Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government

Social care workforce report

2021

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This document is also available in Welsh. Copies of this document are available in large print or other formats, if required.

Contents

1. Executive summary

This report gives a snapshot of the social care workforce in Wales on 31 March 2021. The data was collected by a survey of local authorities between April and August 2021.

Local authorities provided data about people employed by their own social care services, and by the organisations they commission services from within their geographical boundaries. Some of these organisations provide both care that's directly commissioned by a local authority, and to people who arrange and pay for care themselves.

Services that provide care but are unregulated and are not arranged with the help of a local authority are generally excluded from this data collection process, although it's estimated that these services make up a small proportion of the care provided in Wales. Excluded services might include support privately arranged by an individual or family with an organisation that isn't regulated, such as a faith-based or other third sector support group.

1.1 Background

This is the first time we have carried out this survey in its entirety. The information about the workforce was previously collected in three separate data collection exercises administered by us and Welsh Government, with the support of Data Cymru. The move to a single process was agreed as part of Welsh Government's new *Performance and Improvement Framework*, launched in April 2020.

All 22 local authorities returned data to us in this first year of collection. The report reveals some of the challenges of this new approach and the steps we'll take to improve data quality in future reports. It also includes a technical appendix setting out the methods we used to estimate the results, by comparing the data in the workforce survey and other sources, mainly data from the Register of Social Care Workers we hold.

1.2 Results

We estimate there are about 91,000 people working across social care and social work in Wales. Of these:

- 81 per cent are female and 19 per cent are male
- residential care for adults is the largest part of the sector, accounting for just over 28 per cent of the social care workforce
- adult placement schemes are the smallest part of the social care workforce, representing 0.2 per cent of the total

- we estimate there are about 61,000 people employed in commissioned services and 30,000 people in local authority-run social care services, making the independent market twice the size of local authority-run services
- 78 per cent of the social care workforce is employed on permanent contracts
- 50 per cent of the workforce works 36 hours or more per week
- nearly 90 per cent of the social care workforce is from a White ethnic background
- more than 40 per cent of the workforce has some Welsh language ability.

1.3 Lessons learned and next steps

As with any new process, we identified opportunities for improvement, and we asked for feedback from the people involved in responding to the survey. We will use this feedback to refine the data collection process for next year.

We're planning on changing our user interface and how the data is submitted and recorded. We'll also collect data directly from commissioned services, which will reduce local authorities' workload.

We're also looking at long-term improvement opportunities, for example, by working with partner organisations to see how we might bring our data collection processes together.

1.4 Conclusion

While there were some teething issues with this first survey, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of all those involved in collecting the data. The data gives a valuable insight into the social care workforce in Wales.

Our collective understanding of both the data collection process, and what the data tells us, is paramount in continuing to offer the best support for the workforce and the best care and support for the people of Wales. The intelligence from the report will be critical in supporting successful approaches to effective workforce planning, a key action of the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy we lead with Health Education and Improvement Wales.[1]

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[1] https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/workforce-strategy/

2. Introduction

This report gives a snapshot of the social care workforce in Wales in 2021.

We collected this data from local authority and social care providers in Wales between April and August 2021. Local authorities gathered the data on our behalf, with each one collecting data from providers that operated in their areas, as well as submitting data about their own social care workers.

We designed the collection process to be as complete as possible, but it's important to note that the process only allowed the collection of data on services that are regulated, or where care and support is provided by, or commissioned by, local authorities. Providers that only offer support to people who arrange their own care won't be included, although this number is likely to be small.

All 22 local authorities and nearly 2,000 commissioned services in Wales provided data for this report. We want to thank them for their efforts in providing this valuable information.

Where possible, we have used other sources of data, such as the Register of Social Care Workers, to compare our estimates and assess the accuracy of our calculations.

2.1 Background

In 2020, Welsh Government introduced a new code of practice relating to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales.[2]

One aim of the code of practice's new *Performance and Improvement Framework* was to simplify the collection of data about the social care workforce and minimise duplication of effort. Welsh Government asked us to design a single survey for gathering data about the social care workforce.

We began the redesign of the survey process in 2019, in collaboration with around 40 stakeholders, including representatives from local authorities, Welsh Government and independent providers. We also worked with other key stakeholders with an interest in workforce data, such as Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

The aims of the initial workshop were to combine the data sets in the various requests for workforce information to:

- remove duplication
- remove unnecessary data requests
- introduce new data sets required by the sector.

