

Leeds Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy 2025-30



This strategy is for everyone working in social care in Leeds. It sets out our vision, acknowledges the shared challenges we face and the strong foundations on which we are building. It gives clear workforce priorities for the next 5 years.

Each year we will review our action plans to make sure we are making progress and remain focussed on the activities that will make the biggest difference.

The strategy has been produced in collaboration with our stakeholders and partners and covers the breadth of the social care workforce across the city, in all its guises. I hope you find it useful and whatever role you play in social care, please familiarise yourself with it and engage with the opportunities it offers.



Caroline Baria, Director of Adults and Health at Leeds City Council, and Councillor Salma Arif, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles.

High quality, person centred social care is vital to our city, our communities and our economy. Having a compassionate and caring workforce is critical to achieving this. I want to thank each and every member of the workforce - paid and unpaid - for the service and support you provide to people and families here in Leeds.

We are building from a good place, with our innovative strength and asset based approaches and well developed community based partnerships. We know there are workforce

challenges facing our sector and we are going to need to change and transform how we deliver services and will need to face up to the very real recruitment, retention and progression challenges that exist.

Working together, we can deliver on our six workforce priorities and ensure that we have a modern, fit for purpose approach that supports every member of the existing workforce and future generations too.

Adult Social Care in Leeds

This workforce strategy works alongside and supports the other Adult Social Care strategies and plans that we have in the city, which are:

- [Our Best City Ambition](#)
- [Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2030](#)
- [Better Lives Strategy 2022 - 2027](#)
- [Adult Social Care Plan](#)
- Leeds Market Position Statement
- Our co-production framework

It is also informed by the Department of Health and Social Care's 10 year reform proposals as set out in the 2021 white paper, [People at the Heart of Care \(PDF, 2.4MB\)](#), and by the 2024 national [Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care in England](#) which made a number of [recommendations and commitments](#), built around attraction and retention, training and transformation.

Our strategy has 6 priorities, agreed through consultation across the sector in Leeds, and in regional partnership with directors of adult social services and Skills for Care. They will focus us on the activities which will make the biggest difference for our city and connect to the wider changes taking place across the sector.

About the Leeds Adult Social Care Workforce

The Adult Social Care Workforce in Leeds is made up of over 20,000+ paid workers:

- in statutory organisations, such as the council
- commissioned by the council and employed by care providers
- working via care agencies

- employed via a direct payment
- employed as part of integrated arrangements with health

Most of this paid workforce is in the independent sector, with over 19,000 filled posts. The local authority Adults and Health workforce has around 1500 colleagues and there are an estimated 1500 actively working Personal Assistants. In addition, over 6300 people are employed by third sector employers across 1400 charitable organisations. These vary from micro to very large, with nearly 170 directly delivering health and care services.

Whilst not part of the paid workforce, informal and unpaid carers and volunteers also play a valuable role in supporting people to live the lives that they want in their own homes. There are an estimated 75,000 carers in Leeds, and 40,000 volunteers.

Below, you can see the latest Skills for Care data for the Leeds workforce in the Independent Sector and the Local Authority (published October 2024). This provides a good benchmark of our current position and this will be tracked and reported as part of our annual Skills for Care data submission. It acts as a good check on progress we are making, and will develop further as part of our workforce planning in future years.

| Metric | Independent sector | Local authority |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of posts filled | 19,000 | 1,500 |
| Zero hours contracts | 21% | 2% |
| Turnover rate | 33.6% (6000 leavers) | 10.1% (150 leavers) |
| Vacancy rate | 7.6% (1500 vacant posts) | 8.2% (125 vacant posts) |
| Average sickness days | 6.2 | 10 |
| Recruitment within sector | 56% | 91% |
| Sex | 80% female, 20% male | 81% female, 19% male |
| Ethnicity | 22% ethnically diverse | 19% ethnically diverse |
| Under age 25 | 9% | 3% |
| Average hourly pay | £12.03 (all jobs) | £16.88 (all jobs) |
| Hold relevant qualification | 47% | 70% |

In addition to this, data taken from the 2023 publication ['State of the Third Sector in Leeds'](#) shows that between 2020 and 2022 there was a:

- 34% drop in the number of paid workforce in the third sector
- 25% drop in the number of registered volunteers
- 10% drop in the number of registered organisations

Our six workforce priorities

Strategic workforce planning

We will strengthen our workforce plan, working collaboratively with providers and partner organisations to help identify our current and future workforce needs. This will include new ways of working and changes in the way care is delivered.

