

The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England

2024

Executive Summary

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1. Size and structure

Understanding the size and structure of adult social care, in terms of employers and filled posts, is fundamental to understanding the sector. It allows us to evaluate the impact of current policies and external influences, and guides workforce planning for the future.



Size of the adult social care workforce

An estimated 18,500 organisations were involved in providing or organising adult social care in England. Those organisations delivered services in an estimated 40,000 establishments. There were 28,900 CQC-regulated establishments, an increase of 1,100 from 2022/23. The total number of posts (filled and vacant posts) in adult social care in England in 2023/24 stood at 1.84 million. This was an increase of 2.6% (47,000 posts) from 2022/23. As at 2023/24, there were 1.705 million filled posts in adult social care. This was the highest number of filled posts since Skills for Care records began and an increase of around 4% (70,000 filled posts) from 2022/23. There were 131,000 vacant posts, a decrease of 22,000 (14.6%) from the previous year. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) filled posts was estimated at 1.27 million. The number of people working in adult social care was estimated at 1.59 million. The total wage bill for adult social care in England was £27.9 billion, an increase of 13.5% from 2022/23. The sector was estimated to contribute £68.1 billion gross value added (GVA) to the economy in England (up 13.2% from 2022/23).

Structure of the adult social care workforce

In terms of employer type, 79.1% of the workforce were employed in the independent sector (1.350 million filled posts), 6.9% were employed by local authorities (117,400 filled posts) and 7.2% of the workforce (123,000 filled posts) were personal assistants, directly employed by individuals in receipt direct payments from their local authority. Adult social care related posts in the NHS made up 6.8

2. Employment overview

3. Recruitment and ret3.

7. Workforce projections

demand-based projections for the size of the adult social care workforce between 2023/24 and 2040. These workforce projections combine adult social care workforce estimates and population projection information.¹

38%

increase in the population aged 65 and over between 2020 and 2040

Total posts 2023/24
Extra posts by 2040

Population growth

The population aged 65 and above in England is projected to grow 38%, from 10.5 million to 14.5 million between 2020 and 2040.

London is the region expected to have the largest growth in population aged 65 and above, with an increase of 56% between 2020 (1.1 million people) and 2040 (1.7 million people).

The 90 and over age group is expected to see the greatest amount of growth, with a 91% increase between 2020 and 2040 (from 525,000 to 1 million people).

Adult social care workforce

If the workforce grows proportionally to the growth of the population aged 65 and above, between 2023/24 and 2040 the adult social care workforce would need to increase by 540,000 posts (29% growth).

Our model estimates that there is currently one adult social care post for every six people aged 65 and over.

These projections can be used to forecast the number of adult social care posts that may be needed to meet demand in the future. Projections are based on the number of total posts required; this will include future filled posts as well as vacant posts. It should be noted that these projections only account for demographic and population changes over the period. They do not account for any political, economic, technological or sociological factors which may impact on the future size of the workforce.

For a detailed analysis of all the key findings listed here, please [read the chapter](#) in full.

¹ Population information: www.nomisweb.co.uk

8. International recruitment

International recruitment has played an increasingly important role in the adult social care sector. The number of staff coming from overseas has contributed to the increase in filled posts across the sector in 2023/24, and the decrease in vacancy rates. To follow trends in international recruitment in the ASC-WDS, visit our [quarterly tracker](#).

People recruited internationally

Between March 2022 and March 2024 an estimated 185,000 people have started direct care providing roles in the independent sector, having arrived in the UK during that period (80,000 in 2022/23 and 105,000 in 2023/24).

The number of posts filled by people with a British nationality has decreased by around 70,000 since 2021/22. The number of posts filled by people with a non-EU nationality has increased over the same period by around 160,000.

29% of care workers recruited internationally were male. This was higher than the proportion of male care workers with a British nationality (15%).

The top three nationalities for people recruited internationally were Nigerian (28%), Zimbabwean (22%) and Indian (17%).

Employers recruiting internationally

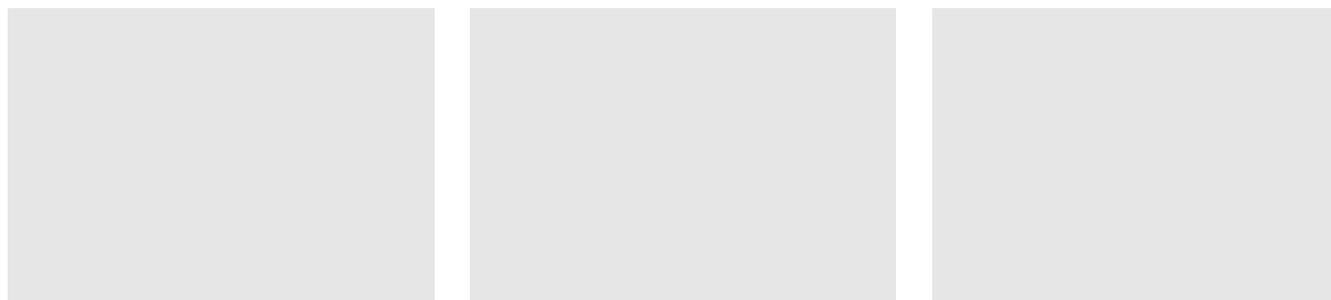
The vacancy rate for employers with people recruited internationally decreased by 4.3 percentage points between March 2022 and March 2024, from 12.8% to 8.5%.

The turnover rate for employers with people recruited internationally decreased by 8.1 percentage points between March 2022 and March 2024, from 41.5% to 33.4%.

Skills for Care has a number of resources related to [international recruitment](#) such as our

9. Factors affecting staff turnover and CQC ratings

This section focuses on their roles. The analysis shows the association between each variable and the turnover rate, this is not necessarily the cause/the reason for workers leaving. All analysis included here is of the independent sector workforce only.



Factors affecting turnover for care workers

The sector has difficulty retaining younger staff. The turnover rate among care workers aged under 25 years was 44.6%.

Further resources

We provide valuable 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 Executive Summary is a compendium of key findings from each

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