

nmds-sc briefing



Issue 21 - Registered Nurses in adult social care

This issue of NMDS-SC Briefings focuses on a job that very much highlights the need for integrated health and social care workforce planning – Registered Nurses. Modelling of NMDS-SC data by Skills for Care shows there to be an estimated **50,000 Registered Nurses**¹ working in adult social care². While only a small part of the overall workforce (circa 1.6m) – it is absolutely vital that the sector can attract and retain these professionals. This briefing looks at some of the characteristics of nurses working in adult social care – while also considering issues around the supply chain.

Chart 1: Where Registered Nurses work by setting

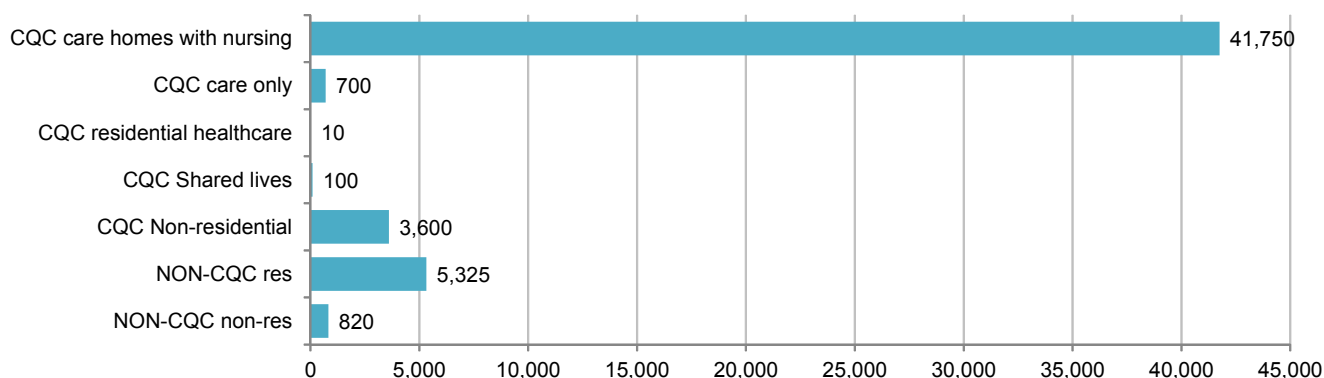


Chart 1 shows that the majority of Registered Nurses in adult social care work in CQC registered care homes with nursing. The remaining 20% are mainly working in CQC registered non-residential services and some non-registered CQC residential services. NMDS-SC analysis also shows that Registered Nurses are almost entirely employed within the independent sector.

Gender and age

Nurses working in adult social care are generally female (87%) – this pattern is fairly consistent across all services using nurses. In terms of age there are some interesting issues to consider.

¹ For the purpose of this briefing, Registered Nurse refers to all those occupying the role of Registered Nurse as specified within the NMDS-SC. Fulfilling this role means the occupants hold a nursing qualification.

² Whilst the term 'adult social care' is used in this briefing it is recognised that residential care with nursing and other services that employ nurses referred to in this briefing represents integrated health and social care.



