

# Experience of the adult social care workforce

Source: National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC)

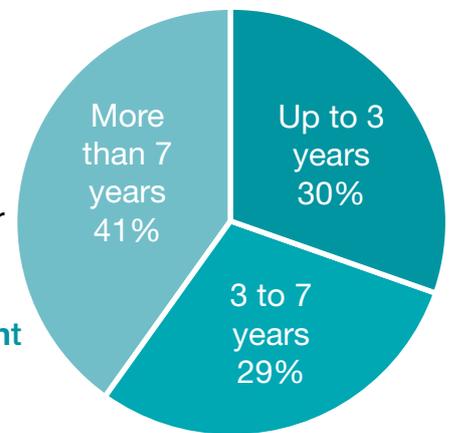
This briefing looks at the experience of the adult social care workforce both in terms of the time workers have spent in their current job roles and in the sector. Workers leaving their jobs is one of the biggest costs to care organisations and has a major impact on those receiving care and support. It is vital for the quality of care to keep the skills and knowledge of experienced workers in the sector.



## Key findings

### The adult social care workforce has an experienced 'core'

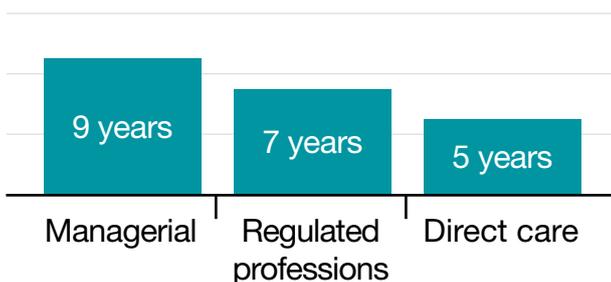
Workers have, on average, nine years of experience in the sector and around 70% of the workforce have been working in the sector for at least three years. This part of the workforce is relatively stable with a lower than average turnover rate (15% for care workers).



### The adult social care workforce also has a 'transient' element

Around a third of the workforce has less than three years experience and new starters have the highest turnover rate. At least 40% of newly employed care workers leave within the first year (compared to 25% for all workers in the sector).

## Experience varies by time in job role



On average, workers have been in their current role for six years, with just over half (54%) having three or more years of experience in post. Workers in managerial jobs have spent more time in their role (nine years) than workers in other jobs. Direct care staff have generally been in their role for the least amount of time (five years on average).

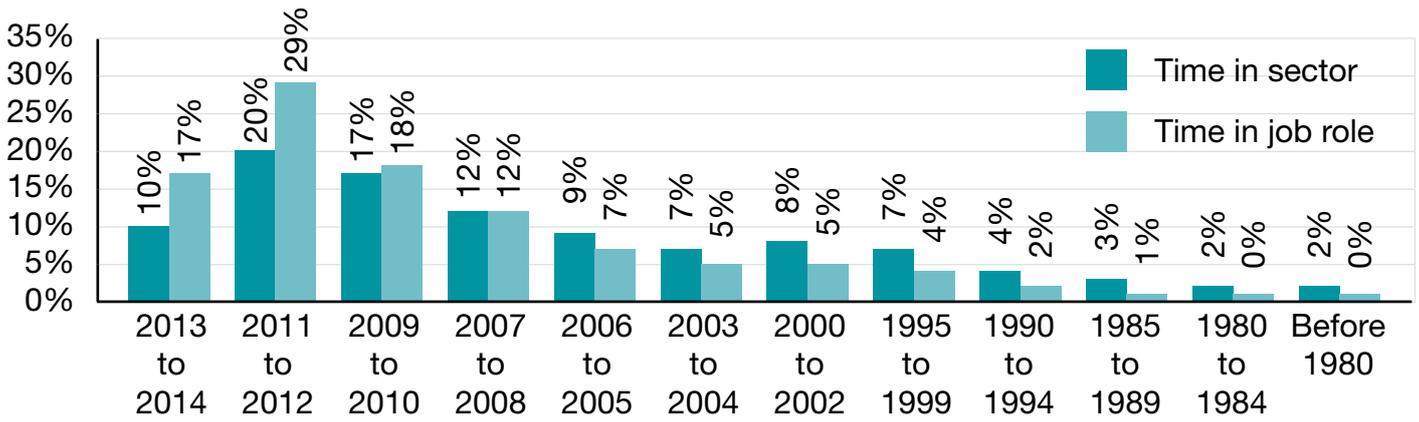
## Introduction

The NMDS-SC collects data on the year workers started in the sector as well as the year they started in their current job role. This briefing uses data from the 2014 'State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England'<sup>1</sup> report to compare the experience of the adult social care workforce across job role, sector and service type.

On average, workers have nine years of experience in the sector and six years of experience in their current job role. Chart 1 shows the breakdown of the workforce by the year workers started in the sector and their job role. The highest proportion of workers started in both their job role and the sector between 2011 and 2012.

