

Apprenticeships in adult social care 2023/24

Skills for Care analysis of
Department for Education data

February 2025

Foreword from our CEO

In the past, adult social care apprenticeships have been a good route into a great career. In 2016/17, almost 100,000 people started apprenticeships in the sector. But this report shows that, by 2023/24, that number had fallen by more than 76% (to 23,420 in 2023/24). This is coupled with the fact that well under half of the people who start adult social care apprenticeships go on to complete and pass them (the achievement rate was 38.7% in 2022/23).



It's clear that apprenticeships have real potential in social care to attract and retain people but currently they aren't working for social care and there are a number of reasons for this. Even though apprenticeship funding is available, the rates are very low – which potentially leads to poor-quality or unsustainable delivery by training providers. We've seen many apprenticeship training providers exit the market for this reason.

Not all employers can easily accommodate apprenticeship learning in its current form. We know that homecare providers in particular often struggle with the requirement for apprentices to spend 20% of normal working hours on training and study, and the need for supervision, which increases the number of people needed for home visits. The absence of backfill funding for off-the-job learning creates added pressures as well.

Concerns have also been raised about the suitability of the apprenticeship standards introduced in the last decade, which often don't reflect the breadth of work, or the depth of specialist learning required in care roles.

When it comes to the low achievement rates, we know that apprenticeships aren't for everyone. But, due to an absence of other funded options, employers tell us that sometimes their options are limited, which means people starting them aren't always suitable. Others are dropping out after achieving the mandatory qualifications that are part of the apprenticeship standard.

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 new and different skills. This means every route into a career in care – including apprenticeships – needs to be firing on all cylinders.

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 both content and funding which would get apprenticeships working to their full potential for social care.

Professor Oonagh Smyth

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 2023/24 academic year (August 2023 to July 2024). Those who achieved an apprenticeship includes people who started in a previous year. This report also includes achievement rates for apprenticeships in the 2022/23 academic year (August 2022 to July 2023). This is the latest available information from the [Department for Education](#).

Apprenticeships included in this report are the Health and Social Care framework and the Care Leadership and Management framework which are now closed to new entrants, as well as the more recently launched standards. 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 23,420 adult social care apprenticeship starts in 2023/24, 5% less than in 2022/23. All apprenticeships had around 339,580 starts in 2023/24, a 1% increase from 2022/23.
- Between 2020/21 and 2023/24 there has been a 31% reduction in adult social care starts, in comparison with a 6% increase in all apprenticeship starts.
- There were around 1,390 starts in the Social Worker degree apprenticeship (Level 6) in 2023/24, which made up 20% of all degree level apprenticeship starts across Health and Social Care.
- The Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship and Adult Care Worker apprenticeship standards ranked 4th and 7th in terms of Intermediate/Advanced Level starts in 2023/24, out of all apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship achievements, leavers and retention

- In adult social care, 26% of achievements were in Level 4 and above apprenticeships, which was the highest among comparable sectors (see Section 3).
- The achievement rate of adult social care apprenticeships was 38.7% in 2022/23, which was lower than the average across all apprenticeships (54.6%).
- There were around 23,190 leavers from adult social care apprenticeships in 2022/23, of which 40.0% completed their course, and of these 96.5% passed the end point assessment.
- The retention rate of adult social care apprenticeships in 2022/23 (40.0%) was lower than that of all apprenticeships (56.2%).

Demographic trends

- Over three quarters (81%) of adult social care apprenticeship starters were aged over 24.
- The proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts aged under 25 has decreased from 21% in 2020/21, to 19% in 2023/24.
- The proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts that identified as male in 2023/24 was 17%. This is a 1 percentage point increase from 2022/23.
- The proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts that identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities has increased from 10% in 2016/17, to 17% in 2023/24.

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 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 with training needed at Levels 6 and 7 (equivalent to a full bachelor's and Master's degree).

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. Retention rate is calculated as the overall number of course completers, divided by the overall number of course leavers.

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Introduction

Apprenticeships are periods of paid employment that include at least 20% of their working hours 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 the standards within the adult social care sector. An apprenticeship can be undertaken to gain knowledge and skills specific to a sector of employment or as a valuable programme of training in its own right. We provide support and information about apprenticeships on our [website](#).

In October 2013 the Government announced that new 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. The body of this report covers the adult social care apprenticeship standards:

- Adult Care Worker
- Lead Adult Care Worker
- Leader in Adult Care
- Lead Practitioner in Adult Care
- Social Worker degree apprenticeship

It also includes the following frameworks, which are now closed:

- Health and Social Care
- Care Leadership and Management

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.

The four sector subject 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-level apprenticeships Registered Nurse, Occupational Therapist, and Physiotherapist and the Nursing Associate standard are shown in Section 5 – Introduction to Healthcare Apprenticeships. Table 1 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 careSource: Institute for Apprenticeships¹

Framework/ standard	Name	Status	Level
Framework	Health and Social Care	Closed in: 31/12/2017	2/3
Framework	Care Leadership and Management	Closed in: 31/07/2020	5
Standard	Adult Care Worker	Approved: 21/07/2016	2
Standard	Lead Adult Care Worker	Approved: 21/07/2016	3
Standard	Leader in Adult Care	Approved: 03/02/2020	5
Standard	Lead Practitioner in Adult Care	Approved: 31/03/2020	4
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 2019².

Chart 1 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 Lead Adult Care Worker and the 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.

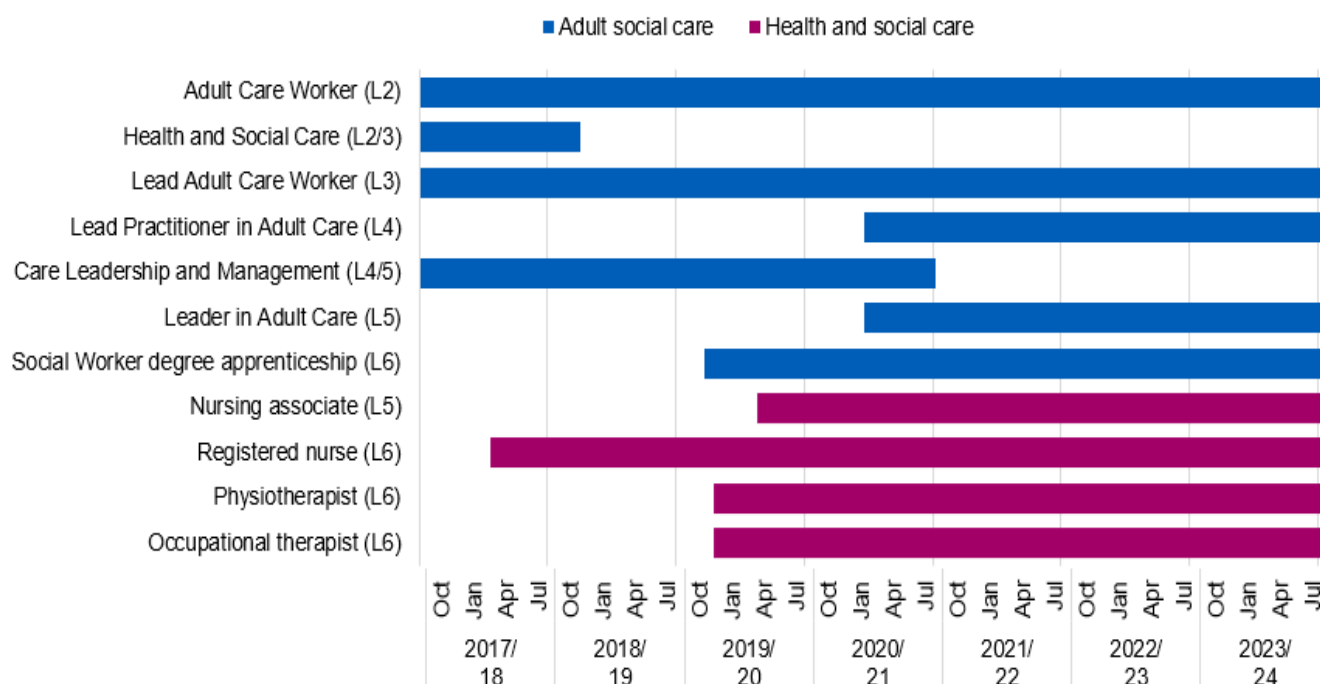
In November 2018, the Social Worker degree apprenticeship was launched, which covers working with adults, children, carers, and families. Skills for Care supported a trailblazer group of employers and universities to develop this new standard. It typically takes three years to complete, combining on-the-job 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.

¹ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org>

² <https://www.nsar.co.uk/services/eqa/care-ega/care-ega-documents>

Chart 1. Timeline of adult social care and health and social care apprenticeships, 2016/17 to 2023/24

Source: Institute for Apprenticeships



It should be noted that throughout this report trends will vary and have been shown to the fullest extent possible. This is due to restrictions with the data source which varies depending on specific variables.

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

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, or through a co-funded model for non-levy paying employers. 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.

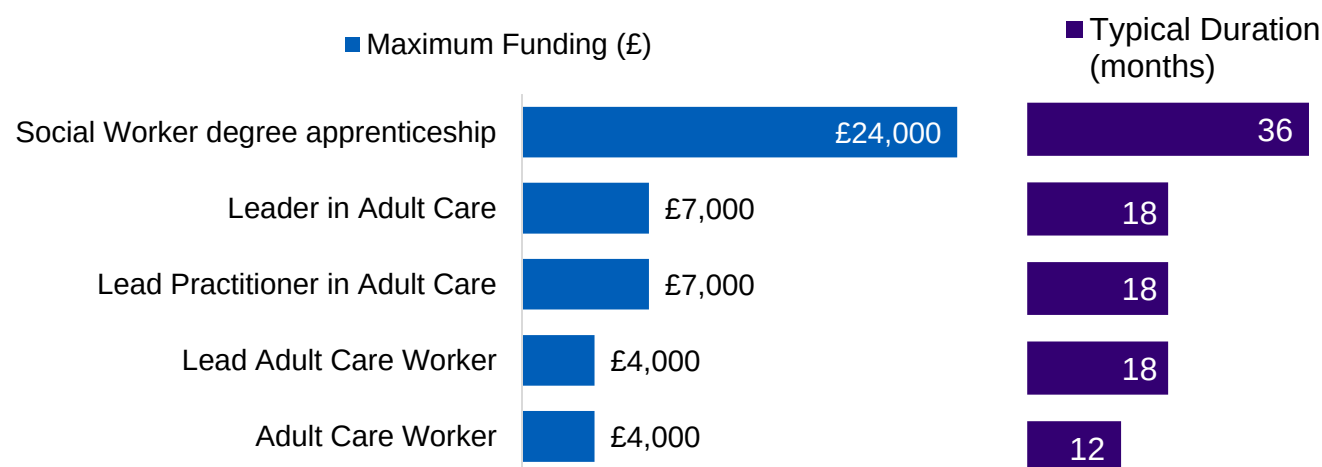
The payments are made into an Apprenticeship Service account controlled by the employer and supplemented by a 10% contribution from the Government. Providers of apprenticeships' training to the employer are paid through this account and unused funds in the account expire after two years. Skills for Care estimates that around 660 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 to which the Government will contribute. As shown in Chart 2, 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 2. Adult social care apprenticeships by maximum funding and typical duration

Source: Institute for Apprenticeships



In addition, employers can also claim funding in two stages from the Workforce Development Fund (WDF) upon completion of the diploma and after the end-point assessment has been passed, however this only applies to standards that are Level 2 to Level 6. WDF cannot be claimed by levy payers to pay for training or end-point assessment as this is covered by the levy, but it can be for other associated costs such as off-the-job learning or wage replacement costs. Find out more about the Workforce Development Fund on Skills for Care's [website](#).

1. Apprenticeship starts

Starts refers to the number of programmes that begin in the academic year from 1 August to 31 July. Adult social care apprenticeships for academic year 2023/24 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. An apprentice is counted for each apprenticeship started.

1.1 Number of apprenticeship starts



There were around 23,420 adult social care apprenticeship starts in 2023/24, equivalent to 7% of all apprenticeship starts (339,580). Adult social care apprenticeship starts decreased by 5% in 2023/24 compared to the previous year, while the overall number of apprenticeships starts increased by 1%.

