Local Government Capacity Survey – Adult Social Care

Research Report

October to January 2024

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Background

As part of the drive to improve workforce information, the LGA has collected quantitative and qualitative workforce data across different service areas, including adult social care. This report is part of that work, and additionally in response to heads of adult social care highlighting challenges in recruiting, developing and retaining staff across the different adult social care specialisms, and increasing pressures facing adult social care teams.

All directors of adult social care, principal adult social care workers, or an equivalent position, in all English local councils with responsibility for adult social care, (153 in total), were asked to complete an online survey between October and December 2023. The final overall response rate was 41 per cent (63 councils). Although district councils work closely with their upper-tier partners and play a crucial role in supporting people's wellbeing, they are not included in these figures as adult social care statutory duties rest with upper tier councils in two-tier area. By council type, the response rate was highest from county councils (48 per cent) and lowest from unitary authorities (35 per cent). Regionally, the response was highest from councils in the East Midlands (60 per cent) and lowest from councils in the East of England (18 per cent).

Key findings

- As of 1 October 2023, there were roughly 63,370 full-time equivalent (FTE) adult social care staff. The average council employed approximately 427 FTE adult social care professionals.

- There were an estimated 10,060 vacant FTE posts, at an average of 66 per council.

- 16 per cent of FTE adult social care roles were vacant on 1 October 2023.

- The most common adult social care roles in local councils were adult social care or sensory care workers who were not professionally qualified (99 per cent).

- Seventy-five per cent of respondents said that the job roles they most often had vacancies for were adult social care or sensory care workers.

- Eighty-seven per cent of respondents reported the most difficult job role to recruit staff for permanently were qualified social workers working in mental health services.

- Fifty-five per cent reported that leaving for more pay elsewhere was the reason they had been given by their adult social care employees for leaving and 54 per cent stated this about retirement.

- The average turnover rate for adult social care staff in the 12 months prior to 1

October 2023 among English councils was 12 per cent.

- Fifty-two per cent of councils reported that, in 2022/23, permanent staff had left to take up temporary work.

- Forty-eight per cent of councils stated that they had, in the last three years, made use of consultancy in order to undertake projects that would previously have been undertaken by in-house staff.

- Eighty-eight per cent of respondents reported that their council made use of agency staff very or fairly often.

- There were an estimated of 4,620 FTE agency staff working as adult social care workers in local councils. This represents around 30 FTE agency staff per council.

- There was a total of 480 FTE agency project team members working in adult social care teams, around three per council.

- The most common reason for councils using agency staff was to cover long-term absence in the team (88 per cent).

- Councils spent approximately £277 million on agency staff in the 2022/23 financial year. This represents an average of £1.8 million per council.

Introduction

As part of the drive to improve workforce information, the LGA has collected quantitative and qualitative workforce data across different service areas, including adult social care. This is in addition to heads of adult social care having highlighted challenges in recruiting, developing, and retaining staff across all adult social care specialisms, as well as the increasing pressures facing adult social care teams. Accordingly, the LGA conducted a survey of English local councils in order to collect key workforce data. This report presents the data from the LGA's local government workforce capacity survey, specifically about their adult social care services.

Directors of adult social care or principal adult social care officers (or equivalent position) in all English councils with responsibility for adult social care (153) were asked to complete an online survey between October and December 2023. The final overall response rate was 41 per cent (62 councils).

Methodology

The survey was conducted by the LGA's Research and Information Team using an online questionnaire. An email containing a unique link was sent to directors of adult social care or principal adult social care officers (or equivalent position) in all English: county, London borough, metropolitan district, and unitary councils (153 in total).

The survey was available to complete online from October to December 2023. The final overall response rate was 41 per cent (62 councils).

Data has been weighted by region and council type to get a full representation of all social care councils in England. The number provided for the base for the tables below refers to the actual (unweighted**)** number of respondents who answered each question.

Because not all councils responded to the survey, numerical figures had to be imputed for those councils which did not respond. This was done by calculating the numerical figures for each respondent council as rates relative to population, taking the averages of these rates for each region and authority type, and attributing the relevant averages to non-respondent councils before multiplying them by the non-respondent councils' populations. This allowed the LGA to estimate totals for each figure across England, even though not all councils in England participated.

Notes

Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question and the number in brackets refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered. Please note that bases vary

throughout the survey, as not all respondents answered all questions.

Where the response base is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore, where this is the case in this report, the non-percentage values are reported, in brackets, alongside the percentage values.

Throughout the report, percentages in figures and tables may add to more or less than 100 per cent due to rounding.

Throughout the report, where the average is provided it refers to the mean.

Response rate

Table 1 shows, by council type, the response rate was highest from county councils (48 per cent) and lowest from unitary authorities (35 per cent).

Table 1: Response rate by type of authority

Type of authority	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
County	21	10	48
London borough	33	15	45
Metropolitan district	36	15	42
Unitary authority	63	22	35

Regionally, as shown in Table 2, response was highest from councils in the East Midlands (60 per cent) and lowest from councils in the East of England (18 per cent).

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
East	11	2	18
East Midlands	10	6	60
Greater London	33	15	45
North East	12	5	42
North West	24	11	46
South East	19	7	37
South West	15	8	53
West Midlands	14	6	43
Yorkshire and the Humber	15	3	20

Local government capacity survey – Adult social care

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

Outsourced and shared services

Respondents were asked whether their adult social care team was outsourced. Five per cent reported that their council had an outsourced adult social care service, and 95 per cent said it did not.

Table 3: Is your adult social care team outsourced?

	All councils %
Yes	5
No	95

Unweighted base: all councils (63)

Seventeen per cent of respondents reported their adult social care team was shared with one or more other councils and 83 per cent said it was not.

Table 4: Is any part of your adult social care team a shared service between more than one authority?

	All councils %
Yes	17
No	83

Unweighted base: all councils (59)

Staff numbers and status

Staff budgeted for at 1 April 2023

Respondents were asked to provide the number of posts, in full-time equivalent (FTE), which their council had budgeted for, as of 1 April 2023. The information provided by respondents was used to estimate an overall total number of FTE adult social care staff across England, as well as an average number of adult social care staff per council. This was achieved by using the data provided by councils in the survey then then imputing data for the authorities which had not submitted a return. In this case for a missing council, their data was calculated by taking a mean of their region, a mean of their council type then taking an average of those two figures. This process was repeated across all missing councils so each had an imputed response. The same method was applied across questions which required a numeric response.

As Table 5 shows, councils across England were estimated to have budgeted for 65,830 adult social care staff for the 2023/24 financial year. This equated to an average of 433 adult social care staff per council. Across all councils, the most common roles were non-professionally qualified adult social care or sensory care workers (99 per council), followed by professionally qualified care workers (88 per council).

