

# North Tyneside Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

# North Tyneside Workforce Strategy

## Introduction

Our workforce is at the heart of the care we provide in North Tyneside. This strategy sets out our vision for supporting and developing the social care workforce across the borough, including both local authority colleagues and external commissioned services. It's about equipping everyone in the sector with the right skills, knowledge, and values to deliver high-quality care now and in the future.

This strategy has been developed in alignment with national and local strategies, including:



It reflects our commitment to fostering a person-centred approach, ensuring the workforce is well-prepared, valued, and empowered.

Workforce is a cross-cutting priority within the Adult Social Care strategy, we need a skilled, dedicated people to deliver the support our residents deserve.

Supported by this cross-sector Workforce Strategy, we will nurture and develop our workforce by:

- Promoting social care as a career of choice.
- Developing our apprenticeships, placements, and training offer.
- Investing in specialist support for integrated working and practice development.

We will know we have made a difference by:

- Reducing staff turnover.
- Improving feedback in our team surveys.
- Increasing the number of colleagues enrolled on training programmes.

## Our Vision

We want North Tyneside to have a **caring, competent, and confident** workforce that puts people at the centre of everything we do. This means:

- Supporting workforce development through high-quality training and career progression.
- Ensuring care is delivered with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Building a workforce that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

## The Current Workforce Landscape

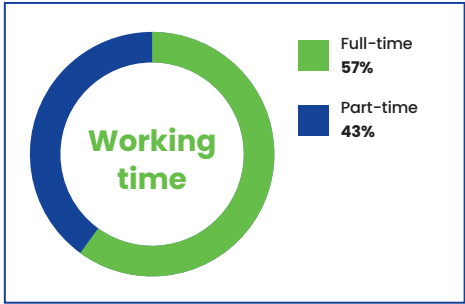
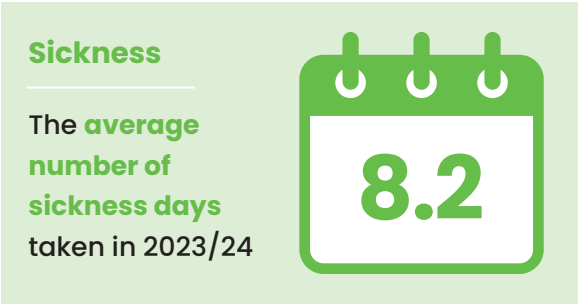
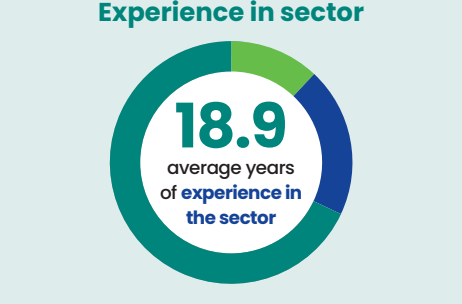
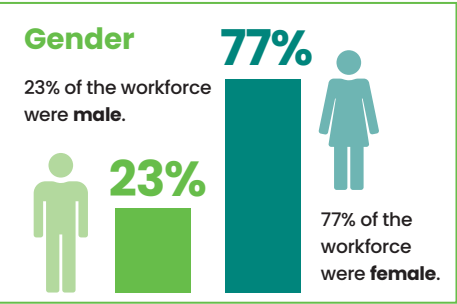
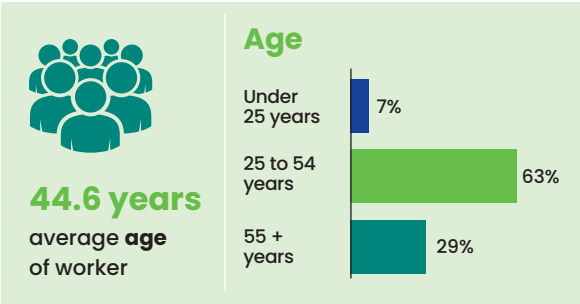
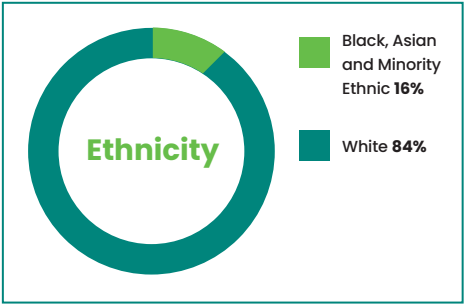
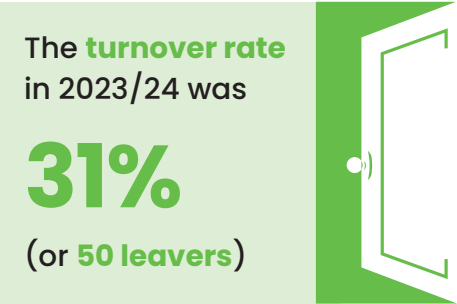
To build a strategy that truly meets the needs of North Tyneside, we must first understand the current workforce.