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 market share held by adult social care fell from 20% in 2016/17 to 7% in 2023/24. 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 may have contributed to the decrease.

Table 2 shows the total number of people starting adult social care apprenticeships between 2017/18 and 2023/24, as well as the starts for all apprenticeships. The Health and Social Care framework includes starts on both the health pathways and the social pathways. As of the end of 2017, the social care pathways of this framework were closed to starters. Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care were launched in early 2020. There were 339,580 people that started an apprenticeship within 2023/24. Of these, around 7% (23,420) were adult social care related.

Table 2. Apprenticeship starts by framework/standard, 2017/18 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

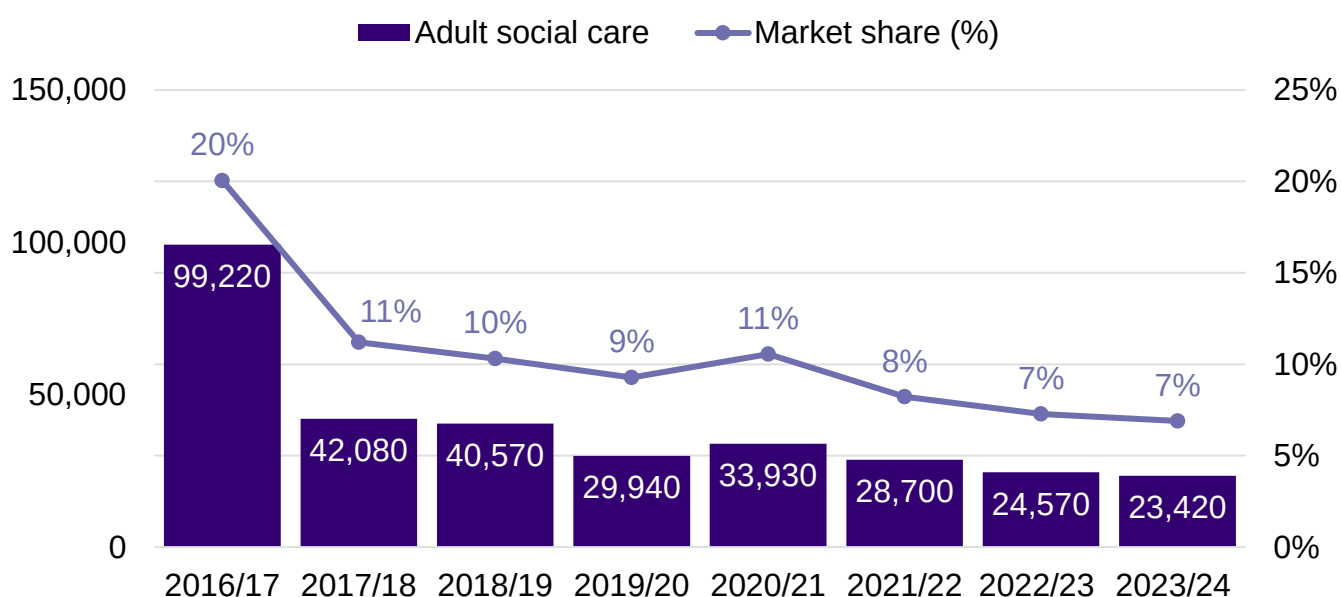
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
All apprenticeships	375,760	393,380	322,530	321,440	349,190	337,140	339,580
Adult social care	42,080	40,570	29,940	33,930	28,700	24,570	23,420
Health and Social Care	17,290	4,850	1,480	100	40	-	-
Care Leadership and Management	6,170	6,570	4,580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

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.

Chart 3 shows the number of adult social care apprenticeships starts between 2016/17 and 2023/24 and the market share. This is the percentage of adult social care of overall apprenticeships.

Chart 3. Apprenticeships starts and market share, 2016/17 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



Following the Government's decision to reform apprenticeships from frameworks into employer-led standards, the Adult Care Worker and Lead Adult Care Worker standards were approved for

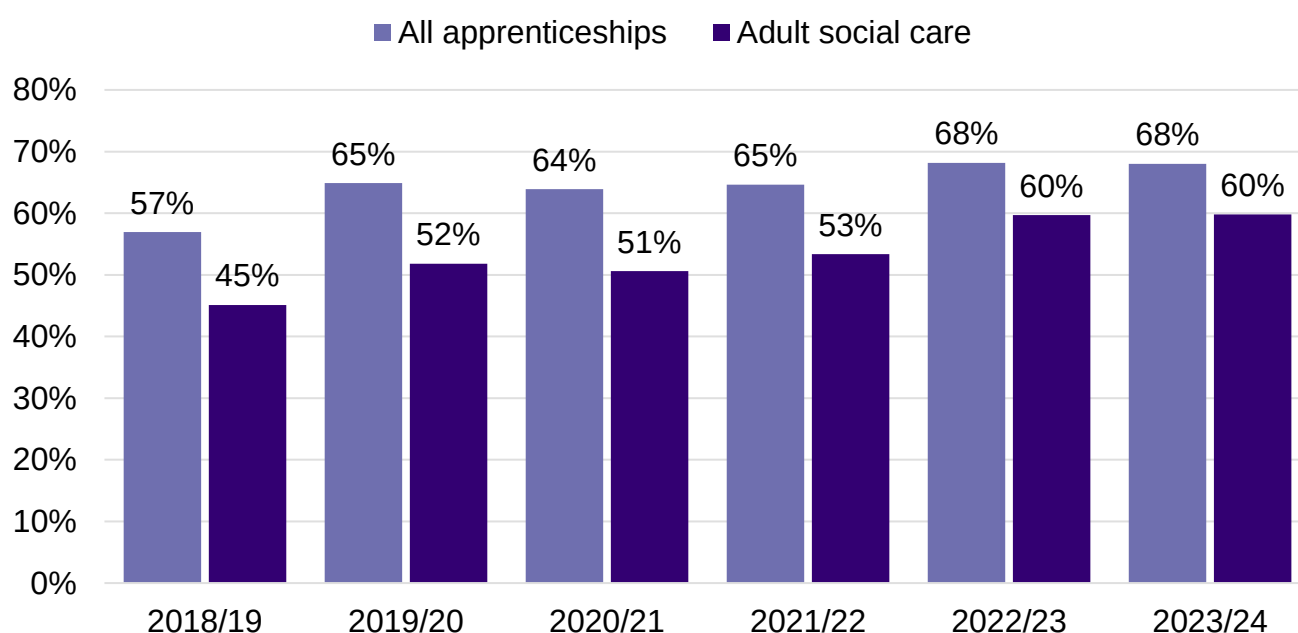
admission in the 2016/17 academic year. The Lead Practitioner in Adult Care and Leader in Adult Care were approved for admissions in the 2019/20 academic year. The reduction between 2017/18 and 2019/20 shows the start of a transition period as employers take on apprenticeships in these new standards.

As mentioned above, the apprenticeship levy may have also contributed to the reduction in starts, as employers need to accumulate reserves in their Apprenticeship Service account to fund new apprenticeship starts. The apprenticeship levy was launched in April 2017, prior to the academic year 2017/18. Before the launch, there was a relatively large increase in starts to apprenticeship frameworks.

Three in five (60%) of adult social care apprenticeships were supported by levy funds in 2023/24. This was less than for all apprenticeships, where over two-thirds (68%) 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 4. Percentage of apprenticeship starts supported by levy funds

Source: Department for Education



[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%.

Chart 5 below shows the number of starts into adult social care apprenticeships in 2023/24. The Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship was the most popular with 9,490 starts, followed by the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship with 6,240 starts. The Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care received 4,240 and 2,050 starts respectively. The Social Worker degree apprenticeship received around 1,390 starts.

Chart 5. Number of adult social care apprenticeships by framework/standard, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

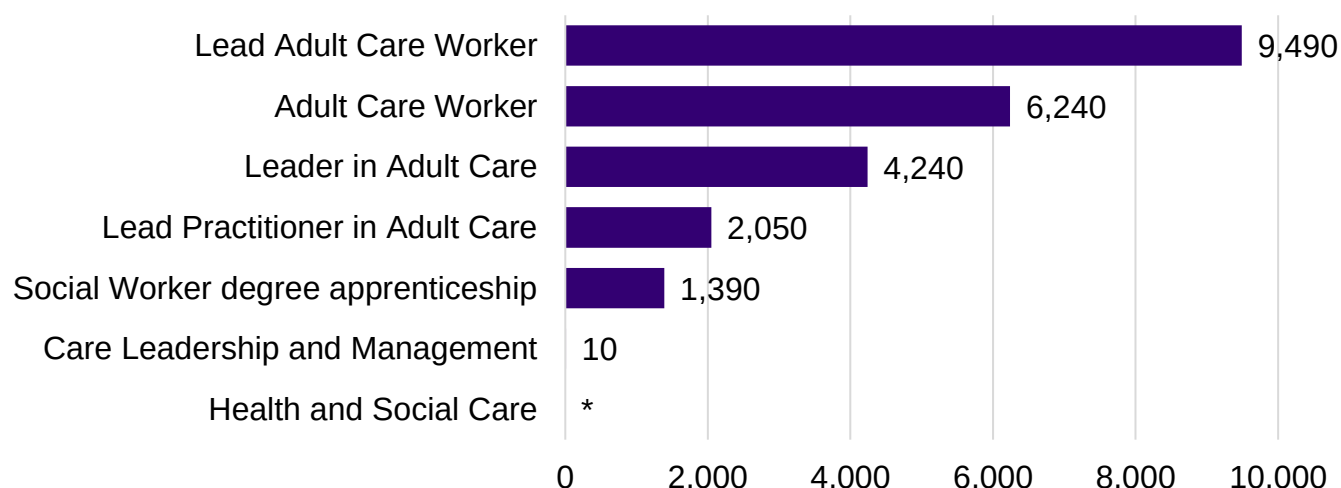


Chart 6 shows the transition of apprenticeship starts from the Health and Social Care and the Care Leadership and Management frameworks to the Adult Care Worker, Lead Adult Care Worker, and Leader in Adult Care standards.

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 27% in 2023/24. The Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship increased from 20% in 2017/18 to 41% in 2023/24.

Chart 6. Proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts by framework/standard, 2017/18 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

