



# Domiciliary care services in the adult social care sector

2023/24

2024

# StateOfReport

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## Key findings

**580,000**

Filled post in  
domiciliary care  
services

**13,733**

CQC regulated  
locations in  
England

**38%**

Employed on  
zero-hours  
contracts

**11.9%**

vacancy rate in  
domiciliary care  
services

## Introduction

This report provides a summary of the adult social care workforce within domiciliary care services in the independent sector. This report covers Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulated domiciliary care services, all domiciliary care services providing personal care must be regulated by the CQC. The definition of domiciliary care services in this report includes CQC regulated domiciliary care services, CQC regulated supported living services and CQC regulated extra care housing services.

The information in this summary is derived from the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS). The independent sector information in this report was collected between April 2023 and March 2024. As at March 2024 over half of the CQC-regulated workforce were recorded in the ASC-WDS (53%). This coverage varied by care sector, services, job role and geographical area. To produce our analysis we create annual [estimates](#) about the size and characteristics of the whole adult social care workforce, which are presented in this report. You can read more about our methodology for creating these on our [website](#).

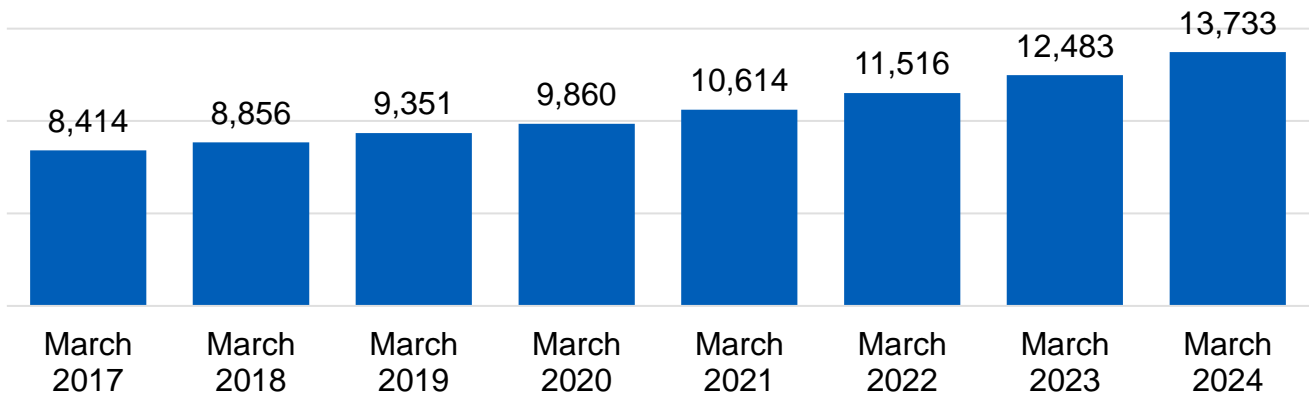
# 1 Size and Structure

As at March 2024 there were 13,733 domiciliary care services registered with CQC across England. These care providing locations had an estimated workforce of 580,000 filled posts in the independent sector and 70,000 vacancies, making 650,000 total posts. There were also 18,700 filled posts in the local authority sector not included in this report.

The chart below shows that between March 2017 and March 2024 the number of CQC regulated domiciliary care services increased from 8,414 to 13,733, an increase of 63%. During this same period, the number of CQC care homes with nursing decreased by 5% and the number of CQC care homes without nursing decreased by 11%.

**Chart 1. Number of CQC-regulated domiciliary care service, 2017 to 2024**

Source: CQC Care Directory



Filled posts for domiciliary care service in the independent sector increased by 43,000 (8%) between 2022/23 and 2023/24, whilst the number of vacant posts decreased by 550 (1%).

In 2023/24, the vacancy rate of independent sector domiciliary care services was 11.9%, equivalent to 70,000 vacant posts. [Monthly tracking](#) of data from the ASC-WDS has shown that the vacancy rate decreased to 10.0% by August 2024, and has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels. It should be noted that this information is based on unweighted data and may change throughout the year as more data is submitted to ASC-WDS.