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[2] Measuring social services performance: code of practice | GOV.WALES

It was also an opportunity to align our data sets and terminology to those requested by CIW.

We regularly brought stakeholders together to discuss and refine the design of the data collection process, including which data to request from employers in the sector and to assess the feasibility of collection. Two organisations volunteered to test the data collection tools.

To launch the collection exercise for 2021, we held a workshop with all lead contacts and workforce managers in the local authorities in March 2021.

During the submission period we set up a dedicated email address for queries and offered a weekly 'surgery' for all lead contacts, where questions and concerns could be addressed as soon as possible.

The new *Performance and Improvement Framework* and workforce data survey was introduced in law on 1 April 2020, in the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Work on the new workforce collections was side-lined as organisations adapted to different ways of working and their efforts were directed to responding to the immediate needs of the pandemic.

In late 2020, following a year where routine administrative data wasn't collected, it was decided to try to collect the data in the new *Performance and Improvement Framework* on a 'best endeavours' basis. Local authorities would collect as much of the data as possible for us and Welsh Government.

This decision was made in consultation with the executive group that oversaw the development of the *Performance and Improvement Framework* – a group with representatives from:

- the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru)
- the All-Wales Heads of Adult Services (AWASH)
- the All-Wales Heads of Children's Services (AWHoCS)
- CIW
- Social Care Wales
- Welsh Government.

We issued the 2021 workforce data collection process under the same 'best endeavours' principle and Sue Evans, our Chief Executive, and Albert Heaney, the then Director of Social Services and Integration, issued a letter to emphasise the importance of this work.

3. Data requirements and collection method

The new workforce data collection combines three mechanisms for collecting social care workforce data:

- the Welsh Government 'STF1' collection of information on the social care workforce employed by local authorities
- the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) collection (previously managed by Data Cymru on our behalf)
- our Social Worker Workforce Planning (SWWP) data.

Combining these processes is designed to streamline data collection and reduce duplication. This allows for a single data collection that fulfils national and local requirements on workforce insight and intelligence, to support effective workforce planning and recruitment strategies.

The social care workers included in the collection are those who provide care and support as described by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014[3].

The process covers the collection of data from across social care for a holistic view of the shape and size of the social care workforce. This report includes local authority and independent sector organisations – these include for-profit organisations and third sector organisations such as charities and social enterprises.

We asked for data on:

- adult residential care
- children's residential care
- domiciliary care
- social work teams
- day services
- supported living
- personal assistants
- foster carers
- adult placement schemes
- central or support staff
- other social care services, which do not fall into any of the above.

We didn't include information about:

- privately arranged care

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[3] Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 1, Section 4. Meaning of "care and support"

- care provided solely by the NHS
- charities and other third sector services that are unregulated and aren't commissioned by local authorities
- government and other regulatory bodies not involved in the direct provision of care and support (such as CIW, Social Care Wales and Welsh Government).

We asked local authorities to report on the workforce in place on 31 March 2021, and to submit this data through a specially created workforce data collection portal by 30 June 2021. We revised the deadline to 31 August 2021 to account for pressures in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

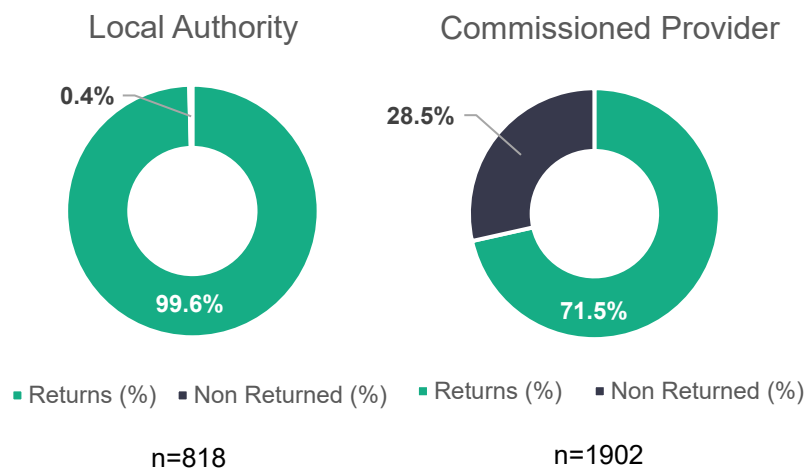See Appendix 1 for a full list of the data items we collected.

