



**The Adult Social Care
Workforce in England**

Jane Brightman

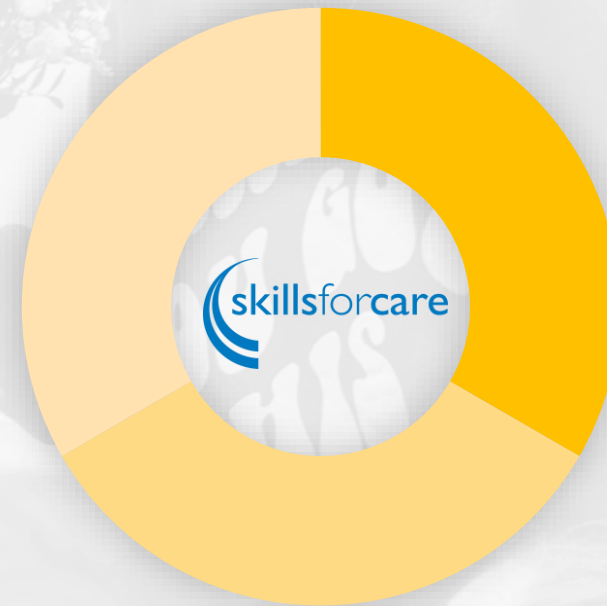
About Skills for Care

Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development body for adult social care in England. Everything we do is about making sure the sector has enough people with the right skills and values to provide the best possible care and support.

We work with government and partners to turn policy into practice and practice into policy. We have been system leaders for over 20 years:

- Driving forward workforce development and improvement
- Developing and overseeing the implementation of a national workforce strategy

Deep expertise
about workforce standards, skills & development



Extensive
workforce data and insight

A strong brand, credibility and infrastructure that allows us to reach the whole care sector and system partners

The context: in 2023-24...

A workforce of 1.59 million – 5.4% of all jobs in England

4.2% more filled posts (70,000) than in 2022-23

131,000 vacancies on any given day (8.3%)

26% of staff in the independent sector left their jobs

105,000 international recruits – up 25,000 on 2022-23

540,000 new posts needed by 2040, 29% more than we had in 23-24

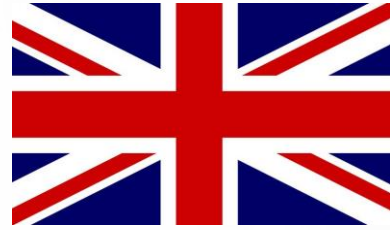
Workforce demographics



21%

male

RECORD



75%

British

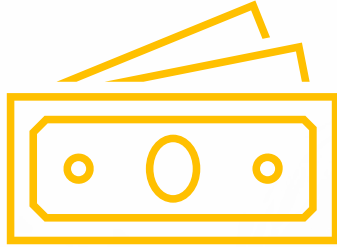


44

average age

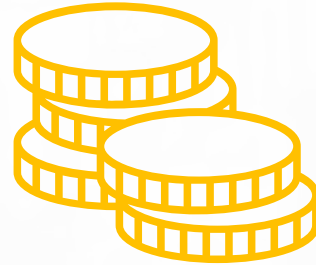


Pay



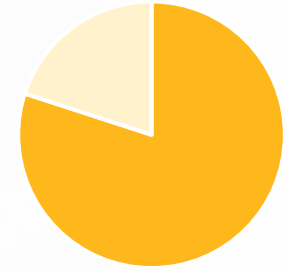
£11

**Care worker
median hourly
pay**



10p

**Differential for 5+
years' experience**



**More than
80%
of other jobs
pay more**

Qualifications and training

Qualifications



41%

Care workers with a relevant qualification at Level 2 or above

Apprenticeships (2022/23)

14%

since 2021/22

75%

since 2016/17

Why did we develop a Workforce Strategy?

