



Apprenticeships in adult social care 2024/25

Skills for Care analysis of
Department for Education data

February 2026

Foreword from our CEO

This report shows that the number of people starting adult social care apprenticeships has increased for the first time since 2020/21. While it's good to see an increase, it's still a drop of more than 75% compared with 2016/17. This is coupled with the fact that under half of the people who start adult social care apprenticeships go on to complete and pass them - the achievement rate was 46.1% in 2023/24.



Although apprenticeship numbers have fallen across all sectors in recent years, the decline in adult social care has been disproportionately steep. At a time when the sector faces persistent workforce shortages and vacancy rates higher than many other industries, it is clear that the current apprenticeship system is not working as it should.

We know that homecare providers, for example, struggle with an apprentice's need to spend 20% of normal working hours on training, and the need for supervision increases the number of people needed for home visits. The absence of backfill funding for off-the-job learning creates particular pressures in a sector with such constrained resources.

Concerns continue to be raised about the suitability of the care apprenticeships introduced in the last decade, and whether they fully reflect the full breadth of work, or the depth of specialist learning required. In future, we would like to see better links between these apprenticeships and the Care Workforce Pathway. This would help establish clearer, more consistent entry routes into the sector that employers can trust and understand.

Social care has a vital role to play in successfully delivering the Government's shifts from hospital to community, sickness to prevention and analogue to digital. But, for this to be possible, we'll need more people with different and more complex skills. That means every entry route into a career in care — including apprenticeships — must be functioning effectively. In July 2024, Skills for Care worked with the sector to create a Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care in England. One of the recommendations in the Strategy is an overhaul of apprenticeships, looking at content, structure and funding which would get apprenticeships working to their full potential for social care. We continue to work towards this end.

For employers, individuals and government, there is both challenge and opportunity. If we get social care apprenticeships right, they can help resource a growing sector, support people currently out of education or work, and open up rewarding long term careers. This research forms part of our ongoing commitment to addressing the challenges and realising the opportunities in adult social care skills development.

Professor Oonagh Smyth CBE
Chief Executive, Skills for Care

Scope of this report

This report describes the number of adult social care apprenticeships which were started or achieved during the 2024/25 academic year (August 2024 to July 2025). Those who achieved an apprenticeship includes people who started their programme in previous academic years. This report also includes achievement rates for apprenticeships in the 2023/24 academic year (August 2023 to July 2024). This is the latest available information from the [Department for Education](#).

The report includes apprenticeship starts and achievements across the current Care apprenticeship standards, as well as apprenticeships on the frameworks for Health and Social Care and Care Leadership and Management, which are closed to new entrants. For more details on all of the apprenticeships that are included in this report see Table 1.

This report covers factors such as:

- Apprenticeship Level
- Demographics
- Regional comparisons
- Trend analysis
- Comparisons to other frameworks to provide context.

It should be of interest to workforce planners, learning providers, social care employers, Government bodies, policy makers and anyone with an interest in social care apprenticeships.

Key findings

Apprenticeship starts

- There were around 24,650 adult social care apprenticeship starts in 2024/25, 5% more than in 2023/24. All apprenticeships had around 353,500 starters in 2024/25, a 4% increase from 2023/24.
- Between 2020/21 and 2024/25 there was a 27% reduction in adult social care starters, in comparison with a 10% increase in all apprenticeship starters.
- There were around 1,290 starters on the Social Worker degree apprenticeship (Level 6) in 2024/25, which made up 20% of all degree level apprenticeship starts across Health and Social Care. The Registered Nurse degree had 3,040 starts, making up 44% of starts across Health and Social Care.
- The Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship and Adult Care Worker apprenticeship standards were most common, ranked 4th and 8th in terms of Intermediate/Advanced Level starts in 2024/25, out of all apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship achievements, leavers and retention

- In adult social care, in 2024/25 28% of achievements were in Level 4 and above apprenticeships, which was the highest among comparable sectors (see Section 3).
- Using the most recent data available from 2023/24: there were 19,870 adult social care apprenticeship leavers, of which 9,400 completed their course (47.3% retention rate) and 9,170 who passed (46.1% achievement rate), and of these 97.5% passed the end point assessment.
- The retention rate of adult social care apprenticeships in 2023/24 (47.3%) was lower than that of all apprenticeships (61.9%). Therefore, a greater proportion of people drop out of adult social care apprenticeships prior to completing compared to other apprenticeships.

Demographic trends

- Over three quarters (83%) of adult social care apprenticeship starters were aged over 24, compared to 51% for all apprenticeships.
- The proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starters aged under 25 has decreased from 21% in 2020/21, to 17% in 2024/25.
- The proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starters that identified as male in 2024/25 was 21%. This is a 3 percentage point increase from 2023/24.
- The proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starters that identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities has increased from 10% in 2016/17, to 16% in 2024/25.

Glossary

Achievement rate

This rate indicates the number of learners who achieved (completed and passed) their course aim as a proportion of all course leavers. This can include leavers who did not complete their course or did not pass. Achievement rate is calculated as the overall number of course achievers divided by the overall number of course leavers.

Advanced apprenticeships

Roles in occupations with training needed at Level 3, which is equivalent to an A-Level.

Apprenticeships

Paid roles with training designed to bring the apprentice to full capability in a specific occupation by the end. This report is about English apprenticeships, as signed off by the UK Government.

Course achiever

A learner whose programme aim has been achieved. This is a student who completed their course (a course completer) and has passed.

Course completer

A learner whose programme aim was completed. This is a student who completed their course but may or may not have passed (achieved the course aim).

Course leaver

A learner whose programme aim has ended. This is when a student leaves their course, either through completing and/or achieving their course aim, or prior to completing the course.

Degree apprenticeships

Roles in occupations where a degree is awarded as part of an apprenticeship.

Higher apprenticeships

Roles in occupations with training needed at Levels 4 to 7 and which are equivalent to a foundation degree and above, such as a professional qualification.

Intermediate apprenticeships

Roles in occupations with training needed at Level 2, which is the equivalent of a grade C / grade 4 GCSE.

Pass rate

This rate indicates the proportion of learners who completed and passed their course. Pass rate is calculated as the overall number of course achievers, divided by the overall number of course completers.

Retention rate

This rate indicates the proportion of learners who completed their course. Even if a learner is not going to complete their course they are retained as long as they stay on the programme. Retention rate is calculated as the overall number of course completers, divided by the overall number of course leavers.

Contents

Foreword from our CEO	2
Scope of this report	3
Key findings	4
Glossary	5
Introduction	8
Apprenticeship levy	11
1. Apprenticeship starts	13
1.1 Number of apprenticeship starts	14
1.2 Comparison to other apprenticeships	19
1.3 Apprenticeship starts by Level	20
1.4 Demographics of apprenticeship starts.....	21
1.5 Apprenticeship starts by home region.....	23
2. Apprenticeship achievements	26
2.1 Apprenticeship retention, pass rates and achievement rates	27
2.2 Apprenticeship achievements in 2024/25	29
3. Comparison of adult social care apprenticeships with other sectors.....	31
3.1 Apprenticeship starts in adult social care and other selected sectors.....	32
3.2 Apprenticeship achievements in adult social care and other selected sectors	34
3.3 Apprenticeship retention, pass rates and achievement rates across sectors	36
4. Healthcare apprenticeships	38
5. Apprenticeships in the ASC-WDS.....	41
5.1 Apprenticeships in the ASC-WDS.....	42
5.2 Employment overview.....	42
Further resources.....	45
Our workforce intelligence publications	46
Adult social care workforce estimates	47
Commission our services	47
Our values	47

Introduction

In England, Apprenticeships are periods of paid employment where the apprentice develops new knowledge and skills through a mixture of on and off the job learning. At least 20% of an apprentice's working hours are spent doing off-the-job studying and developing the skills needed for their new role. Under the reformed system of apprenticeship standards, it is no longer mandatory to include qualifications, although there are required qualifications in all of the standards within the adult social care sector. We provide support and information about apprenticeships on our [website](#).

In October 2013 the Government announced apprenticeship "standards" would be developed by employers and would replace the existing system of "frameworks". This reform was completed in August 2020 at which point all new starts into apprenticeships were on [employer-led standards](#).

There are currently nine apprenticeship standards that are open to entrants with either a direct link to adult social care, or multidisciplinary learning between health and social care (see Table 2). The body of this report covers the apprenticeship standards that are directly linked to adult social care:

- [Adult Care Worker \(ST0005\)](#) – Level 2
- [Lead Adult Care Worker \(ST0006\)](#) – Level 3
- [Lead Practitioner in Adult Care \(ST0007\)](#) – Level 4
- [Leader in Adult Care \(ST0008\)](#) – Level 5
- [Social Worker degree apprenticeship \(ST0510\)](#) – Level 6.

It also includes the following apprenticeship frameworks that are now closed, but which still include data that is relevant to the report:

- Health and Social Care
- Care Leadership and Management.

The new Health and Social Care Foundation Apprenticeship was rolled out in April 2025 and therefore no data is currently available, so it is not included in this report.

The report goes on to compare adult social care apprenticeships with apprenticeships in other sectors. These sectors are regarded as comparable to adult social care based on their pay and conditions.

We have selected apprenticeships for comparison from four sector subject areas. A sector subject area is a broad educational category used to group courses and qualifications by the industry or field of study they relate to. The areas selected were:

- Administration – for example, Business Administrator and Customer Service Practitioner apprenticeships.
- Hospitality and Catering – for example, Hospitality Team Member apprenticeships.
- Retailing and Wholesaling – for example, Retailer apprenticeships.
- Service Enterprises – for example, Hairdressing Professional and Beauty Therapist apprenticeships.

The analysis includes only apprenticeships in these sectors which are between Level 2 and Level 6.

The healthcare degree apprenticeships: Registered Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist and the Nursing Associate standards are shown in Section 5 – Introduction to Healthcare Apprenticeships.

Table 1 below describes each of the five apprenticeship standards that have a direct link to adult social care as well as the two frameworks.

Table 1. Apprenticeships in adult social care

Source: Skills England

Framework/standard	Name	Status	Level
Standard	Adult Care Worker	Approved: 21/07/2016	2
Framework	Health and Social Care	Closed in: 31/12/2017	2/3
Standard	Lead Adult Care Worker	Approved: 21/07/2016	3
Standard	Lead Practitioner in Adult Care	Approved: 31/03/2020	4
Framework	Care Leadership and Management	Closed in: 31/07/2020	5
Standard	Leader in Adult Care	Approved: 03/02/2020	5
Standard	Social Worker degree apprenticeship	Approved: 30/11/2018	6

Each apprenticeship standard has specific skills, knowledge and behaviours necessary to be competent in that role. At the end of their learning, apprentices go through an end-point assessment which must be carried out by an organisation independent from the learning provider and employer. At the end of the process, successful apprentices receive a final grade.

External quality assurance (EQA) is carried out on the end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) to ensure consistency and quality for all apprentices and their employers. The EQA responsibility for these standards was taken on by the [National Skills Academy for Rail \(NSAR\)](#) in November 2019.

Table 2 below shows the apprenticeships included and reporting period of this report. The Health and Social Care apprenticeship framework, which previously accounted for the majority of apprenticeships, was closed to new entrants on 31st December 2017. This was replaced by the Adult Care Worker and the Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship standards. The Care Leadership and Management framework apprenticeship also closed to new entrants on 31st July 2020 and was replaced by the Leader in Adult Care apprenticeship standard.

In November 2018, the Social Worker degree apprenticeship was launched, which covers working with adults, children, carers, and families. Skills for Care supported a trailblazer group of employers and universities to develop this new standard. It typically takes three years to complete, combining on-the-job experience with a minimum of 20% of the apprentice's paid working hours spent on off-the-job training. Successful apprentices are awarded an honours

degree by their partnered university and are eligible to apply to the Social Work England register.

Table 2. Adult social care and healthcare apprenticeships approval and closure dates

Source: Skills England

Apprenticeship name	Level	Approved for delivery date	Close date (where applicable)
Adult social care apprenticeships			
Adult Care Worker	2	21/07/2016	*
Health and social care	2/3	01/02/2013	31/12/2017
Lead Adult Care Worker	3	21/07/2016	*
Lead Practitioner in Adult Care	4	31/03/2020	*
Care Leadership and Management	4/5	05/12/2012	31/07/2020
Leader in Adult Care	5	03/02/2020	*
Social Worker degree apprenticeship	6	30/11/2018	*
Healthcare apprenticeships			
Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	5	08/04/2019	*
Occupational Therapist (integrated degree)	6	07/12/2018	*
Physiotherapist (integrated degree)	6	18/12/2018	*
Registered Nurse - degree (NMC 2010)	6	09/05/2017	11/01/2024
Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)	6	13/02/2019	*

Throughout this report, charts and tables will display rounded whole numbers and percentages. Therefore, it should be noted that charts and tables may not always total to 100%.

Apprenticeship levy

The apprenticeships levy was launched in April 2017. The levy is charged at 0.5% of the employer wage bill above £3 million if the organisation has a wage bill over £3 million. Apprentices starting on the new standards will be funded either through the use of the apprenticeship levy for employers who are required to pay this, through an employer-DfE co-funded model for non-levy paying employers, or through a 'levy gifting' processes where levy payers can 'gift' levy funds to smaller organisations.