1 [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/stateof2014](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/stateof2014)

**Chart 1: Year started in sector and job role**

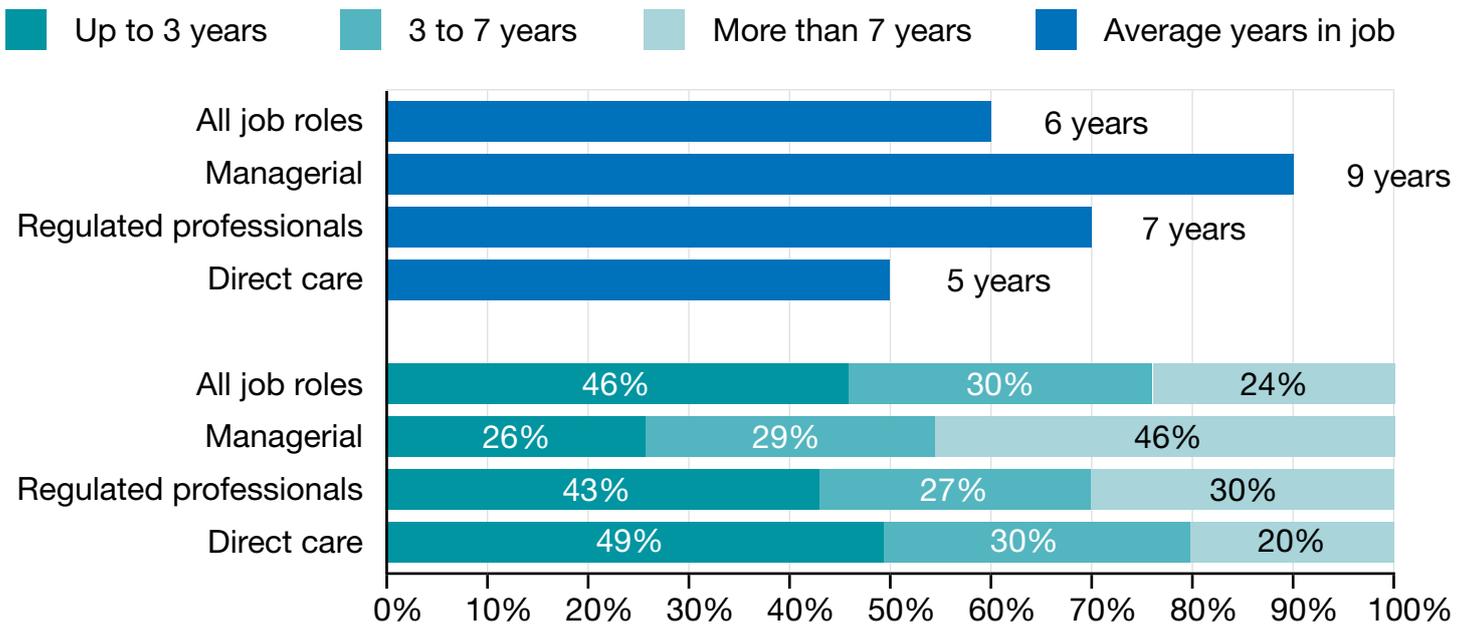


**Experience in current role**

Workers have, on average, six years of experience in their current role. Almost half of workers (46%) have been in their role for less than three years, 30% for three to seven years and 24% for more than seven years.

Chart 2 shows the average length of time workers have been in their current role by job role group. Managerial staff have the most experience in their roles (46% with more than seven years) and direct care staff generally have the least experience (49% with less than three years).

**Chart 2: Length of time in current role**



When comparing years of experience with workforce turnover rates a similar picture can be seen; the turnover rate for managerial staff is lower, at 12% a year, when compared to 25% for direct care workers.

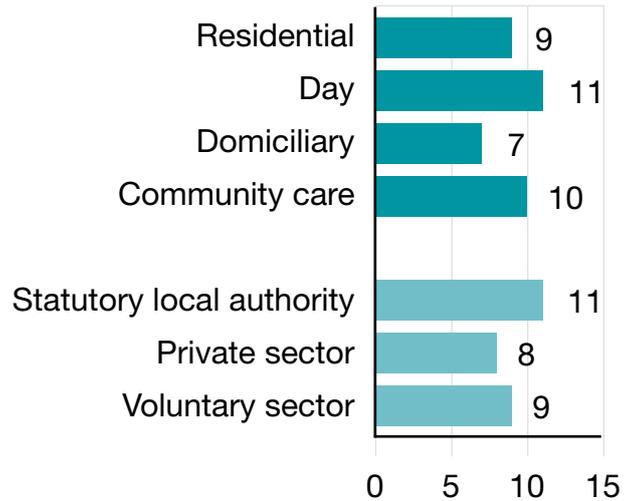
Although the estimated turnover rate of the adult social care sector is relatively high at 25%, around 40% of those leavers move to a new role within the sector. This high level of ‘churn’ within the sector allows some experience to be retained and developed. Churn within the sector is also highlighted by the gap between the average years workers have spent in their current job (six years) and the average years spent in the sector (nine years).

## Experience in the adult social care sector

Workers have, on average, three years more experience in the sector than in their current role. Chart 3 shows the average number of years of experience working in the sector by service and establishment type (sector).