Chart 2: Registered Nurses by age band

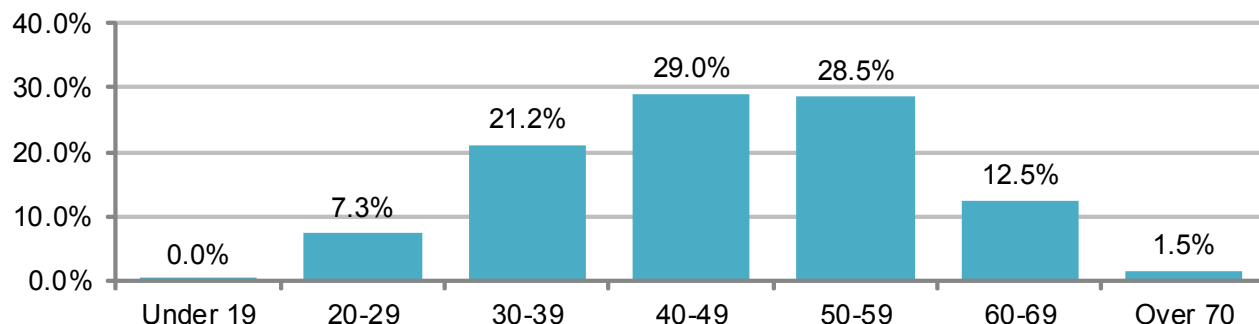
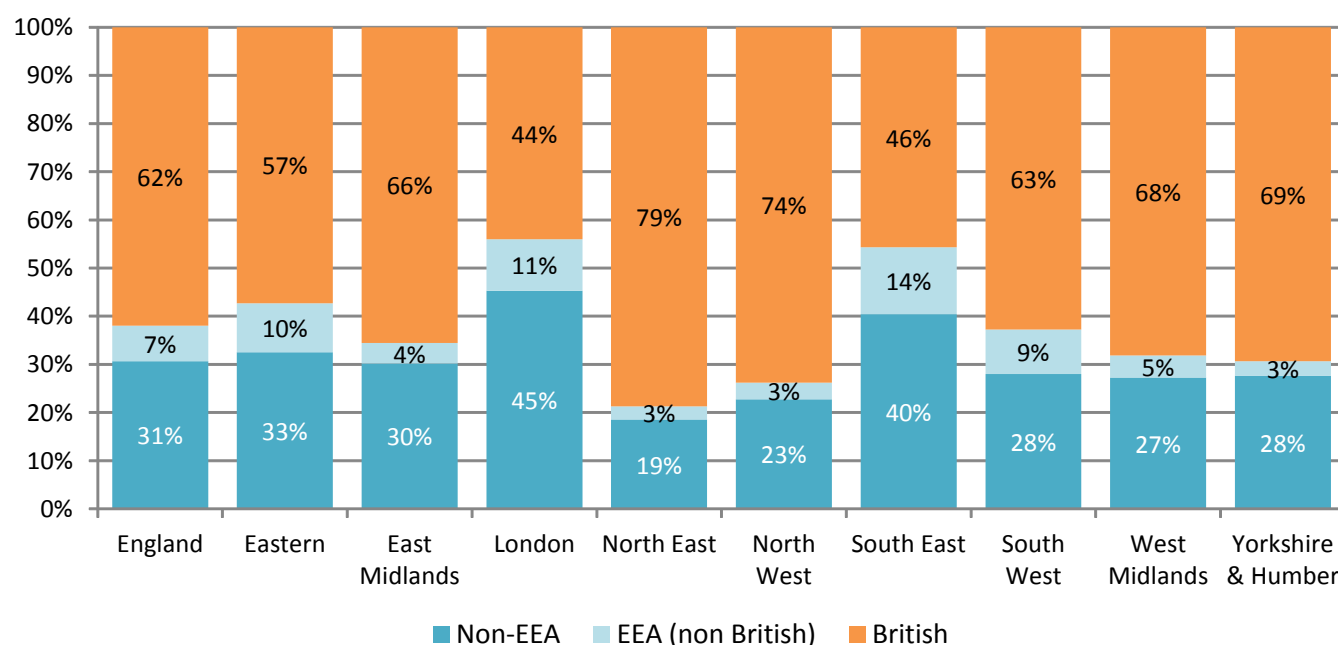


Chart 2 shows that over 70% of nurses working in adult social care are aged 40 or over, while over 40% (or 2 in 5) are aged 50 or over. Given this age breakdown, the sector should expect to lose close to half its nursing workforce to retirement in the next 10 to 15 years.

Ethnicity and nationality

Nurses are less likely to be of white ethnicity than the sector as a whole (43% are from a BME background) and more likely to hold a non-EEA nationality than the rest of the sector. With regard to nationality, chart 3 shows distinct patterns by region – a third of the workforce in London and the South East have a non-EEA nationality. This high level of workers from overseas suggests that employers may be filling (either now or in the recent past) a skills shortage in England by recruiting from abroad³.

Chart 3: Registered Nurses - nationality by region



³ It should be noted that non-EEA citizens can qualify for NHS training after they have been in residence for 3 years or more.



Recruiting from abroad contributes to a number of issues for the sector including:

- Nurses having to undertake ‘adaptation’ in order to be registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Council.
- How to overcome potential cultural and language barriers.
- Employers completing the resident labour market test and requiring a certificate of sponsorship from UK Border Agency.
- The Registered Nursing Home Association (RNHA) advise that during the mid-2000's that recruitment from abroad was common, particularly from the Philippines. Changes in immigration policy have meant this option is less used now. However, there are still nursing homes where all of the nurses are from overseas.
- Anyone who enters after April 2011 is expected to leave after 5 years.
- RNHA advise that employers may now be beginning to experience recruitment difficulties again.
- Research by the Royal College of Nursing showed that pay levels for international nurses may be low relative to their experience and qualification levels.

Ian Turner, National Chairman of the RNHA advises that: [‘We welcome this briefing that uses NMDS-SC data to shine a light on this vital part of the care workforce. The data certainly reflects what we learn and hear from our members. It will be important to use NMDS-SC data to monitor the effects of policy changes going forward’](#).

Employment status

In terms of employment status – just over 3 out of 4 nurses (77%) are employed on a permanent basis, while around 18% are part of a bank or pool of nursing staff. Also of interest is that only 53% are working full time hours, with 30% classed as part time and 16% as ‘neither of these’. This employment status data may suggest a workforce that is happy to have some flexibility in terms of their working lives and when considered alongside age data may highlight nurses moving to social care to fit in with family commitments.