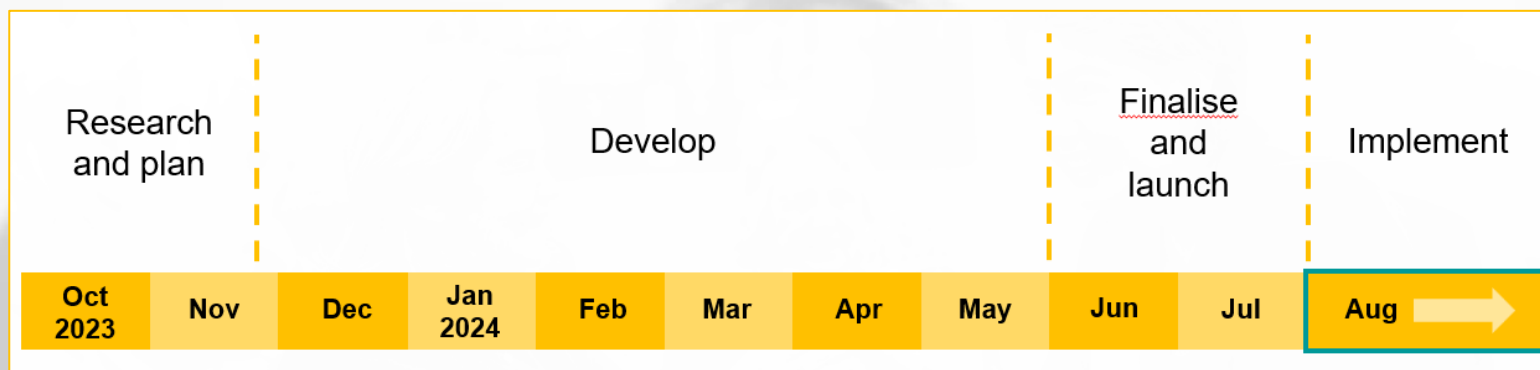
The workforce makes the most important contribution to the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of adult social care in this country

The long-term position on recruitment, retention, training and ability to respond to current and future need and demand

To provide a set of proposals that could be owned and acted upon by the whole sector and could be adopted by a new Government

In the context of likely challenges to wider reform, addressing the workforce is likely to be the most cost-effective contribution to service improvement

How did we develop the Strategy?



- **Expert working groups**
 - Science, technology, AI and pharmaceuticals; integration; prevention; new service models and multidisciplinary working; recruit and retain; develop and train; leadership
- **Economic modelling**
- Engagement with **people with experience drawing on care and support**
- Engagement with the **workforce and employers**
- Engagement with the **wider sector**

Service assumptions

- **The Care Act** continues to be a fundamental platform for the delivery of social care - albeit not yet fully implemented
- **Integrating Health and Care** will continue to be the direction of travel
- Continued uncertainty about the **future balance of responsibility in paying for care** - to keep workforce implications under review
- **Reform of mental health law** likely and precise reforms need factoring in
- **Demand for social care increasing** - predicted 540,000 more posts needed by 2040. Potentially some reduction as a result of technology and AI.

Service assumptions

- Largest increase in care and support currently with **working age adults** - principally people with a learning disability. We can expect this to continue.
- Levels of **safeguarding concerns** have increased year on year since the Care Act. Likely to continue.
- Move to a greater proportion of care to be **delivered in the community** (outside care homes) likely to continue
- **Direct payments have reduced** - needs a focus in training and development plans
- Consistent feedback from people with lived experience, unpaid carers and parts of the sector is the degree to which **prevention needs strengthening**

Who contributed to WfS



Care Quality Commission



TheKingsFund

Local Government Association

NHS England



Royal College of Nursing



Social Care Future

Social Work England



UNISON



Examples of recommendations and commitments

Attract and retain

Train

Transform

Attract and retain

Pay and T&Cs



International recruitment



Regulator actions



10-year attraction plan



Individual employers



Attracting leaders



Regulated professionals



Wellbeing & EDI



Train

Career development



Competency



Regulator actions



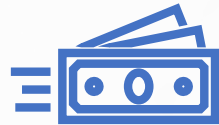
Apprenticeships



High-quality training



Training funding



Registered managers



Transform

Workforce planning



Training infrastructure



10-yr transformation



Coastal & rural



New roles



Digital skills



Care technologist



Registration



How the Strategy supports the Government's three shifts

Hospital to community

The Strategy is designed to enable effective social care, delivered by a skilled, well-staffed and valued workforce. This plays a central role in providing integrated, person-centred care for people in their communities – reducing demand on the NHS.

Analogue to digital

The Strategy is designed to harness and integrate digital technology, data and artificial intelligence. This will improve the quality and value of social care for the people drawing on it and the taxpayer. It will increase the efficiency with which care is delivered and enables the sector to attract people with digital skills. Everyone working in care will have access to the right training opportunities to use digital, data and technology effectively and ethically.