The payments are made into an Apprenticeship Service account controlled by the employer and supplemented by a 10% contribution from the Government. Providers of apprenticeships' training to the employer are paid through this account and unused funds in the account expire after two years. Skills for Care estimates that around 520 adult social care organisations have a wage bill over £3million and are therefore contributing to the apprenticeship levy. This was

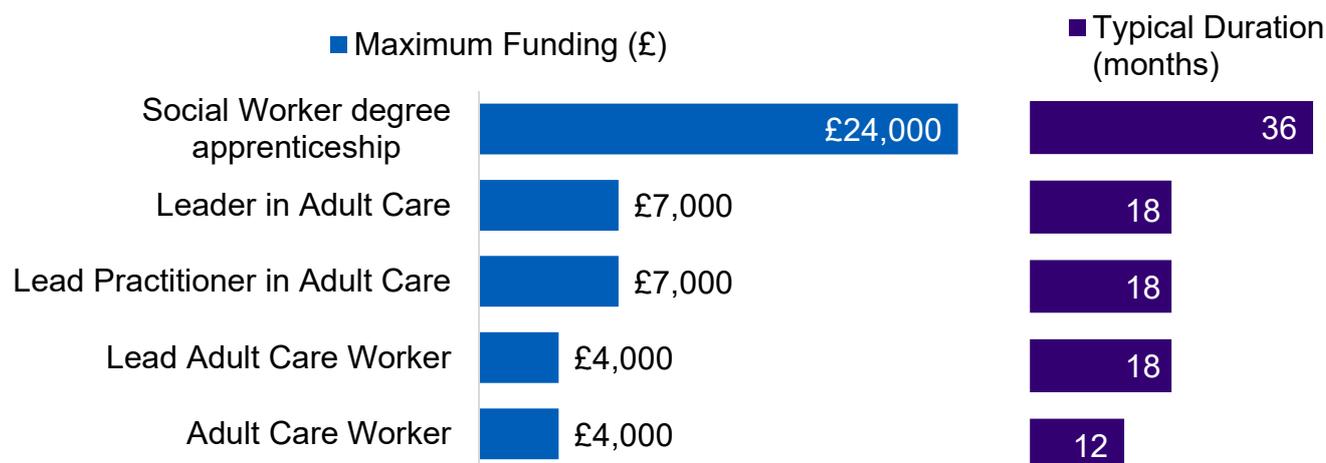
based on the estimated wage bill of organisations in the [Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set \(ASC-WDS\)](#).

Non-levy paying employers have access to co-funding arrangements for apprenticeship learning in which the employer pays 5% of the cost and 95% is paid for by the Government. Likewise, if there are insufficient funds for an apprenticeship in a levy-paying employer’s account, the Government will contribute 95% of these extra costs. A levy-paying employer can choose to donate up to 25% of their apprenticeship levy fund to any other employer who can then use it to fund learning and assessment of their apprentices. Find out more about apprenticeship funding on Skills for Care’s [website](#).

Each apprenticeship has a maximum funding amount which can be used from the levy to pay for the apprentices training. This funding is intended to reflect the costs of delivering the training and is strongly aligned with the expected duration of the apprenticeship. As shown in Chart 1, this ranged from £4,000 for the Adult Care Worker and Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship, to £7,000 for the Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care apprenticeship standards and was highest for the Social Worker degree apprenticeship (£24,000).

Chart 1. Adult social care apprenticeships by maximum funding and typical duration

Source: Skills England



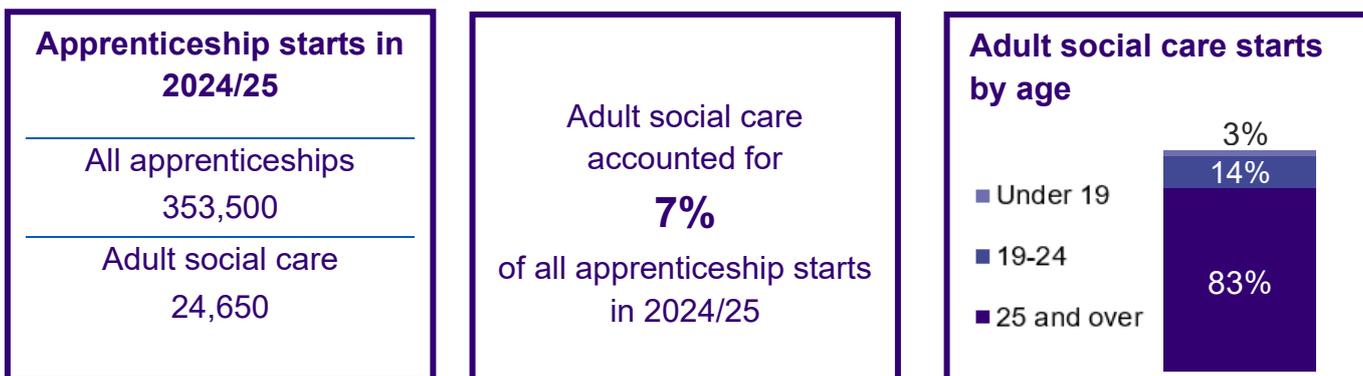
During the academic year 2024/25 employers were able to claim funding for standards at Level 2 to Level 6 in two stages from the Workforce Development Fund (WDF): upon completion of the diploma and after the end-point assessment has been passed. The WDF ended 31 March 2025 and was replaced by the [Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme \(LDSS\)](#). Under LDSS no funding is available for apprenticeships.

In December 2025 the government [announced](#) a £725 million package of reforms to the apprenticeship system. This will include funding for around 50,000 apprenticeships for young people, with the Health and Social Care sector expected to benefit.

1. Apprenticeship starts

Starts refers to the number of programmes that began in the academic year from 1 August to 31 July. Adult social care apprenticeships for academic year 2024/25 include the framework Health and Social Care and Care Leadership and Management as well as the standards Adult Care Worker, Lead Adult Care Worker, Leader in Adult Care, Lead Practitioner in Adult Care, and Social Worker degree apprenticeship.

1.1 Number of apprenticeship starts



There were around 24,650 adult social care apprenticeship starts in 2024/25, 7% of all apprenticeship starts (353,500). Adult social care apprenticeship starts increased by 5% in 2024/25 compared to the previous year, while the overall number of apprenticeships starts increased by 4%.

Historically, apprenticeship starts were much higher. Between 2014/15 and 2016/17, there were an average of around 501,400 apprenticeships started each year across all sectors. In 2017/18, the number of starts dropped by 24% to around 375,760. The number of starts in adult social care peaked at around 99,220 in 2016/17, before also decreasing by 58% to around 42,080 in 2017/18. Consequently, the overall share by adult social care fell from 20% in 2016/17 to 7% in 2024/25. The Department for Education apprenticeships policy changed around this time with the move from frameworks to employer-led standards, and the launch of the apprenticeship levy, both of which most likely contributed to the peak in 2016/17 and then subsequent decrease.

Table 3 shows the total number of starts for adult social care apprenticeships between 2017/18 and 2024/25, as well as the starts for all apprenticeships. There were 353,500 people that started an apprenticeship within 2024/25. Of these, around 7% (24,650) were adult social care related.

Table 3. Apprenticeship starts by framework/standard, 2017/18 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

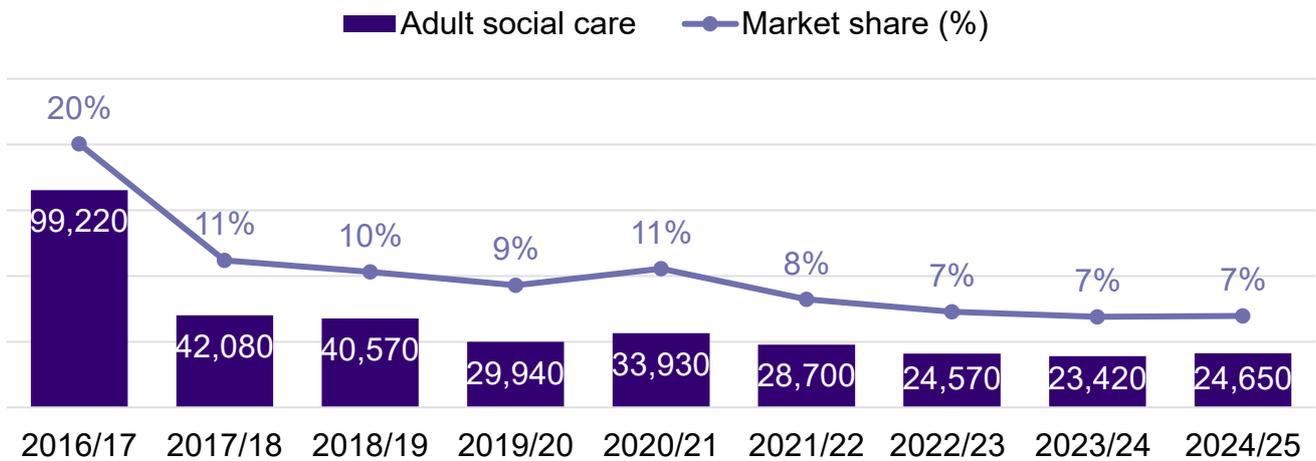
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
All apprenticeships	375,760	393,380	322,530	321,440	349,190	337,140	339,580	353,500
Adult social care	42,080	40,570	29,940	33,930	28,700	24,570	23,420	24,650
Health and Social Care	17,290	4,850	1,480	100	40	-	-	-
Care Leadership and Management	6,170	6,570	4,580	310	150	40	10	-
Adult Care Worker	10,240	14,820	10,840	12,830	9,800	7,460	6,240	5,830
Lead Adult Care Worker	8,380	14,170	11,530	14,220	12,080	10,180	9,490	10,980
Leader in Adult Care	-	-	700	3,780	3,880	3,930	4,240	4,310
Social worker	-	160	660	810	740	1,060	1,390	1,290
Lead Practitioner in adult care	-	-	140	1,890	2,020	1,890	2,050	2,240

In 2019/20, when restrictions were put in place to combat COVID-19, the number of starts across all apprenticeships fell by 18% and in adult social care by 26%. Apprenticeship starts in adult social care increased slightly to 33,930 in 2020/21, despite lockdown restrictions continuing to be implemented. Adult social care apprenticeship starts continued to decrease after the end of lockdown restrictions. We believe that social care providers acted with initial caution during COVID to manage risk to users of care and support and relatively inexperienced employees, reengaging with apprentices as the risks around COVID became better understood. This COVID effect did not change the overall downward trend in adult social care apprenticeships.

Chart 2 shows the number of adult social care apprenticeships starts between 2016/17 and 2024/25 and the market share. This is the percentage of adult social care of overall apprenticeships.

Chart 2. Apprenticeships starts and market share, 2016/17 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

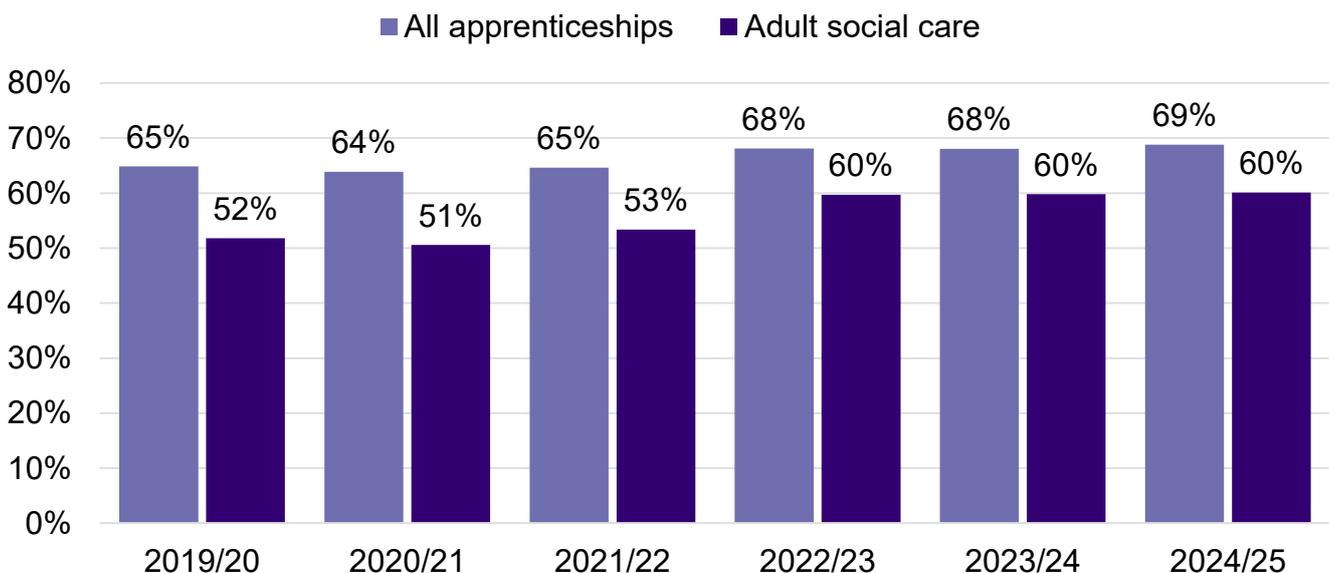


Following the reform of apprenticeships from frameworks into employer-led standards, the Adult Care Worker and Lead Adult Care Worker standards were approved for starts in the 2016/17 academic year. The Lead Practitioner in Adult Care and Leader in Adult Care were approved for admissions in the 2019/20 academic year. The reduction between 2017/18 and 2019/20 shows the start of a transition period as employers take on apprenticeships on these new standards.

Three in five (60%) of adult social care apprenticeships were supported by levy funds in 2024/25. This was a lower proportion than for all apprenticeships, where over two-thirds (69%) were supported by levy funding. The Social Worker degree apprentice had by far the highest proportion of adult social care starts supported by the levy, at 98%.

Chart 3. Percentage of apprenticeship starts supported by levy funds

Source: Department for Education



The most recent research evaluating the effectiveness of the apprenticeships levy, conducted by [The National Audit Office](#), showed in 2017/18 that levy-paying employers accessed 9% (£191 million) of almost £2.2 billion of levy funds and Government top-up available to them. This was lower than the Department for Education’s forecast of 13%. No more recent evaluation data has been published to update these findings.

Chart 4 below shows the number of starts into adult social care apprenticeships in 2024/25. The Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship was the most popular with 10,980 starts, followed by the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship with 5,830 starts. The Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care received 4,310 and 2,240 starts respectively. The Social Worker degree apprenticeship received around 1,290 starts.