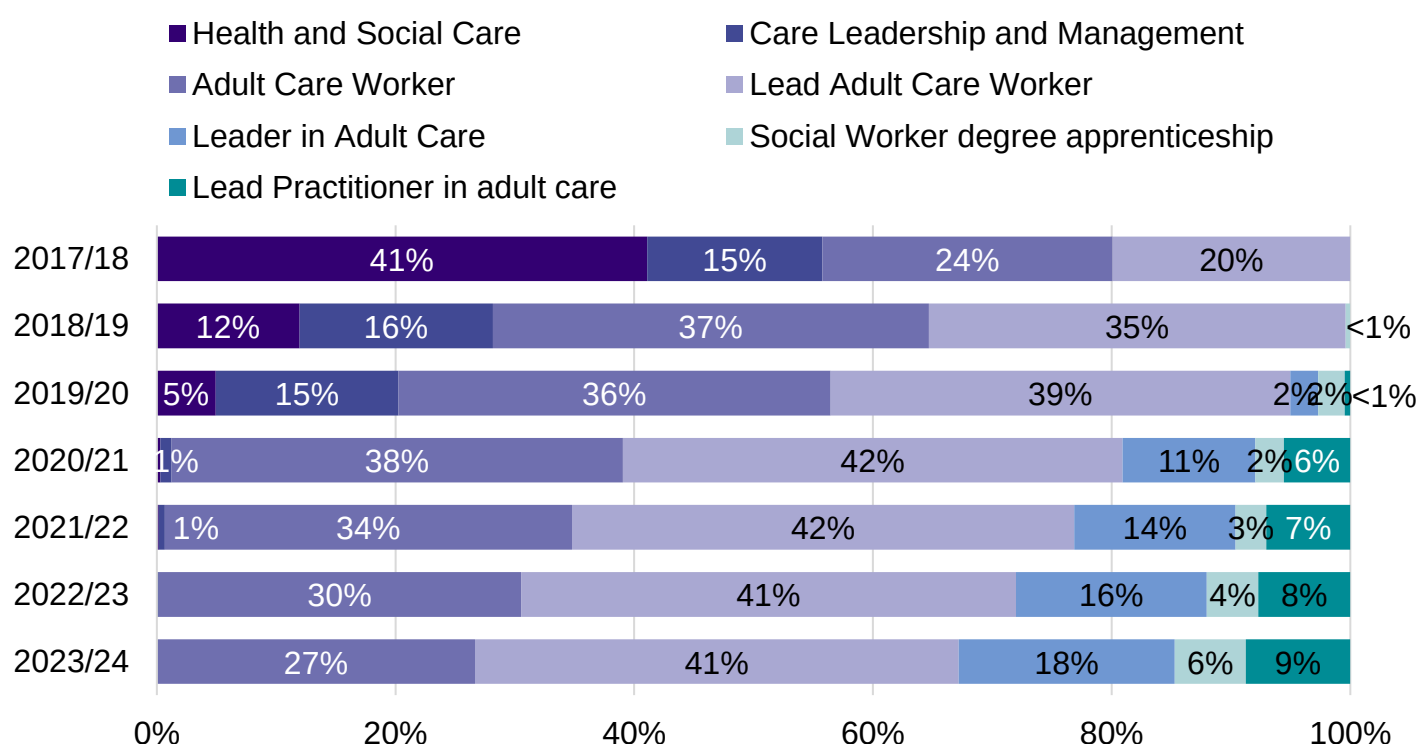
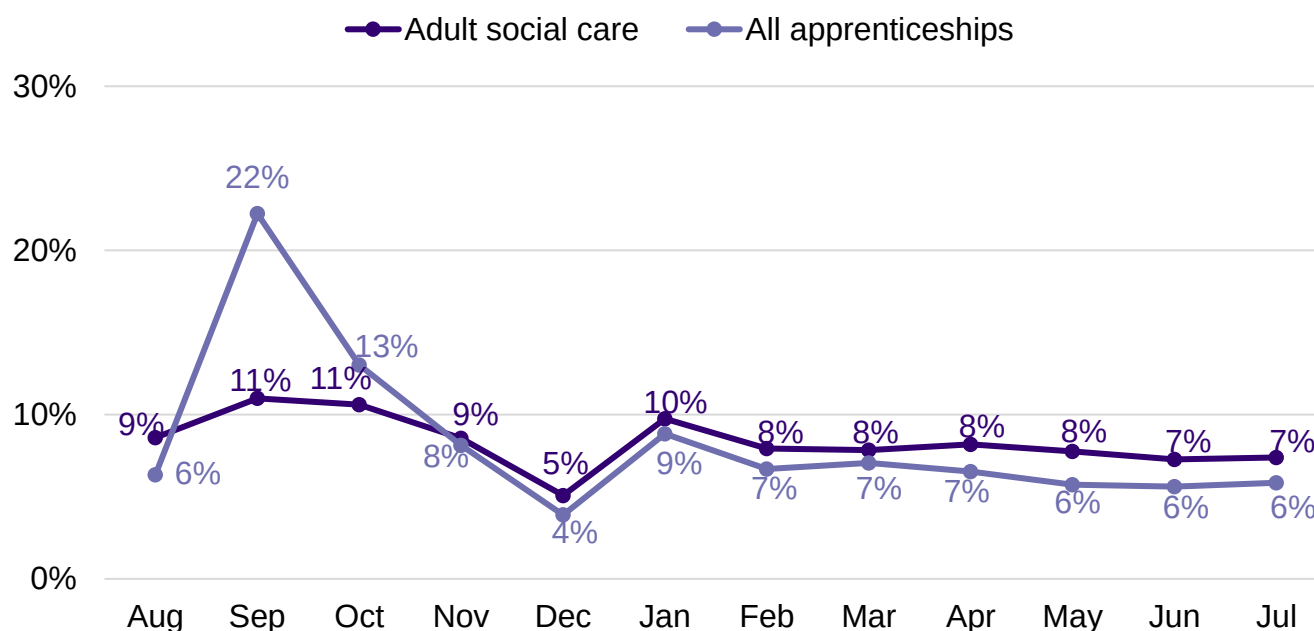


Chart 7 compares the proportion of apprenticeship starts per month in 2023/24 in adult social care to all apprenticeships. Apprenticeships generally receive a large proportion of their starts at the beginning of the academic year, whereas the proportion per month in adult social care is even throughout the academic year.

Chart 7. Proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts per month, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



1.2 Comparison to other apprenticeships

When combined, adult social care apprenticeships accounted for 7% of all apprenticeship starts in 2023/24. Table 3 compares the five largest apprenticeships and their proportion by programme level.

Of the 357 apprenticeships at the Intermediate/Advanced Level with recorded starts in 2023/24, the standards Lead Adult Care Worker and Adult Care Worker ranked 4th and 7th respectively. The most popular Intermediate/Advanced level non-social care apprenticeships included Early Years Educator, Team Leader, and Business Administrator.

Of the 275 apprenticeships at the Higher level with recorded starts, the Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care standards were ranked 6th and 16th respectively. The Social Worker degree apprenticeship ranked 23rd in terms of starts. The most popular Higher Level non-social care apprenticeships included Operations Manager, Accountancy or Taxation Professional, and Senior Leader.

Table 3. Top five apprenticeship starts by Level, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

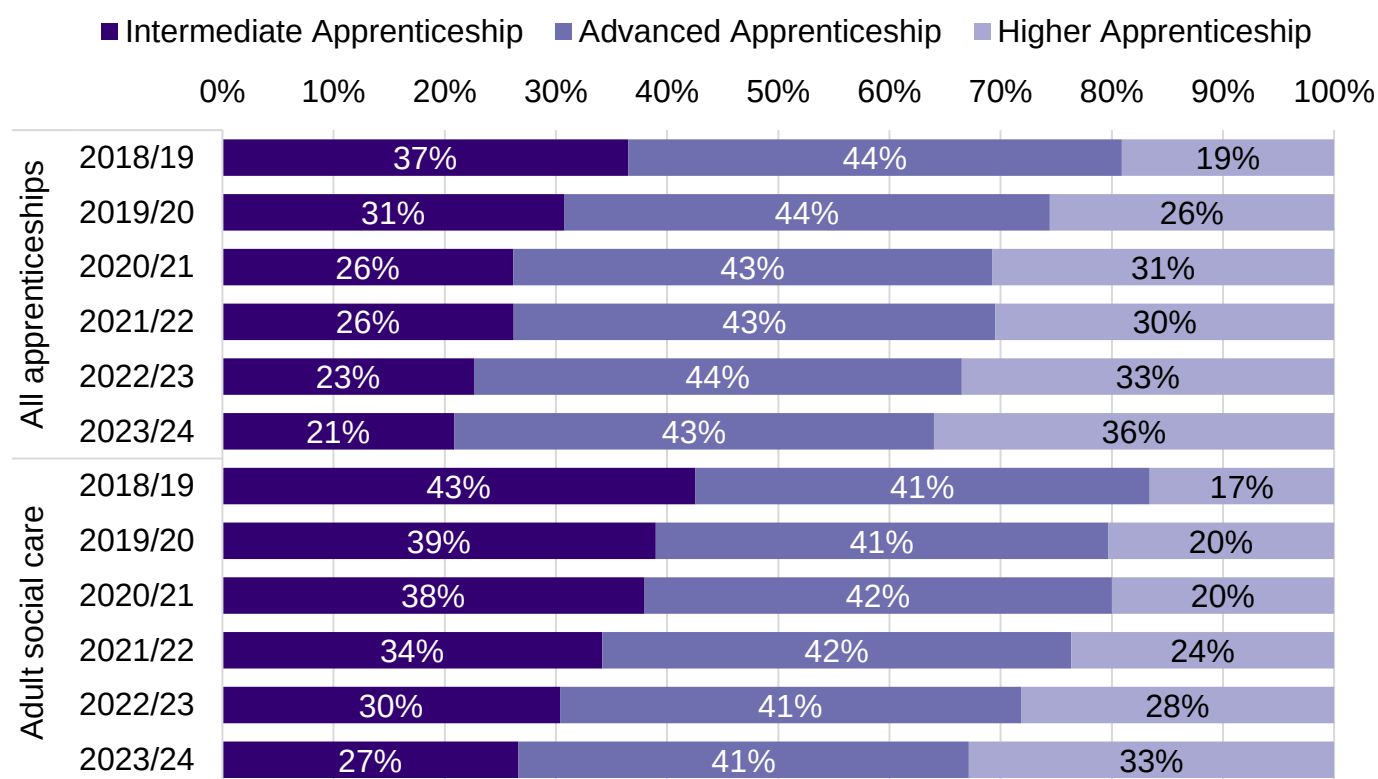
Intermediate/Advanced (Levels 2-3)				Higher (Levels 4-7)			
Rank	All apprenticeships	217,350		Rank	All apprenticeships	122,230	
1	Early Years Educator	15,300	7%	1	Operations Manager	10,710	9%
2	Team Leader	13,760	6%	2	Accountancy or Taxation Professional	9,200	8%
3	Business Administrator	12,680	6%	3	Senior Leader	7,140	6%
4	Lead Adult Care Worker	9,490	4%	4	Data Analyst	6,750	6%
5	Installation and Maintenance Electrician	7,570	3%	5	Children, Young People and Families Practitioner	5,900	5%
7	Adult Care Worker	6,236	3%	6	Leader in Adult Care	4,239	3%
				16	Lead Practitioner in Adult Care	2,053	2%
				23	Social Worker (Integrated Degree)	1,391	1%

1.3 Apprenticeship starts by Level

Chart 8 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 the Intermediate and Advanced Level, while Care Leadership and Management, Leader in Adult Care and Lead Practitioner in Adult Care are at Higher Level.

Chart 8. Apprenticeship starts in all apprenticeships and adult social care by programme level, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



Across all apprenticeships, the proportion of starts at the Intermediate Level decreased each year between 2018/19 and 2023/24.

Those in adult social care also showed a consecutive decrease in starts at the Intermediate Level from 43% in 2018/19, to 27% in 2023/24. 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 33% in 2023/24.

1.4 Demographics of apprenticeship starts

The majority of people starting adult social care apprenticeships in 2023/24 were aged 25 and over (81%). This age profile was notably older than that of all apprenticeships, in which just under half were aged 25 and over (48%).

The Leader in Adult Care and the Social Worker degree apprenticeship had the oldest age profiles out of the adult social care apprenticeships, with 94% and 93% aged 25 and over respectively. This is expected as these apprenticeships are at a higher academic level. It is also generally expected that the people starting these courses have had experience working in a care setting.

Chart 9. Apprenticeship starts by framework/standard and age group, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