Table 5: In total, how many posts were budgeted for within the adult social care team on 1 April 2023? England total and average (mean) per council.

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	65,830	433
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	6,220	41
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	13,370	88
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	2,980	20
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	15,030	99
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	3,380	22
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	140	1
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	1,460	10
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	1,890	12
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	240	2
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	3,090	20
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	18,020	119

Unweighted base: all councils (44). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total. Averages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Adult social care staffing numbers

Respondents were asked to report the number of adult social care posts at their council as of 1 October 2023, both in terms of headcount and FTE. This included both filled and vacant posts. Their responses were used to estimate overall levels of

local council adult social care staff across England. Staffing levels for councils which did not respond to the survey or to these questions were estimated based upon the average levels reported by respondents of the same region and authority type, weighted according to their resident population.

As shown on Table 6, as of 1 October 2023, there were 63,370 FTE adult social care staff working in English local councils. The average council employed approximately 417 FTE adult social care professionals. The most common FTE staff were adult social care or sensory care workers who were not qualified (99 per council) and professionally qualified adult social care or sensory care workers (88 per council). Third most common was director, deputy director, principal social worker and team leaders (41 per council).

Skills for Care regularly conduct workforce studies of adult social care, including care workers employed by local authorities. Unlike the workforce data collected by Skills for Care, this study excluded administrative staff. Moreover, this project used other research and analysis methods, and is generally different in scope when compared with Skills for Care's research. Consequently, the results between this study and Skills for Care are not directly comparable.

Table 6: Total adult social care staff FTE at 1 October 2023. England total and average (mean) per council.

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	63,370	417
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	6,200	41
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	13,390	88
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	3,150	21
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	14,990	99
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	3,260	21
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	32	0
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	1,710	11
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	2,200	14
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	306	2
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	3,130	21
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	15,010	99

Unweighted base: all councils (44). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total. Averages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

As shown on Table 7, as of 1 October 2023 there was an approximate total headcount of 66,330 adult social care professionals working in local councils. The average council employed approximately 436 adult social care workers. The most common roles were adult social care or sensory care workers who were not professionally qualified (99 per council) followed by professionally qualified adult social care or sensory care workers (83 per council).

Table 7: Total adult social care staff headcount at 1 October 2023. England total and average (mean) per council.

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	66,330	436
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	6,740	44
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	12,630	83
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	3,140	21
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	18,410	99
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	3,260	21
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	18	0
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	1,790	12
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	1,870	12
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	336	2
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	3,650	24
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	14,510	95

Unweighted base: all councils (38). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total. Averages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Breakdown and vacancy rates

Respondents were asked to provide a breakdown of their adult social care posts in FTE according to whether staff were present in the post (including those on annual leave or sick leave), vacant, long-term absent, or of another status.

Table 8 shows that there were 48,490 adult social care staff estimated to be in post across local councils in England, at an average of 319 per council. Table 9 shows that there were around 10,060 vacant FTE posts, at an average of 66 per council.

Table 8: How many (in FTE) were filled posts where the staff member is present (this includes those on annual leave and short-term parental leave or sick leave) on 1 October 2023? England total and average (mean) per council.

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	48,490	319
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	5,290	35
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	9,020	59
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	2,190	14
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	11,940	79
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	2,220	15
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	20	0
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	1,400	9
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	1,430	9
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	130	1
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	2,660	17
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	12,210	80

Unweighted base: all councils (44). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total. Averages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 9: How many (in FTE) were vacant (even if covered by agency staff) on 1 October 2023? England total and average (mean) per council.

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	10,060	66
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	670	4
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	2,900	19
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	640	4
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	1,820	12
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	750	5
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	10	0
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	230	2
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	520	3
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	160	1
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	350	2
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	2,000	13

Unweighted base: all councils (41). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total. Averages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 10 shows there were an estimated 3,360 FTE adult social care posts where staff were long-term absent either through parental leave or sickness. This means the average English council had 22 FTE absent members of staff. Smaller numbers of posts had an incumbent who was given an 'other' status. Table 11 shows that 1,040 FTE posts had an 'other' status, with an average of seven per council.

Table 10: How many (in FTE) were posts where the staff member is absent though long-term parental leave or long-term sickness on 1 October 2023?

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	3,360	22
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	180	1
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	810	5
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	170	1
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	1,000	7
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	190	1
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	0	0
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	80	1
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	110	1
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	10	0
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	100	1
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	710	5

Unweighted base: all councils (40). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total.

Table 11: How many (in FTE) were posts with an 'other' status on 1 October 2023?

	Estimated England total	Per council
Total	1,040	7
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	17	0
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	580	4
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	130	1
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	130	1
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	80	1
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	0	0
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	0	0
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	110	1
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	0	0
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	0	0
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	0	0

Unweighted base: all councils (18). Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest 10. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total.

Dividing the reported numbers of posts vacant by the total number of FTE posts provided vacancy rates for each type of position for each council.

Table 12 shows the average vacancy rates for adult social care staff posts, overall and by role type. This demonstrates that approximately 16 per cent of FTE adult social care roles were vacant on 1 October 2023. By type of role, the vacancy rate

was highest among occupational therapists working in learning disability services (52 per cent) and occupational therapists working in mental health services (36 per cent). However, given that these groups of social care staff are relatively small in number (see Table 6), these estimates are less reliable than those roles for which larger numbers are applicable. The vacancy rates for qualified social workers across adult social care or sensory care, mental health services, and learning disability services had the next highest vacancy rates and were more likely to be accurate statistics (24, 23, and 22 per cent respectively). The job role with the lowest vacancy rate was that of director, deputy director, principal social worker, or team leader (10 per cent).

Table 12: Adult social care staff post vacancy rates at 1 October 2023

	Average (mean) vacancy rate %
Total	16
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	11
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers	22
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists	20
Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker	12
Mental health services - Qualified social workers	23
Mental health services - Occupational therapists	36
Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	13
Learning disability services - Qualified social workers	24
Learning disability services - Occupational therapists	52
Learning disability services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers	11
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	13

Unweighted base: all councils (18-44). Note: Averages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Respondents were asked, over the previous three years, for which groups of staff they most often had vacancies. The group of staff councils most often had vacancies for were adult social care or sensory care workers (75 per cent). Following on, 63 per cent of councils reported that they most often had vacancies in mental health services and 42 per cent reported the same regarding learning disability services. Directors, deputy directors, principal social workers, or team leaders were the roles councils were least likely to have reported having vacancies for (13 per cent).

Table 13: Over the last three years, for which groups of staff do you most often have vacancies?