Chart 4. Number of adult social care apprenticeships by framework/standard, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

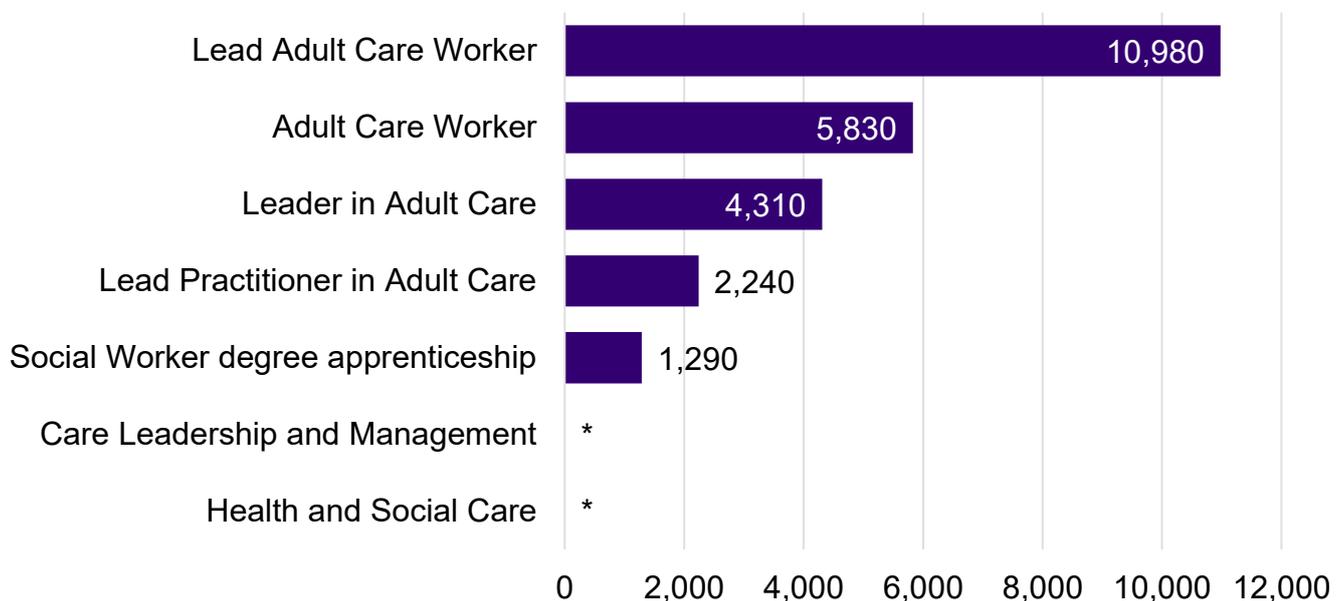


Chart 5 shows the transition of apprenticeship starts from the Health and Social Care and the Care Leadership and Management frameworks to the Adult Care Worker, Lead Adult Care Worker, and Leader in Adult Care standards.

The proportion of starts in the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship increased from 24% in 2017/18, to a peak of 38% in 2020/21, but has decreased to 24% in 2024/25. The Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship increased from 20% in 2017/18 to 45% in 2024/25.

Chart 5. Proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts by framework/standard, 2017/18 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

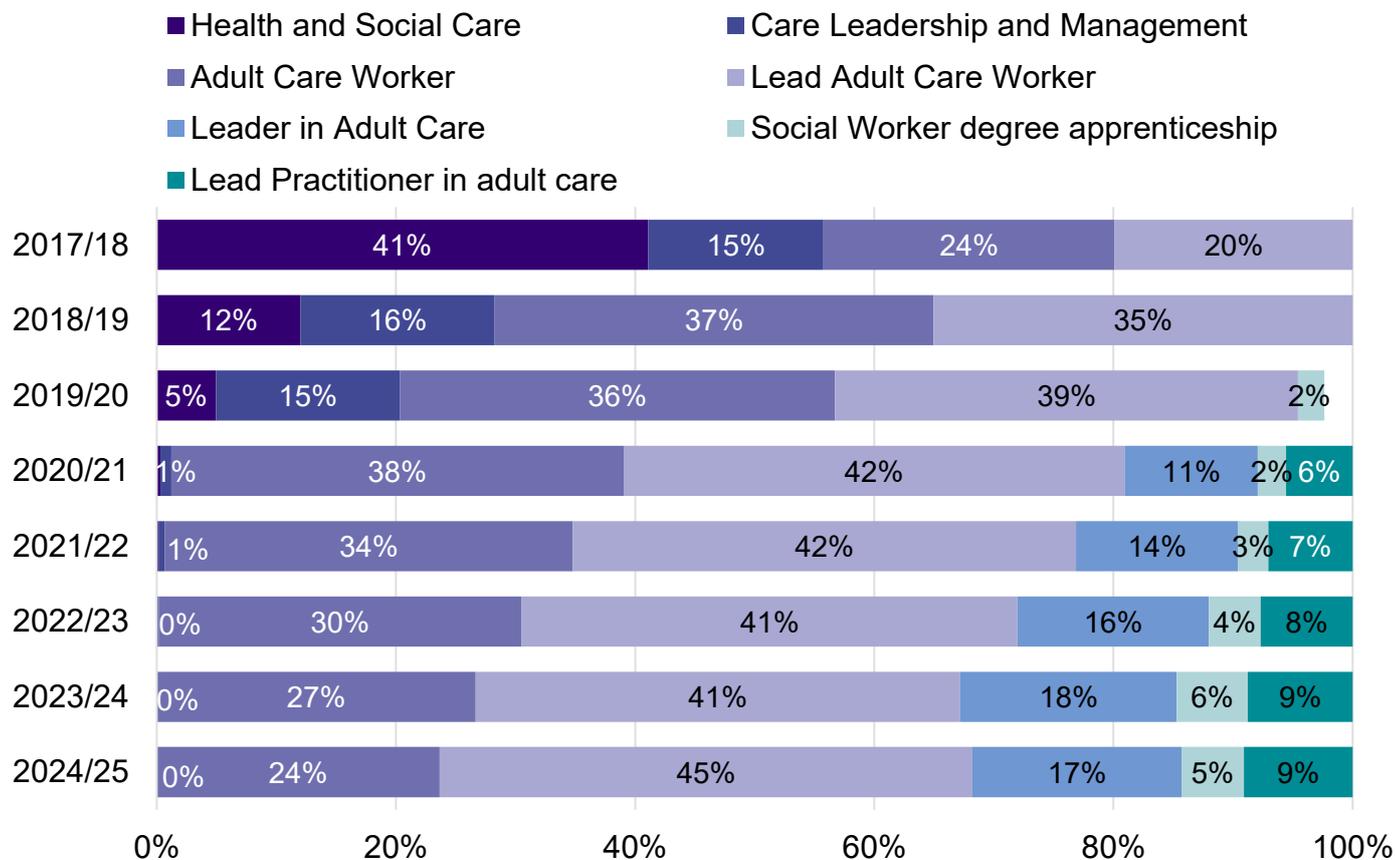
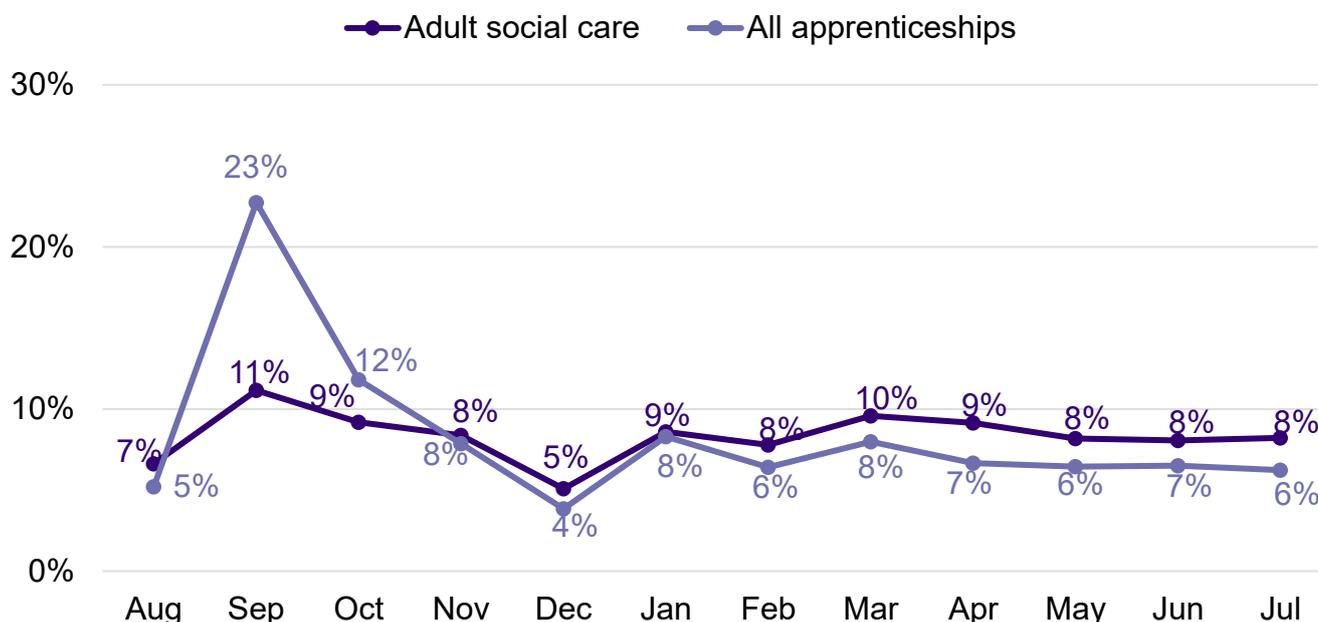


Chart 6 compares the proportion of apprenticeship starts per month in 2024/25 in adult social care to all apprenticeships. Apprenticeships generally receive a large proportion of their starts at the beginning of the academic year, whereas the proportion per month in adult social care is even throughout the academic year.

Chart 6. Proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts per month, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



1.2 Comparison to other apprenticeships

When combined, adult social care apprenticeships accounted for 7% of all apprenticeship starts in 2024/25. Table 3 compares the five largest apprenticeships and their proportion by programme level.

Of the 362 apprenticeships at level 2 and level 3 (intermediate/advanced level) with recorded starts in 2024/25, the standards Lead Adult Care Worker and Adult Care Worker ranked 4th and 8th respectively. The most popular intermediate/advanced level non-social care apprenticeships were Early Years Educator, Team Leader, and Business Administrator.

Of the 286 apprenticeships at levels 4 to 7 (higher level) with recorded starts, the Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care standards were ranked 6th and 15th respectively. The Social Worker degree apprenticeship ranked 25th in terms of starts. The most popular higher level non-social care apprenticeships included Operations Manager, Senior Leader and Accountancy or Taxation Professional.

Table 4. Top five apprenticeship starts by Level, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

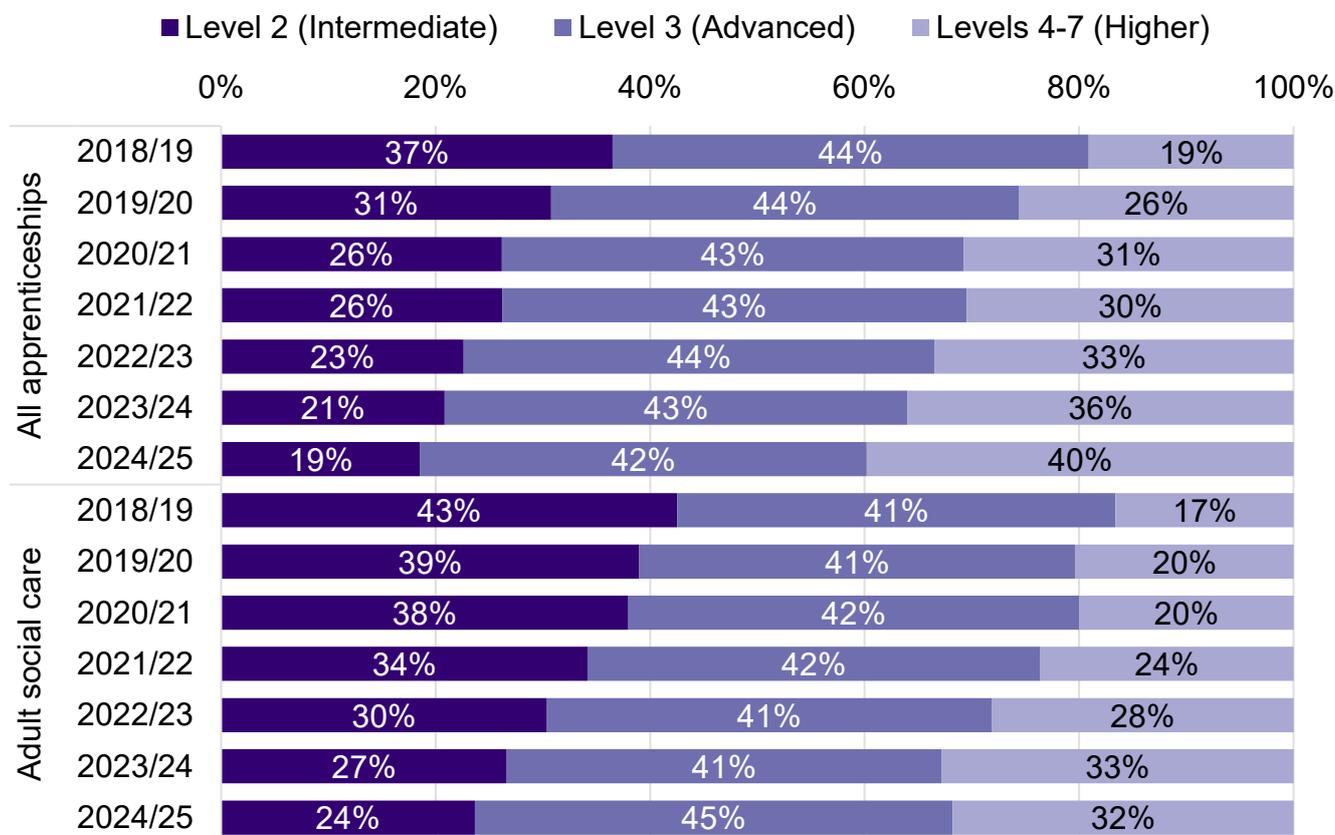
Levels 2-3 (Intermediate/Advanced)				Levels 4-7 (Higher)			
Rank	All apprenticeships	212,770		Rank	All apprenticeships	140,730	
1	Early Years Educator	18,570	7%	1	Operations Manager	12,530	9%
2	Team Leader	12,670	6%	2	Accountancy or Taxation Professional	12,480	8%
3	Business Administrator	11,210	6%	3	Senior Leader	10,690	6%
4	Lead Adult Care Worker	10,980	4%	4	Data Analyst	7,140	6%
5	Installation and Maintenance Electrician	7,600	3%	5	Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	7,090	5%
8	Adult Care Worker	5,830	3%	6	Leader in Adult Care	4,310	3%
				15	Lead Practitioner in Adult Care	2,240	2%
				25	Social Worker (Integrated Degree)	1,290	1%

1.3 Apprenticeship starts by Level

Chart 7 compares the proportion of starts per Level between adult social care apprenticeships and all apprenticeships. The standards Adult Care Worker and Lead Adult Care Worker are at level 2 and level 3 respectively (intermediate/advanced level), while Lead Practitioner in Adult Care (level 4), Care Leadership and Management (level 4/5), and Leader in Adult Care (level 5) are at higher level.