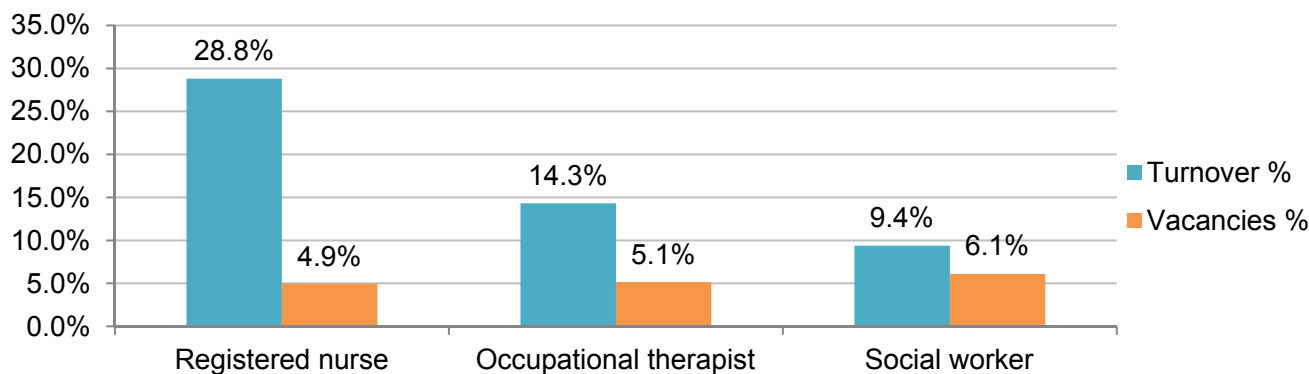
Pay rates

NMDS-SC analysis shows that median pay rates for nurses working in care homes with nursing (£24,000) are in line with those paid in the NHS Band 5 rate which starts at around £21,000 and goes up to just below £28,000.

Turnover and vacancies

Turnover and vacancy rates for Registered Nurses in adult social care are higher than for other professions represented in the sector – namely social workers and occupational therapists. For registered nurses, a turnover rate of 29% means, 14,500 leaving their post each year.

Chart 5: Turnover and vacancy rates of Registered Nurses, Occupational Therapists and Social Workers



Securing a supply of nurses

This report shows that Registered Nurses play a critical role in adult social care and it is imperative that the sector can be confident of the supply of nurses to meet future demand and the need to replace those leaving employment in adult social care. Previously the number of training places required for nurses was provided by Strategic Health Authorities, this responsibility has now passed to Health Education England. The recruitment source they have some control over (or did in the past) is recruiting from overseas – and the nationality breakdown of nurses in the sector suggests that this has been a significant source of recruitment.

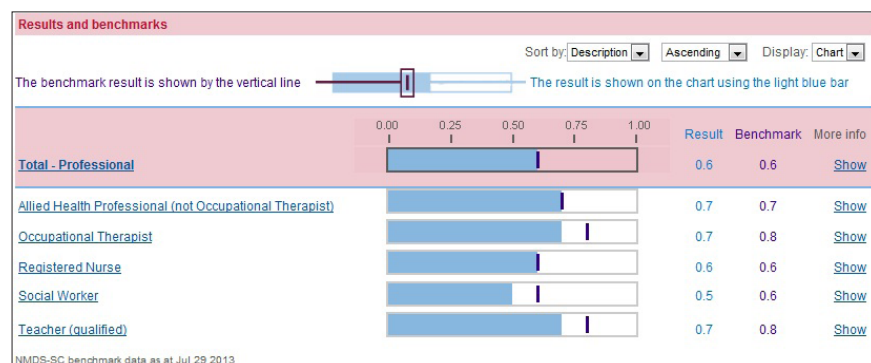
Health Education England

Skills for Care will continue to forge a partnership with Health Education England to inform supply and demand side issues.

Further Information from NMDS-SC

Perform your own analysis of 26,000 establishment records and over 700,000 worker records by accessing the recently launched NMDS-SC Open Access Dashboards. The Open Access NMDS-SC Dashboards are an interactive web based analysis tool, freely available to all visitors to the NMDS-SC Online website (without having to have a login). The dashboards analyse NMDS-SC information on the social care sector and workforce within the topic areas of staff overview, recruitment & retention, workforce demographics, pay, qualifications & training and local demand

& intelligence. Users are able to focus in on particular geographies, sectors, service types, job roles or service-user groups (or any combination of these) to get fast and accurate information. Below is an example showing Whole Time Equivalent rates for professionals in the private sector (blue bar) versus the voluntary sector (purple mark).



To access the dashboards please visit <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/reportengine/dashboard.aspx>