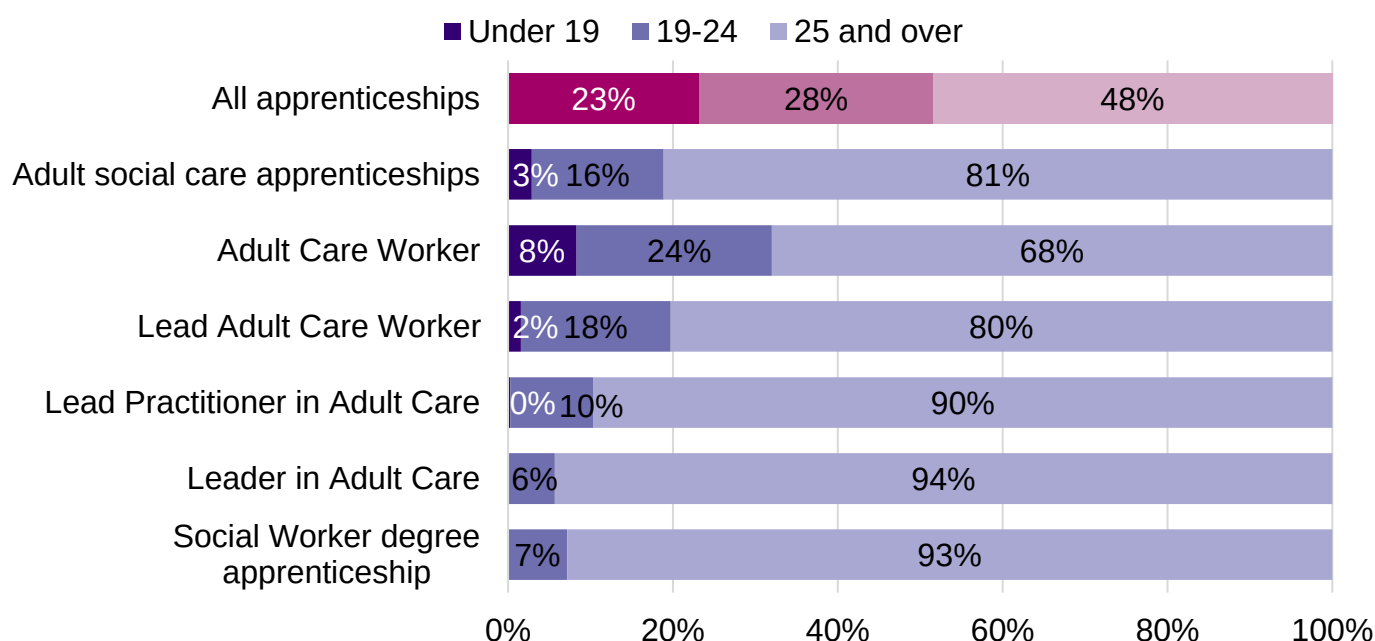
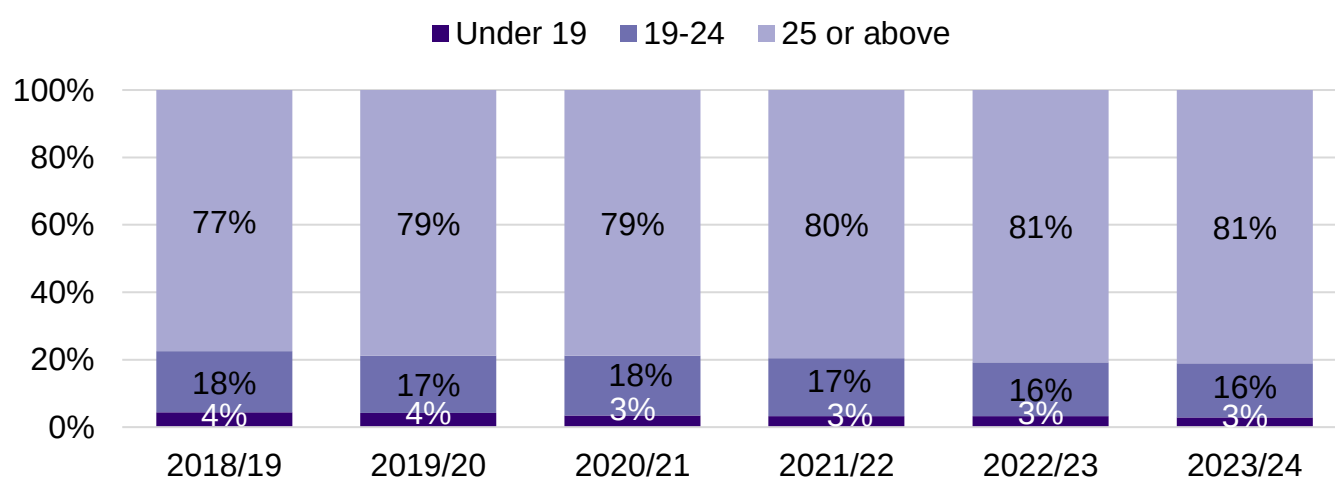


Chart 10 below shows the age trend of adult social care apprenticeship starts between 2018/19 and 2023/24. The proportion of starts aged under 19 was consistently low over the period, whereas those aged 19 to 24 have been decreasing in favour of those aged 25 and over. This age profile is reflective of the wider adult social care sector in which the average age of the workforce was 44.1 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 2024’](#).

Chart 10. Adult social care apprenticeship starts by age group, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



The majority of adult social care apprenticeship starts identified as female (83%) in 2023/24. This is a decrease of one percentage point from 2022/23. Across all apprenticeships, around 52% identified as female in 2023/24, this is an increase of one percentage point from 2022/23.

The Department for Education data categorises ethnicities as “white” or “ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)”. We have taken this to mean that the latter group includes Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, Asian/ Asian British, mixed/ multiple ethnic groups, and other ethnic groups. These categories also appear individually in the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS). The Department for Education dataset is limited by grouping ethnicity in this way.

Around a fifth of adult social care apprenticeship starts (21%) identified as of ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities). This was lower than the wider adult social care workforce, in which 18% were Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British, 11% were Asian/ Asian British, 2% were mixed/ multiple ethnic groups, and 1% were other ethnic groups (32% of the workforce). However, this was more diverse than across all apprenticeships (17%).

Around 17% of adult social care apprenticeship starts identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. This proportion has increased from 10% in 2016/17.

1.5 Apprenticeship starts by home region

Table 4 shows the largest proportion of adult social care apprenticeship starts in 2023/24 were people living in the South East (17%). 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 6% 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 17% of adult social care apprenticeship starts.

Table 4. Apprenticeship starts and adult social care filled posts by home region, 2023/24

Source: Skills for Care estimates, Department for Education

	Adult social care filled posts		Adult social care apprenticeship starts		Difference
Total	1,705,000		23,400		
Eastern	182,000	11%	2,480	11%	0%
East Midlands	161,000	9%	2,350	10%	1%
London	235,000	14%	1,410	6%	-8%
North East	90,000	5%	1,300	6%	0%
North West	244,000	14%	3,610	15%	1%
South East	270,000	16%	3,870	17%	1%
South West	182,000	11%	3,140	13%	3%
West Midlands	180,000	11%	2,640	11%	1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	165,000	10%	2,540	11%	1%

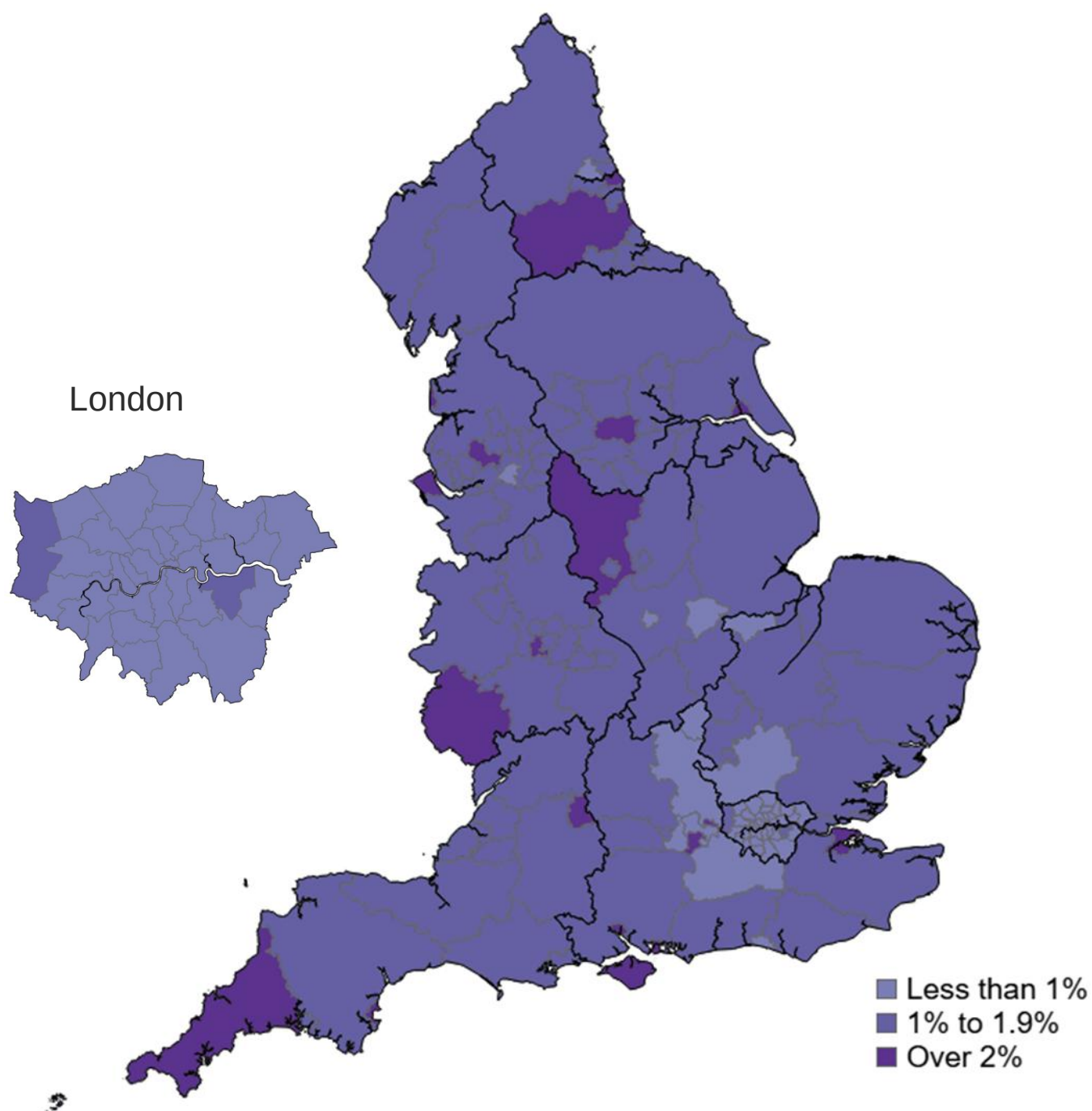
Map 1 below shows the number of adult social care apprenticeship starts by home local authority area, as a proportion of adult social care filled posts in the academic year 2023/24.

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 Isle of Wight (2.8%), Southampton (2.5%) and Blackpool (2.4%). The local authorities with the lowest ratio of apprenticeship starts were in Camden (0.1%), Tower Hamlets (0.1%) and Westminster (0.1%).

Regionally, London had the lowest proportion of apprenticeship starts to filled posts (0.6%), whereas the South West had the highest (1.7%).

Map 1. Proportion of apprenticeship starts to adult social care filled posts by home local authority area, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



2. Apprenticeship achievements

23,190

leavers from adult
social care
apprenticeships in
2022/23.

40.0%

retention rate across
adult social care
apprenticeships in
2022/23.

96.5%

pass rate across adult
social care
apprenticeships in
2022/23.

2.1 Apprenticeship retention, pass rates and achievement rates

Please note that this section refers to achievement rates from the academic year 2022/23. Figures in this section were not available for 2023/24 at the time of writing as the Department for Education has not yet released achievement rates for this period.

There were 23,190 leavers from adult social care apprenticeships in 2022/23. Less than half of these leavers completed their course (retention rate 40.0%), which was equivalent to around 9,290 completers and, of these, 96.5% achieved their learning aim. Therefore, there were around 8,980 successful leavers from adult social care apprenticeships in 2022/23.

Chart 11 below shows the retention rate of adult social care apprenticeships (40.0%) was lower than that of all apprenticeships (56.2%). Therefore, a greater proportion of people drop out of adult social care apprenticeships prior to completing compared to other apprenticeships.