### Who makes up the workforce?

North Tyneside's health and social care workforce is diverse, comprising approximately 7,600 posts across various roles, including management, regulated professionals (such as nurses and social workers), and direct care colleagues. A significant portion of the workforce (64%) holds relevant qualifications, ensuring a commitment to high-quality care. More detailed insights into the demographics, roles, and qualifications can be found in Appendices 1.

# North Tyneside's Health and Social Care Workforce at a Glance:

Data from the Skills for Care Workforce Intelligence Report (November 2024) about North Tyneside:



## Challenges

Whilst we have a dedicated workforce, we face several key challenges that must be addressed to ensure sustainability and quality delivery of care. We also know that people who use our services value a consistent member of staff supporting them. Our challenges include:



**Recruitment and Retention:** The sector continues to experience staff shortages, making recruitment and retention critical areas of focus. Staff members seek clear career progression opportunities and recognition for their contributions, which are vital for maintaining morale and reducing turnover.



**Skills Gaps:** As the needs of our community evolve, it is essential to bridge the skills gaps within our workforce. Ongoing training and development opportunities must be tailored to equip colleagues with the knowledge and skills required to meet changing care demands.



**Embracing Digital Technology:** The integration of digital tools in care delivery is becoming increasingly important. However, colleagues may require training to adapt to new technologies effectively. It is necessary to provide ongoing education in digital skills that the workforce can use to enhance care quality.



**Financial Pressures:** The current economic climate poses significant challenges for both care providers and colleagues, impacting the funding available for training, development, and resources. Advocating for sustainable financial models is essential to ensure continued investment in workforce development and to maintain the quality-of-care services across the sector.

## The Future Workforce

To adapt to these challenges, we envision a future workforce that is not only competent and skilled but also reflective of the diverse communities we serve. This workforce should embody the following characteristics:



**Enhanced Diversity:** A commitment to inclusivity that ensures our workforce mirrors the demographics of North Tyneside, enhancing our ability to provide culturally sensitive care.



**Robust Professional Development:** A structured pathway for career progression that empowers colleagues through ongoing education and professional growth, fostering a sense of purpose and commitment to the sector.



**Collaborative Spirit:** A workforce that thrives on teamwork and partnership, actively engaging with health, social care, and community organisations to create holistic care solutions.

By addressing these challenges and nurturing the qualities of the future workforce, we can ensure that North Tyneside's social care provision remains resilient and responsive to the needs of our residents.

## Key Themes from Stakeholder Engagement

We conducted focus groups with care provider managers, HR professionals, workforce leads, representatives from the Department for Work & Pensions, care and support workers, social workers, community wellbeing officers, and occupational therapists. Additionally, we engaged with external training providers, individuals receiving care services, and their carers. These valuable discussions helped shape our strategic priorities. Here's what we heard:

### 1. Investment in Training and Development



- There's a clear need for **ongoing, high-quality training** to ensure colleagues can adapt to changes in care needs and practice standards.
- Focus on **continuous professional development (CPD)** and career pathways.

### 2. Recruitment and Retention



- The workforce is stretched, and **recruitment and retention are ongoing challenges**. Colleagues want clear career progression and recognition.

### 3. Person-Centred Approach



- We need to ensure the workforce understands and can deliver **person-centred care**, with a **focus on dignity, respect, and autonomy**.

### 4. Partnership Working



- Strengthen partnerships between **health, social care, education providers, and other stakeholders**.

# Strategic Priorities

Our workforce strategy is structured around four priorities that reflect both local needs and the national goals as set out by Skills for Care's National Workforce Strategy 2024



## Attract and recruit a talented workforce

- Position social care as a fulfilling and dynamic career option.
- Ensure recruitment strategies focus on growing a workforce that reflects the needs of the community and is ready to meet increasing demand for care.



## Develop a competent and skilled workforce

- Provide accessible, high-quality training that includes both mandatory and specialist areas (e.g., dementia care, safeguarding, digital skills).
- Align development programs with national Skills for Care standards to ensure ongoing competence and continuous professional growth.



## Retain and value the workforce

- Develop clear career progression pathways, offering opportunities for advancement to encourage retention.
- Foster a positive and inclusive work environment, where colleagues feel appreciated, recognised, and motivated to grow within the sector.



## Support wellbeing and promote a positive culture

- Prioritise staff wellbeing, providing access to mental health support and resources that promote work-life balance.
- Embed values-based recruitment and training to create a culture of respect, care, and person-centred service delivery.



## Our Approach

To support the implementation of this strategy, a comprehensive action plan will be developed, outlining specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities. This action plan will serve as a roadmap to ensure that the strategic priorities are met accordingly.

Full details on the action plan can be found in the key priorities and actions document.