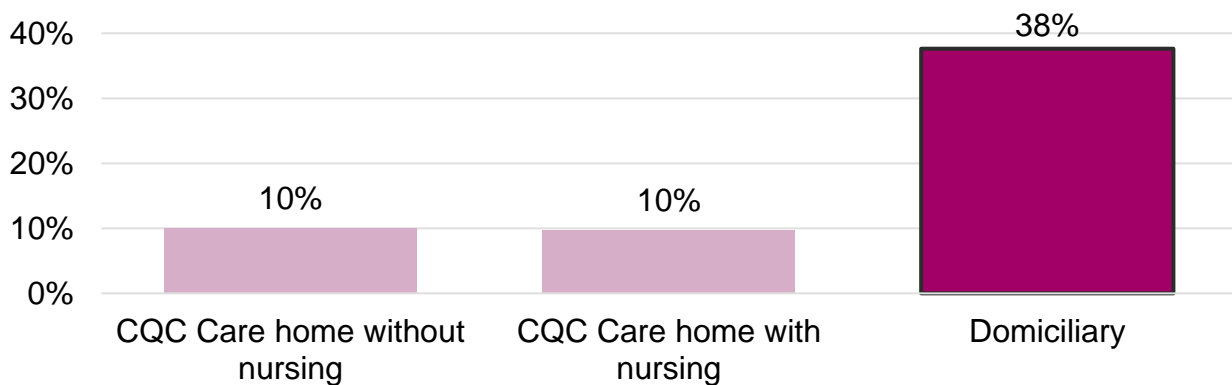
## 2 Employment overview

In 2023/24 there was an estimated 505,000 direct care providing filled posts in domiciliary care services, 46,000 managerial filled posts, 1,700 regulated professionals and 28,000 other filled posts including ancillary non-care-providing roles.

Around 38% of the domiciliary care workforce were employed on zero-hours contracts. This proportion has decreased by six percentage points since last year and nine percentage points since 2021/22. Across all care service types, 23% of the independent sector workforce were employed on zero-hours contracts.

**Chart 2. Proportion of workers on a zero-hours contract by main care service, independent sector only, 2023/24**

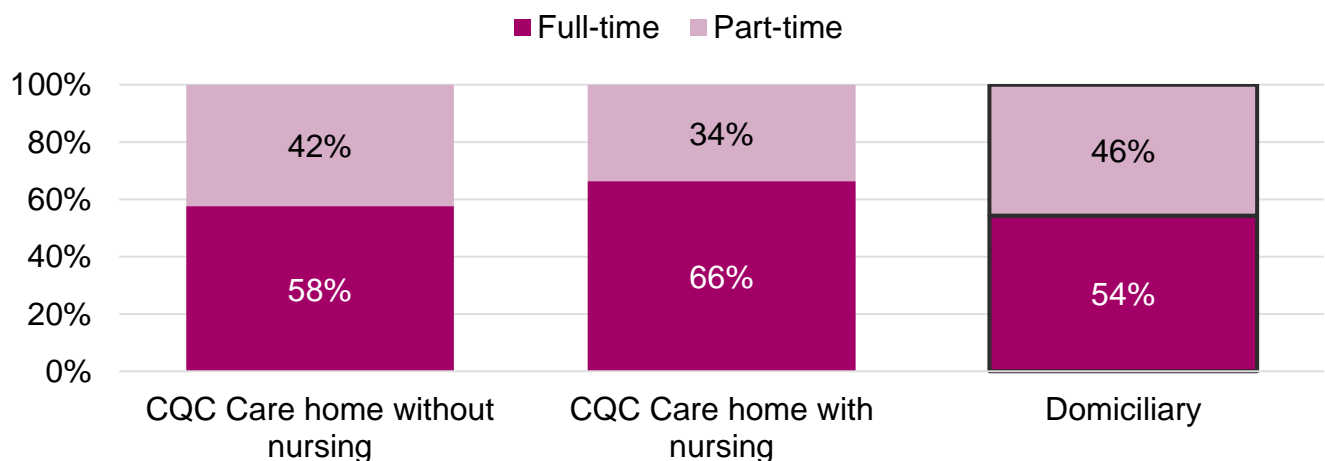
Source: Skills for Care estimates



Over half of staff in domiciliary care services were employed on a full-time basis (54%) and 46% employed part-time. This was similar to care home without nursing services, whereas more workers in care homes with nursing worked on a full-time basis (66%).