Sickness to prevention

The Strategy is designed to facilitate effective social care that enables people to live better and reduces the number of people needing NHS treatment. A skilled, well-staffed and valued workforce, with time to support people before their needs escalate, plays a central role in preventing illness.

Three strategic shifts

1 Hospital
↓
Community

2 Analogue
↓
Digital

3 Sickness
↓
Prevention

Influence of the Workforce Strategy

Oversight Executive Group: This cross-sector group is meeting quarterly to govern implementation. They are ambassadors for the Workforce Strategy, advocating for and supporting delivery of the recommendations.

Minister for Care, Stephen Kinnock MP announced a commitment to dementia training for social care staff. He hosted a roundtable with social care leaders. We talked with one voice about the importance of the Workforce Strategy and how it will help transform social care, showing the whole sector is behind it.

CQC strong advocacy for the Workforce Strategy in 2024 'State of Care' report.

Social Work England hosted a roundtable and are planning a social work workforce sub-strategy to align with the national Strategy.

Spending Review We want the whole Workforce Strategy to be considered. Oversight Executive Group members continue to have discussions with Government departments, and Ministers, to share the wealth of evidence that we used in compiling the Strategy.

Workforce Strategy Implementation Unit



The Skills for Care Board of Trustees signed off approval for charitable reserves to fund a Workforce Strategy Implementation Unit.

This officially launched in December 2024 and is delivering on a number of workstreams over 5 years.

The unit has been set up to support the sector to deliver recommendations in the Workforce Strategy.

Recommendations in progress or completed



The National Care Forum have kicked off the care technologists' pilots to test and roll out support for creating a new care technologist role



ADASS and Skills for Care have begun discussions on the programme of development for new Directors of Adult Social Services



New eLearning has been launched on public health and prevention by OHID and RSPH



The Care Workers' Charity hosted a focused day on wellbeing during Professional Care Workers Week in September.

Recommendations in progress or completed



The revised statutory and mandatory training guide has been launched, Skills for Care and CQC are working together to share these across the sector



Commitment from MSC Stephen Kinnock to 'ramp up dementia training for the Adult Social Care workforce' made in House of Commons



Working with Newton Europe and partners to scope a project focusing on using AI to improve workforce productivity.



Skills for Care are currently supporting Phase 2 of the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standards with 83 LAs signed up, across all regions in England.

Change we are seeing in practice: ICBs, local authorities and regional ADASS



The South West is becoming a leading example of partnership working and joint responsibility for the Strategy. In Feb, the **South West ICB** agreed to formally recognise the WfS implementation group as an ICB subgroup. It includes representatives from ICS's, regional NHSE, **LAs**, **ADASS**, South West Provider CEO network and care associations.



The **Staffordshire & Stoke Social Care Academy** (pilot) launched in Jan. The virtual learning portal offers a variety of courses for all roles, and information to support careers in care. It already has 220 active users (exceeding the target of 90.) **Surrey Heartlands ICB** also runs a successful academy and have recently launched a 'Career ambassador' programme to promote care careers.



A practical example of good practice is from **Suffolk and North East Essex ICB**, who are working with partners to produce a series of videos and supporting resources around flexible working and menopause for social care providers. The aim is to show employers how to improve staff wellbeing and retention.



Many **LAs** (inc. Essex, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire) continue to map their local strategies to the national strategy. Telford & Wrekin Council said the strategy helped with their CQC review and Walsall Council has recruited an interim Workforce Lead to develop their strategy and conduct a Training Needs Analysis.



NHSE East of England are looking to extend elements of their **People Promise** offer to the social care sector in ICS footprints, with most activity is taking place with the **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICS**. Elsewhere, **North East ADASS** and the **ICB** are looking to pilot the **People Promise** with six social care employers.

Key messages

The adult social care sector is already collaborating to progress and implement many of the recommendations in the Workforce Strategy.

Just under half the recommendations and commitments in the Strategy need some kind of Government support, although only just over a quarter are for the Government alone. The rest are commitments from the sector or recommendations for organisations outside government.

We continue to engage with colleagues in Government as we implement the Strategy. To address the challenges facing the sector, we hope Government will see the Strategy as crucial to the Casey Commission and a 'downpayment' on bigger reform in the sector and the creation of a National Care Service.

Please contact me jane.Brightman@skillsforcare.org.uk if you have any questions about the Workforce Strategy, would like further information or would value a follow-up conversations.