4. Quality of data

We carried out rigorous testing to identify and remove process issues and we also talked to people in local authorities to explain what was needed. But, as with any new process, we experienced some challenges.

While many of the data items were included in previous data collection processes, we also asked for new data. These new data items were not universally collected by local authorities or providers, so data needed to be manually collected specifically for this process.

While local authorities had control over data about their own employees, they relied on providers to supply the correct data. The data we received about providers varied in quality.

The figure below shows the completion rates for local authorities and commissioned services across Wales.

Local Authority	Commissioned Provider
0.4%	28.5%
99.6%	71.5%
■ Returns (%) ■ Non Returned (%)	■ Returns (%) ■ Non Returned (%)
n=818	n=1902

We received information from 2,173 settings or providers of social care services in Wales, from a potential 2,720 providers. This represents a response rate of 79.9 per cent. While this doesn't represent the whole sector, this response for this first year of collection – and during the pandemic – has been enormously encouraging as a step towards our aims of understanding the workforce.

Responses varied by service type. Many services were able to provide 100 per cent of the information we asked for, while others experienced challenges in providing some of the data we asked for. The lowest response rate was for day services in commissioned services, where the response rate was 61 per cent. As expected, data that had previously been collected had better rates of submission.

The gaps in the data mean that we can't carry out a full analysis of the characteristics of the entire workforce without making significant assumptions. Instead, the report sets out the information we can be confident about.

To address the gaps and inconsistencies in the data, we used a number of methods to sense check our estimates for the results in this report – these are described in appendix 2.
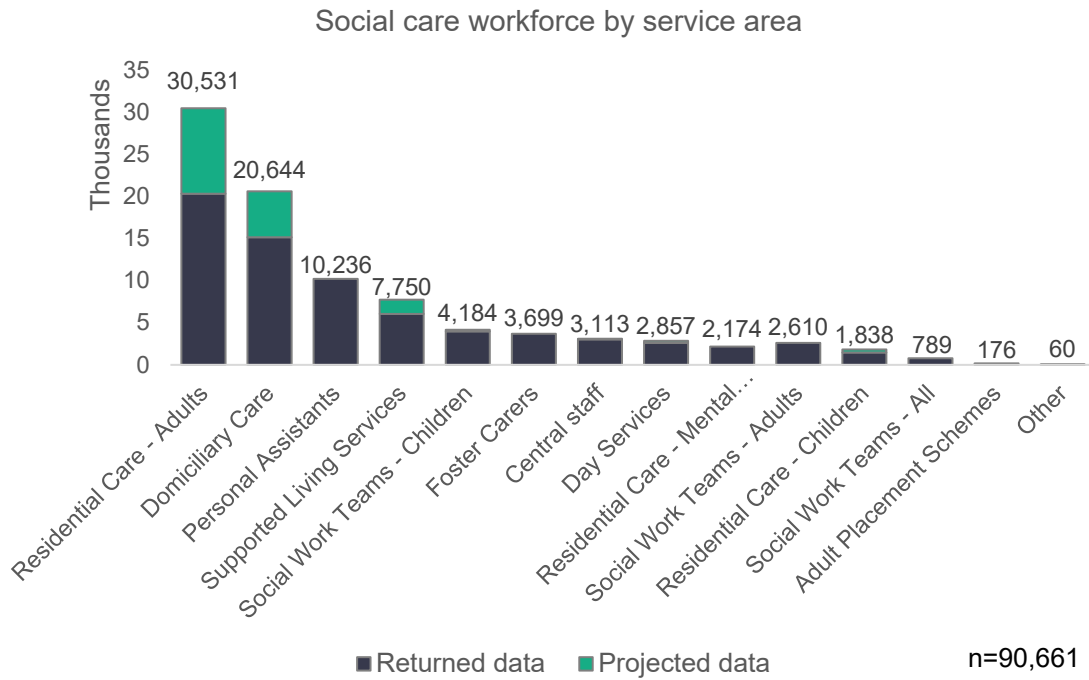
5. Data and insight

5.1 Overall social care workforce

We received data for 72,440 people working in social care. These figures represent a 99.4 per cent return rate from local authority run services and a 71.5 per cent return rate from commissioned services.
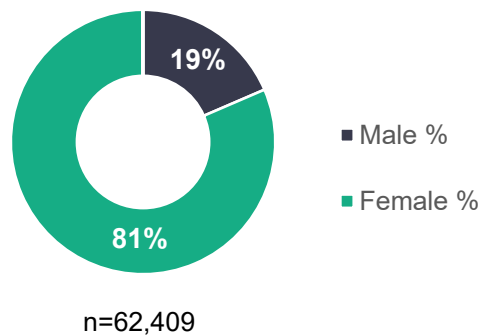
We were able to estimate the overall numbers in the workforce by comparing these figures with other data, for example the number of workers registered with us, and adjust our estimations accordingly. Using these techniques, we estimate that there were between 85,990 and 95,332 people working in social care in Wales on 31 March 2021 (90,661 +/- five per cent).