## Governance and Monitoring

The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by regular reporting to the Adult Social Care Senior Management Team and the Care Academy Steering Group. Progress will be tracked against the action plan, with adjustments made to actions as necessary.

**The Care Academy** is a collaborative partnership between all care providers in North Tyneside, including the local authority, social care providers, the voluntary sector, and local schools and colleges. Its primary aim is to help recruit, retain, and develop the adult social care workforce by promoting social care as a career of choice, attracting more individuals into the sector, and offering diverse learning and development opportunities to retain and progress those in the workforce.

The Care Academy Steering Group meets bi-monthly and comprises representatives from all sectors involved in the delivery of care and support in North Tyneside.

**The Adult Social Care Senior Management Team**, led by the Director of Adult Social Care, includes three Heads of Service and the Principal Social Worker. This team holds overarching responsibility for the strategic leadership, planning, and delivery of adult social care within the local authority. They are committed to ensuring that high-quality, person-centred care is commissioned and delivered across North Tyneside, while fostering strong partnerships and driving continuous improvement across the sector.

## Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Demographics of North Tyneside
- **Appendix 2:** Summary of Focus Group Findings

## Conclusion

This strategy represents our commitment to supporting and developing North Tyneside's social care workforce, ensuring they have the tools, training, and support needed to deliver exceptional care. By working together, we can create a workforce that is ready to meet the challenges of the future and deliver the best possible outcomes for the people we serve.



# Appendix 1

## Demographics of the North Tyneside Adult Social Care Workforce

### Age:

The average age of the workforce in North Tyneside is 45, which is in line with the national average of 44. A notable 29% of North Tyneside's adult social care workforce is aged 55 or over, highlighting concerns about a potential wave of retirements and the importance of attracting younger workers to ensure a sustainable talent pipeline. This is consistent with both regional (29%) and national (27%) figures, where a significant proportion of the workforce is nearing retirement age.

### Gender:

In North Tyneside, as in most parts of the country, the workforce is predominantly female, with women making up 77% of the adult social care workforce. Regionally, this figure is slightly higher at 81%, aligning with the national trend of women representing most of the workforce. Ongoing initiatives are aimed at increasing the number of men entering the sector to promote gender diversity.

### Ethnicity:

The workforce in North Tyneside is largely White British, with only 11% of workers identifying as being of European or non-European nationality. This is lower than the national figure of 25%, but slightly higher than the regional average of 10%. Efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion within the workforce remain a key focus.

### Turnover and Stability:

North Tyneside has a turnover rate of 31%, which is higher than both the national average of 30.2% and the regional average of 28.3%. The turnover rate remains a concern as stability within the workforce is essential for maintaining high standards of care and continuity for service users.



# Appendix 1

## Demographics of the North Tyneside Adult Social Care Workforce

### Full-time/Part-time Working Patterns:

In North Tyneside, 43% of the workforce is employed on a part-time basis, reflecting a shift towards more flexible working arrangements within the sector. This figure is comparable to the regional average of 44%, though slightly below the national average of 45%, where part-time work is even more prevalent.

Overall, North Tyneside has approximately 7,600 posts within the health and social care sector, with 7,100 currently filled. The breakdown of filled posts is as follows:

- **Independent Sector:** 5,650 filled posts
- **Local Authority:** 500 filled posts

Furthermore, it is estimated that around 1,000 individuals are employed by the NHS or other health & social care providers, indicating the interconnectedness of health and social care in North Tyneside.

In terms of qualifications, 64% of the workforce hold a relevant qualification for social care, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining high standards in care delivery. Notably, 30% of the workforce has achieved the Care Certificate, with an additional 12% currently in progress, reflecting ongoing professional development within the sector.

North Tyneside's health and social care sector encompasses a diverse range of roles, each contributing to the delivery of quality care and support within the community. Key roles include:

- **Management:** Approximately 425 managers oversee the various aspects of care delivery, ensuring that services are run efficiently and effectively.
- **Regulated Professionals:** This category includes essential roles such as nurses, social workers and Occupational therapists, with a total of 350 individuals employed in regulated professions. These professionals play a critical role in maintaining standards of care and addressing the complex needs of service users.
- **Direct Care Colleague:** The workforce also includes a substantial number of direct care roles, such as care workers, senior care workers, and outreach support colleague. Around 5,600 individuals work in direct care across the borough, providing hands-on support to those with care & support needs.