Growing and developing the workforce to meet future demand

We will keep working together to recruit, retain and develop a valued social care workforce to meet the changing needs of our communities and deliver the best quality care and outcomes.

Enhancing the use of technology

We will optimise the opportunities offered by digital technology to address workforce challenges and support new, more integrated and flexible ways of working.

Wellbeing of the workforce

We will build on existing approaches to staff wellbeing and ensure colleagues feel valued and cared for, with working environments that are safe and productive.

Social justice & Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We will continue to build a more diverse workforce that better reflects and understands our communities, and inclusive workplaces where all working in social care have equality of opportunity, dignity and respect.

Inclusive and compassionate leadership

We will enhance support for current and future managers to help create a culture where diversity is valued, all colleagues feel they belong and are empowered to deliver high quality care.

Building on strong foundations

We already have a good story to tell about our collective progress against the 6 workforce priorities. We have much to be proud of, with a long established and successful track record.

We take a forward looking approach to workforce challenges, with some of our most relevant and recent examples including:

- transformation programmes such as the city wide Community Health and Wellbeing Service and the HomeFirst programmes
- our city wide and regional partnerships around international recruitment in the adult social care sector
- our pioneering work on delegated health care tasks
- flexible and collaborative apprenticeships across Health and Care
- a refreshed city vision for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity
- a wellbeing and benefits offer that is open to all in the sector
- our West Yorkshire Social Care Nurse preceptorship programme
- our 100% Digital Leeds programme
- the We Care and Leadership Academy offers available through the council
- West Yorkshire Fair work Charter and the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy

Leeds is a national leader in strengths based social care. We have one of the largest programmes of Asset Based Community Development in the UK and a strong track record of preventative work delivered through community funded partnerships. We work with people instead of doing things to them or for them, maximising the assets, strengths and skills of Leeds citizens, carers and workforce. The city's strong community model includes: 37 Neighbourhood Networks; 26 Community Hubs; a Local Community Anchor Network; and 17 ABCD pathfinder sites. Unpaid volunteers and carers play a crucial role and we work hard in the city to continue to ensure that they are supported and valued.

Our TeamLeeds approach brings together partners across the city and the sector, creating a strong and effective partnership that helps us to work together to meet our shared goals. By working together we improve the quality of care, make the best use of our resources and improve outcomes through innovation and a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Our One Workforce programme brings partners together to make Leeds the best place to train and work at any age. Together we provide opportunities for skills, jobs and wealth creation, engaging and recruiting those in our most disadvantaged communities and inspiring the next generation health and care workforce. This continues to help us to build a highly diverse, skilled workforce we need to work with the people of Leeds, now and in the future. We established the first ever Health and Care Academy in the country, aimed at

providing the right development opportunities for our workforce to best support and care for the people of Leeds.

Tackling known workforce challenges

The workforce strategy and associated priorities will help us address the key challenges and issues facing Adult Social Care organisations in Leeds, many of which are influenced by demographic changes and national level policy.

We have a growing demand for social care and increasing complexity and acuity of needs of people who use care and support services. Anticipating and responding to the changing demands of our population and communities comes at a time of significant financial pressure, including austerity and the cost of living crisis.

Projections show that, nationally, we will need 25% more posts (440,000) by 2035 if the number of adult social care posts grows proportionally to the projected number of people aged 65 and over in the population (Skills for Care 2023)

Difficulties recruiting and retaining staff remain, resulting in staffing shortages and vacant posts. As an example, turnover runs at 33% in the independent sector, with a 7.6% vacancy rate. There is a pressing need to improve pay and terms of conditions of employment. There is a need to create more robust career pathways and a focussed learning offer for all parts of the workforce.