We estimate that the workforce is split across service type as below:

Social care workforce by service area

n=90,661

5.1.1 Gender

The gender split* across all services within social care in Wales is:
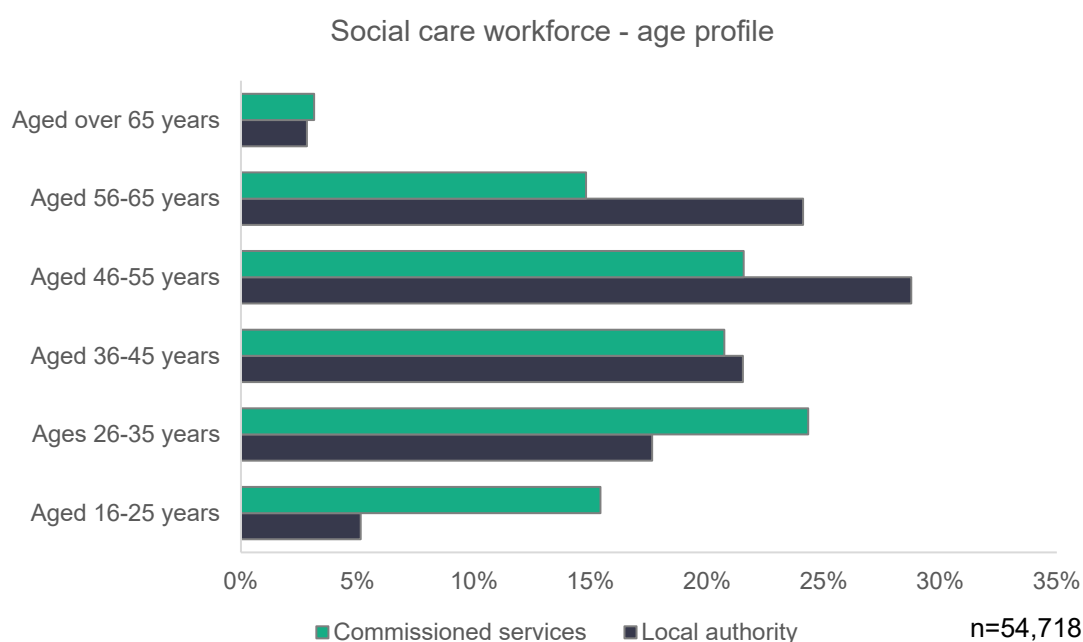

n=62,409

In our data sample 51 people identified as gender fluid or as non-binary. These represent less than 0.01 per cent of the overall sample.

As expected, females occupy the largest proportion of the social care workforce, making up more than four out of every five of those employed within the sector.
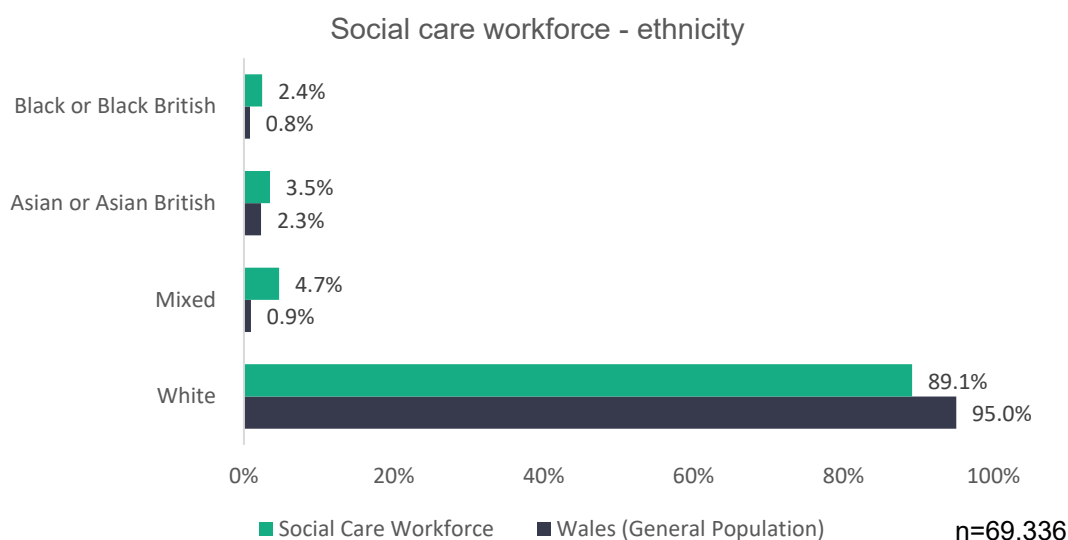
5.1.2 Age profile