	All councils %
Adult social care / Sensory care services - workers	75
Mental health services - workers	63
Learning disabilities services - workers	42
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	13
Other (please specify)	50
No vacancies	0

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Fifty per cent of respondents stated an 'other' group of staff which most often had vacancies over the previous three years. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Occupational therapists
- Social workers
- Approved Mental Health Professionals

Following on from the previous question, respondents were asked which single vacancy their council found most difficult to fill over the previous three years. Similar to the responses to the questions above, positions in adult social care or sensory care were most likely to be considered the most difficult to fill (34 per cent). Twenty-two per cent of councils reported that vacancies in mental health services were the most difficult to fill. Seven per cent stated this about those working in learning disabilities services, and two per cent of respondents said this about directors, principal social worker, or team leader roles.

Table 14: Over the last three years, what is the single vacancy you found / are finding most difficult to fill?

	All councils %
Adult social care / Sensory care services – workers	34
Mental health services – workers	22
Learning disabilities services – workers	7
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	2
Other (please specify)	33
No vacancies	0

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Thirty-three per cent of respondents said that an 'other' vacancy was the single most difficult to fill over the last three years. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Occupational therapists
- Social workers
- Approved Mental Health Professionals

Respondents were asked for how long they had had their single most difficult vacancy to fill, which they had selected in the previous question. Eight per cent of councils reported that it was for less than six months, and 22 per cent stated it was for six months or more but less than a year. In total, 31 per cent of councils' single most difficult post to fill was vacant for less than one year. Thirty-one per cent of councils had their single most difficult to fill vacancy for a year or more but less than three years, 11 per cent stated it was three years or more but less than five years and 13 per cent said it was for five years or more. In summation, 58 percent of councils' single most difficult to fill vacancy lasted for one year or more.

Table 15: For how long did you have / have you had this vacancy?

	All councils %
Less than one year	**31**
One year or more	**56**
Less than six months	8
Six months or more but less than a year	22
A year or more but less than three years	31
Three years or more but less than five years	11
Five years or more	13
Don't know / Not applicable	13

Unweighted base: all councils (57)

Respondents were asked what the main reasons were that they had these vacancies for the amount of time they had reported in the previous question. By far the most common reason given was difficulties recruiting staff of the right skills or experience (95 per cent). This was followed by a new appointment being unable to start quickly (12 per cent), and an overall council recruitment freeze or managed vacancy policy (11 per cent).

Table 16: What are the main reasons why you had / have had the vacancies for this long?

	All councils %
Difficulties recruiting staff of the right skills/experience	95
New appointment unable to start quickly	12
Overall council recruitment freeze / managed vacancy policy	11
Pending a restructure	2
Cost of recruitment has delayed it	0
Other	17
Don't know	0

Unweighted base: all councils (45)

Seventeen per cent of respondents stated an 'other' reason why it had taken as long as it did to fill their single most difficult to fill vacancy. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Competition with the NHS

- Shortages of care workers nationally

- Ageing workforce

- Ageing population

- Unable to compete on salary.

Respondents were asked, in the last three years, whether or not they had made use of consultancy in order to undertake projects that would previously have been undertaken by in-house staff. Forty-eight per cent of councils stated that they had done this and 47 per cent had not.

Table 17: In the last three years, have you made use of consultancy or not in order to undertake projects that would previously have been undertaken by in-house staff?

	All councils %
Yes	48
No	47
Don't know	5

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Respondents whose councils had made use of consultancy to undertake projects which would previously have been undertaken by in-house staff were asked what kind of consultancy work was undertaken. Twenty-seven councils responded to this question, which are broken down into the themes below:

- **Transformation**: Eight respondents reported the kind of consultancy work undertaken was related to transformation, streamlining services, and development.

- **Audit and review support:** Eight respondents stated that the consultancy work undertaken was to support the adult social care team with its annual review or audit.

- **Workforce**: Four respondents said that consultancy work undertaken was related to HR and recruitment.

- **Social work**: Four respondents said that the kind of consultancy work undertaken was related to social work.

- **Projects**: Four respondents reported that project work was the kind of consultancy work undertaken.

Recruitment and retention of staff

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult their council found it to recruit permanent staff for different roles in the adult social care team over the previous three years. The type of adult social care roles which were most difficult to recruit for were qualified social workers working in mental health services (87 per cent). This was followed by qualified social workers or occupational therapists working in adult social care or sensory care services (both 84 per cent). A similar proportion, 80 per cent, reported it was difficult to recruit qualified social workers working in learning disability services. Forty-nine per cent stated an 'other' kind of adult social care officer was difficult to recruit.

Table 18: Over the last three years, how easy or difficult has your council found it to <u>recruit</u> permanent staff for each of the following roles in the adult social care team?

	Very or fairly difficult	Not very or not at all	Very difficult	Fairly difficult	Not very difficult	Not difficult at all	Don' t know / not recruited
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	**28**	**69**	0	28	45	24	3
Adult social care / Sensory care services – Qualified social workers	**84**	**11**	52	32	10	2	5
Adult social care / Sensory care services – Occupational therapists	**84**	**6**	53	31	6	0	10
Adult social care / Sensory care services – Not professionally qualified care / social worker	**32**	**59**	8	25	47	12	8

Mental health services – Qualified social workers	**87**	**8**	60	27	7	1	5
Mental health services – Occupational therapists	**28**	**6**	17	11	6	0	66
Mental health services – Not professionally qualified care / social workers	**26**	**47**	6	19	39	7	28
Learning disability services – Qualified social workers	**80**	**9**	46	34	8	2	10
Learning disability services – Occupational therapists	**32**	**5**	14	18	5	0	63
Learning disability services – Not professionally qualified care / social workers	**27**	**48**	3	24	37	11	25
Other adult social care workers – but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	**49**	**39**	13	36	33	5	12

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Respondents were asked, over the last three years, how easy or difficult their council had found it to retain permanent adult social care staff across different roles. Respondents were most likely to report that it was very or fairly difficult to retain qualified social workers working in mental health services (81 per cent). Seventy-

three per cent reported that it was difficult to permanently retain qualified social workers working in adult social care or sensory care services. The third most common job role that was difficult to retain staff for was occupational therapists working in adult social care (57 per cent). Forty-one per cent of respondents highlighted that an 'other' position was very or fairly difficult to retain staff for.

Table 19: Over the last three years, how easy or difficult has your council found it to <u>retain</u> permanent staff for each of the following roles in the adult social care team?

