Notes on methodology improvements which have impacted previously published figures

The size and structure of the adult social care workforce in England 2022/23

Skills for Care publish estimates of the size and structure of the workforce each year. When additional information becomes available or methodologies improve, we also make retrospective changes to previously published estimates to ensure our estimates are comparable across years and not a reflection of changes methodologies.

Below is a description of two improvements made this year which have impacted previously published figures.

1. Dormant locations

Skills for Care have started to receive information from CQC (Care Quality Commission) showing whether a location is 'dormant' or not.

Locations can be dormant if, for example, a care home is undergoing renovation so is currently not open. Or for domiciliary care providers, when they currently do not have any contracts (sometimes this is new locations).

Using ASC-WDS data we can see that dormant locations are likely to have less staff than non-dormant locations. As such, we have included this as part of our modelling for 22/23 which brings our staffing estimates down slightly.

To ensure the trend going backwards is comparable we have retrospectively applied an estimate for the level of dormancy in all previous years too.

2. Number of individual employers and personal assistants

This year we have improved our methodology for making estimates for this part of the sector.

We have applied a data engineering pipeline which has allowed us to improve the way we make estimates for missing local authorities. We now use a combination of mean imputation, extrapolation, and interpolation.

We have added a rolling average to our figures to reduce the impact of bias in the data for years with fewer local authorities responding to the ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) survey.

We have also been able to apply more sophisticated logic to assess the ADASS data we use to estimate the proportion of direct payment recipients with care and support needs who employ staff.

We have improved the logic we use to remove outliers from the raw data by considering change within a local authority area over time.

3. Changes to estimates of the characteristics of the workforce

The two changes detailed above result in new estimates for the size of the workforce in previous years. Estimates of the size of the workforce are used as the basis for weighting the characteristics of the workforce and therefore some of these statistics have changed from previously published estimates as a result.

4. Sickness trends

Through speaking to users, we have become aware that some sickness data is incorrectly submitted as calendar days off, rather than the number of working days missed. As such, we have created a new filter which caps the number of sickness days allowed based an estimate for the number of days they work in a year (estimated using hours data).

This new filter has been retrospectively applied to estimates from previous years.

5. Factors affecting turnover

The factors affecting turnover methodology has been improved by adding a new filter which excludes workplaces that don't appear to have removed their leavers from ASC-WDS. Previously, in the analysis all their staff would have been flagged as not leaving their role, whereas some of them likely did leave. This change has improved the quality of this section, however the figures are not comparable to those previously published.