Age ranges are broadly distributed across the working age range, as we would expect. However, there's a difference between the age distribution in local authority-run services and commissioned providers. A higher proportion of younger people (16 to 35 years of age) make up the workforce in commissioned services. The opposite is true with local authority services, with those aged 46 to 65 making up the largest group of employees.

Social care workforce - age profile
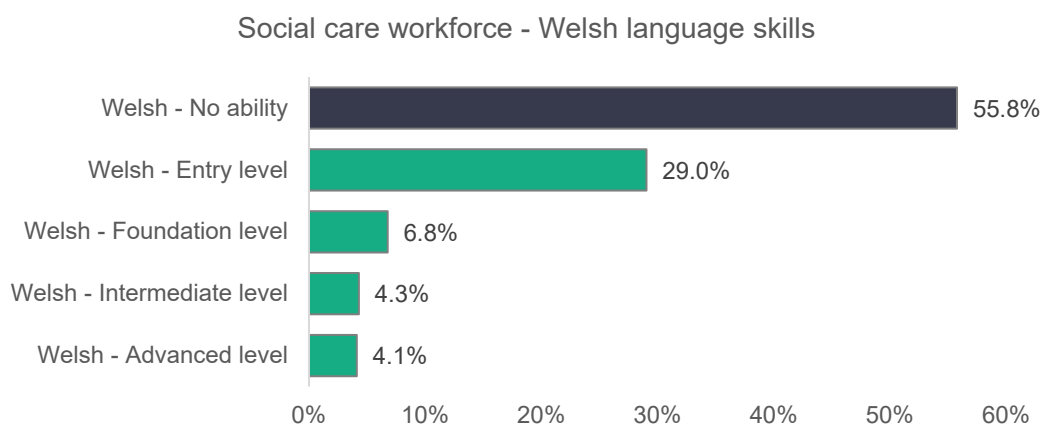
5.1.3 Ethnicity

Workers from diverse backgrounds are represented at a higher proportion in the social care workforce than in the general population[4] in Wales. Workers who were reported as White make up most of the social care workforce in Wales (89.1 per cent).

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[4] Stats Wales – https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/ethnicity-by-age

Social care workforce - ethnicity

Ethnicity	Social Care Workforce	Wales (General Population)
Black or Black British	2.4%	0.8%
Asian or Asian British	3.5%	2.3%
Mixed	4.7%	0.9%
White	89.1%	95.0%

■ Social Care Workforce ■ Wales (General Population)   n=69,336

5.1.4 Welsh language skills

We were told that 44.2 per cent of the social care workforce in Wales can understand Welsh to some degree. A breakdown of their Welsh language proficiency is shown below.

Social care workforce - Welsh language skills

Welsh language skill	Percentage
Welsh - No ability	55.8%
Welsh - Entry level	29.0%
Welsh - Foundation level	6.8%
Welsh - Intermediate level	4.3%
Welsh - Advanced level	4.1%

Data reported by Welsh Government[5] suggests that just over 22 per cent* of the population aged over three in Wales can speak Welsh, with two per cent able to speak a few words and 11 per cent fluent Welsh speakers.