Reform is needed and welcomed. Pressure on adult social care budgets exists for councils and care providers. To offer genuine career prospects and pay our care workforce in line with experience, qualifications and responsibility we need commitment to a long term fully funded plan for social care.

Lack of career development is one of the main reasons staff leave adult social care, so national plans for the Care Workforce Pathway and other measures including new qualifications, subsidised training and new apprenticeship opportunities are all positive steps to help make adult social care a real career choice now and in the future.

Solutions will come through the redesign of roles and services to meet new and future demands, with integration of Health and Care services playing a key role. Digital change and improvements and further investment in digital skills will build the confidence and competence of the workforce, whilst also improving the quality and efficiency of services.

Focussing on the wellbeing of the workforce is a priority, given the unique pressures that the role of caring and the support of vulnerable people brings especially following Covid-19.

We will continue our work to promote social care as a positive, long term career of choice and will work to create a social care workforce that is representative of the diverse communities in the city.

Our ambition. Everyone in Adult Social Care in Leeds will:

- feel valued in their role and enjoy their jobs
- have a rewarding career with opportunities to develop and progress
- have a voice and feel able to speak up and raise concerns
- be equipped with the right skills and knowledge including feeling confident about their digital skills
- be recognised and rewarded
- feel well supported around their health and wellbeing
- have good relationships and networking opportunities with professionals in other organisations as part of #TeamLeeds
- be well led and managed and feel empowered to deliver the best quality, personalised care
- have equality of opportunity and be treated with dignity and respect
- have the tools, systems and information they need to deliver outstanding care



Action planning and reporting

We have set out actions for the first two years of the strategy. On an annual basis, we will conduct a review of progress and share an update. This will provide an opportunity to

refresh key actions where necessary. We will do this in collaboration with stakeholders and partners in the city.

Key Actions 2025 to 2027

1. Strategic workforce planning

- Update and share a 'State of Leeds Social Care' dataset for the city workforce
- Understand current vacancy levels across the city, the impact they have and create attraction plans to address them
- Set out the vision and share learning around new roles and new models of delivery in Leeds
- Agree ways for all partners to feed into a Leeds sector-wide discussion around Action on Pay
- Deliver a campaign 'the positive side of social care in Leeds' to promote all that is good about our people and sector

2. Growing and developing the workforce to meet future demand

- Refresh career progression pathways and set out what good learning and development looks like, including apprenticeships
- Review our approaches around mandatory training and explore ways to improve quality, delivery and affordability
- Strike the right balance between international and domestic recruitment, and ensure all recruitment is ethical
- Provide improved training and peer support for Volunteers, Personal Assistants and Direct Payment holders
- Strengthen our development pathways for Social Work, Nursing and Occupational Therapy

3. Enhancing the use of technology

- Raise awareness of digital tools available in social care and give people the skills and confidence to use them
- Encourage and support use of the Adult Social Care Digital Skills framework
- Build networks of digital leaders and digital champions to embed technology and improve the delivery of care and support

4. Wellbeing of the workforce

- Improve wellbeing by clarifying what guidance, training and support is on offer and ensuring take up is high
- Create more networks and better peer support to help people with the demanding nature of social care roles
- Increase the number of working carers who receive support and training from their employer

5. Social justice and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- Build plans to attract more men, younger people and those with technical skills into our workforce, alongside existing efforts to create diverse, representative and inclusive workplaces
- Embed our learning around race equality and anti-racist practice
- Share inclusive recruitment guidance and good practice

6. Inclusive and compassionate leadership

- Improve learning and development for people stepping into management and those progressing into senior leadership roles
- Strengthen behaviours and relationships that support integrated and collaborate working
- Make EDI and Wellbeing central themes for management development programmes

Working together on workforce

Champion the commitments and recommendations from the National Workforce Strategy. **Leeds' good practice and collective voice influences positive change in the sector.**

Set up an engagement and collaboration framework for social care partners. **Building on and strengthening existing arrangements.**

Share more workforce related success stories, good practice and case studies. **To scale up the things that work well.**

Build more and better opportunities for collaborative working. **To increase efficiencies and share resources and staffing.**