Chart 11. Apprenticeship retention rate, 2022/23

Source: Department for Education

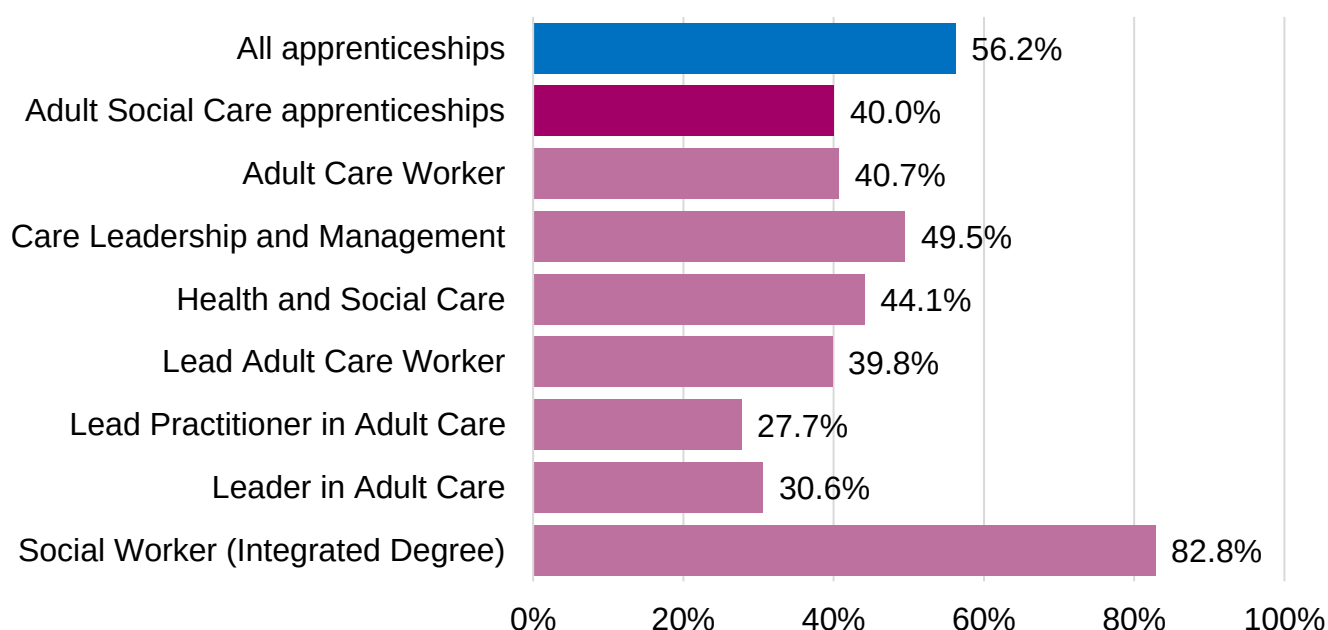
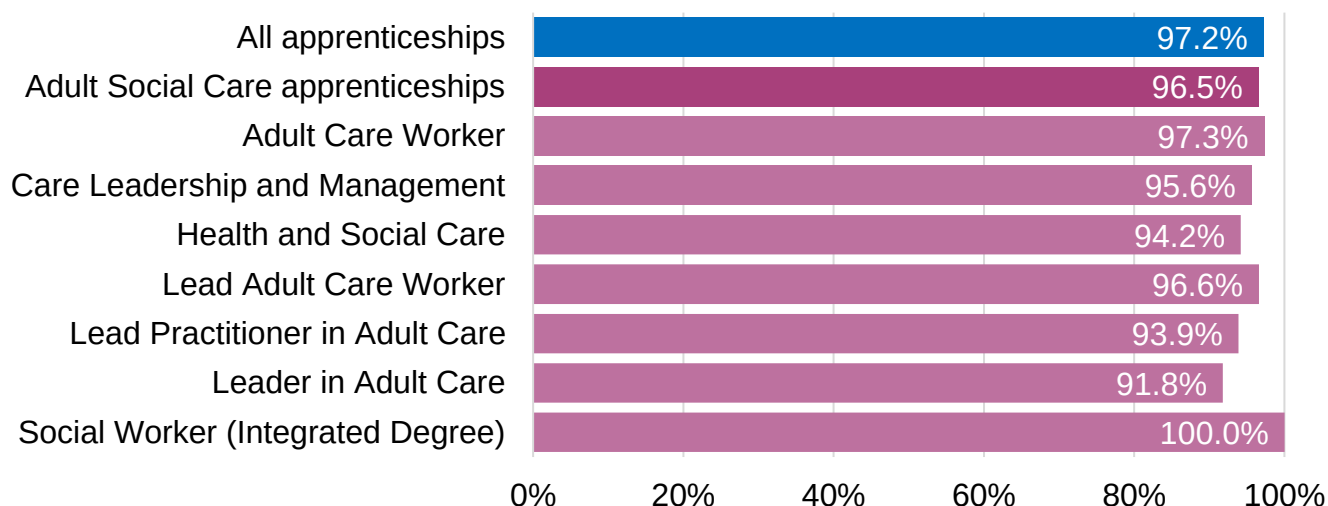


Chart 12 shows the pass rate of adult social care apprenticeships (96.5%) was similar to that of all apprenticeships (97.2%). This indicates that learners who reach their end point assessment are very likely to pass, however many learners drop out from the course before this point.

Chart 12. Apprenticeship pass rate, 2022/23

Source: Department for Education

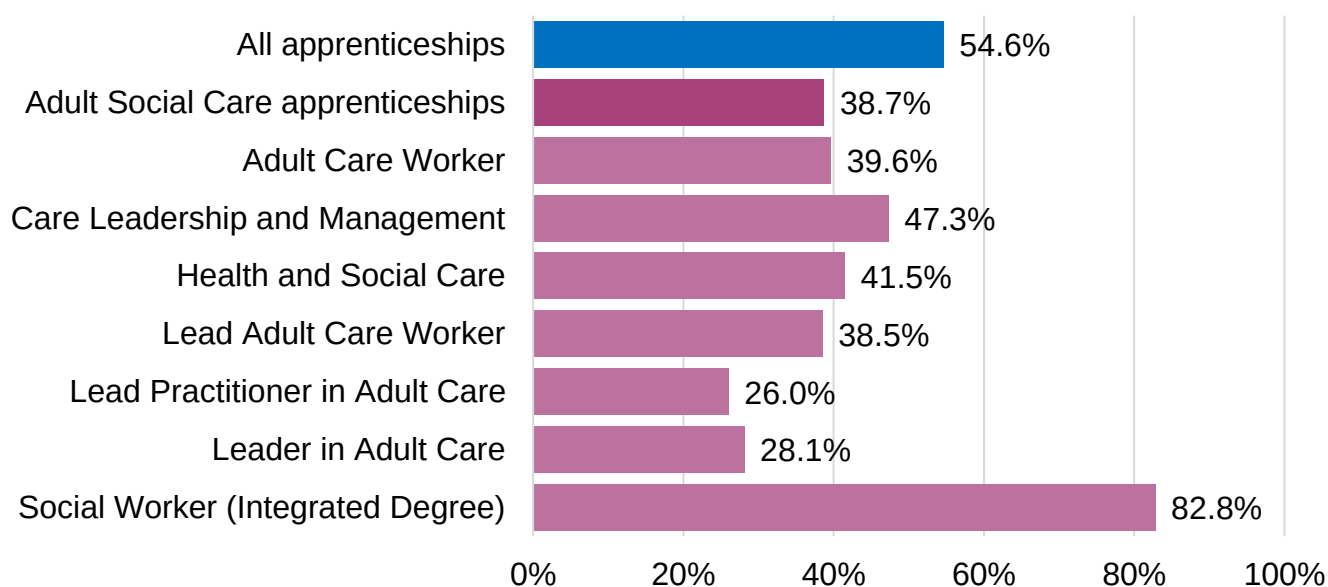


The achievement rate of adult social care apprenticeships was 38.7% in 2022/23, which was lower than the average across all apprenticeships (54.6%).

There was little variation between the achievement rate of the Lead Adult Care Worker standard (38.5%) and Adult Care worker standard (39.6%). The Social Worker degree apprenticeship had a much higher achievement rate (82.8%).

Chart 13. Apprenticeship achievement rates, 2022/23

Source: Department for Education



2.2 Apprenticeship achievements in 2023/24

This section includes the number of achievements from the 2023/24 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.

Chart 14 shows the apprenticeship achievements between 2017/18 and 2023/24. There were around 9,160 adult social care apprenticeship achievements in 2023/24, a decrease of 6% from 9,710 to 9,160 achievements in 2022/23. The number of adult social care achievements decreased sharply between 2017/18 and 2019/20.

Chart 14. Apprenticeship achievements and market share, 2017/18 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

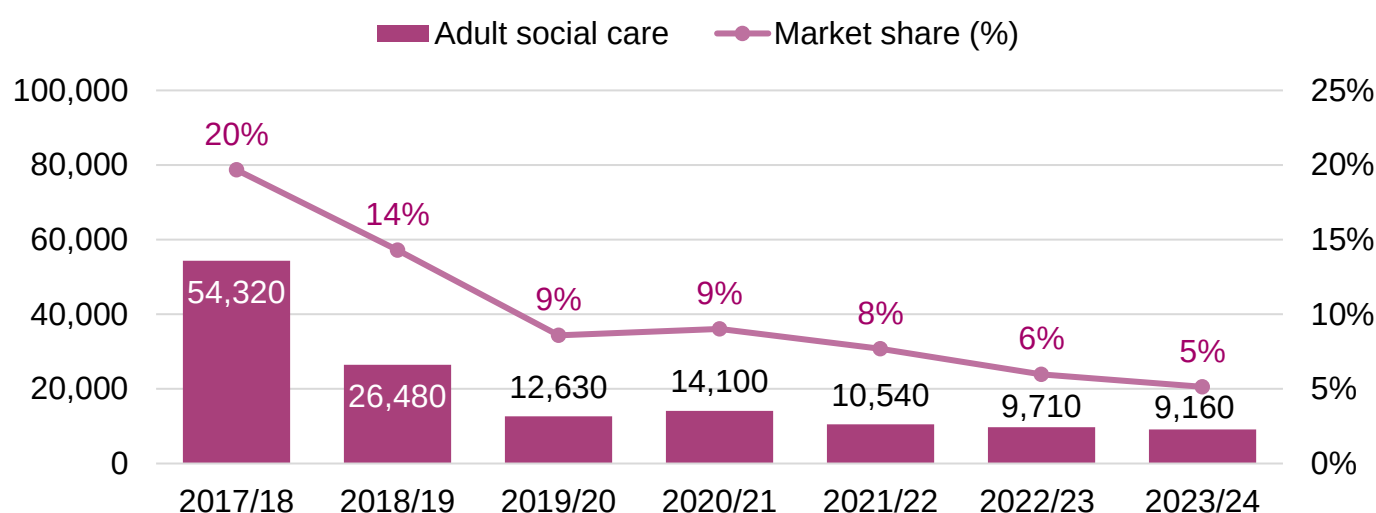


Chart 15 shows the proportion of adult social care apprenticeships achievements for each framework or standard. Around two in five (42%) achievements were from the Lead Adult Care Worker apprenticeship and a further 32% from the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship.

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 2023/24. 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 42% in 2023/24, and from 28% to 32% for the Adult Care Worker apprenticeship in the same period.

Chart 15. Adult social care achievements by framework/standard, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

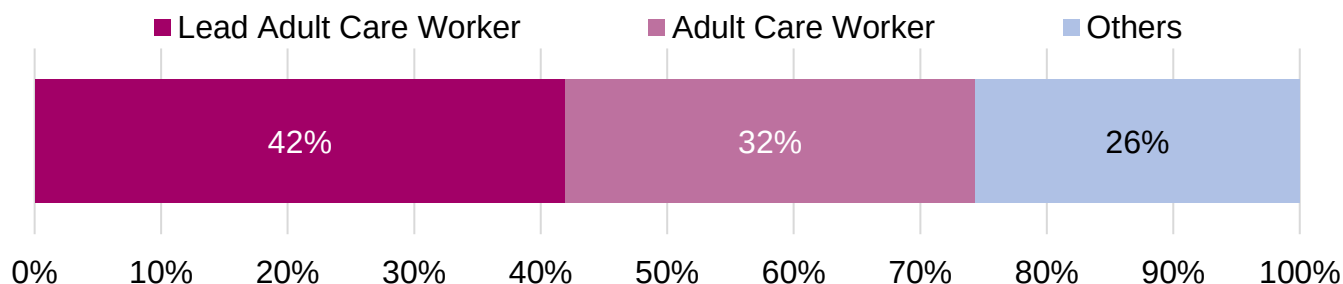
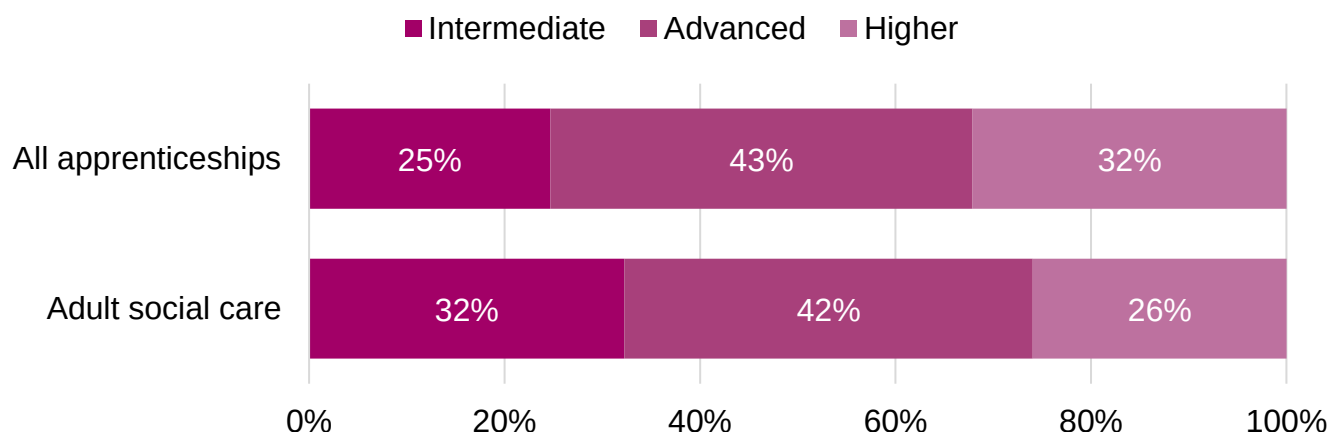


Chart 16 below shows the proportion of apprenticeship achievements by level in 2023/24. Intermediate apprenticeships made up a larger proportion of the adult social care sector (32%) compared to all apprenticeships (25%). There were a similar proportion of Advanced apprenticeships, and there were proportionally 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 16. Adult social care achievements by apprenticeship level, 2023/24

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 2024’](#).