Chart 7. Apprenticeship starts in all apprenticeships and adult social care by programme level, 2018/19 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



Across all apprenticeships, the proportion of starts at intermediate level decreased each year between 2018/19 and 2024/25.

Those in adult social care also showed a consecutive decrease in starts at the intermediate level from 43% in 2018/19, to 24% in 2024/25. They also saw an increase in higher level (Care Leadership and Management, Lead Practitioner in Adult Care and Leader in Adult Care) apprenticeships from 17% in 2018/19 to 32% in 2024/25.

1.4 Demographics of apprenticeship starts

The majority of people starting adult social care apprenticeships in 2024/25 were aged 25 and over (83%). This age profile was notably older than that of all apprenticeships, in which just over half were aged 25 and over (51%).

The Leader in Adult Care and the Social Worker degree apprenticeship had the oldest age profiles out of the adult social care apprenticeships, with 95% and 92% aged 25 and over respectively. This is expected as these apprenticeships are at a higher level. It is also generally expected that the people starting these courses have had experience working in a care setting.

Chart 8. Apprenticeship starts by framework/standard and age group, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

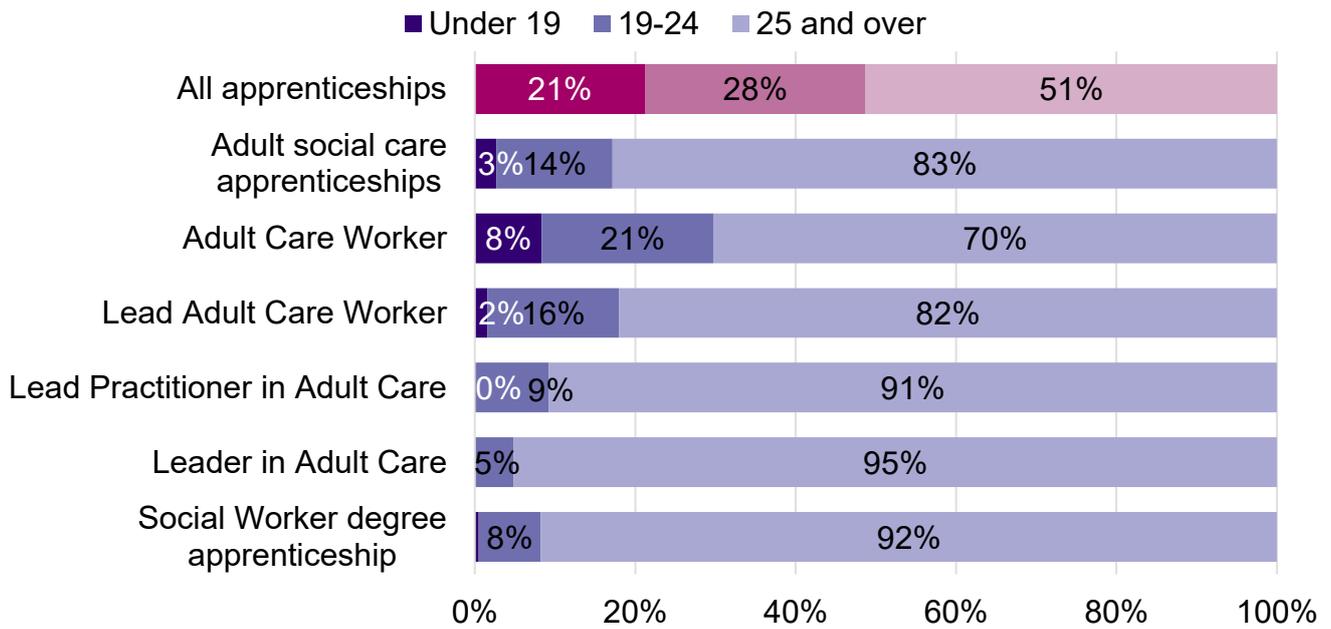
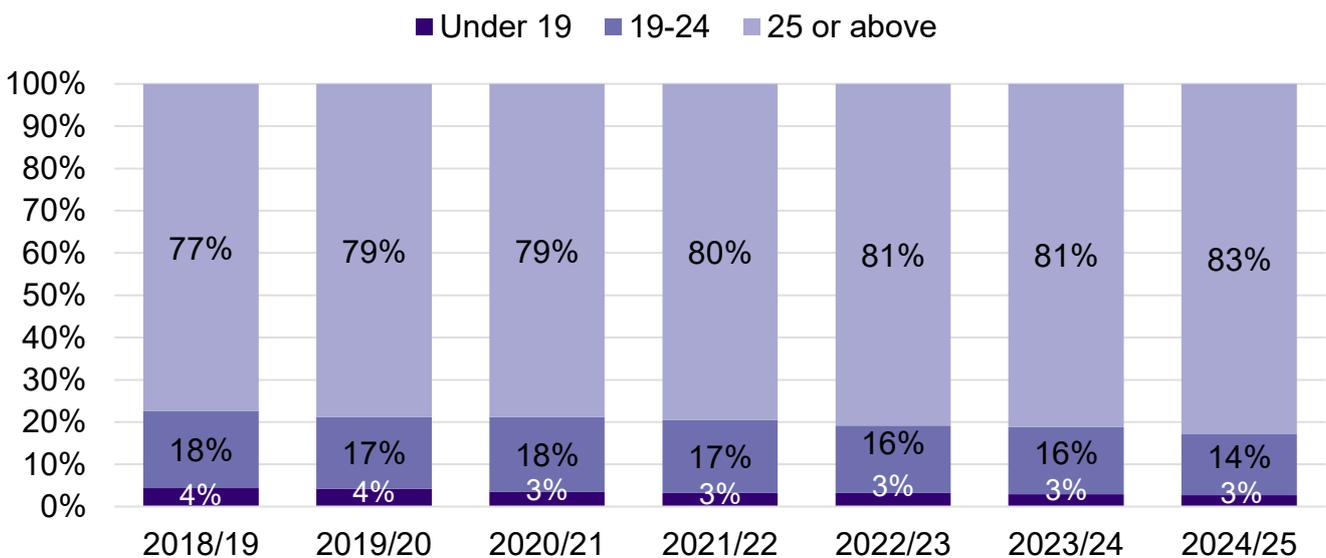


Chart 9 below shows the age trend of adult social care apprenticeship starts between 2018/19 and 2024/25. The proportion of starts aged under 19 was consistently low over the period, whereas those aged 19 to 24 have been decreasing in favour of those aged 25 and over. This age profile is reflective of the wider adult social care sector in which the average age of the workforce is 44.0 years old. More information about this topic can be found in the Demographics chapter of [‘The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England 2025’](#).

Chart 9. Adult social care apprenticeship starts by age group, 2018/19 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



The majority of adult social care apprenticeship starts identified as female (79%) in 2024/25. This is a decrease of four percentage points from 2023/24. Across all apprenticeships, around

52% identified as female in 2024/25, which remains unchanged from 2023/24. The Department for Education data includes only "male" and "female" options while the Adult Social Care Workforce Dataset (ASC-WDS) also contains an option for "other" gender. The Department for Education dataset is limited in this way, so we are unable to compare this group directly to the ASC-WDS.

The Department for Education dataset classifies ethnicity in relation to Black and Minority Ethnicity (BAME). Using this approach the dataset includes a "BAME – yes" category, which groups together people of Black, Asian or minority ethnicity. People of White ethnicity are categorised as "BAME – no". The Department for Education dataset is limited to grouping ethnicity in this way and this is not consistent with how ethnicity is categorised in ASC-WDS, where a more detailed breakdown is available.

Over a quarter of adult social care apprenticeship starters (27%) belonged to black and minority ethnicities. This was lower than the wider adult social care workforce, in which 21% were of a Black, African, Caribbean or Black British ethnicity, 12% were of an Asian or Asian British ethnicity, 2% were of Mixed or multiple ethnicities, and 2% were of other ethnicities (37% of the workforce). However, this was more diverse than across all apprenticeships (18%).

Around 16% of adult social care apprenticeship starts identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. This proportion has increased from 10% in 2016/17. This is similar to all apprenticeships, which increased from 10% in 2016/17 to 17% in 2024/25.

1.5 Apprenticeship starts by home region

Table 5 shows the largest proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts in 2024/25 were people living in the South East (16%). The lowest proportion of starts were in the North East and London (both 6%). This generally follows the regional distribution of the adult social care workforce, with London being the only exception.

London made up 14% of adult social care filled posts but only 7% of the adult social care apprenticeship starts, therefore apprenticeships are under-represented in London. In contrast, the South East also made up 16% of adult social care filled posts but made up 16% of adult social care apprenticeship starts.

Table 5. Apprenticeship starts and adult social care filled posts by home region, 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates, Department for Education

	Adult social care filled posts		Adult social care apprenticeship starts		Difference
Total	1,595,000		24,560		
Eastern	173,000	11%	2,740	11%	0%
East Midlands	148,000	9%	2,300	9%	0%
London	216,000	14%	1,760	7%	-6%
North East	82,000	5%	1,270	5%	0%
North West	221,000	14%	3,640	15%	1%
South East	255,000	16%	3,920	16%	0%
South West	171,000	11%	3,400	14%	3%
West Midlands	171,000	11%	2,910	12%	1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	159,000	10%	2,610	11%	1%

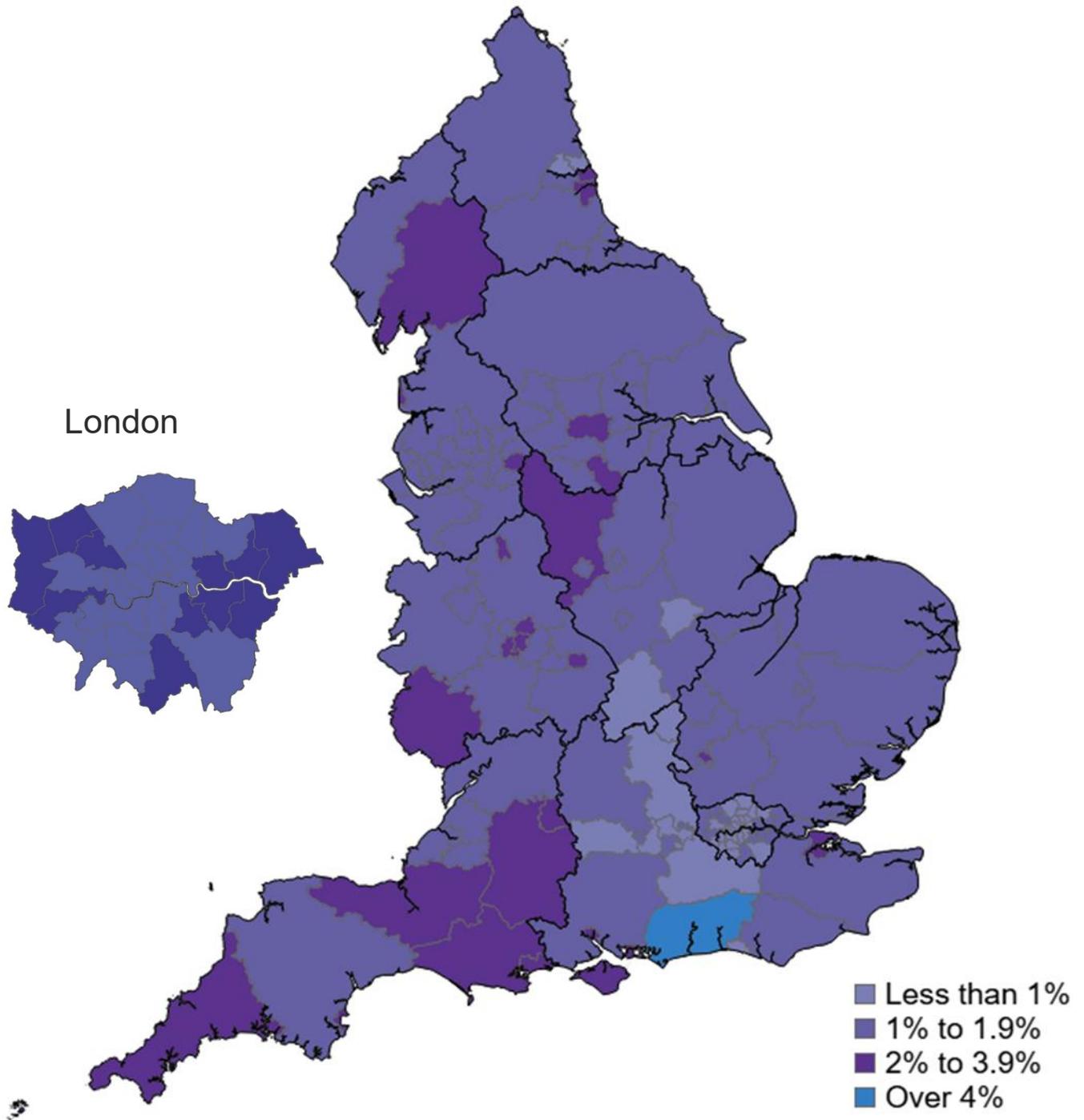
Map 1 below shows the number of adult social care apprenticeship starts by home local authority area, as a proportion of adult social care filled posts in the academic year 2024/25.

The local authority areas with the highest proportion of apprenticeship starts to filled posts (where there were the most starts relative to the size of the sector in that area) were West Sussex (5.5%), Portsmouth (2.7%) and Walsall (2.6%). The local authorities with the lowest ratio of apprenticeship starts included Kensington and Chelsea (0.2%), Camden (0.2%) and Richmond upon Thames (0.1%).

Regionally, London had the lowest proportion of apprenticeship starts to filled posts (0.8%), whereas the South West had the highest (2.0%).

Map 1. Proportion of apprenticeship starts to adult social care filled posts by home local authority area, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



2. Apprenticeship achievements

9,170

Successful leavers
from adult social care
apprenticeships in
2023/24.

46.1%

achievement rate
across adult social
care apprenticeships
in 2023/24.

97.5%

pass rate across adult
social care
apprenticeships in
2023/24.

2.1 Apprenticeship retention, pass rates and achievement rates

Please note that this section refers to achievement rates from the academic year 2023/24. Figures in this section were not available for 2024/25 at the time of writing as the Department for Education has not yet released achievement rates for this period. Due to its withdrawal, there was no data available for the Health and social care apprenticeship, so it is not included in this section.