	Very or fairly difficult	Not very or not at all difficult	Very difficult	Fairly difficult	Not very difficult	Not difficult at all	Don't know
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	**23**	**73**	2	21	44	29	3
Adult social care / Sensory care services – Qualified social workers	**73**	**24**	16	57	18	6	3
Adult social care / Sensory care services – Occupational therapists	**57**	**31**	22	35	29	2	12
Adult social care / Sensory care services – Not professionally qualified care / social workers	**31**	**62**	3	28	47	15	7
Mental health services – Qualified social workers	**81**	**14**	24	57	11	3	5
Mental health services – Occupational	**19**	**16**	9	10	15	2	64

therapists							
Mental health services – Not professionally qualified care / social workers	**19**	**57**	2	17	54	4	24
Learning disability services – Qualified social workers	**51**	**33**	20	32	29	3	16
Learning disability services – Occupational therapists	**17**	**22**	7	10	21	2	60
Learning disability services – Not professionally qualified care / social workers	**24**	**56**	3	21	44	12	20
Other adult social care workers – but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	**41**	**46**	9	32	44	2	13

Unweighted base: all councils (57)

Respondents were asked what their adult social care team's current turnover rate was. This was based on employees who left the authority voluntarily or involuntarily in the 12 months prior to 1 October 2023. Table 20 shows the average turnover rate per council. This demonstrates that, on average, local council adult social care teams had a turnover of approximately 12 per cent.

Table 20: Current adult social care team turnover rate

	Average turnover rate %
Average per council	12

Unweighted base: all councils (53)

Respondents were asked whether their turnover rate had changed in the last three years. Thirty-two per cent of respondents reported that this rate had increased, and a similar percentage (28 per cent) said that it had decreased. Seventeen per cent said that their turnover rate had stayed the same over the last three years.

Table 21: Has your turnover rate changed or not over the last three years?

	All councils %
Increased	32
Stayed the same	17
Decreased	28
Don't know	24

Unweighted base: all councils (57)

Respondents were asked to report the main reasons they had been given by their adult social care employees for leaving. The most common reasons for leaving were for more pay (55 per cent) and retirement (54 per cent). Thirty-seven per cent said staff had left for better opportunities elsewhere followed by 31 per cent having reported this because of the workload. A similar proportion stated that they had left their council's adult social care service to work in a different sector (25 per cent) or due to personal commitments (22 per cent). Sixteen per cent reported that employees had left for a career change and slightly fewer said due to travel were equal (14 per cent). Fewer than 10 per cent of respondents reported that their adult social care employees had left because they wanted more flexibility (9 per cent), due to their relationship with their line manager or leadership (6 per cent), or member-officer relations (1 per cent).

Table 22: What have been the main reasons given by employees for leaving the service?

	All councils %
For more pay	55
Retirement	55
Better career opportunities	37
Workload	31
To work in a different sector (private or other parts of the public sector)	25
Personal commitments e.g. caring responsibilities	22
For career change	16
Travel	14
More flexibility (e.g. more home working; less rigid working patterns)	9
Relationship with line manager/leadership	6
Member-officer relations	1
Other (Please specify)	26
Don't know	10

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Twenty-six per cent of respondents stated an 'other' main reason given by employees as to why they have left the service. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Relocation

- To take up agency work

- Impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

Respondents were asked whether, in the 2022/23 financial year, any of their permanent staff had left to take up temporary work. Fifty-two per cent reported that some staff had left to take up temporary work. Eight per cent reported that none of their adult social care staff have done this.

Table 23: In 2022/23, did any of your permanent staff leave to take up temporary work?

	All councils %
Yes	52
No	8
Don't know	40

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Respondents who reported that employees had left to take up temporary work were asked what reasons were given by staff for this. By far the most common reason was that the pay was higher for agency work (84 per cent). The second most common reason was that agency work has greater flexibility (39 per cent). A similar percentage stated that it was because the workload was lower for agency work (18 per cent), they did not want a permanent role (16 per cent), and there was less administration for agency work (10 per cent). Four per cent stated it was because temporary work has less professional risk. Given that the base size for this question was quite low, any conclusions taken from this question must be interpreted with caution.

Table 24: What reasons, if any, did those staff give for preferring temporary work?

	All councils %
Pay is higher for agency work	84
Greater flexibility of work	39
Workload is lower for agency work	18
Didn't want a permanent role	16
Less administration for agency work	10
Less professional risk	4
Better career progression	0
Other (please specify)	8
Don't know	10

Unweighted base: all councils (30)

Respondents were asked what actions their councils had taken in order to help with recruitment and retention issues in their team. Ninety-three per cent of respondents reported that they were offering apprenticeships. A similar proportion reported that they have offered staff flexible working (93 per cent) or made use of agency staff (88

per cent). Seventy per cent had launched a targeted recruitment campaign from within the sector and 65 per cent had made use of secondments.

Table 25: What actions, if any, have you taken or are you taking to help with recruitment and retention issues generally in your adult social care team?

	All councils %
Apprenticeships	93
Flexible working	88
Agency staff	85
Targeted recruitment campaigns within the sector	70
Secondments	65
Personal development offers	55
Career frameworks/career grades	53
Market supplements or other pay augmentation	44
Creating a specific recruitment pipeline through education partnerships	42
Relocation packages	34
Graduate programme	30
Organisational redesign	27
Refer a friend' scheme	25
Targeted recruitment campaigns outside the sector	22
Job redesign	22
Retention payments	18
Government training schemes	16
"Golden hellos"	10
T-levels	3
Other (please specify)	20
None of the above	2
Don't know	2

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Twenty per cent of respondents stated an 'other' method used to tackle issues with recruitment and retention issues in their adult social care team. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- NHS partnership agreements

- Employed a recruitment co-ordinator

- Job fairs

- Work with the Jobcentre Plus and creating pre-employment programmes

- Internal transfer policy.

Respondents were asked which forms, if any, of collaboration with other councils' adult social care services their team undertook to help address recruitment challenges. The most common form of collaboration was pooling specialist knowledge (16 per cent), followed by sharing posts (8 per cent). Three per cent of councils mentioned sharing some services, although note that 17 per cent of councils had separately indicated their adult social care service was formally shared with another council, and two per cent shared the use of agency staff with other councils. Councils were most likely to have reported that they had not used any methods of collaboration with other councils (61 per cent).

Table 26: Which, if any, of the following forms of collaboration with other councils does your adult social care team undertake to help address recruitment challenges?

	All councils %
Pooling specialist knowledge	16
Shared posts	8
Shared services	3
Shared use of agency staff	2
Other	16
None of these	61

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Sixteen per cent of respondents stated an 'other' method used to collaborate with other councils to help address their recruitment challenges. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Coordinate with authorities to limit agency worker hourly rates

- Sharing of approved mental health professionals (AMHPs)

- Coordinating recruitment

- Secondments.