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 only apprenticeships in these sectors which are between Level 2 to Level 6 so figures in this section may not match those in other sections.

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 2023/24, three quarters (67%) of adult social care apprenticeship starts between Level 2 to 6 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 (18%), 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 17. Apprenticeship starts by level in selected sectors, 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

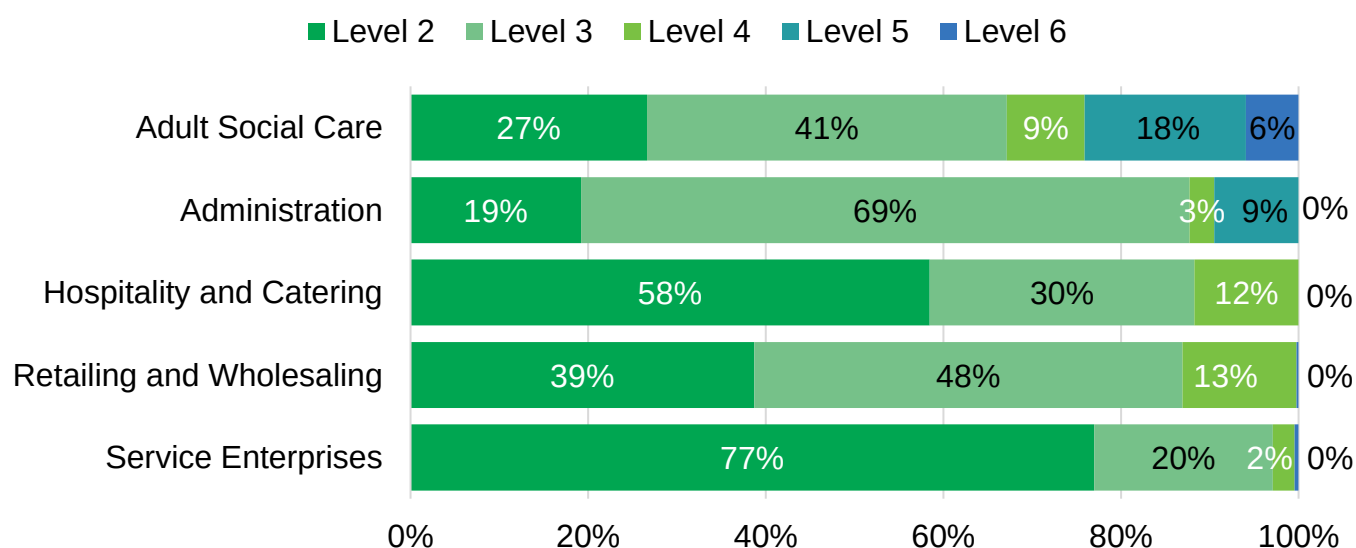


Chart 18 shows that in 2023/24, the number of Level 2 to 6 apprenticeship starts in Adult Social Care and Administration were very close (23,420 and 22,810 respectively) while the starts for the other sectors were much lower.

Chart 18. Level 2 to 6 apprenticeship starts in selected sectors, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

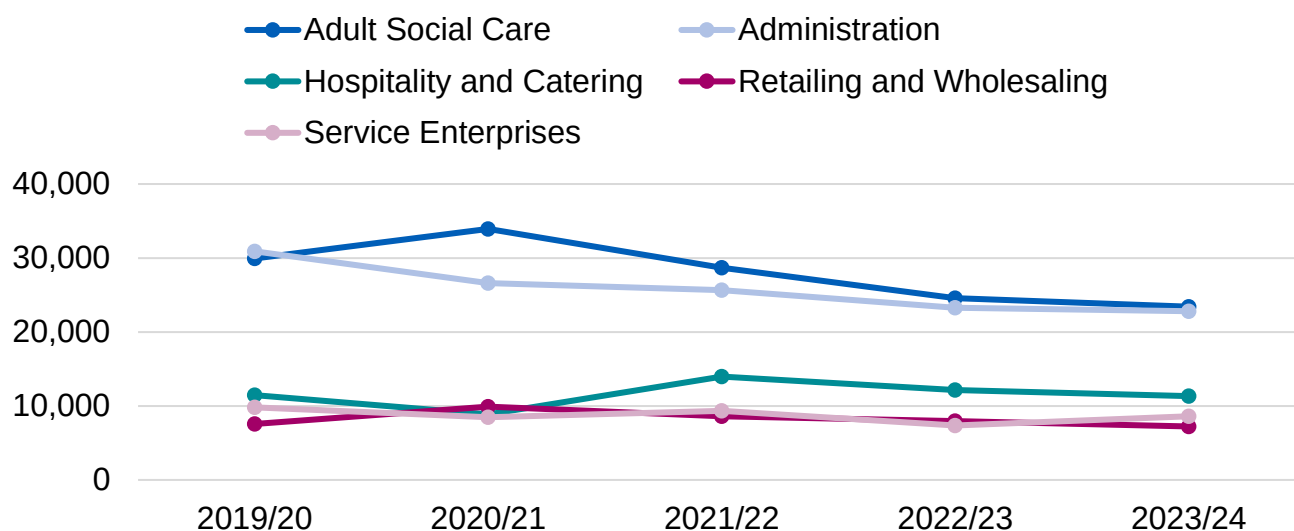


Table 5 shows that Adult Social Care starts declined by 22% to 23,420 since 2019/20 while administration starts declined by 26% to 22,810. Service Enterprises starts also declined by 12% over the period, Hospitality and Catering and Retailing and Wholesaling both have the lowest decline (1% and 5% respectively).

Table 5. Level 2 to 6 apprenticeship starts in selected sectors and percentage change, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

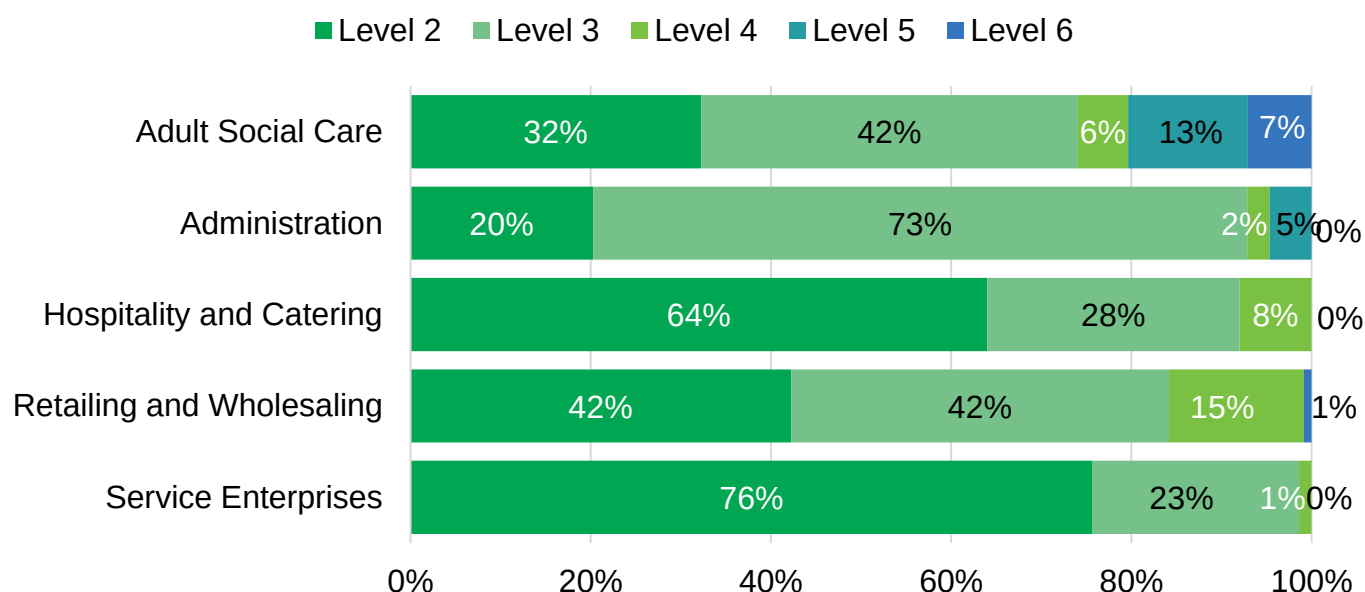
Sector	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	% Change since 2019/20
Adult Social Care	29,940	33,930	28,700	24,570	23,420	-22%
Administration	30,900	26,590	25,640	23,270	22,810	-26%
Hospitality and Catering	11,470	8,870	13,970	12,170	11,340	-1%
Retailing and Wholesaling	7,580	9,910	8,590	7,950	7,230	-5%
Service Enterprises	9,810	8,470	9,330	7,360	8,600	-12%

3.2 Apprenticeship achievements in adult social care and other selected sectors

Chart 19 shows that a higher proportion of achievements were from people completing Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships across the sectors in 2023/24. In Adult Social Care, 19% of achievements were in Level 4 and Level 5 apprenticeships, which was the highest among the sectors. 7% of Adult Social Care apprenticeships achievements were in Level 6 and Retailing and Wholesaling with 1%, these were the only sectors with a Level 6 achievement.

Chart 19. Apprenticeship achievements by level in selected sectors, 2023/24

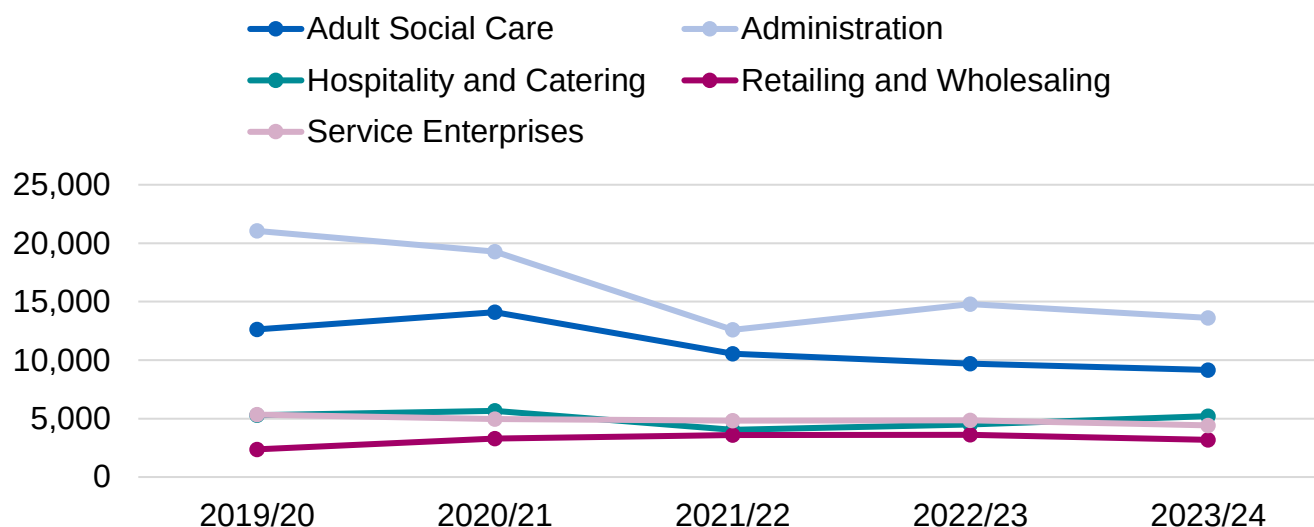
Source: Department for Education



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 20 below shows that Adult Social Care achievements decreased by 27% from 12,630 in 2019/20, to 9,160 in 2023/24. Administration achievements decreased by 35%, from 21,050 in 2019/20 to 13,620 in 2023/24.