There were 19,870 leavers from adult social care apprenticeships in 2023/24. Less than half of these leavers completed their course (retention rate 47.3%), which was equivalent to around 9,400 completers and, of these, 97.5% achieved their learning aim. Therefore, there were around 9,170 successful leavers from adult social care apprenticeships in 2023/24.

Chart 10 below shows the retention rate of adult social care apprenticeships (47.3%) was lower than that of all apprenticeships (61.9%). Therefore, a greater proportion of people drop out of adult social care apprenticeships prior to completing compared to other apprenticeships.

Chart 10. Apprenticeship retention rate, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

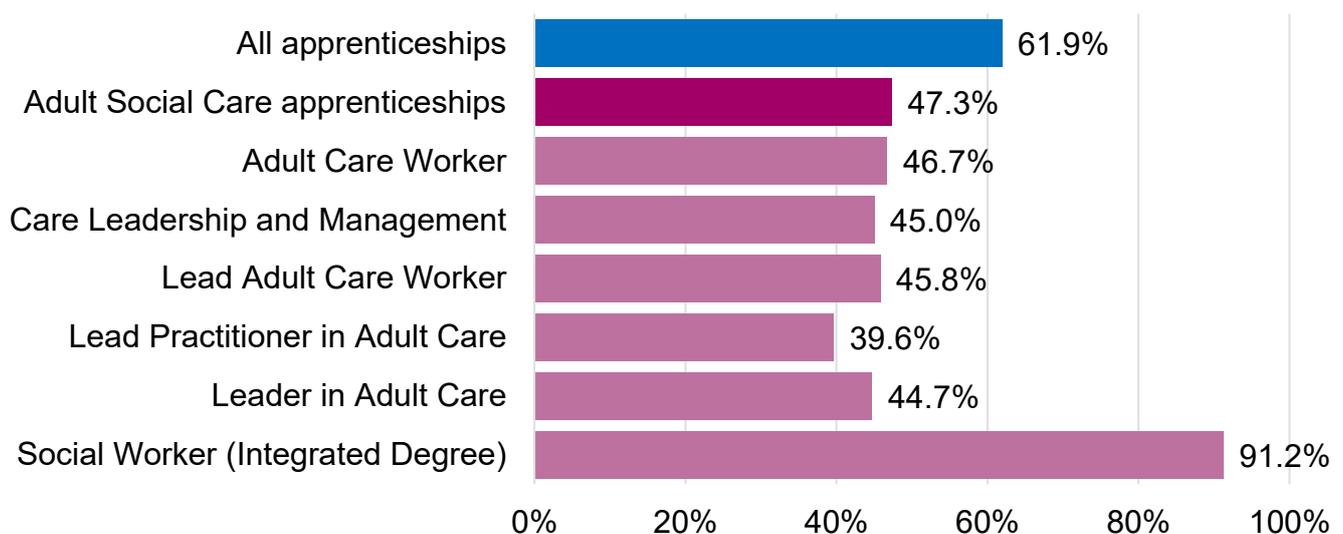
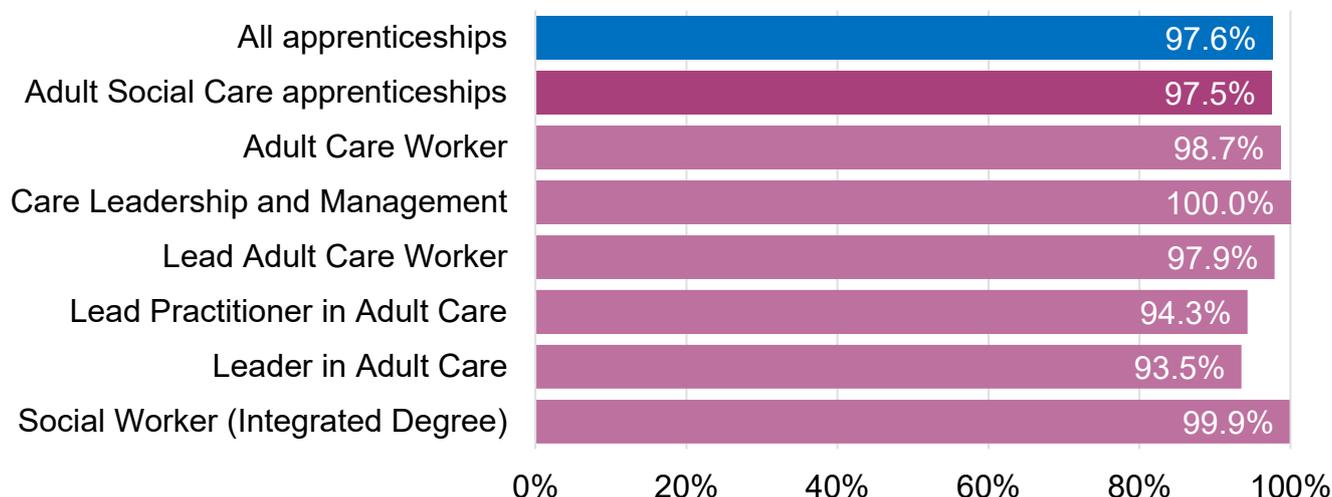


Chart 11 shows the pass rate of adult social care apprenticeships (97.5%) was similar to that of all apprenticeships (97.6%). Learners who reach their end point assessment are very likely to pass, however many learners drop out from the course before this point.

Chart 11. Apprenticeship pass rate, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

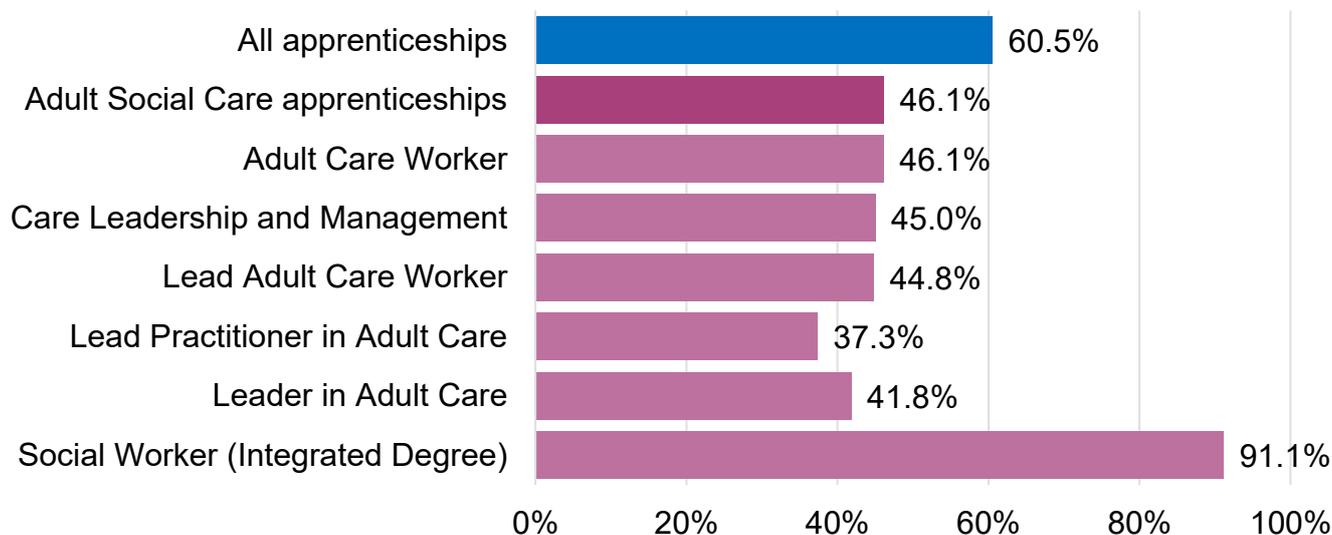


The achievement rate of adult social care apprenticeships was 46.1% in 2023/24, which was lower than the average across all apprenticeships (60.5%). Achievement rate is calculated as the overall number of course achievers divided by the overall number of course leavers.

There was little variation between the achievement rate of the Lead Adult Care Worker standard (44.8%) and Adult Care worker standard (46.1%). The Social Worker degree apprenticeship had a much higher achievement rate (91.1%).

Chart 12. Apprenticeship achievement rates, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



2.2 Apprenticeship achievements in 2024/25

This section includes data that was available at the time of publishing this report relating to the number of achievements from the 2024/25 academic year. Learners achieving more than one Apprenticeship will appear more than once, therefore the figures in this section differ from those quoted earlier in this chapter. However we would not expect many apprentices to achieve more than one apprenticeship within the same reporting year.

Chart 13 shows the apprenticeship achievements between 2017/18 and 2024/25. There were around 12,230 adult social care apprenticeship achievements in 2024/25, an increase of 34% from 9,160 in 2023/24 to 12,230 achievements in 2024/25. The number of adult social care achievements decreased sharply between 2017/18 and 2019/20.

Chart 13. Apprenticeship achievements and market share, 2017/18 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

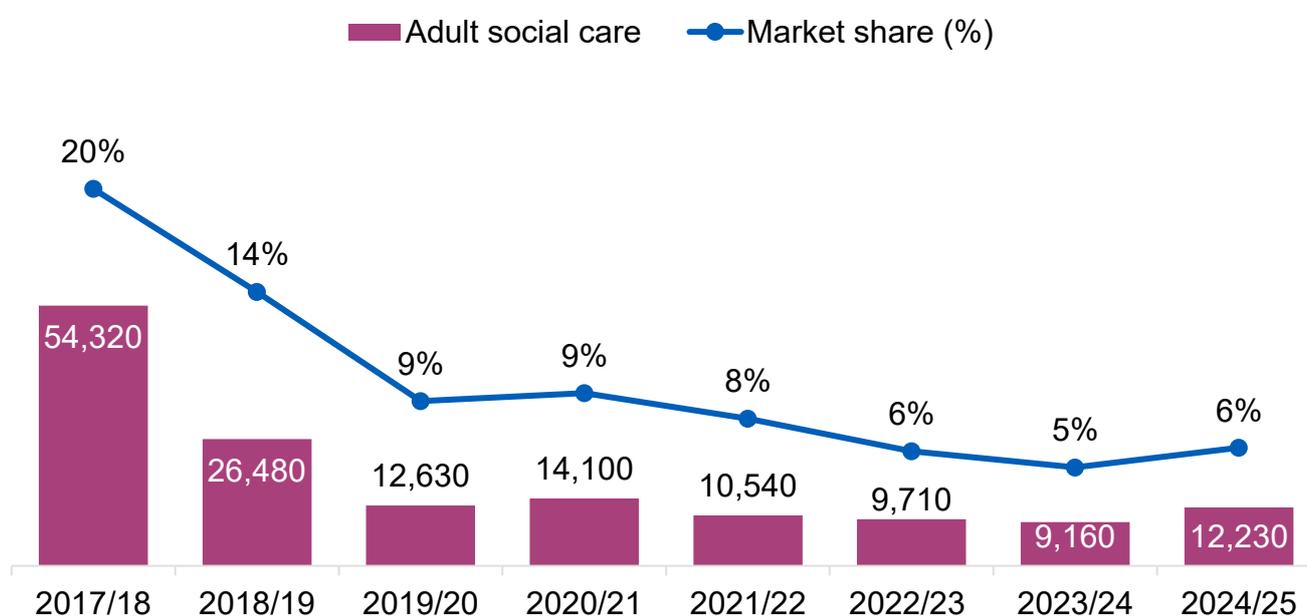


Chart 14 shows the proportion of adult social care apprenticeships achievements for each framework or standard. Around two in five (43%) achievements were from the Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship and a further 29% from the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship.

As expected, due to the closing of new entrants, the proportion of achievements for the Health and Social Care apprenticeship dropped from 22% in 2019/20, to 0% in 2024/25. This was the same for Care Leadership and Management which also dropped from 23% to 0%, and therefore they are not included in this chart. The proportion of achievements of the Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship increased from 27% in 2019/20, to 43% in 2024/25, and from 28% to 29% for the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship in the same period.

Chart 14. Adult social care achievements by framework/standard, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

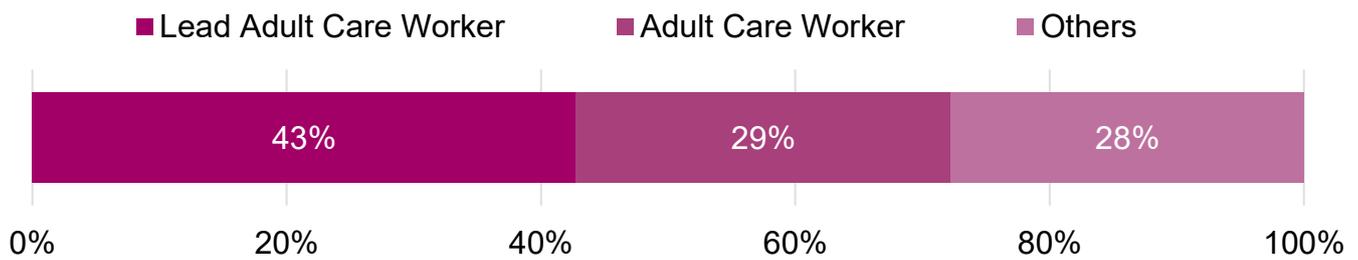
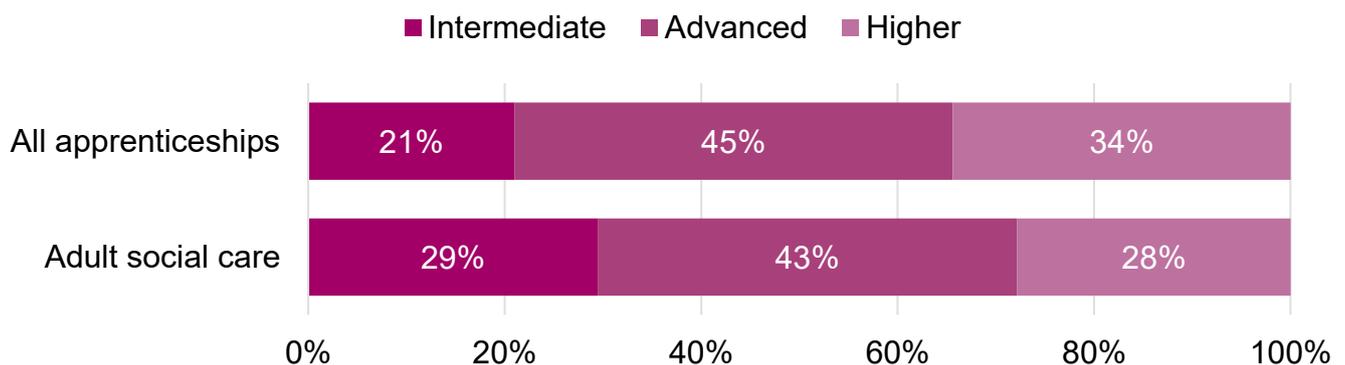


Chart 15 below shows the proportion of apprenticeship achievements by level in 2024/25. Intermediate apprenticeships made up a larger proportion of the adult social care sector (29%) compared to all apprenticeships (21%). There were a similar proportion of Advanced apprenticeships, and there were proportionally fewer adult social care apprenticeships at the Higher Level. This could be a product of the transition from the now closed Care Leadership and Management framework to the Lead Practitioner in Adult Care and Leader in Adult Care standards.