Agency staff

Respondents were asked how often, over the previous three years, their council had made use of agency staff in the adult social care team. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents reported that their council had made use of agency staff very or fairly often. Twelve per cent of respondents reported that they did not make use of agency staff very often. No respondents stated that they never used them.

Table 27: Over the last three years, how often would you say you make use of agency staff (excluding any in agency project teams) in your adult social care team?

	All councils %
Very or fairly often	**88**
Not very often or never	**12**
Very often	31
Fairly often	57
Not very often	12
Never	0

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Respondents were asked if their council's use of agency staff had increased or decreased over the last three years. Forty-nine per cent of councils reported that their use of agency staff has increased, and 15 per cent stated that it had decreased. Thirty-one per cent of respondents reported that agency staff use had remained the same over the last three years.

Table 28: Has your use of agency staff changed or not over the last three years?

	All councils %
Increased	49
Stayed the same	31
Decreased	15
Don't know	4

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Respondents were asked to report the number of agency staff employed in their adult social care team, both in terms of headcount and full-time equivalent. The agency staff figures reported by the respondents have been used to estimate an

overall total for the number of agency staff across England, as well as an average per council.

On the 1 October 2023, there were an estimated 6,600 agency staff working as adult social care workers in local councils. Twelve per cent of those working in adult social care teams in local councils were agency staff. On average, there were 43 agency staff working in adult social care teams per English council. There were an estimated 4,620 FTE agency staff working in adult social care roles in local councils. Ten per cent (FTE) of those working in adult social care teams in councils were agency staff. There was an average of 30 FTE agency staff working in adult social care teams per English council.

Table 29: How many agency staff did you have in place in your adult social care team on 1 October 2023? England total and averages per council.

	All councils
Headcount (No.)	6,600
Headcount (%)	12
Headcount (Average no. per council)	43
FTE (No.)	4,620
FTE (%)	10
FTE (Average no. per council)	30

Unweighted base: all councils (57). Note: estimated total agency staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. Estimated average agency staff numbers per council for England have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

The following tables refer to agency project teams who are defined as groups of agency staff who are employed as teams of two or more and not individually.

Respondents were asked how often, over the previous three years, their council had made use of agency project teams in their adult social care service. Eleven per cent of respondents reported that their council made use of agency project teams very or fairly often. Fifty-three per cent of respondents reported that their adult social care service did not make use of agency project teams very often and 36 per cent never used them.

Table 30: Over the last three years, how often would you say you make use of agency project teams in your adult social care team?

	All councils %
Very or fairly often	**11**
Not very often or never	**89**
Very often	6
Fairly often	5
Not very often	53
Never	36

Unweighted base: all councils (59)

Respondents were asked if their council's use of agency project teams had increased or decreased over the last three years. Twenty-one per cent of councils reported that the use of agency project teams has increased, and 17 per cent stated that it decreased. Fifty-one per cent of respondents reported that agency project team use had remained the same over the last three years.

Table 31: Has your use of agency project teams changed or not over the last three years?

	All councils %
Increased	21
Stayed the same	51
Decreased	17
Don't know	11

Unweighted base: all councils (59)

Respondents were asked to report the number of staff employed in agency project teams in their adult social care service, both in terms of headcount and full-time equivalent. The agency project team figures reported by the respondents have been used to estimate an overall total for the number of agency staff in project teams across England, as well as an average per council.

On the 1 October 2023, there were an estimated 600 staff in agency project teams working in adult social care in local councils. One per cent of those working in adult social care teams in local councils were in an agency project team. On average, there were four agency project team staff working in adult social care teams per English council. There were an estimated 480 FTE agency project team staff working in adult social care roles in local councils. One per cent (FTE) of those working in adult social care teams in councils were agency project team staff. There was an

average of three (FTE) agency project team members working in adult social care teams per council.

Table 32: How many staff in agency project teams did you have in place in your adult social care team on 1 October 2023? England total and averages per council.

	All councils
Headcount (No.)	600
Headcount (%)	1
Headcount (Average no. per council)	4
FTE (No.)	480
FTE (%)	1
FTE (Average no. per council)	3

Unweighted base: all councils (53). Note: estimated total agency staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest ten. Estimated average agency staff numbers per council for England have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Respondents were asked for the reasons that they used agency staff or agency project teams. The most common reason reported was to cover long-term absence in the team (88 per cent). The second most common reason was that the recruitment exercise did not generate enough candidates with the required skills (73 per cent). This was followed by 60 per cent of respondents who stated that the recruitment exercise did not generate enough candidates.

The most common reason for using agency project teams was to cover short-term work or a specific task only (39 per cent). This was followed by using them to cover an unprecedented workload (26 per cent). The third most common reason councils used agency project staff in their adult social care service was due to a lack of specialist knowledge available in-house (12 per cent).

Table 33: In general, for what reasons do you use agency staff or agency project teams?

	Agency staff %	Agency project team %
To cover long-term absence in the team	88	0
Recruitment exercise didn't generate enough candidates with the required skills	73	4
Recruitment exercise didn't generate enough candidates	60	4
To cover short-term absence in the team	42	0
To meet unprecedented demand	41	26
To cover short-term work/specific task only	41	39
Lack of capacity to recruit immediately/to cover during recruitment exercise	39	1
Specialist knowledge was not available in-house	29	12
Other (please specify)	5	9

Unweighted base: all councils (59)

Five per cent of respondents stated an 'other' reason why they had made use of agency staff and nine per cent stated this regarding agency project teams. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Staff absences
- To cover Approved Mental Health Professional shortages
- High demand on the service generally
- Demand on the hospital discharge team.

Respondents were asked to add any more information they had about the issues that led them to use agency staff over the last three years. Twenty-seven councils responded to this question, which are broken down into the themes below:

- **Deal with backlog or specific projects**: Twelve respondents stated that agency staff were used to clear the backlog or work on specific projects such as an organisational redesign. For example, one council said that

"agency staff are used where demand outweighs budgeted staffing for time bound periods. Project team currently used for backlog of reviews in Learning Disabilities team."

- **Recruitment of experienced staff**: Nine respondents stated that agency staff were hired as their council had difficulties in recruiting permanent staff with enough experience. One council reported that it was difficult to recruit "experienced social workers and home support workers".

- **Short-term or one-off grant funded posts**: Seven respondents reported that their council had made use of agency staff in short-term or one-off grant funded posts. According to one council the purpose of these posts is to "support with hospital discharge associated with winter pressures".

