



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





In 2021/22, Skills for Care workforce estimates showed a decrease in the number of filled posts. Overall, the decrease was around 4% (60,000 posts). In 2022/23, the number of filled posts increased by 1% (20,000 posts), therefore overall filled posts are not back to the levels of 2020/21.

Monthly tracking of ASC-WDS data (not weighted to represent the whole sector) has shown a continuation in this trend with the number of filled posts in the independent sector increasing by a further 1.1 percentage points between March 2023 and June 2023.

For independent sector care homes, the number of filled posts increased by 3% (16,000). In independent sector domiciliary care services, the number of filled posts increased by 2% (10,000). There was a small drop in the number of Personal Assistants and posts employed by Local Authorities.

One of the factors behind this trend is the increased number of international recruits entering the sector after care workers were added to the shortage occupation list in February 2022.

**Chart 2. Estimated number of adult social care filled posts and percentage change in the number of filled posts in England, 2012/13-2022/23**

Source: Skills for Care estimates

The increase in the number of posts being filled in 2022/23 has contriv0 (b)b77 Tm0 g0 (g)TJETC MC

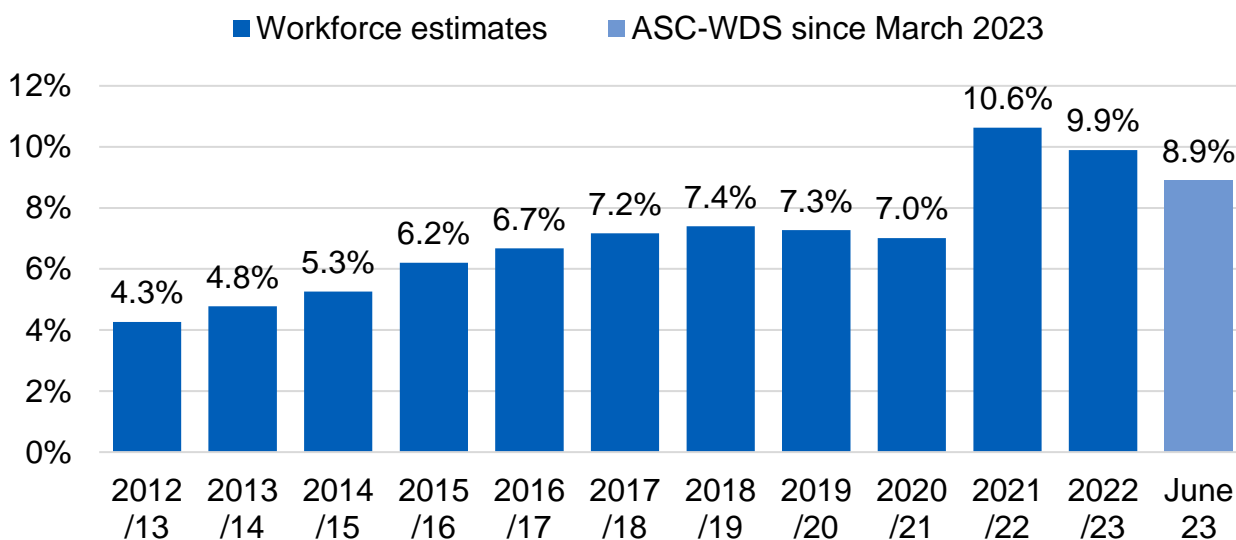
In the independent sector, the decrease in vacancy rates was larger in care homes (down from 8.2% to 6.8%) than it was in domiciliary care (down from 13.2% to 12.9%).

Monthly tracking of data in ASC-WDS from independent sector employers between March 2023 and June 2023 (not weighted to represent the whole sector) has shown this trend continuing, with the rate decreasing by a further 1 percentage point.

The vacancy rate remains high, however, compared to historical levels and other sectors. This shows that recruitment and retention difficulties in the sector persist despite improvements this year.

### Chart 3. Change in the adult social care vacancy rate

Source: Skills for Care estimates and Skills for Care monthly tracking



The high staff vacancy rate can impact the ability of care providers to deliver care and support. If more of these posts were filled, providers would be able to deliver support to more people and maintain higher ratios of staff to people drawing on care and support.

In 2022/23, the starters rate in the independent sector increased from 32% to 34%. A large part of this increase can be attributed to the level of international recruitment seen during the year.

At the same time, in 2022/23, the turnover rate in the independent sector decreased from 32% to 30%. Early evidence from ASC-WDS data collected between 2022 and 2023 (up to May) suggests that international recruitment may have also played a part in this, with the turnover rate for international recruits being around half that of people recruited from within the UK.

### 3. Social care vacancies vs availability of jobs in the wider economy

At the beginning of the pandemic, there were fewer jobs available in the wider economy (there were 472,000 vacancies or 1.6%). This contributed to a fall in vacancy rates in adult social care as people losing their jobs elsewhere took up roles in the care sector while fewer people left their care roles.

As at March 2022, as the economy opened back up, there were more job opportunities in the jobs market with 1.3m vacancies at this point (4.1%). At the same time, the adult social care vacancy rate increased substantially and was back above its pre-pandemic levels at 10.6%.

As at April 2023, the number of vacancies in the wider economy decreased to 3.4% (1.1m vacancies in total). The rate is still at a high level comparing back historically however, and the number of opportunities available in other sectors will still be making it difficult for adult social care employers to find all the staff they need. This is reflected by the adult social care vacancy rate decreasing but remaining at higher levels than in previous years.

The chart below shows how the adult social care vacancy rate is correlated with the number of jobs available in the wider economy. There are other factors influencing these figures but it demonstrates that, in general, when there are more jobs available in other sectors, fewer adult social care posts get filled.

#### **Chart 4. Adult social care vacancy rate trend in comparison to the wider economy vacancy rate**

Source: ASC-WDS<sup>3</sup> and ONS: Vacancies and jobs in the UK

This trend matches feedback received from some care providers who advise that recruitment and retention