Chart 15. Adult social care achievements by apprenticeship level, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



3. Comparison of adult social care apprenticeships with other sectors

In this section, we compared adult social care apprenticeships with apprenticeships in other sectors. These apprenticeships have been selected as these sectors are comparable to adult social care based on their pay and conditions as reported in [‘The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England 2025’](#).

The four sector subject areas selected were:

- Administration – e.g. Business Administrator and Customer Service Practitioner apprenticeships
- Hospitality and Catering – e.g. Hospitality Team Member apprenticeships
- Retailing and Wholesaling – e.g. Retailer apprenticeships
- Service Enterprises – e.g. Hairdressing Professional and Beauty Therapist apprenticeships

These analyses include all apprenticeships across these sectors, all of which are between Level 2 and Level 6.

Please note that this section shows trends from 2019/20 onwards as these are the years provided by the data source.

3.1 Apprenticeship starts in adult social care and other selected sectors

In 2024/25, three quarters (68%) of adult social care apprenticeship starts were of Level 2 or Level 3, which was the lowest of all selected sectors. Adult Social Care also had the greatest proportion of starters to Level 5 apprenticeships of the selected sectors (17%), with administration being the only other sector offering this level of apprenticeship. Adult Social Care, Service Enterprises and Retailing and Wholesaling are the only apprenticeships that has a Level 6 compared to other sectors listed in this report.

Chart 16. Apprenticeship starts by level in selected sectors, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

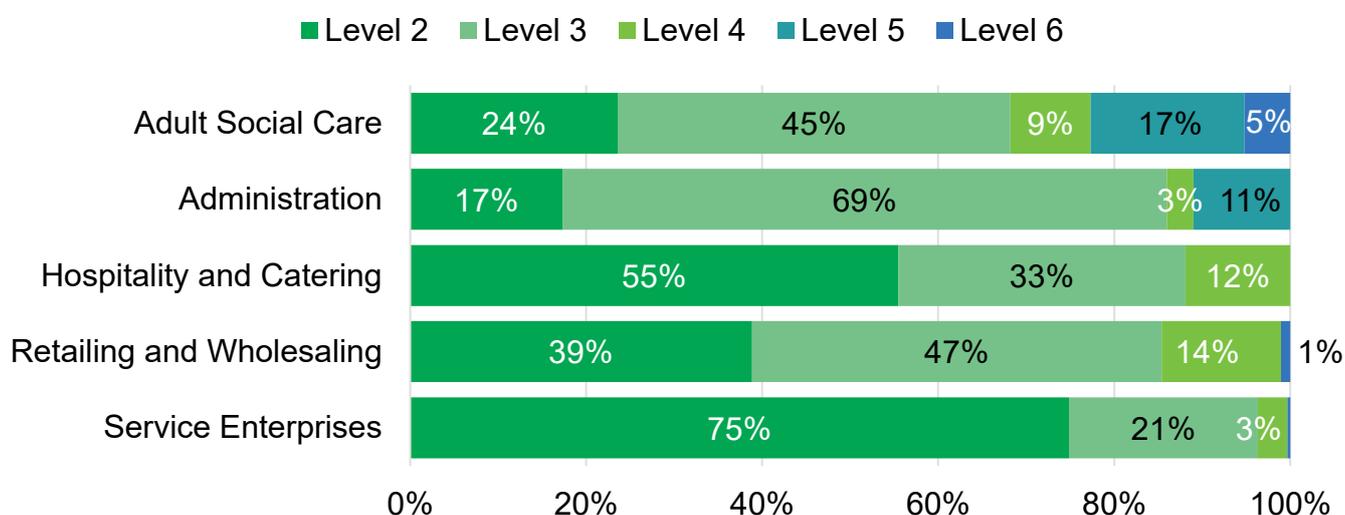


Chart 17 shows that in 2024/25, the number of Level 2 to 6 apprenticeship starts in Adult Social Care and Administration were relatively close (24,650 and 20,360 respectively) while the starts for the other sectors were much lower.

Chart 17. Level 2 to 6 apprenticeship starts in selected sectors, 2019/20 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

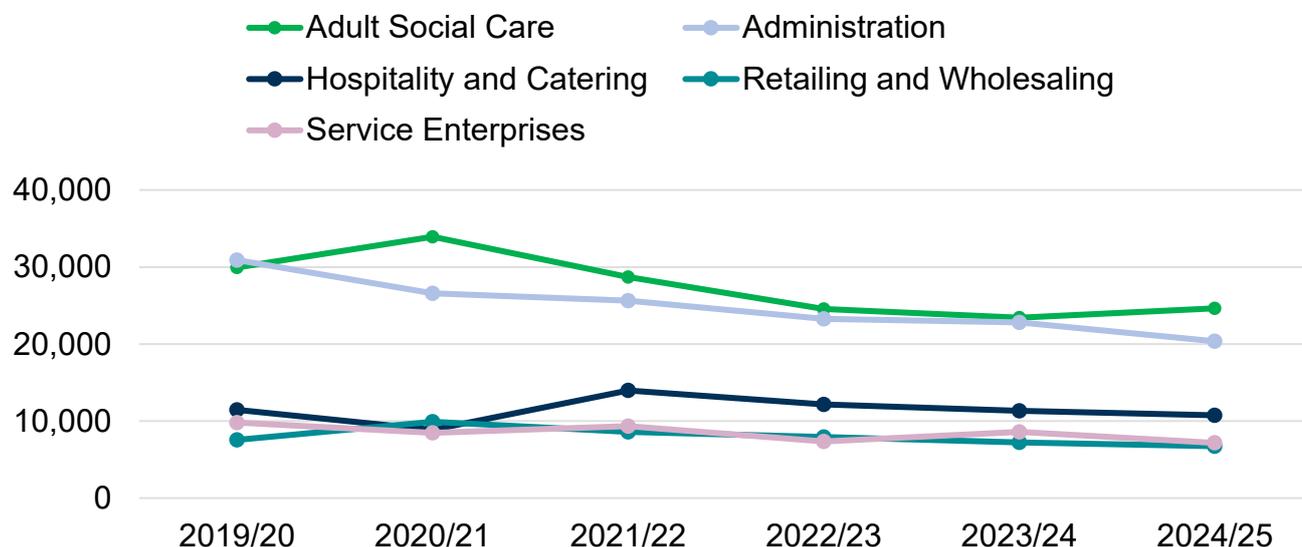


Table 6 shows that Adult Social Care starts declined by 18% to 24,650 since 2019/20 while Administration starts decreased by 34% to 20,360. Service Enterprises starts also declined by 27% over the period, Hospitality and Catering and Retailing and Wholesaling both have the lowest decline (6% and 11% respectively).

Table 6. Level 2 to 6 apprenticeship starts in selected sectors and percentage change, 2019/20 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

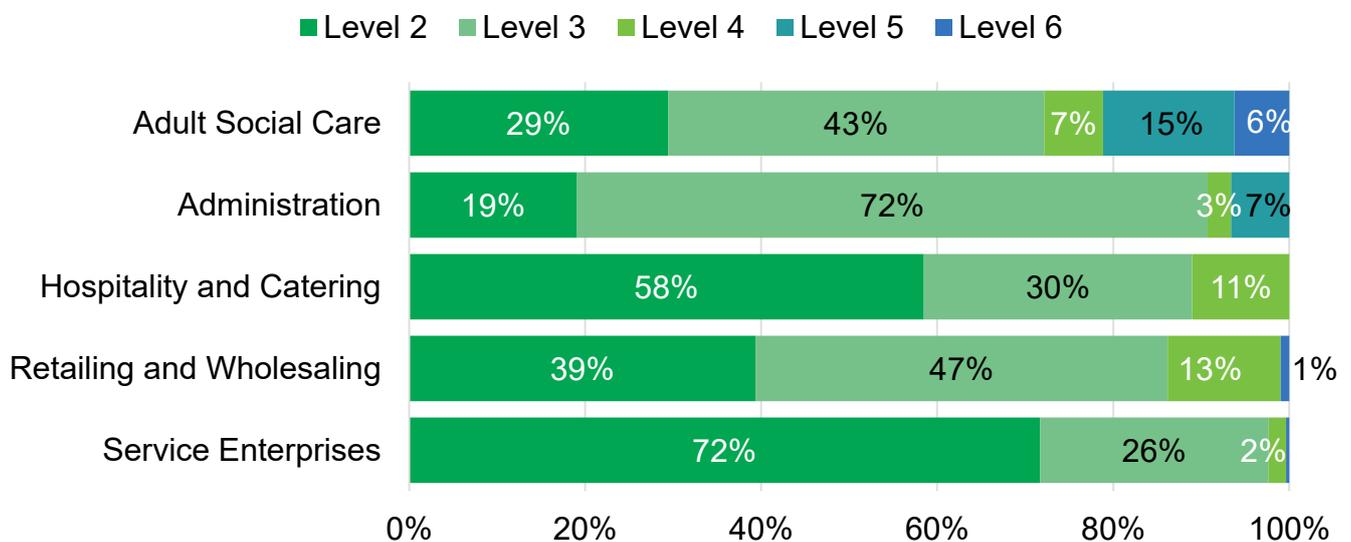
Sector	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	% Change since 2019/20
Adult Social Care	29,940	33,930	28,700	24,570	23,420	24,650	-18%
Administration	30,900	26,590	25,640	23,270	22,810	20,360	-34%
Hospitality and Catering	11,470	8,870	13,970	12,170	11,340	10,770	-6%
Retailing and Wholesaling	7,580	9,910	8,590	7,950	7,230	6,740	-11%
Service Enterprises	9,810	8,470	9,330	7,360	8,600	7,170	-27%

3.2 Apprenticeship achievements in adult social care and other selected sectors

Chart 18 shows that a higher proportion of achievements were from people completing Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships across the sectors in 2024/25. In Adult Social Care, 22% of achievements were in Level 4 and Level 5 apprenticeships, which was the highest among the sectors. 6% of Adult Social Care apprenticeships achievements were at Level 6. Service Enterprises and Retailing and Wholesaling were the only other sectors with a Level 6 achievement.

Chart 18. Apprenticeship achievements by level in selected sectors, 2024/25

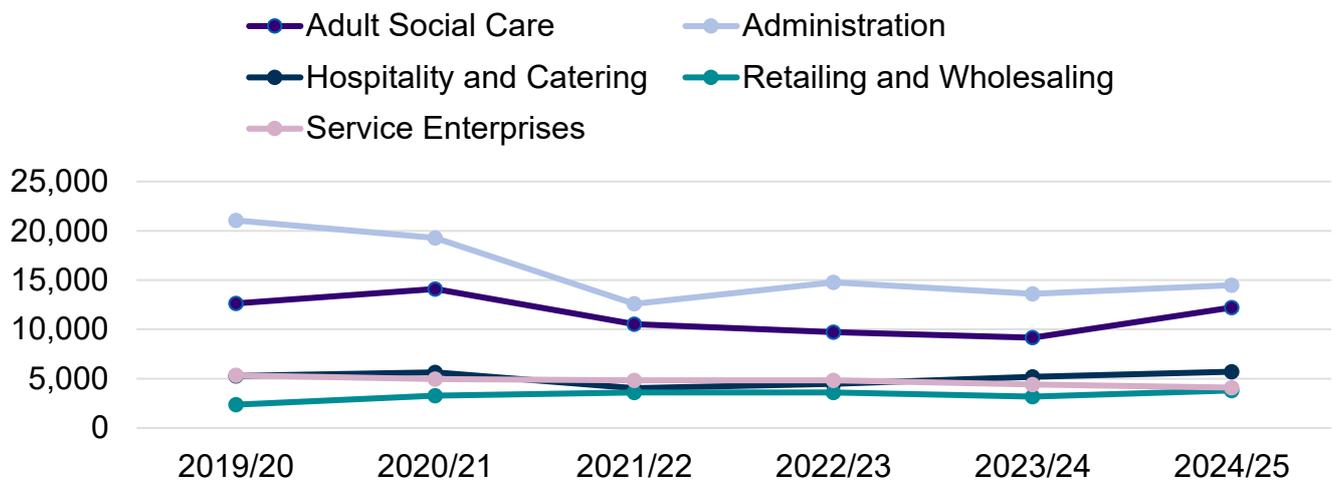
Source: Department for Education



Although Adult Social Care typically had a higher number of apprenticeships starts than the Administration sector, the number of achievements remained lower. Both sectors saw a decrease in the number of achievements since 2019/20. Chart 19 and Table 7 below show that Adult Social Care achievements decreased by 3% from 12,630 in 2019/20, to 12,230 in 2024/25. Administration achievements decreased by 31%, from 21,050 in 2019/20 to 14,470 in 2024/25.

Chart 19. Levels 2 to 6 apprenticeship achievements in selected sectors, 2019/20 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



The number of achievements in the Hospitality and Catering and Service Enterprises sectors have remained fairly steady over time, while the number of Retailing and Wholesaling achievements increased by 61% from 2,370 in 2019/20 to 3,810 in 2024/25.

Table 7. Levels 2 to 6 apprenticeship achievements in selected sectors and percentage change, 2019/20 to 2024/25

Source: Department for Education

Sector	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	% Change since 2019/20
Adult Social Care	12,630	14,100	10,540	9,710	9,160	12,230	-3%
Administration	21,050	19,270	12,590	14,790	13,620	14,470	-31%
Hospitality and Catering	5,280	5,660	4,040	4,490	5,200	5,710	8%
Retailing and Wholesaling	2,370	3,290	3,590	3,610	3,170	3,810	61%
Service Enterprises	5,340	4,960	4,820	4,840	4,420	4,100	-23%

3.3 Apprenticeship retention, pass rates and achievement rates across sectors

Please note that this section refers to academic year 2023/24. Figures in this section were not available for 2024/25 at the time of writing.