Respondents were asked how successful or not was the result of using agency staff in the last three years. Eighty-two per cent of respondents reported that it had been very or fairly successful. However, the majority of respondents had said it was fairly successful (8 per cent) rather than very successful (one per cent). Moreover, 14 per cent said it was not very successful though no respondents reported it had not been successful at all.

Table 34: Generally, how successful or not was the result of using agency staff in the last three years, in your opinion?

	All council %
Very or fairly successful	**82**
Not very or not successful at all	**14**
Very successful	1
Fairly successful	81
Not very successful	14
Not successful at all	0
Don't know	4

Unweighted base: all councils (59)

Respondents were asked what the impact has been of using agency staff on the delivery of the adult social care service or on outcomes. Forty-six councils responded to this question, which is broken down into the themes below:

- **Increased capacity**: Twenty-six respondents reported that agency staff helped increase their adult social care service's capacity. However, many of these respondents also stated that the use of agency staff presented some issues such as a high level of turnover.

- **Variable quality of agency staff**: Thirteen respondents said that the quality of agency staff varied when compared with permanent staff. For example, one council reported that "agency staff can be unreliable and less productive".

- **Negative impact of agency workers on permanent staff**: Eleven respondents reported that agency staff can have negative effects on existing staff. This includes a "lack of team building" and the difference in pay between agency and permanent staff.

- **Lack of consistency and continuity for residents**: Ten respondents reported that agency staff are more likely to leave at short notice meaning residents who receive support from the service are less likely to be familiar with the worker they have been assigned. According to one council this lack of consistency was an issue "where long term intervention is needed. This has been a particular issue in learning disabilities."

Respondents were asked how much their council spent on adult social care agency staff in the 2022/23 financial year. Councils spent approximately £277 million on agency staff in the 2022/23 financial year. This means the average spend during this period per council was roughly £1.8 million. Respondents were also asked to give their expenditure on agency staff from April to October 2023. This figure was then doubled to estimate a figure for the 2023/24 financial year. The estimated spend for all councils in England was £292 million. The predicted average spend on agency staff across all English councils was around £1.9 million.

Table 35: What was the expenditure on agency staff for the adult social care team? England total and average (mean) per council.

	Estimated England total	Per council
Expenditure on agency staff in 2022/23	£277,362,000	£1,813,000
Expenditure on agency staff in 1 April to 1 October 2023	£145,791,000	£953,000
Estimated expenditure on agency staff in the 2023/24 financial year	£291,581,000	£1,906,000

Unweighted base: all respondents (47) Note: estimated budgeted staff numbers for England have been rounded to the nearest thousand. This may cause the figures not to add up precisely to the total.

The survey asked respondents how easy or difficult their council had found it to recruit agency staff for each of the different roles in the adult social care team over the previous three years. Respondents were most likely to say it was very or fairly difficult to recruit agency staff to fill the roles in mental health services (74 per cent). A similar proportion reported that it was difficult to recruit agency staff for adult social care or sensory care roles (67 per cent) and positions providing learning disability

services (64 per cent). Fewer respondents (19 per cent) reported that it was difficult to recruit agency staff to fill director, deputy director, principal social worker, or team leader roles. Thirty-eight per cent reported that an 'other' adult social care team role was very or fairly difficult to recruit agency staff for.

Table 36: Over the last three years, how easy or difficult has your council found it to recruit agency staff for each of the following roles in the adult social care team?

	Very or fairly difficult	Not very or not at all difficult	Very difficult	Fairly difficult	Not very difficult	Not difficult at all	Don't know
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	**19**	**40**	0	19	32	8	42
Adult social care / Sensory care services	**67**	**20**	9	58	13	6	13
Mental health services	**74**	**8**	23	51	7	1	18
Learning disability services	**65**	**15**	23	42	3	12	20
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	**38**	**29**	8	30	21	8	33

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Future plans

Respondents were asked if their council had a specific adult social care workforce plan. Seventy-eight per cent reported that they had a workforce plan for adult social care staff, while 21 per cent stated their council did not.

Table 37: Does your council have a specific adult social care workforce plan, or not?

	All councils %
Yes, we have an adult social care workforce plan	78
No, we do not currently have an adult social care workforce plan	21
Don't know	1

Unweighted base: all councils (59)

Respondents were asked what workforce actions their council were undertaking within the adult social care team during the 2023/24 financial year. The most common workforce action being taken was increasing the number of apprenticeships (70 per cent). Fifty-two per cent of respondents said that their council had reduced the use of consultants or agencies. A lower percentage reported that their council had recruited more staff in specialist roles (38 per cent) and recruited more staff overall (36 per cent). Thirty per cent said that their council was making no substantive changes to staffing numbers.

Table 38: Which, if any, of the following workforce actions are you undertaking within your adult social care team during 2023/24?

	All councils %
Increasing apprenticeships	70
Reducing use of consultants or agencies	52
Recruiting more staff in specialist roles	38
Recruiting more staff overall	36
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	30
Recruitment freeze	14
Introducing graduate entry	14
Reducing staff numbers overall (through managing vacancies)	13
Reviewing the agency service provider	12
Introducing apprenticeships	12
Increasing use of agency staff	11
Making redundancies	7
Increasing use of consultancy	4
Decreasing apprenticeships	2
Other (please specify)	27
Don't know	0

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents stated an 'other' workforce action they had undertaken in the 2023/24 financial year. Below is a list of the most common 'other' responses that were given by respondents:

- Succession planning
- Career pathways
- Offering development opportunities.

Respondents were asked if they had undertaken any projections for the staffing numbers they would need in future years to meet anticipated demand for adult social care services. Thirty-six per cent of councils reported that they had undertaken staffing projections while 53 per cent said that they had not.

Table 39: Have you undertaken any projections of the staffing numbers you will need in future years to meet anticipated demand for adult social care services, or not?

	All councils %
Yes	36
No	53
Don't know	11

Unweighted: all councils (58)

Capacity to deliver services

Respondents were asked how confident they were that their council would have enough of the right staff to maintain their adult social care service adequately over the next year. Respondents were most likely to report they are very or fairly confident about having the right staff in their director, deputy director, principal social worker, or team leader roles (86 per cent). Fifty-seven per cent of respondents were confident about having the right staff in adult social care or sensory care positions and 53 per cent said this regarding roles in learning disability services. Forty-four per cent of councils said they were not very or not at all confident about having enough of the right staff in mental health roles.

Table 40: How confident or not are you that, over the next year, your council will have enough of the right staff (in terms of numbers and skills) to maintain the adult social care service adequately?