Workers in domiciliary services have the least experience in the sector (seven years) and also in their roles (five years) with just over half (52%) starting in their role in the last three years. This is reflected in turnover rates, with domiciliary care having the highest workforce turnover of all service types at 30.6%.

**Chart 3: Experience in the sector by service and sector (years)**



**Chart 4: Experience in the sector by job role (years)**



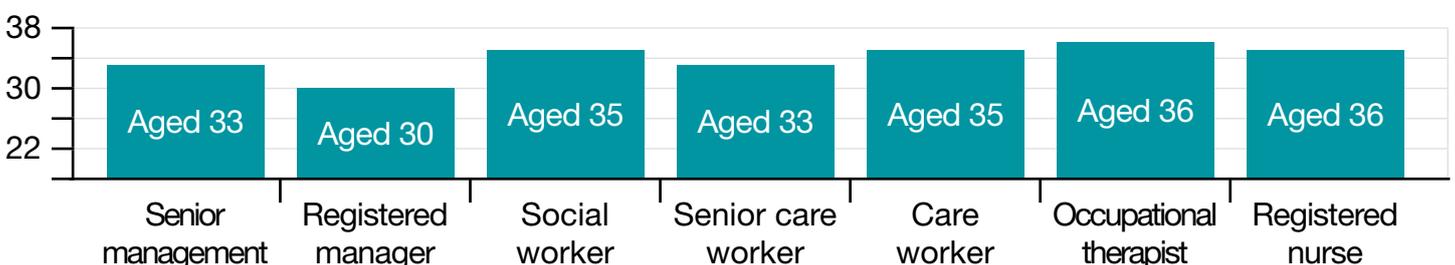
Workers in senior manager and registered manager roles have the most experience in the sector, with averages of 18 and 20 years respectively. Registered nurses have, on average, 14 years of experience working in the sector. Social workers have 11 years and occupational therapists have 10 years.

Care workers generally have the least experience, with an average of seven years (five years in role). Senior care workers have an average of 11 years of experience in the sector. Only 9% of senior care workers have been in the sector for less than three years, this is much lower when compared with the 36% of care workers.

## Age started in the adult social care sector

The average age a worker starts in the adult social care sector is 35 years old. This suggests that people tend to join the sector as a second career or later in life. Chart 5 shows the average age started by job role. Registered managers were the youngest starters at 30 years old. This is unsurprising given they have the most experience in the sector. The three regulated professions, social workers (aged 35), registered nurses (aged 35) and occupational therapists (aged 36) were among the oldest starters. This shows that workers in these regulated professions join the sector later, maybe suggesting a shift from NHS roles, but stay in their roles for a relatively long time when they do join the adult social care sector.

**Chart 5: Median age of workers started in the sector by job role**



## Summary

The adult social care workforce has an experienced core with workers having, on average, nine years of experience in the adult social care sector and around 70% of workers having more than three years of experience. The sector has an above average workforce turnover rate of 25.4% and a large proportion of this turnover is a result of workers that are new to the sector leaving relatively quickly.

The NMDS-SC recruitment and retention trend briefing<sup>2</sup> shows that “the rate of leaving for care workers that were new to their jobs was much higher (40%) than the rate for those that had been in their jobs for longer (25%), so a large proportion of workforce turnover is a result of workers leaving the sector within a year or two or starting and that longer established workers were much less likely to leave”. Turnover rates of newly employed workers could be even more pronounced than the NMDS-SC shows because some workers could leave before their employer had chance to record them in the NMDS-SC. This suggests that some employers are struggling to find and recruit people that are likely to stay and progress within the sector.

Skills for Care advocate value based recruitment, which is designed to help employers recruit people with the right values, qualities and behaviours. Skills for Care is also working in conjunction with the Government and other social care employers on a number of initiatives to encourage younger people to join the adult social care sector, for example ‘I Care... Ambassadors’ and Apprenticeships<sup>3</sup>.

## Further information

As at July 2015, the NMDS-SC held data on around 23,000 adult social care establishments and 710,000 social care workers. Skills for Care estimates there to be 1.52 million adult social care jobs being carried out by 1.45 million people.

To perform your own analysis of this data you can access the Open Access NMDS-SC Dashboards here: [www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk](http://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk) > dashboards, or to view other NMDS-SC workforce publications please visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmdsscpublications](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmdsscpublications).

To be kept up to date with news from Skills for Care please join our mailing list by visiting [myaccount.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://myaccount.skillsforcare.org.uk) and select “workforce intelligence publications” under areas of interest to receive alerts for all our workforce publications.

## Bespoke analytical services

Skills for Care’s highly experienced analysts can work with you to identify your requirements, and design and deliver bespoke workforce intelligence reports. They use NMDS-SC to provide essential data in the form of reports or within a broader consultancy package to inform business decision making. For more information about this service please email [analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk).

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2 [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmdsscpublications](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmdsscpublications)

3 [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/findingandkeepingworkers](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/findingandkeepingworkers)