Chart 20 below shows the retention rate of Adult Social Care apprenticeships (47.3%) was lower than that of all apprenticeships (61.9%) and of the selected apprenticeships in this analysis. Administration had a higher retention rate than the overall apprenticeships rate (66.7%). Service Enterprises (60.2%), Hospitality and Catering (48.2%) and Retailing and Wholesaling (49.8%) had retention rates below the overall apprenticeship rate.

Chart 20. Apprenticeship retention rate, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

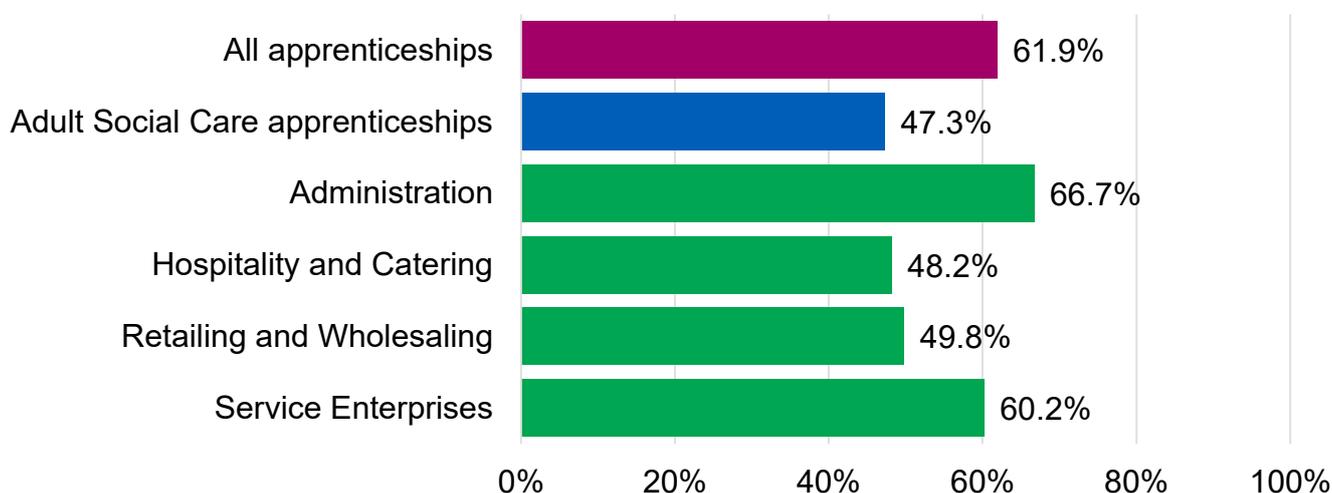
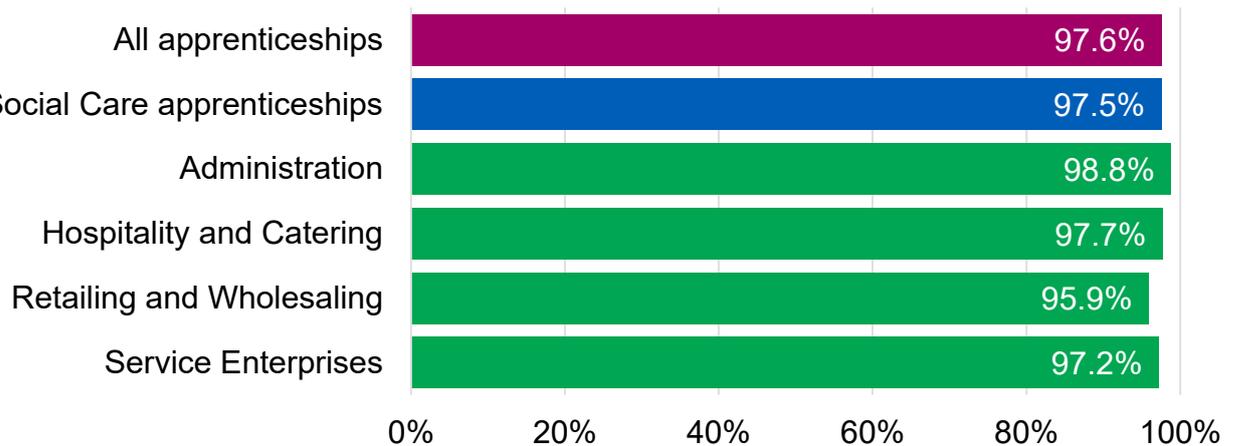


Chart 21 shows the pass rate of Adult Social Care apprenticeships (97.5%) which was slightly lower than all apprenticeships (97.6%). The selected sector with the lowest pass rate was Retailing and Wholesaling at 95.9%. Across all apprenticeships, learners who reach their end point assessment are very likely to pass, though many learners drop out from the course before this point. This pattern is seen across the selected apprenticeships.

Chart 21. Apprenticeship pass rate, 2023/24

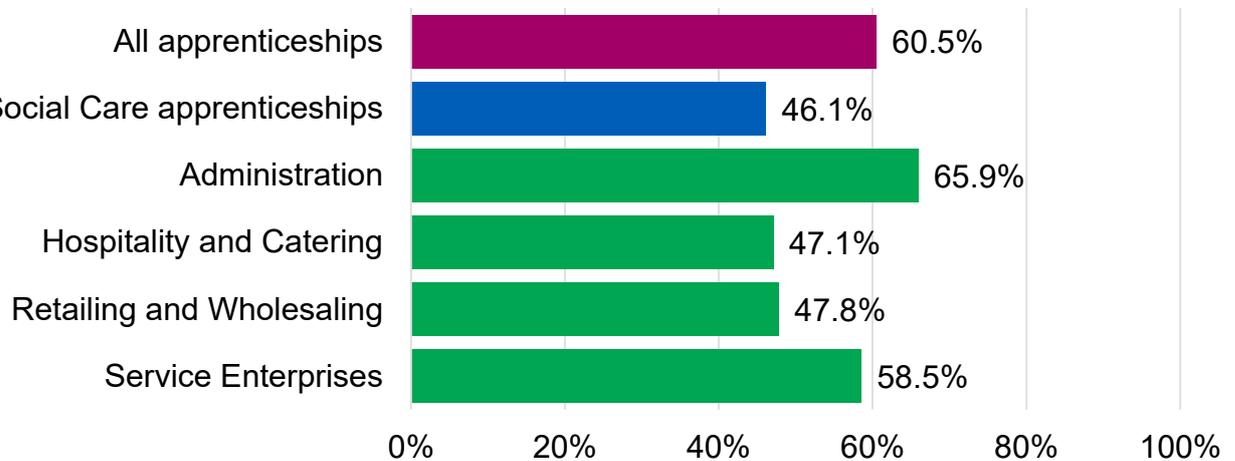
Source: Department for Education



The achievement rate of Adult Social Care apprenticeships was 46.1% in 2023/24, which was the lowest across all selected apprenticeships. Hospitality and Catering apprenticeship had the second lowest achievement rate at 47.1%. Administration (65.9%) had achievement rates above the overall apprenticeships rate (60.5%).

Chart 22. Apprenticeship achievement rate, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



4. Healthcare apprenticeships

This section looks at healthcare apprenticeships that may link to adult social care via multidisciplinary learning between health and social care. The majority of occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nursing associates and registered nurses are employed within health settings in the NHS, but some are employed in adult social care settings.

Table 8. Healthcare apprenticeships

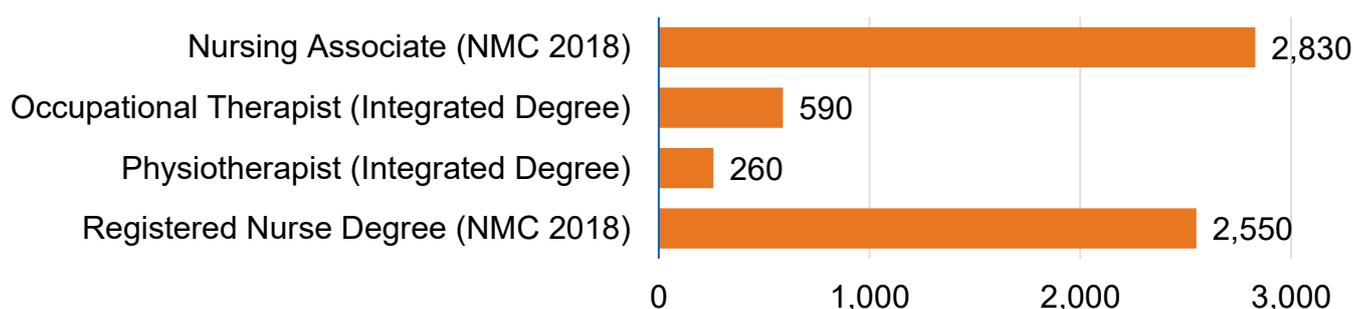
Source: Skills England

Standard	Name	Status	Level
Standard	Occupational Therapist	Approved: 07/12/2018	6
Standard	Physiotherapist	Approved: 18/12/2018	6
Standard	Registered Nurse (NMC 2010)	Approved: 07/05/2017	6
Standard	Registered Nurse (NMC 2018)	Approved: 13/02/2019	6
Standard	Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	Approved: 08/04/2019	5

The Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) apprenticeship, which was approved for delivery in April 2019, had 2,830 starts in 2024/25. Its previous version, “Nursing Associate”, which was retired in 2019, had no starts in the 2024/25 academic year, so it is not included in Chart 25. The Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) apprenticeship emphasises the multidisciplinary learning programme due to the increasing integration of health and social care services. The standard Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) ranked 12th out of 286 higher level (levels 4 to 7) apprenticeships that had starts in 2024/25, while the degree Registered Nurse (NMC 2018) ranked 13th. The degree Registered Nurse (NMC 2010) was retired on 11/01/2024, during the period this report covers.

Chart 23. Number of healthcare apprenticeship starts, 2024/25

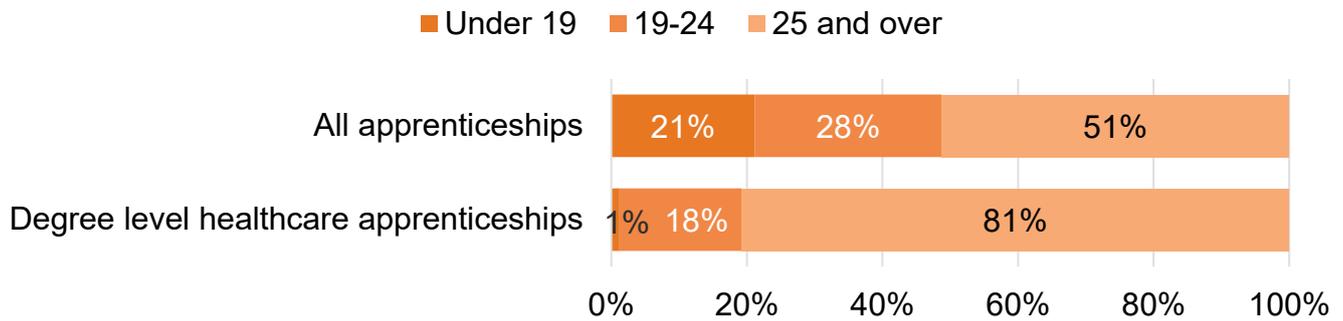
Source: Department for Education



The age profile of the healthcare apprenticeships was much older than the overall age profile of all apprenticeships. The proportion of apprenticeships who were aged 25 and over was 81% for healthcare compared to just over half (51%) for all apprenticeships.

Chart 24. Age profile of degree level healthcare apprenticeship starts, 2024/25

Source: Department for Education



Achievement rates for 2024/25 were not published at the time of writing. However, in 2023/24, there were 3,860 leavers from the Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) standard, of which 79.9% completed the course, with a 99.7% pass rate. There were also 2,320 leavers from the Registered Nurse (NMC 2018) degree, of which 92.8% completed the course, with a 100% pass rate.

Table 9. Outcomes for healthcare apprenticeships, 2023/24

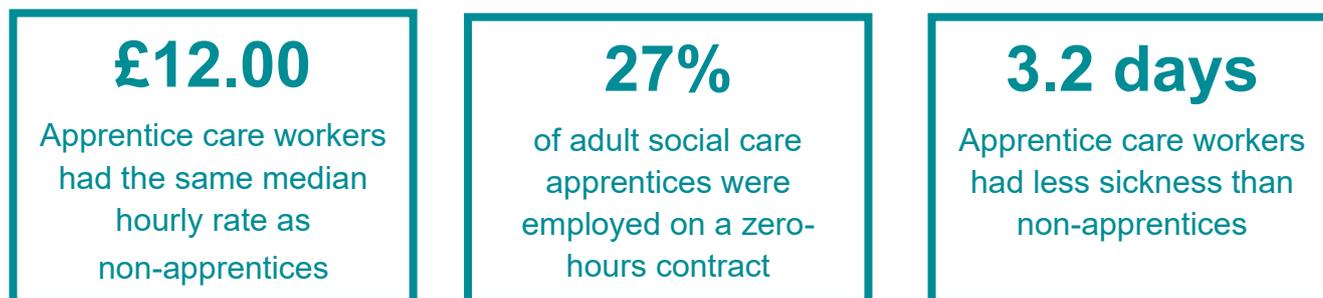
Source: Department for Education

Standard	Leavers	Achievers	Completers	Achievement rate	Retention rate	Pass rate
Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)	3,860	3,080	3,090	79.7%	79.9%	99.7%
Nursing Associate	20	20	20	85.0%	85.0%	100%
Occupational Therapist	260	240	240	91.6%	92.0%	99.6%
Physiotherapist	90	80	80	95.4%	95.4%	100%
Registered Nurse - Degree (NMC 2010)	170	110	110	63.8%	63.8%	100%
Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)	2,320	2,150	2,150	92.8%	92.8%	100%

5. Apprenticeships in the ASC- WDS

To further understand the characteristics of people in apprenticeship roles, analysis of the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) is used in this chapter. Employers are asked to respond “yes” or “no” to whether each of their staff were doing training as part of an apprenticeship. This data includes employers in the independent sector as at March 2025 only.

