

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a leopard print top, assisting an elderly woman with white hair who is leaning on a walker. They are in a living room with armchairs, a coffee table, and a decorative wall piece. The elderly woman is wearing a dark dress and a light-colored shawl. The background shows a cozy living room environment with soft lighting.

Social work enrolments: 2022/23 and 2023/24

January 2026

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Contents

Introduction 3

Social work enrolments in 2022/23 and 2023/24 4

Social work education report..... 5

Introduction

Skills for Care typically publish the ['Social work education' report](#) on an annual basis in March.

The report analyses data from the [Higher Education Statistics Agency](#) (HESA) to inform on both the number of enrolments and qualifications of regulated social work courses accredited by [Social Work England](#). Only courses leading to pre-registration with Social Work England are included in the analysis, post-registration courses for personal or further career development are not included in these figures. Student characteristics such as demographics, course level and geographic location are also analysed.

The last 'Social work education' report was published by Skills for Care in March 2023, covering enrolments and qualifications from the 2021/22 academic year. New student record data was significantly delayed due to HESA data not being available, which in turn delayed the publication of 'Social work education' reports covering the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years.

The delay in releasing data after 2021/22 was caused by HESA revising their data collection and increasing their quality assessment processes. For more information, see the 'About this release' section of the [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2022/23 statistical bulletin](#).

Student record information for 2022/23 was released by HESA in August 2024, and data relating to 2023/24 was released March 2025. However, the specific data required this report was not released for some time after each official release due to further delays in HESA quality assurance.

Social work enrolments in 2022/23 and 2023/24

Once student record data was obtained, it was processed by the Skills for Care Workforce Intelligence team. However, as a result of HESA revisions to the student data collection, accurate identification of students on accredited social work courses was no longer possible using previous methodologies.

Alternative methods for identifying those students to include in analysis for the 'Social work education' report were explored at length. Historically only the student record data from HESA provided any information which could be used to analyse enrolments onto social work courses. In the summer of 2025, Skills for Care obtained enrolment figures for 2023 and 2024 from Social Work England and details about social work courses, from their own data collection. This allowed Skills for Care to identify social work courses in the HESA student record by combining the accredited social work course information from Social Work England with the fields available in the HESA student record data.

Skills for Care's analysis of the student recorded showed the following for students enrolling onto regulated pre-registration courses in 2022/23 and 2023/24 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Enrolments onto accredited social work courses in England (students eligible for pre-registration only), 2022/23 and 2023/24

Source: HESA student record

	2022/23	2023/24
Total enrolments	5,520	5,720
Undergraduate courses	3,400	3,340
Postgraduate courses	2,120	2,380

These findings align well with data published by Social Work England using their own data collection¹. The Social Work England report showed a similar picture with 6,090 enrolments in 2022/23 and 5,899 in 2023/24. Skills for Care is continuing discussions with Social Work England to understand and align the figures from the two sources further.

Skills for Care's Social Work Education report, will analyse the student record further to provide details about the demographics of students, regional analysis, qualifiers and figures from ASC-WDS. This report should be used in conjunction with Social Work England's report which covers different topics and gives the regulator's view of the effectiveness of social work education.

¹ [Preparing for practice: social work education in England - Social Work England](#)

Social work education report

Skills for Care is in the process of obtaining student record data for the 2024/25 academic year from HESA. This data is scheduled for release in January 2026, but an exact date has not been set.

Once this data has been obtained, we will produce a 'Social work education' report covering the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. This will bring the report up to the latest information available.

A publication date for this report will be set in due course and our [Publication calendar](#) will be updated to reflect this.

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