

Skills for Care

Our work in 2022/23

A message from our CEO




At Skills for Care, our vision is of a fair and just society, where people can access the advice, care and support they need to live life to the fullest. We continue to strive for this through the pursuit of our four strategic priorities: to support workforce capabilities, to support culture and diversity, to increase workforce capacity, and to improve the social care system.

Social care is a fundamental part of all our communities; it supports people to live their lives every day, and most people who work in social care find it incredibly rewarding. But it's facing a complex challenge with recruitment and retention.

Our State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England report published in October 2022 highlighted the immediate and longer-term capacity issues that social care is facing. Yet, despite those challenges, we see providers and their employees dedicated to supporting and providing high-quality care to those who draw on it.

The high-profile launch of our State of the Sector report was just the tip of the iceberg in a year when we've achieved a great deal. Other highlights from our work this year include a programme of activities to ensure that social care can thrive in Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), working with DHSC to develop a Code of Practice to support the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on learning disabilities and autism, and the relaunch of our impactful Moving Up development programme.

Much of our work has been greatly enhanced through strong and effective partnerships and relationships with organisations and individuals across the sector at a national, regional and local level. I'd like to thank all the partners we work with and look forward to achieving even more together in the future.



Oonagh Smyth
CEO

Supporting workforce capabilities

We work to ensure people working in care have the right skills, knowledge, competencies, values and behaviours to meet current and future needs in our communities.

We do this by defining the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed now and in the future, developing and reviewing learning and development to fill the gaps, helping care providers and their staff to access training, and ensuring there is a vibrant learning market.

Highlights in 2022/23

- Our **Essential Training** helps to ensure that new starters and existing staff have the vital skills they need to provide care and support safely. It supported the completion of **29,002** refresher training programmes and **7,441** rapid inductions.
- We developed a **Level 5 commissioning qualification** – including a learning disability and autism version – to help ensure that commissioning focuses on outcomes and enables people to lead meaningful and fulfilled lives. **93%** of learners found the qualification useful.
- We helped to review the **Care Certificate** and are now developing it as a Level 2 qualification - which will provide a recognised level of competence and a route to further learning or career progression.
- We administered the **Workforce Development Fund**, which helps employers to overcome the financial barriers to learning and development. **91%** of employers said the fund had improved the skills and qualification levels of their staff and teams.
- Our **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)** programme helps Newly Qualified Social Workers to develop high standards of practice and supports retention and progression. This year it supported around **1,480** new social workers in adult services and around **2,850** in child and family services.



I think before I did [the essential training] I was more likely to accept the 'oh that's not how we do things here' line, whereas now I've progressed by doing this I would be less likely to accept that, and I would be like 'why is that?' And I'm definitely more comfortable challenging that.

Essential training participant



Supporting culture and diversity

We work to ensure the workforce is treated equally, feels included and valued, and is supported to stay well and pursue their careers in social care.

We do this by using evidence to identify the issues - and developing frameworks, training, resources and communities to improve equality, diversity and inclusion and strengthen leadership.

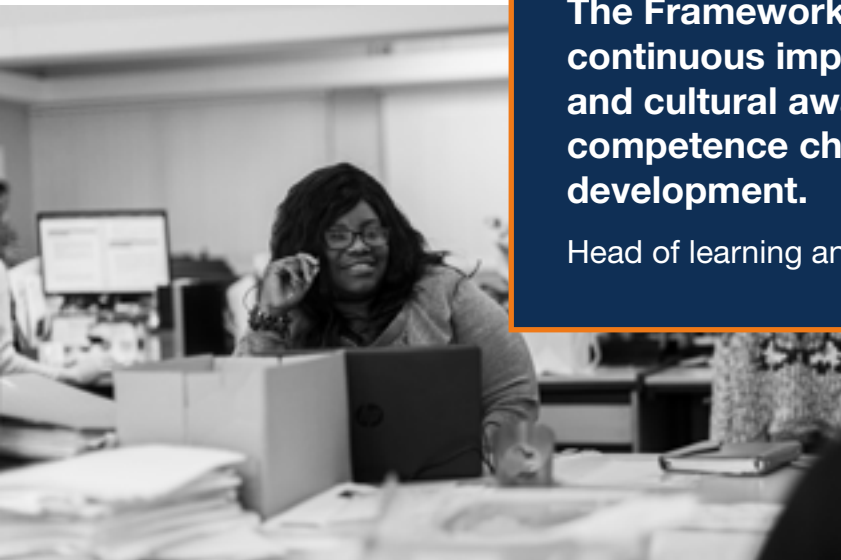
Highlights in 2022/23

- Our **Moving Up** development programme helped people from diverse backgrounds with progression, networking and support. Participants' belief in their ability to influence equality, diversity and inclusion increased by **26%** by the end of the programme.
- We worked with the University of Strathclyde and the LGBT Foundation to develop a **learning framework for knowledge, skills, and values for working affirmatively with LGBTQ+ people in later life.**
- We developed a **Confident with Difference** resource and summary guide on racism.
- We launched our **leadership brochure** outlining the support we offer and hot topics for leaders - and explaining the importance of developing leadership skills for, aspiring, existing and senior leaders.
- We worked with partners through the National Wellbeing Strategic Steering Group - and this year we revised our **Creating a Positive Workplace Culture Toolkit**, which has been viewed **11,215** times.