Chart 20. Levels 2 to 6 apprenticeship achievements in selected sectors, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education



The number of achievements in the Hospitality and Catering and Service Enterprises sectors have remained fairly steady over time, though the number of Retailing and Wholesaling achievements increased by 34% from 2,370 in 2019/20 to 3,170 in 2023/24.

Table 6. Levels 2 to 6 apprenticeship achievements in selected sectors and percentage change, 2019/20 to 2023/24

Source: Department for Education

Sector	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	% change since 2019/20
Adult Social Care	12,630	14,100	10,540	9,710	9,160	-27%
Administration	21,050	19,270	12,590	14,790	13,620	-35%
Hospitality and Catering	5,280	5,660	4,040	4,490	5,200	-1%
Retailing and Wholesaling	2,370	3,290	3,590	3,610	3,170	34%
Service Enterprises	5,340	4,960	4,820	4,840	4,420	-17%

3.3 Apprenticeship retention, pass rates and achievement rates across sectors

Please note that this section refers to academic year 2022/23. Figures in this section were not available for 2023/24 at the time of writing.

Chart 21 below shows the retention rate of Adult Social Care apprenticeships (40.0%) was lower than that of all apprenticeships (56.2%) and of the selected apprenticeships in this analysis. Administration and Service Enterprises apprenticeships had a higher retention rate than the overall apprenticeships rate (60.0% and 56.2% respectively). Hospitality and Catering (41.2%) and Retailing and Wholesaling (44.5%) had retention rates below the overall apprenticeship and Adult Social Care apprenticeships rate.

Chart 21. Apprenticeship retention rate, 2022/23

Source: Department for Education

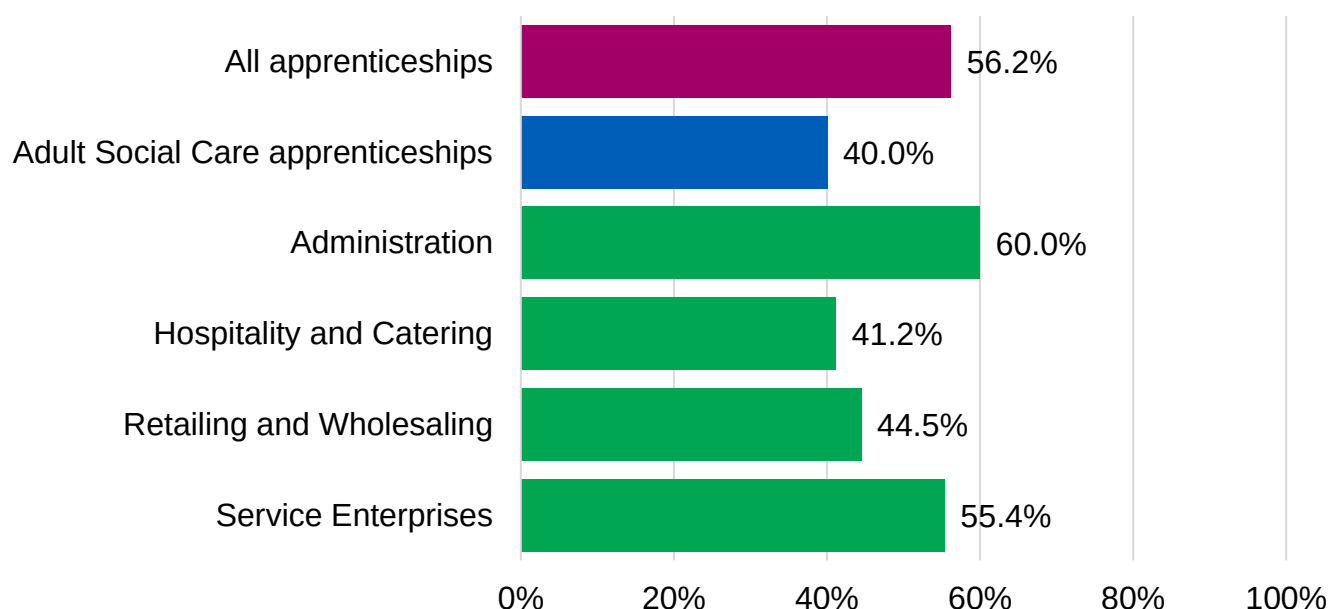
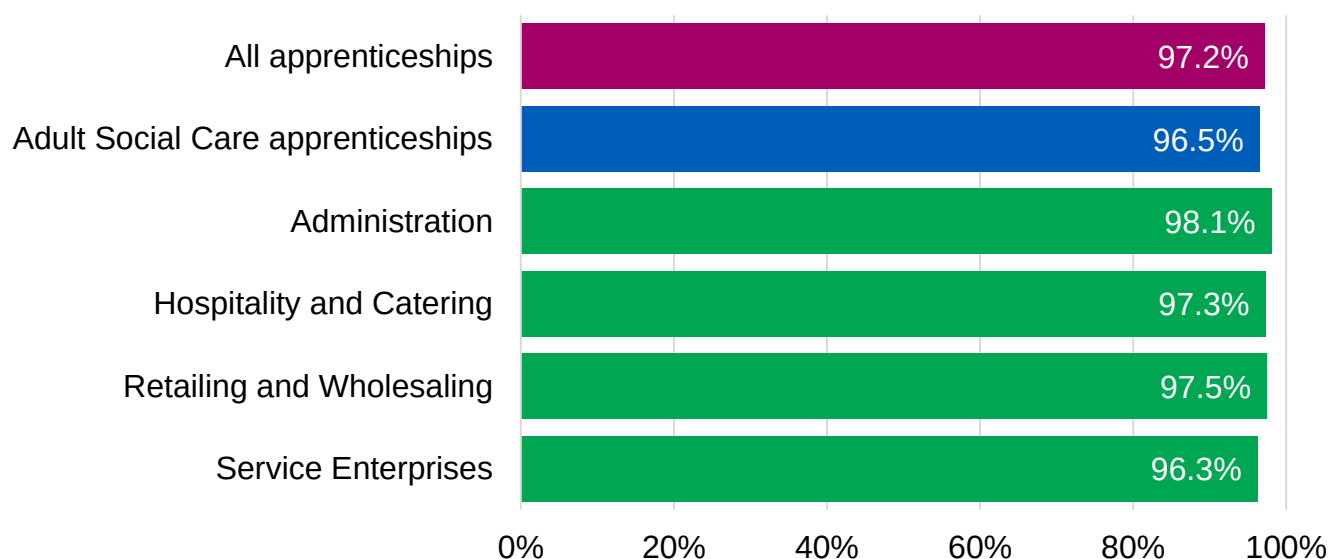


Chart 22 shows the pass rate of Adult Social Care apprenticeships (96.5%) which is the lowest compared to all apprenticeships. The selected sector with the lowest pass rate was Service Enterprises at 96.3%. Across all apprenticeships, learners who reach their end point assessment are very likely to pass, though many learners drop out from the course before this point. This pattern is seen across the selected apprenticeships.

Chart 22. Apprenticeship pass rate, 2022/23

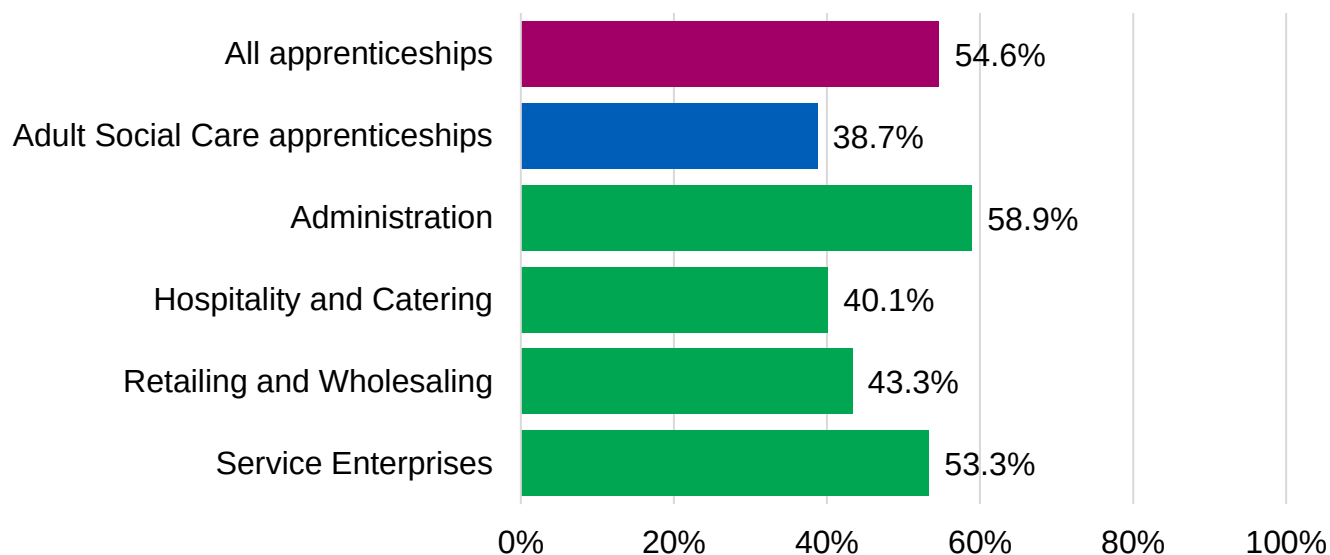
Source: Department for Education



The achievement rate of Adult Social Care apprenticeships was 38.7% in 2022/23, which was the lowest across all selected apprenticeships. Hospitality and Catering apprenticeship had the second lowest achievement rate at 40.1%. Administration (58.9%) had achievement rates above the overall apprenticeships rate (54.6%).

Chart 23. Apprenticeship achievement rate, 2022/23

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 7. Healthcare apprenticeships

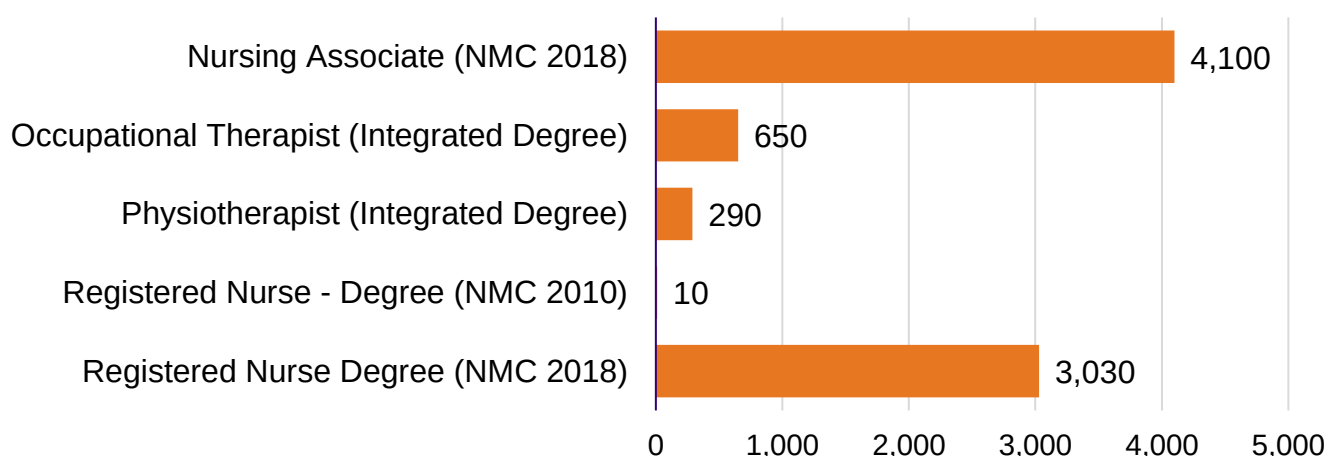
Source: Institute for Apprenticeships

Framework/ 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 relatively new role of Nursing Associate (NMC 2018), which was approved for delivery in April 2019, had 3,030 starts in 2023/24. Its previous version, “Nursing Associate”, which was retired in 2019, had 10 starts in the 2023/24 academic year. 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 7th out of 275 Higher Level apprenticeships that had starts in 2023/24, while the degree Registered Nurse (NMC 2018) ranked 8th. The degree Registered Nurse (NMC 2010) was retired on 11/01/2024, after the period this report covers.