**Chart 3. Estimated full-time or part-time status by main care service, independent sector only, 2023/24**

Source: Skills for Care estimates



### 3 Recruitment and retention

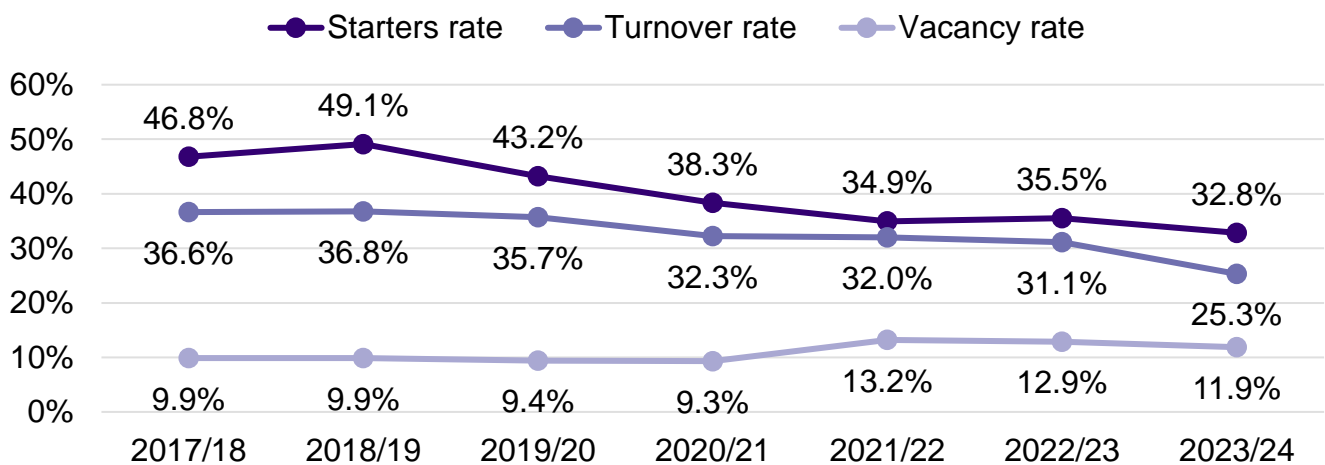
The turnover rate for domiciliary care services was 25.3%, which was lower than that of care homes with nursing (29.8%) but higher than care homes without nursing (26.0%). This equates to an estimated 131,000 workers leaving their role in the previous 12 months. Care workers had a turnover rate of 29.3%, which equates to an estimated 116,000 leavers. Please note that the turnover rate only includes services which were active in March during each period, and leavers from services that closed down are not included, therefore the total number of leavers may be higher.

The starters rate has consistently been higher than the turnover rate over time, which highlights the growing domiciliary care workforce.

The vacancy rate increased sharply in 2021/22 and has decreased each year since. The [monthly tracking](#) of data in the ASC-WDS, has continued to decrease between April and August 2024.

**Chart 4. Starter, turnover and vacancy rate trends in domiciliary care services, independent sector only, 2017/18 to 2023/24**

Source: Skills for Care estimates



Not all turnover results in workers leaving the sector. Over half of the domiciliary care workforce were recruited from within adult social care (51%). This means that although the high turnover rate results in employers going through the recruitment process, with its associated costs, the skills and experience of many workers are retained by the sector.

The workforce had an average of 8.3 years of experience working in social care. This was less than the average for workers from care homes with nursing (9.7 years) as well workers from care homes without nursing (9.6 years). The average length of time in current role was 4.2 years, which was lower than the average of those working in care homes with (4.8 years) and care homes without nursing (5.1 years).