We're delighted to see the LGBTQ+ Framework [...] that will enable us as a care and support provider to further consider the needs and preferences of people using our services. The Framework provides a structure for the continuous improvement of our learning resources and cultural awareness, as well as providing competence checks for use within our workforce development.

Head of learning and development at a care provider



Increasing workforce capacity

We work to ensure we have the right number of people, with the right values and behaviours, working in social care now and in the future.

We do this by using our data and insight to identify the issues and help policymakers to understand them, developing best practice solutions and getting them out to the sector through our networks, and promoting careers in social care.

Highlights in 2022/23

- Our **State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England report** helped to highlight the scale of the capacity challenges facing the sector. It was downloaded more than **2,700** times, generated more than **800** pieces of media coverage, has been quoted in parliamentary debates, and used in advocacy and policy development.
- With around 1 in 10 posts vacant on any given day, retention is key to improving capacity. We published a **study into new starters in social care**, which identified the best ways to retain new starters - including using values-based recruitment and providing training resulting in a care qualification.
- The **reach of our best practice tools, insights, data and intelligence** grew from 43% of CQC-registered providers to **55%**.
- There were **288,207** views of the **Think Care Careers website** – which promotes careers in social care to people outside the sector.
- We were involved in the delivery of a series of five ‘Learn live’ careers broadcasts to around **10,000** young people to promote the opportunities of a career in care.



The ‘State of the adult social care sector and workforce in England’ report is the most comprehensive publicly available source of workforce statistics for the adult social care sector in England

[Office for National Statistics](#)



Improving the social care system

We work to ensure the adult social care system is well funded, supports people to live the lives that they choose, and attracts the right people to the workforce.

We do this by gathering and analysing workforce intelligence data through our Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS), using our intelligence and insight from the sector to support local and national partners in strategy and policy development, and supporting social care within Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

Highlights in 2022/23

- ASC-WDS is the engine that drives our workforce intelligence, collecting rich data that helps us identify, understand and tackle the challenges the sector is facing. **51%** of CQC regulated workplaces were using **ASC-WDS** at the end of February 2023 – **14,114** workplaces. This makes the data very reliable. There were over **10 million** page views of **ASC-WDS**.
- Recognition and understanding of social care are essential to the success of integration. We **worked directly with over 80% of Integrated Care Systems** and we were members of **32 of the 42** People Boards.
- We provided a detailed **written submission to the [Hewitt Review of Integrated Care Systems](#)**.
- In partnership with NHS Employers, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), we produced an **[online guide to help system leaders to plan for an integrated workforce](#)**. It was accessed by **3,500** people in the first 6 weeks after publication.
- We worked closely with DHSC to help **shape key integration guidance** such as the **[preparation of integrated care strategies](#)** and the **[principles for integrated care partnerships engaging with adult social care](#)**.
- Registered managers are at the heart of every outstanding provider, working hard to create a person-centred culture that delivers high-quality care. We connected over **7,000** managers to a **Registered Manager Network** – which creates opportunities for managers to learn from others in their local area and tackle challenges together.



I make it a priority to come to the Registered Manager Network meetings. There is just so much to our role that I can't possibly know all the answers. Part of the meeting is to network with others who have similar experiences and to learn from them. We support each other and bring back ideas to our own service that directly benefits our staff and service users.

Registered Manager who attended an event on strategic workforce planning

Our priorities for 2023/24

Supporting workforce capabilities

- Working in partnership with DHSC on the development of the Care Workforce Pathway
 - which was a commitment in the Government's People at the Heart of Care white paper
 - to ensure it reflects the skills, behaviours and expertise needed to deliver high-quality, personalised, compassionate care and support in collaboration with the sector.
- Developing the new qualification specification to make the Care Certificate a Level 2 qualification.
- Building digital skills essential for the future of the workforce, following the launch of the Digital Skills Framework – including developing the specification for a Level 5 qualification in digital leadership.

Supporting culture and diversity

- Supporting the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard.
- Designing new leadership programmes and expanding our Moving Up and nurse leadership programmes, following increasing demand for these across the sector.
- Supporting the implementation of the Messenger Review's recommendations on equality, diversity and inclusion and leadership.

Increasing workforce capacity

- Continuing to encourage employers to adopt our best practice insights, tools, data and intelligence to reduce their staff turnover and vacancy rates.
- Exploring ways to attract and retain the under-represented demographics of men and younger people in social care.

Improving the social care system

- Continuing to work towards a social care workforce strategy, which is essential to ensure we have the workforce for the future.
- Continuing to play a key system leadership role, supporting DHSC to measure and implement the reform agenda - for example, using ASC-WDS to measure the impact of reform investment.
- Working with partners to develop a shared definition of what successful integrated workforce thinking and planning looks like, and work through our local authority and ICS connections to embed this approach.

Read more about our work in 2022/23

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/annualreview22-23