# Appendix 2

## Detailed Breakdown from Focus Groups

The following sets out the detailed breakdown from the focus groups, which highlights key priorities, actions, opportunities, challenges, and strategies for improving recruitment, retention, and development in the social care sector in North Tyneside:

### Top Priorities

1. **Attracting young people to the care sector** – Increasing engagement through schools and colleges.
2. **Training and induction pathways** – Structured training to facilitate new hires' entry and growth in the sector.
3. **Specialised training** – Offering advanced and niche training to improve expertise in areas like mental health, dementia, and clinical skills.
4. **Recognition and reward** – Ensuring that employees are compensated and recognised.
5. **Effective workforce planning** – Improving recruitment and retention and addressing mental health.
6. **Funding and promotion** – Strengthening funding and raising the sector's profile to attract quality candidates.
7. **Fair pay and working conditions** – Establishing fair wages and better working conditions to improve recruitment and retention.
8. **Public perception** – Changing negative stereotypes and enhancing the sector's image.
9. **Well-being support** – Providing mental health support, wage improvements, and better access to services.

### Actions from Priorities

1. **Work experience opportunities** – Increase exposure of young people to Adult Social Care (ASC) through work experience and shadowing.
2. **Collaboration and partnership** – Create formal partnerships between care providers, educational institutions, and Care Academy.
3. **Targeted training** – Use feedback from oversight bodies (CQC) to tailor training programs to meet quality assurance standards.
4. **Flexible career pathways** – Establish clear, consistent career pathways that allow progression based on qualifications and experience.
5. **Mental health and well-being** – Introduce mindfulness, mental health first aiders, and sessions to promote mental health support.
6. **Public awareness campaigns** – Develop campaigns showcasing real-life care worker experiences to attract new recruits.

## Opportunities

1. **Flexible working patterns** – Offer flexible hours to attract more diverse groups, including men, and encourage entry into care roles.
2. **Funded apprenticeships** – Expand opportunities for young people to enter the field through funded apprenticeships and NVQs.
3. **Collaboration with NHS and healthcare** – Develop stronger ties with health sectors to enhance training and career mobility.
4. **Use of technology** – Leverage AI and digital platforms to improve training, recruitment, and service delivery.
5. **Diversity and inclusion** – Promote ethnic and gender diversity in care roles by targeting underrepresented groups.
6. **Incentives and recognition** – Implement reward schemes and recognition programs for care workers to boost morale and retention.

## Threats

1. **Competing sectors** – Higher wages in retail, hospitality, and the NHS are pulling potential recruits away from social care.
2. **Government funding and policy** – Uncertainty around funding and immigration laws can impact recruitment, retention, and service delivery.
3. **Overwork and burnout** – High turnover rates and overwork could lead to declining quality of care and increased staff stress.
4. **Cost of living** – Rising living expenses and transportation challenges add strain on workers and recruitment.
5. **Recruitment pool** – Limited quality candidates, coupled with unrealistic job expectations and limited flexibility, could lead to persistent workforce shortages.

## Strengths

1. **Collaboration and commitment** – Providers are committed to working together to address sector-wide challenges.
2. **Job satisfaction** – Many workers find value and purpose in contributing to their communities and providing care.
3. **Flexibility and career development** – The sector offers opportunities for career growth, flexibility in work hours, and skills development.
4. **Community engagement** – The social aspect of working in care, and the potential to work within one's own community, are seen as positive attributes.
5. **High demand** – The sector has high and growing demand, which offers long-term job security.

## Weaknesses/Challenges

1. **Pay and benefits** – Low wages and limited benefits remain significant barriers to recruitment and retention.
2. **Lack of progression** – Limited opportunities for career progression and training after initial induction can lead to employee dissatisfaction.
3. **Stereotypes and perception** – Negative perceptions of care roles deter potential recruits, particularly young people.
4. **Complexity of needs** – Increasing complexity of care needs without corresponding training and resources adds pressure on the workforce.
5. **Fragmented recruitment efforts** – Lack of coordination between providers, leading to competition for the same pool of workers.
6. **Compliance burdens** – Regulatory demands (CQC, Ofsted) require extensive paperwork and training, often perceived as overly burdensome.

## Key Recommendations for Implementation:

1. **Promote Care Academy initiatives** – Use the Care Academy to offer free or subsidised training, NVQs, apprenticeships, and collaborative opportunities across the sector.
2. **Reward and recognition schemes** – Implement formal rewards, such as local authority-led care awards, to boost staff morale and retention.
3. **Public engagement campaigns** – Develop a sustained campaign aimed at schools, colleges, and the wider public to promote the value of social care careers.
4. **Create flexible and inclusive pathways** – Design career pathways that cater to diverse candidate needs, including young people, minorities, and men.
5. **Leverage technology** – Introduce digital training solutions, AI, and telecare to improve service delivery and increase efficiency.
6. **Cross-sector collaboration** – Work closely with healthcare, education, and government to streamline recruitment and training efforts.
7. **Focus on well-being** – Prioritise mental health support and well-being initiatives to support retention and improve job satisfaction.

By addressing these areas and fostering collaboration between providers, educational institutions, and the public sector, the social care industry can significantly improve workforce recruitment, retention, and overall sector strength.