

A summary of the adult social care sector and workforce in Somerset 2023/24



Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England. We work with employers, Government, and partners to ensure social care has the right people, skills, and support required to deliver the highest quality care and support, now and in the future. Our role is to respond and adapt to the emerging trends and needs within social care, using data and evidence to drive forward widescale change.

The information within this summary has been produced by Skills for Care using the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS). We use the data collected by the ASC-WDS to create workforce models that, in turn, allow for estimates of the workforce requirements for the sector.

Across England, the vacancy rate has decreased compared to last year and the number of filled posts has increased. During this period international recruitment increased which has impacted these trends.

Workers in Somerset had on average 9.6 years of experience in the sector and 72% of the workforce had been working in the sector for at least three years.

We have many resources and tools available to help. Please visit our [values-based recruitment](#) page for more information. Skills for Care have also collaborated with the adult social care sector and people who draw on care and support to develop a [Workforce Strategy](#), which includes [attraction recommendations and commitments](#).

Employment information

We estimate Somerset had 16,000 adult social care filled posts in the local authority and independent sectors. These included 1,300 managerial roles, 700 regulated profession roles, 12,000 direct care (including 10,000 care workers), and 2,300 other-non-care proving roles.

The average number of sickness days taken in the last year in Somerset was 3.7, (4.9 in South West and 5.3 across England). With an estimated directly employed workforce of 15,000, this means employers in Somerset lost approximately 55,000 days to sickness in 2023/24.

Over half of the workforce (55%) usually worked full-time hours in Somerset and 45% were part-time.

Less than a quarter (17%) of the workforce were on zero-hours contracts.

Chart 1. Proportion of workers on zero hours contracts by area



Workforce demographics

The majority (79%) of the workforce in Somerset were female, and the average age was 42.6 years old. Workers aged under 25 made up 13% of the workforce and workers aged 55 and above represented 26%. Given this age profile approximately 4,200 posts will be reaching retirement age in the next 10 years.

Across England 73% of the workforce identified as British, while in the South West region this was 77%. An estimated 78% of the workforce in Somerset identified as British, 17% identified as of a non-EU nationality and 5% identified as of an EU nationality, therefore there was a higher reliance on non-EU than EU workers.

Pay

Table 1 shows the full-time equivalent annual or hourly pay rate of selected job roles in Somerset (area), South West (region) and England. All figures represent the independent sector as at March 2024, except social workers which represent the local authority sector as at September 2023. At the time of analysis, the National Living Wage was £10.42.

Table 1. Average pay rate of selected job roles by area

	England	Region	Area
Full-time equivalent annual pay			
Social Worker**	£41,500	£39,900	£37,500
Registered nurse	£39,500	£40,500	£41,500
Hourly pay			
National Living Wage	£10.42	£10.42	£10.42
Senior care worker	£12.04	£12.17	£11.85
Care worker	£11.23	£11.39	£11.43
Support and outreach	£11.11	£11.47	£11.57

**Local authority social workers only.

Qualifications, training and skills

We believe that everyone working in adult social care should be able to take part in learning and development so that they can carry out their roles effectively. Learning and development helps everyone to develop the right skills and knowledge to enable them to provide high-quality care and support.

Skills for Care estimates show that 47% of the direct care providing workforce in Somerset hold a *relevant*