	Very or fairly confident	Not very or not at all confident	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Don't know
Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders	**86**	**13**	30	56	8	4	2
Adult social care / Sensory care services	**57**	**43**	8	49	37	6	0
Mental health services	**44**	**48**	4	40	40	8	8
Learning disability services	**53**	**40**	6	46	31	9	7
Other adult social care workers - but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers	**71**	**25**	7	64	20	5	4

Unweighted base: all councils (58)

Respondents were asked what their biggest workforce challenge was at the moment, and those that had reported their adult social care service is outsourced or a shared service were also asked this question. Fifty-six councils responded to this question, which are broken down into the themes below:

- **Recruitment and retention**: Forty-nine respondents reported an issue with recruiting experienced staff and retaining staff generally. According to respondents, recruiting and retaining social workers and occupational therapists has been particularly difficult. In particular, respondents highlighted that being unable to offer a competitive salary in comparison to,

for example, the NHS was the reason their authorities have had recruitment and retention issues.

- **Lack of capacity**: Ten respondents stated there is a lack of capacity in their adult social care service to cope with the level of demand. As one respondent reported, while recruiting staff was difficult, they were also experiencing increasing demand on their services due to an "ageing population and increasing complexity in relation to supporting people with drug and alcohol issues, dual diagnosis, self-neglect and fluctuating capacity".

- **Burnout**: Six respondents stated that many staff experienced or have started experiencing burnout. As one council stated, burnout was as a result of the "scale and pace of change or demands" in adult social care.

Respondents were asked if there was anything else about workforce capacity and the use of agency staff they would like to share. Thirty councils responded to this question, which are broken down into the themes below:

- **Cost of agency staff**: Nine respondents said there were issues associated with the cost of hiring agency staff. This, as one council reported, is due to councils having to pay a "premium" for agency staff. This extra cost becomes more pronounced when it was necessary for a council to make use of many agency workers. As one respondent stated, their spend on agency workers had significantly increased in 2023. This was as a result of commissioning agency staff to conduct "700 MHA or BIA [Mental Health Act or Best Interest Assessors] assessments to clear a backlog" which built up during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Experience and quality of agency staff**: Seven respondents reported that agency workers were often less qualified than permanent staff or were of a less consistent quality. For example, one respondent described agency staff as "less experienced and skilled" than permanent staff. Another responding council described how inconsistent the quality of agency workers was, having stated that some were "very good and others poor".

- **Recruitment and retention**: Six respondents reiterated that their council has had difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. Multiple councils reported that the current financial situation in local government has made it difficult to offer competitive salaries in order both to recruit and retain staff. Moreover, one council highlighted that the NHS can offer higher pay, meaning local councils cannot compete.

- **Limiting the use of agency staff**: Six respondents stated their council is attempting to limit or end their reliance on agency staff. One council reported that their method of reducing the number of agency workers was to hire them as permanent members of staff.

Annex A: Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. Use the 'previous' button at the bottom of the page if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

If you stop before completing the return, you can come back to this page using the link supplied in the email and you will be able to continue where you left off. To ensure your answers have been saved, click on the 'next' button at the bottom of the page that you were working on before exiting.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our privacy statement. We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

If you would like to see an overview of the questions before completing the survey online, you can access a PDF here.

We are collecting information to understand the capacity within adult social care teams, to assist councils and for discussion with central government.

Several of the questions list groups of staff where councils have previously identified they have experienced issues with capacity. We would be grateful if you could provide information for each of these groups, where possible.

For councils with a shared adult social care team, a single return is sufficient. Please write in the councils with which you share the service at the start of the questionnaire.

By 'adult social care team' we mean the team or teams of professionals working within the council who are directly responsible for the care provided to adults. This can also include the managers who oversee the adult social care team.

Please amend the details we have on record if necessary.

- Name
- Authority
- Job title
- Email address

Apart from internal audit, revenues and benefits, and posts mainly concerned with exchequer services, is your adult social care team outsourced?

- Yes

- No

If yes, please tell us which posts are outsourced with whom.

Is any part of your adult social care team a shared service between more than one authority?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please write in which parts and the names of the authorities that share the adult social care team with you.

Staff numbers and status

In total, how many posts were budgeted for within the adult social care team on 1 April 2023?

Please include all directly employed council staff (including partly qualified and trainee staff), whether the post is filled or not.

Please write in a full-time equivalent (FTE): for example, two posts in which both people work half-time counts as one post. Write '0' if there are no budgeted staff.

Where the same post conducts multiple job roles, or is a shared post between multiple councils, please use a rough estimate of the proportion allocated to each role. Please include staff based in service directorates.

- Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker

- Mental health services - Qualified social workers

- Mental health services - Occupational therapists

- Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers

- Learning disabilities services - Qualified social workers

- Learning disabilities services - Occupational therapists

FTE posts

And how many (in FTE) were classified under each of the following categories on 1 October 2023?

Please include all directly employed staff (including partly qualified and trainee staff).

Directly employed staff are all permanent, temporary and fixed-term staff, but exclude agency staff.

Column headings:

- Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - Qualified social workers

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - Occupational therapists

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - Not professionally qualified care / social worker

- Mental health services - Qualified social workers

- Mental health services - Occupational therapists

- Mental health services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers

- Learning disabilities services - Qualified social workers

- Learning disabilities services - Occupational therapists

- Learning disabilities services - Not professionally qualified care / social workers

- Other adult social care workers – but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers

Row headings:

- FTE of filled posts where the staff member is present (this includes those on annual leave and short-term parental leave or sick leave

- FTE of filled posts where the staff member is absent though long-term parental leave or long-term sickness (even if covered by agency staff)

- FTE of posts that are vacant (even if covered by agency staff)

- Other (please specify)

- Total FTE posts at 1 October 2023

- Total headcount at 1 October 2023 (please enter a whole number without a comma or decimal place)

Please specify the other category of staff you identified which make up the total.

Over the last three years, for which groups of staff do you most often have vacancies?

Please tick all that apply.

- Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders

- Adult social care / Sensory care services - workers

- Mental health services - workers

- Learning disabilities services - workers

- Other adult social care workers – but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers

- None of the above

Over the last three years, what is the single vacancy you found/ are finding most difficult to fill?

Please tick one box only.

- Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders
- Adult social care / Sensory care services - workers
- Mental health services - workers
- Learning disabilities services - workers
- Other adult social care workers – but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers
- None of the above

For how long did you have / have you had this vacancy?

- Less than six months
- Six months or more but less than a year
- A year or more but less than three years
- Three years or more but less than five years
- Five years or more
- Don't know/not applicable

What are the main reasons why you had / have had the vacancies for this long?

- Overall council recruitment freeze / managed vacancy policy
- Pending a restructure
- New appointment unable to start quickly
- Cost of recruitment has delayed it
- Difficulties recruiting staff of the right skills/experience
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

In the last three years, have you made use of consultancy or not, in order to undertake projects that would previously have been undertaken by in-house staff?