In June 2024 the role of support worker was added to the ASC-WDS at the request of adult social care providers. A large proportion of these support workers were previously recorded as care workers in the ASC-WDS, so, to accurately reflect the change over time care workers and support workers have been grouped in the analysis below.

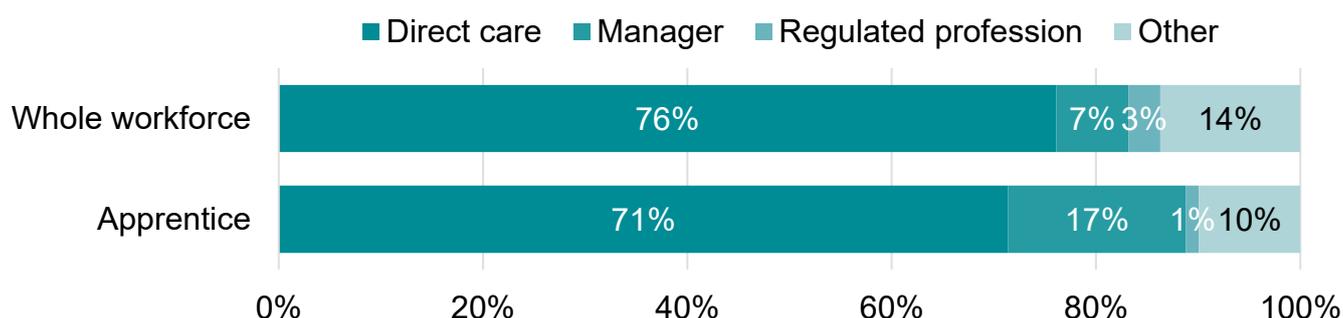


5.1 Apprenticeships in the ASC-WDS

Chart 25 below shows that as at March 2025, workers who were doing training as part of an apprenticeship were more likely to have a manager role (17%) than the overall workforce (7%). This was up from 15% in 2023/24. They were also less likely to have a regulated professions role (1%). Over half (54%) of those training as part of an apprenticeship were in care worker or support worker roles, and 13% in senior care worker roles.

Chart 25. Job role group of apprentices in the adult social care workforce

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2025

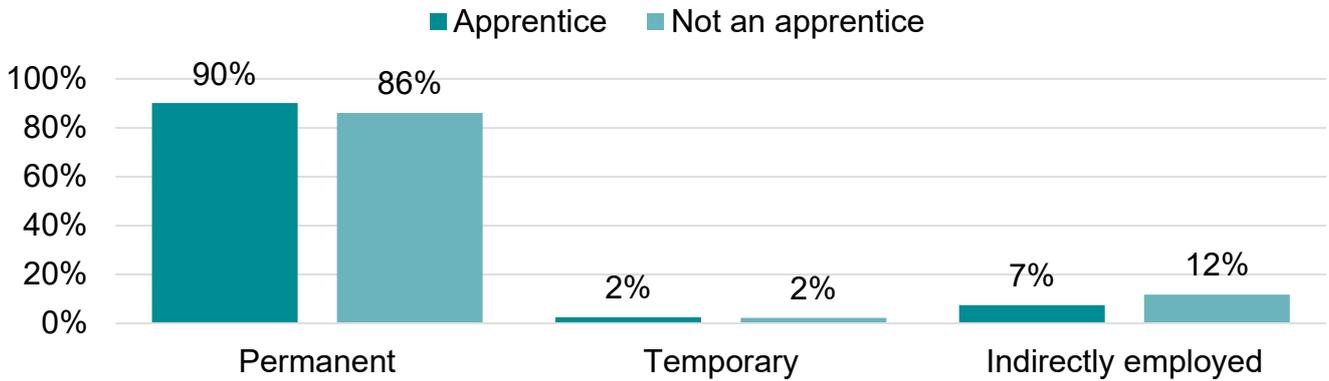


5.2 Employment overview

The majority of care worker and support worker apprentices and care workers and support workers not studying for an apprenticeship were employed on permanent contracts (90% and 86% respectively). A lower proportion of care worker apprentices were indirectly employed (7%) than care workers not studying for an apprenticeship (12%). Indirectly employed staff include those on bank, pool, agency, and/or other contracts.

Chart 26. Employment status of care workers and support workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2025

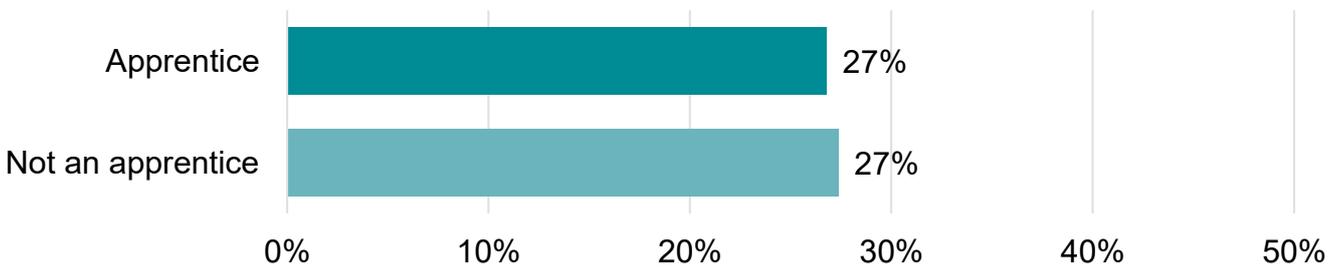


Care worker and support worker apprentices were slightly less likely to work full-time (56%) compared to those not studying for an apprenticeship (58% worked full-time).

Care worker and support worker apprentices had the same proportion employed on a zero-hours contract as those not studying for an apprenticeship (27%).

Chart 27. Zero-hours contract status of care workers and support workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2025



Care worker and social worker apprentices had a lower average number of sickness days compared to those not studying for an apprenticeship, with 3.2 days and 3.6 days respectively.

Chart 28. Average number of sickness days in the previous 12 months of care workers and support workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2025

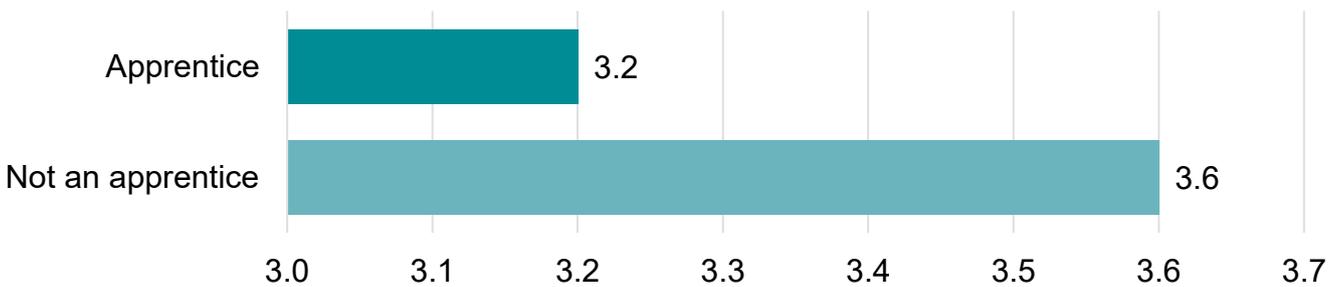


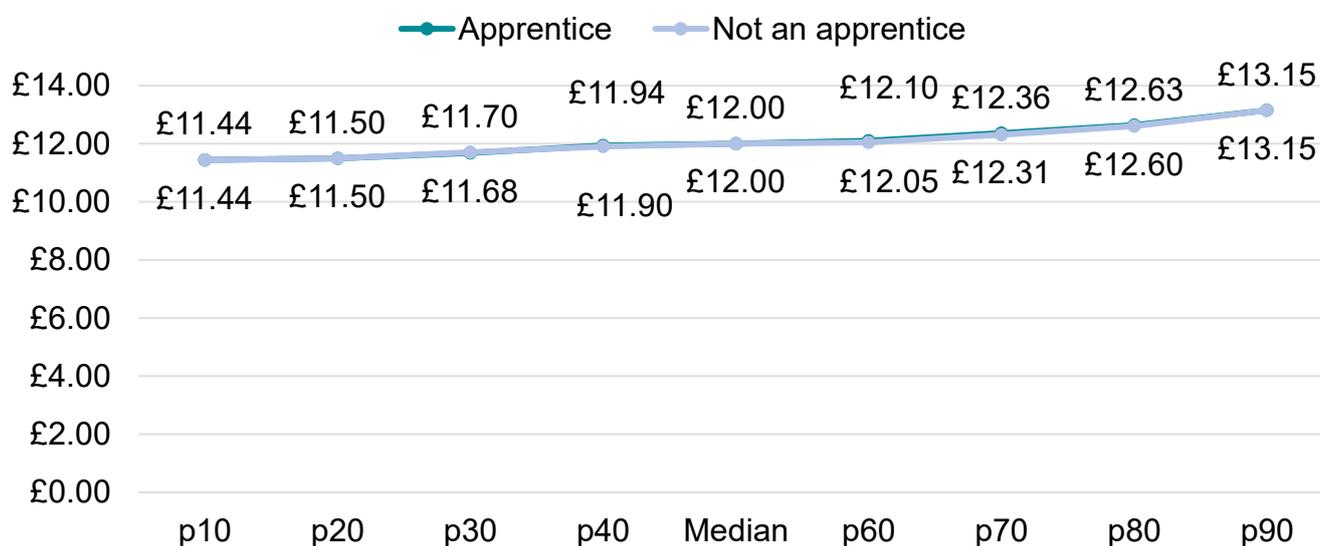
Chart 29 below shows the care worker hourly rate change across the percentile distribution, where p10 refers to the bottom 10% of earners, the median represents half of earners, and p90 refers to the top 10% of earners.

Care worker and support worker apprentices had a median hourly rate of £12.00, which was the same as care workers and support workers not studying for an apprenticeship. The lowest paid 10% of care worker and support apprentices (p10) had a rate of £11.44, and the highest paid apprentice care workers (p90) had a rate £13.15.

The apprentice minimum wage in this period was £6.40; however the apprentice pay series is not visible in Chart 29 because it coincides almost exactly with the non-apprentice series at each point in the distribution. This reflects minimal difference in hourly pay between the two groups.

Chart 29. Hourly pay distribution of care workers and support workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2025



Further resources

Our workforce intelligence publications

We provide outstanding workforce intelligence which the Government, strategic bodies, employers, and individuals rely upon to help them make decisions that will improve outcomes for the people who use care services. This chapter provides an overview of some of the reports and resources published by our Workforce Intelligence team. To access these reports and visualisations, please refer to the relevant pages on our [Workforce Intelligence website](#).

The size and structure of the adult social care sector and workforce in England

This report provides estimates of the number of organisations and establishments involved in providing or organising adult social care, as well as the size and structure of the workforce, including people and filled posts estimates, trend data, and future projections.

To access this information, visit [here](#).

Latest version, July 2025. Updated information is due in June 2026.

Local area information

There are six pages of local area information on our website, these are split by either local authority area or NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) geography area.

- Individual areas: we have one report looking at the workforce in each local authority area or ICB area, one at a time.
- Our comparison reports compare key variables across local areas or ICB areas
- Each local area has a written summary report, summarising the workforce statistics.
- Our 'My ICB area (MH and LD&A)' report shows the latest information from the ASC-WDS for the mental health and learning disability and/or autism workforces, split into ICB areas.

To access this information, visit [here](#).

Latest versions, October 2025. Updated information is due in October 2026.

Key topic areas

We also produce information on popular topic areas. Each topic includes a summary of the workforce information available, and signposts to other relevant resources.

We also produce information on popular topic areas. Each topic includes a summary of the workforce information available, and signposts to other relevant resources.

To access these topic pages, visit [here](#).

- Monthly tracking of key metrics
- Apprenticeships
- Individual employers and personal assistants
- Learning disability and/or autism workforce
- Nurses in social care
- Occupational therapists
- Registered managers
- Social work
- Workforce nationality and international recruitment.

Adult social care workforce estimates

Throughout this report we have presented analysis from our workforce estimates. To support this publication, we've published several additional spreadsheets to provide further insights. To access these, visit [here](#).

The 'Workforce estimates – 2024/25' spreadsheet includes the size and structure of the workforce, recruitment and retention information, employment information, demographics, pay rates, qualification and training information and workforce projections. Each of these areas are split by region, sector, service, and job role.

We've also published 'Data download' spreadsheets which provide more granular information. These are available at England level, regional, local area and ICB area.

Commission our services

Our Workforce Intelligence team are the experts in adult social care workforce insight. The data we collect in the ASC-WDS gives an unrivalled overview of the adult social care workforce in England. Beyond the wealth of information already available publicly on our website you can commission the services of the Workforce Intelligence team to produce bespoke reports and analysis for your organisation or area.

How we can help you

- We can partner with you or form part of your project team on tenders and bids. By using our expertise and sector knowledge we can add value to your research or project.
- We can use advanced analytics techniques to help you understand how key outcomes such as CQC scores, turnover and vacancy rates can be improved.
- We can produce bespoke reports and analysis to help you solve problems and provide data solutions to help you improve your services.
- We can provide a detailed analysis into the adult social care workforce in your local area or look at performance in comparison to other areas.
- Request a feed of data to enhance or improve a product or service.

Our values

Skills for Care is guided by core values. Throughout everything we do, we're inclusive, motivated, passionate, ambitious, collaborative and trustworthy. For more information about the Skills for Care strategy, our vision, mission, values and plan to achieve our mission, visit [our website](#).

All analysts leading on the production of this report are certified statisticians, meaning we work to the standard of the 'five safes'. We always make sure that our research and outputs are appropriate and trustworthy, and that there's no risk of misuse or confidentially breach. When creating outputs, we always adhere to statistical disclosure controls.

As a Workforce Intelligence team, we:

- help people to understand what's already available without commissioning our services and what options are available
- aren't selling the data, we're selling our analysis and sector expertise
- carry out bespoke work in particular areas that we can't cover in general outputs
- have a 'good for the sector' aim on all projects we work on
- channel any money we earn straight back into the sector.

In 2023 Skills for Care became an official statistics provider, having been added to the [Official Statistics Order 2023](#). We, Skills for Care's Workforce Intelligence team, then worked with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to become a producer of [official statistics](#) in February 2024. We are committed to the three pillars of trustworthiness, quality and value, and principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics. Please see our website for our full [statement](#).

For more information about the services listed above, please email:

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