# 4 Demographics

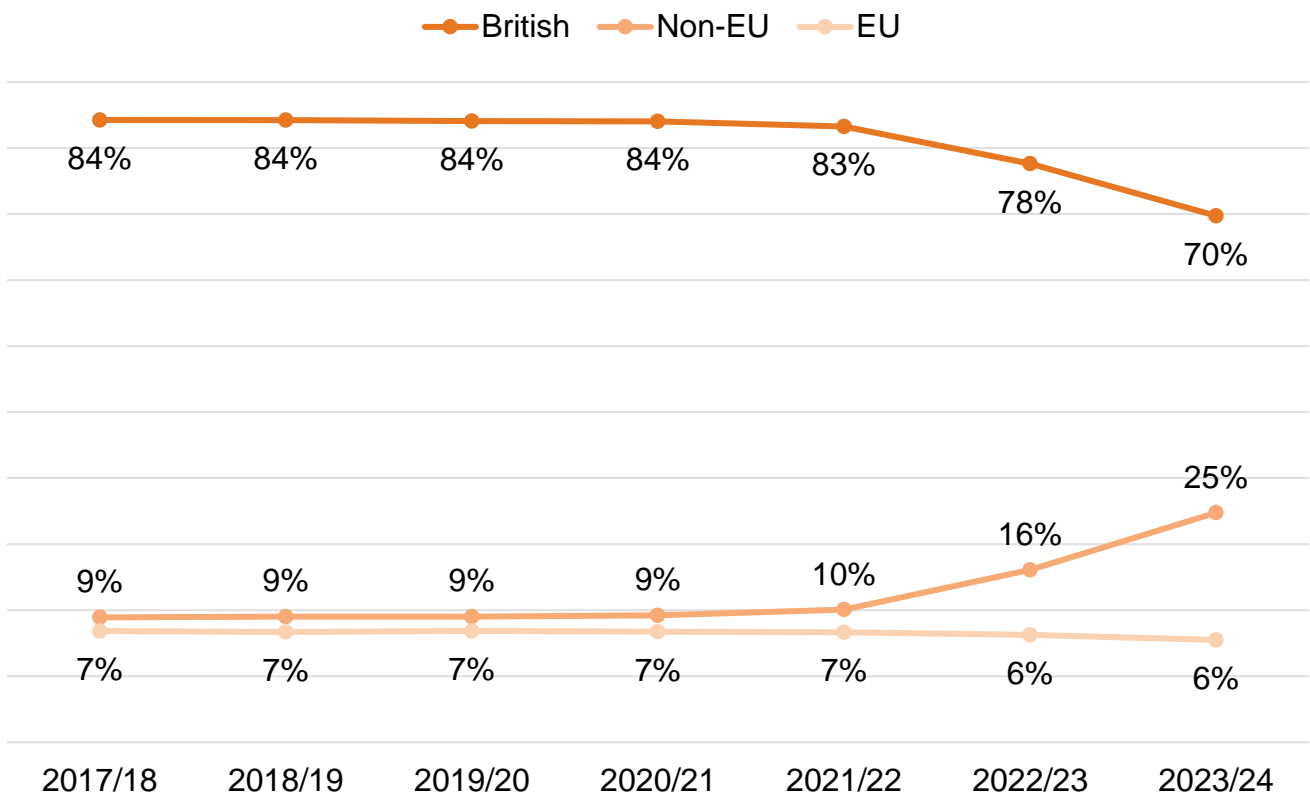
Around 79% of workers in domiciliary care services identified as female and 21% identified as male. The proportion of male workers was the same in managerial roles and direct care providing roles. This was also the same as the whole adult social care workforce.

Around 24% of the workforce were aged 55 and above in 2023/24, and this proportion has increased from 22% in 2017/18. The average age of workers in domiciliary care services in 2023/24 was 43.0, this was similar for care homes without nursing (43.3) and care home with nursing services (43.2).

The nationality distribution of the workforce in domiciliary care services was 70% British, 25% non-EU and 6% EU. The proportion of British workers in domiciliary care services remained similar between 2017/18 and 2021/22, however since 2021/22 the proportion of British workers has decreased from 83% to 70% in 2023/24, this equates to a decrease of around 35,000 workers. Over the same period the proportion of non-EU workers increased from 10% to 25%, an increase of around 90,000 workers.