- Yes
- No

- Don't know

What sort of consultancy work was undertaken?

Recruitment and retention of staff

Over the last three years, how easy or difficult has your council found it to recruit permanent staff for each of the following roles in adult social care?

Please tick one on each row

Column headings:

- Very difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Not very difficult
- Not at all difficult
- Don't know / not recruited

Row headings:

- Director/deputy director/principal social worker/team leaders
- Adult social care / Sensory care services - workers
- Mental health services - workers
- Learning disabilities services - workers
- Other adult social care workers – but excluding administrative staff and assessment and reviewing officers

What is your adult social care team's current turnover rate?

Please base this on employees who left the authority either voluntarily or involuntarily in the 12 months to 1 October 2023 (including retirements, resignations, dismissals or redundancies). It should be calculated on headcount terms, not full-time equivalent terms. The sum is headcount of employees that have left, divided by the total number headcount, and then multiplied by 100.

Has your turnover rate changed or not over the last three years?

- Increased
- Stayed the same
- Decreased

- Don't know

What have been the main reasons given by employees for leaving the service?

- To work in a different sector (private or other parts of the public sector)
- For more pay
- Relationship with line manager/leadership
- Better career opportunities
- For career change
- More flexibility (e.g. more home working; less rigid working patterns)
- Retirement
- Personal commitments e.g. caring responsibilities
- Travel
- Workload
- Member-officer relations
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

In 2022/23, did any of your permanent staff leave to take up agency work?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

What reasons, if any, did those staff give for preferring agency work?

- Didn't want a rmanent role
- Pay is higher for agency work
- Less professional risk
- Workload is lower for agency work
- Less administration for agency work
- Greater flexibility of work
- Better career progression
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

What actions, if any, have you taken or are you taking to help with recruitment and retention issues generally in your adult social care team?

Please tick all that apply

- Market supplements or other pay augmentation
- Relocation packages
- Targeted recruitment campaigns within the sector
- Targeted recruitment campaigns outside the sector
- Career frameworks/career grades
- Personal development offers
- "Golden hellos"
- Job redesign
- Flexible working
- Retention payments
- Organisational redesign
- Secondments
- Apprenticeships
- T-levels
- Agency staff
- Government training schemes
- Creating a specific recruitment pipeline through education partnerships
- Graduate programme
- 'Refer a friend' scheme
- Other (please specify below)
- None of the above
- Don't know

Which, if any, of the following forms of collaboration with other councils does your adult social care team undertake to help address recruitment challenges?

Please tick all that apply.

- Shared posts
- Pooling service knowledge
- Shared services
- Shared use of interims
- Other (please specify)
- None of these

Agency staff

We know that one of the ways of dealing with recruitment and retention issues is through the use of agency staff, and the following questions ask about this in more detail, for key areas of adult social care teams.

Over the last three years, how often would you say you make use of agency staff in your adult social care team?

- Very often - we are heavily reliant on them, and the service would run inadequately without them

- Fairly often - we regularly rely on them to ensure the continuous smooth-running of the service

- Not very often - we use them occasionally for specific tasks or at points of increased demand or low capacity

- Never

Has your use of agency staff changed or not over the last three years?

- Increased

- Stayed the same

- Decreased

- Don't know

How many agency staff did you have in place in your adult social care team on 1 October 2023, in terms of:

- Headcount

- Full-time equivalent

In general, for what reasons do you use agency staff?

Please tick all that apply.

Column heads

- Agency staff

- Agency project teams

Row headings

- Recruitment exercise didn't generate enough candidates (number available for interview generally was low)

- Recruitment exercise didn't generate enough candidates with the required skills (number appointable with required experience was low)

- To cover short-term absence in the team

- To cover long-term absence in the team

- Post was to cover short-term work/specific task only

- To reduce adult social care casework backlog

- To meet unprecedented demand

- Lack of capacity to recruit immediately/to cover during recruitment exercise

- Specialist knowledge was not available in-house

- Other (please specify)

- Don't know

Please add any more information you have about the issues that led you to use agency staff over the last three years.

Generally, how successful or not was the result of using agency staff in the last three years, in your opinion?

- Very successful
- Fairly successful
- Not very successful
- Not at all successful

What, in your opinion, has been the impact of using agency staff on the delivery of the adult social care service or on outcomes?

For the 2022/23 financial year, what was the expenditure on agency staff for the adult social care team?

Please answer using whole pounds, for example 1000 rather than 1k

- Expenditure on agency/interim staff in 2022/23
- Expenditure on agency/interim staff from 1 April to 1 October 2023

Over the last three years, how easy or difficult has your council found it to recruit agency staff for each of the following roles in adult social care?

Column headings:

- Very difficult
- Fairly difficult

- Not very difficult
- Not at all difficult
- Don't know / not tried

Row headings:

- Head of Service for Environmental Health
- Food Safety Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Health and Safety Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Environmental Protection Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Housing Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Animal Control / Welfare Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Other adult social care team staff – but excluding administrative staff

Future plans

Does your council have a specific adult social care workforce plan, or not?

- Yes, we have a adult social care workforce plan
- No, we do not currently have a adult social care workforce plan
- Don't know

Which, if any, of the following workforce actions are you undertaking within your adult social care team during 2023/24?

Please tick all that apply.

- Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers
- Recruiting more staff overall
- Making redundancies
- Reducing staff numbers overall (through managing vacancies)
- Recruitment freeze
- Recruiting more staff in specialist roles
- Increasing use of consultancy
- Increasing use of agency staff
- Reducing use of consultants or agencies
- Reviewing the agency service provider
- Introducing graduate entry
- Introducing apprenticeships
- Increasing apprenticeships
- Decreasing apprenticeships
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

Have you undertaken any projections of the staffing numbers you will need in future years to meet anticipated demand for adult social care services, or not?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please write in the estimated increase on 2023/24 FTE you will need in the following time periods to meet anticipated demand.

Please write in the additional number of FTE needed. Enter 'DK' if you do not know.

- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years

Capacity to deliver services

How confident or not are you that, over the next year, your council will have enough of the right staff (in terms of numbers and skills) to maintain the adult social care service adequately?

Column headings:

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- Don't know

Row headings:

- Head of Service for Environmental Health
- Food Safety Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Health and Safety Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Environmental Protection Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Housing Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Animal Control / Welfare Officers (including heads and team leaders)
- Other adult social care team staff – but excluding administrative staff

What is your biggest workforce challenge at the moment?

Is there anything else about workforce capacity and use of agency staff you would like to share with us?