Chart 24. Number of degree level apprenticeship starts, 2023/24

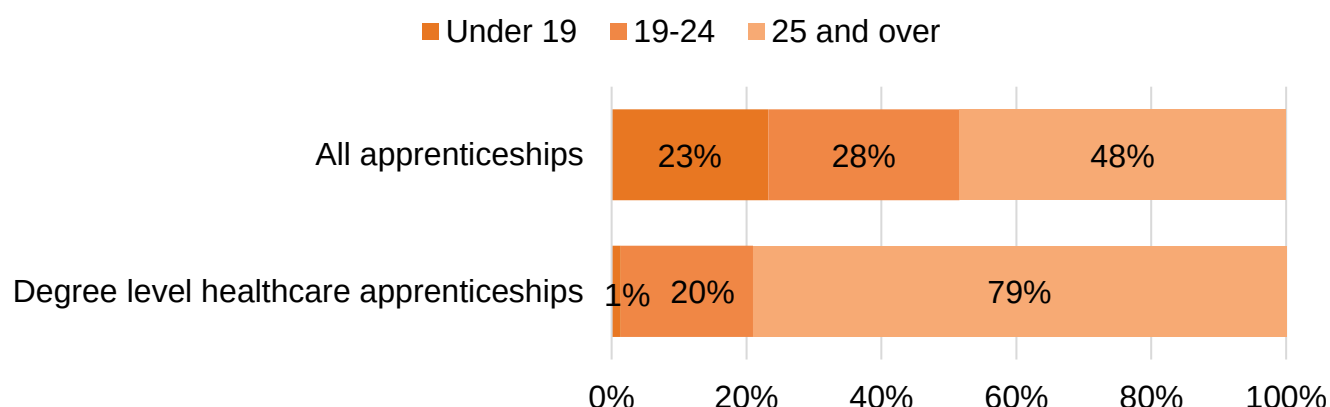
Source: Department for Education



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 79% for healthcare compared to under half (48%) for all apprenticeships.

Chart 25. Age profile of degree level healthcare apprenticeship starts, 2023/24

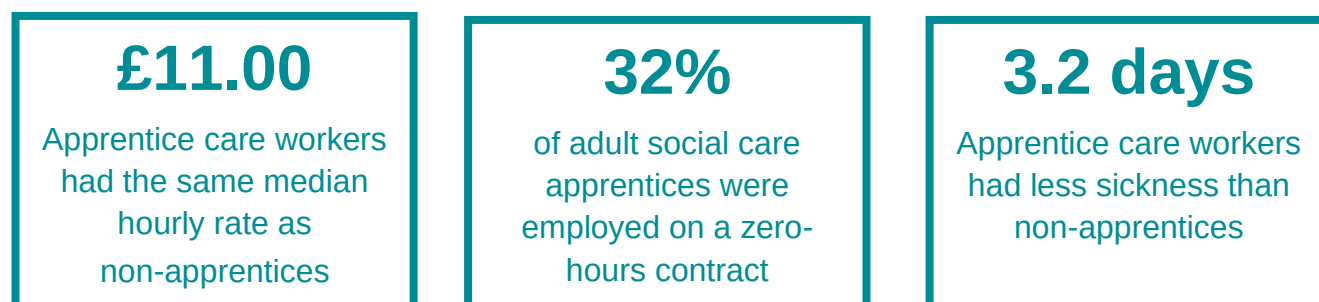
Source: Department for Education



Achievement rates for 2023/24 were not published at the time of writing. However, in 2022/23, there were 150 leavers from the Nursing Associate standard and of these 58.0% completed the course, and all of whom passed. There were 4,080 leavers from the Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) standard, of which 76.0% completed the course, with a 99.7% pass rate. There were also 550 leavers from the Registered Nurse (NMC 2010) degree, of which 76.2% completed the course, with a 99.3% pass rate. There were 1,420 leavers from the Registered Nurse (NMC 2018) degree, of which 89.5% completed the course, with a 99.9% pass rate.

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 2024 only.

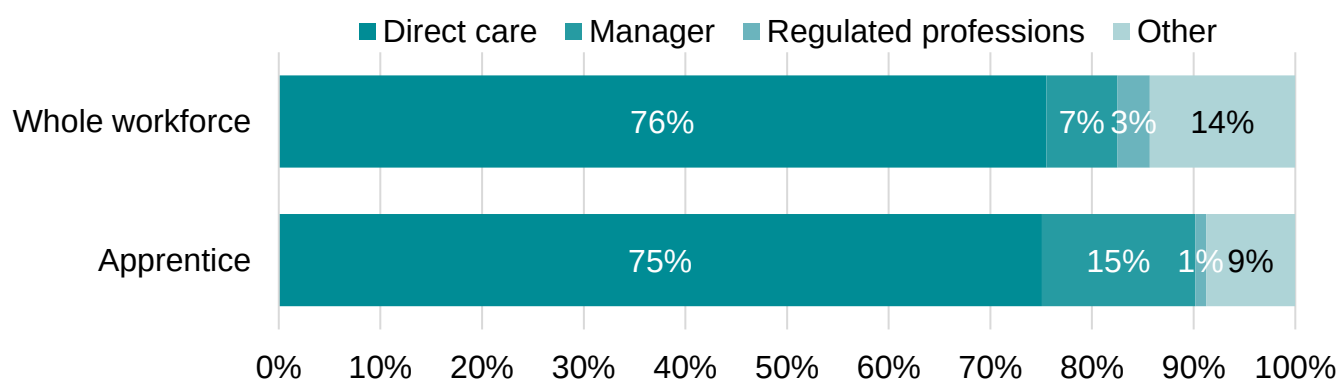


5.1 Apprenticeships in the ASC-WDS

Chart 26 below shows that as at March 2024, workers who were doing training as part of an apprenticeship were more likely to have a manager role (15%) than the overall workforce (7%). This was up from 12% in 2022/23. They were also less likely to have a regulated professions role (1%). Around two thirds (57%) of those training as part of an apprenticeship were in care worker roles, and 14% in senior care worker roles.

Chart 26. Job role group of apprentices in the adult social care workforce

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2024

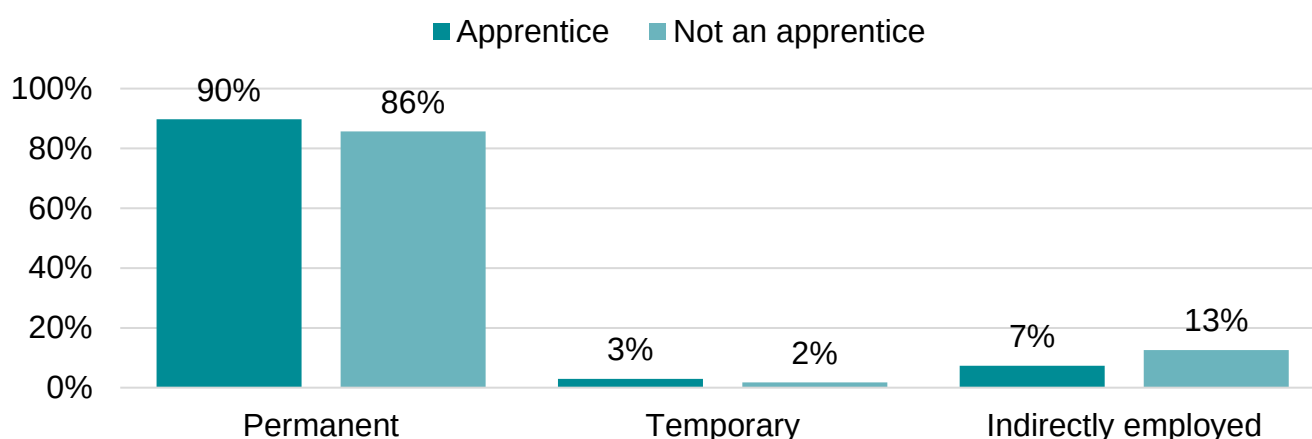


5.2 Employment overview

The majority of care workers apprentices and care 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 (13%). Indirectly employed staff include those on bank, pool, agency, and/or other contracts.

Chart 27. Employment status of care workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2024



There was also very little difference in terms of full-time or part-time hours between care worker apprentices (55% full-time) and those not studying for an apprenticeship (56% full-time).

Care worker apprentices had a similar proportion employed on a zero-hours contract at 32%, compared to 31% of those not studying for an apprenticeship.

Chart 28. Zero-hours contract status of care workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2024



Care worker apprentices had a lower average number of sickness days compared to those not studying for an apprenticeship, with 3.2 days and 4.0 days respectively.

Chart 29. Average number of sickness days in the previous 12 months of care workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2024



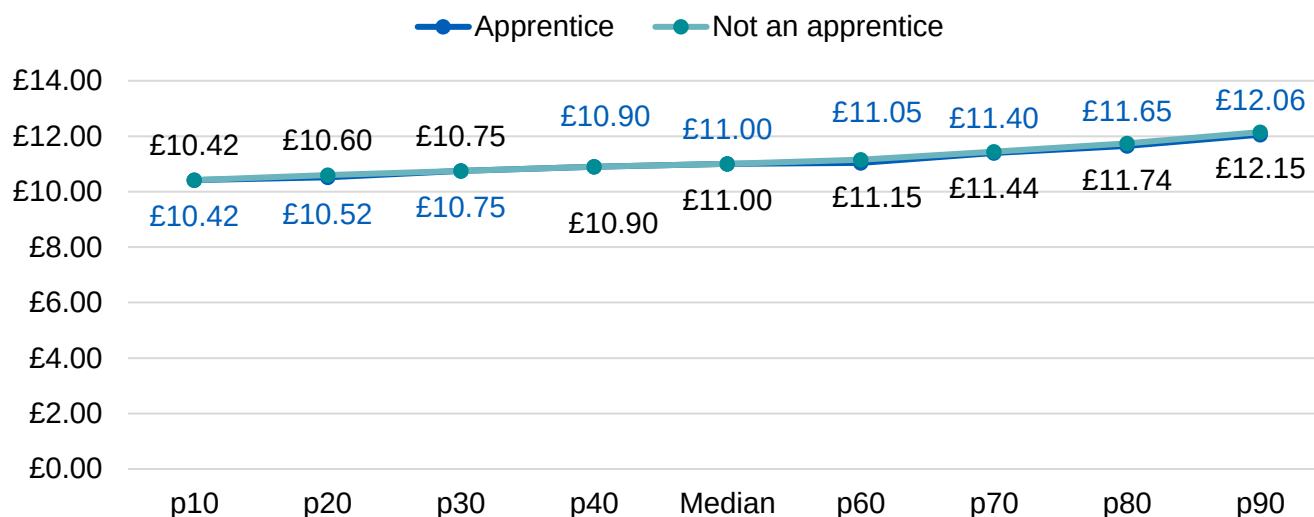
Chart 30 shows the care worker hourly rate change across the percentile distribution, where p10 refers to the bottom 10% of earners, the median represents half of earners, and p90 refers to the top 10% of earners.

There was very little difference in terms of hourly rates between care worker apprentices and those not studying for an apprenticeship. Care worker apprentices had a median hourly rate of £11.00, which was the same to care workers not studying for an apprenticeship. The lowest paid 10% of care worker apprentices (p10) had a rate of £10.42, and the highest paid apprentice care workers (p90) had a rate £12.06.

The apprentice minimum wage in this period was £5.28, however this distribution indicates that employers pay apprentice care workers the same rates as those not studying an apprenticeship.

Chart 30. Hourly pay distribution of care workers

Source: ASC-WDS unweighted data March 2024



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 www.skillsforcare.org.uk/sizeandstructure

Latest version, June 2024. Updated information is due in June 2025.

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 www.skillsforcare.org.uk/local-information

Latest versions, October 2024. Updated information is due in October 2025.

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 www.skillsforcare.org.uk/topics

- 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: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforceestimates

The 'Adult social care workforce estimates' 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 analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk.



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