**Chart 5. Estimated proportion of workers by nationality, independent sector only, 2017/18 to 2023/24**

Source: Skills for Care estimates



## 5 Pay

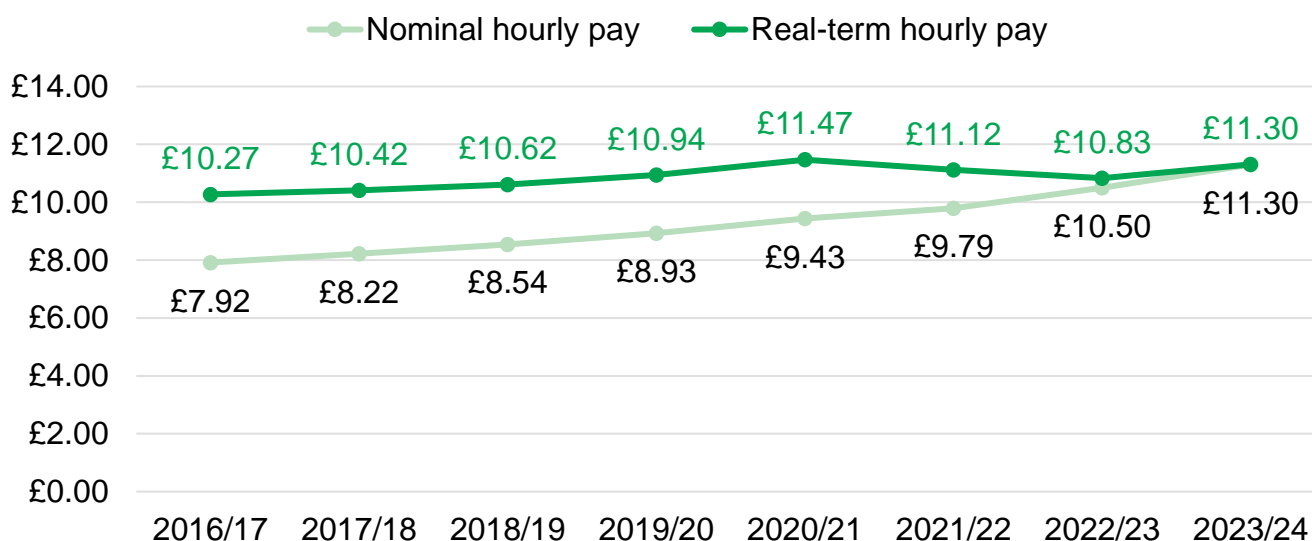
This section shows the mean hourly pay trend of care workers at domiciliary care services in the independent sector, in both nominal and real-term amounts. Nominal pay rates are not adjusted for inflation and present the rates as they were in each year. 'Real terms' means that pay rates have been adjusted to take inflation into account and have been calculated using the Consumers Price Index (CPI) (the official measure of inflation of consumer prices in the UK) and expressed in prices as at March 2024. As an example, a worker's wage may have increased by 2% in a year. However, if inflation also rises by 2% then the worker will be no better off as a result of the pay rise; the nominal pay rise was 2%, but in real terms, the 'rise' would have been zero.

Chart 6 shows the increase in nominal and real term hourly pay since 2016/17, when the National Living Wage (NLW) was introduced. The mean nominal hourly rate of care workers has increased every year from £7.92 in 2016/17 to £11.30 in 2023/24, an increase of 43% over the whole period.

Their real-term pay also increased every year up to 2020/21, therefore the nominal increases were usually above the change in inflation. However, their real-term pay has decreased by 1% between 2020/21 and 2023/24, which means care workers are paid relatively less now compared to three years ago.

**Chart 6. Average mean nominal and real-term hourly pay of care workers in domiciliary care services, independent sector only, 2016/17 to 2023/24**

Source: Skills for Care estimates



## Further information

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. In addition to this publication, we produce and analyse workforce estimates at national, regional and local levels. This allows for greater scrutiny of the sector and its workforce and helps support local decision making in these geographical areas.

### National information

This summary accompanies our flagship publication: [The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England](#). This report analyses the size and structure of the workforce, as well as key workforce characteristics and additional analysis on international recruitment and factors affecting turnover and CQC ratings.

### Regional information

We have data visualisations and written reports which provide an annual overview of adult social care services and the workforce in each region. We have two data visualisations that show regional information: one looks at one region at a time, the other looks at key variables and compares the nine regions. Alongside these data visualisations are nine regional written summaries.

### Local area information

There are six pages of local area information on our website, these are split by either local authority area or NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) geography area.

- Individual areas: we have one report looking at the workforce in each local authority area or ICB area, one at a time.
- Our comparison reports compare key variables across local areas or ICB areas
- Each local area has a written summary report, summarising the workforce statistics.
- Our 'My ICB area (MH and LD&A)' report shows the latest information from the ASC-WDS for the mental health and learning disability and/or autism workforces, split into ICB areas.

We also publish [tracking information](#) about the adult social care workforce in key areas on a monthly and quarterly basis. These trackers do not use weighted estimates (as shown in our other annual reports) but do give a good indication of moving trends through the year. Trackers are available for recruitment and retention, filled posts and international recruitment.

To access all these reports and accompanying data visualisations, please refer to the relevant pages on our [Workforce Intelligence website](#).

For bespoke analysis of workforce information or to answer any specific questions you have about the adult social care workforce please contact us at [analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk).



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