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[5] Welsh language use in Wales: https://gov.wales/welsh-language-use-wales-initial-findings-july-2019-march-2020

Data collected from the Annual Population Survey[6] in 2021 states that 29.1 per cent* of the population in Wales can speak Welsh.
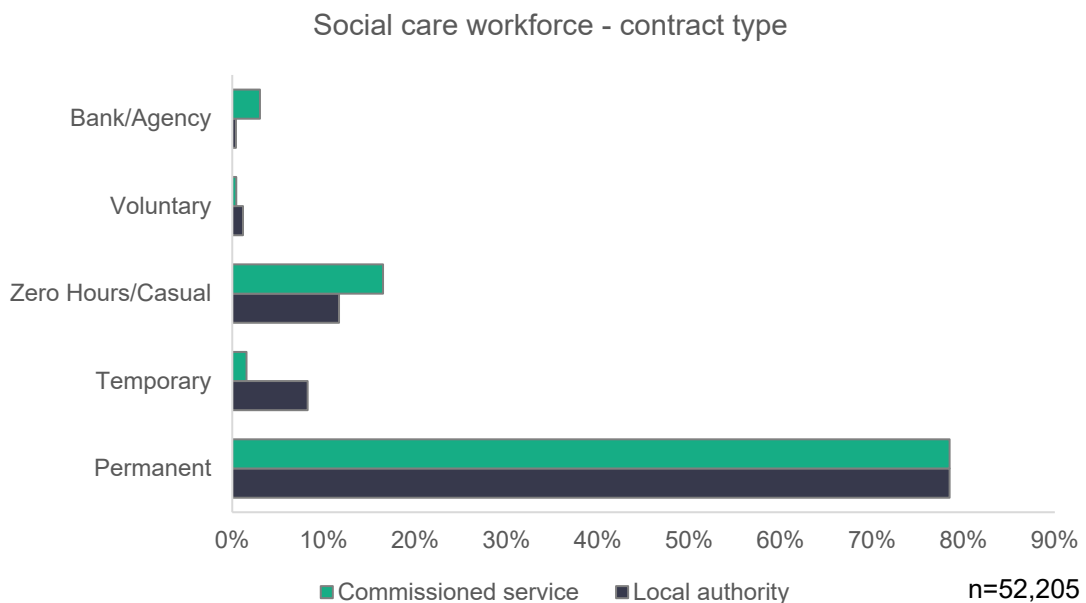
*Both of these data use slightly different categorisation to the Welsh Language Skills framework used in the workforce data collection. These are comparable to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) frameworks used elsewhere.

5.1.5 Contract type

Overall, 78.5 per cent of those employed in social care in Wales are employed on permanent contracts. There's no difference between the proportion of those on permanent contracts between local authority-run services and commissioned services.

The data included workers on casual and zero hours contracts and showed that commissioned services employ a higher proportion of their staff on these contracts (16.5 per cent versus 11.7 per cent).
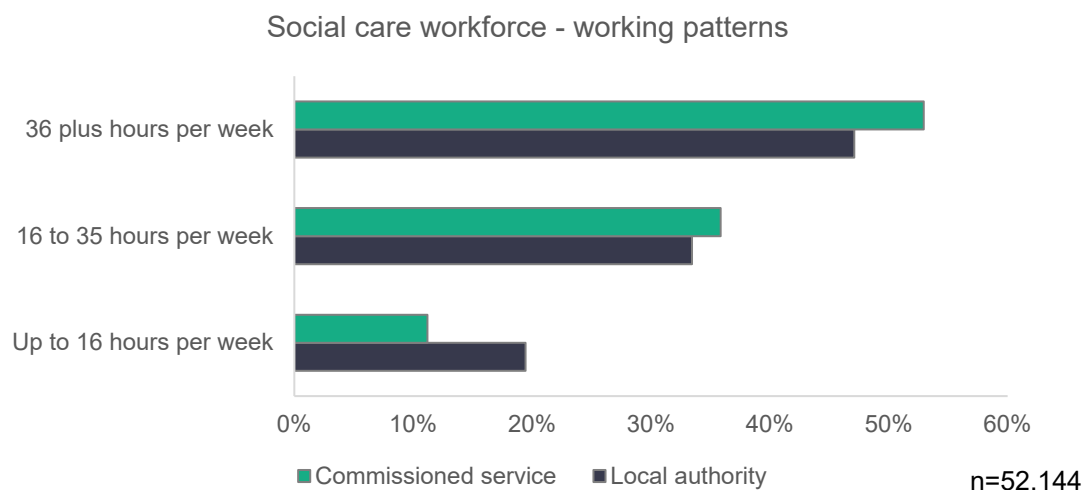
Commissioned services employ more bank/agency staff in relation to their entire workforce (3.0 per cent versus 0.4 per cent).

Social care workforce - contract type

■ Commissioned service ■ Local authority   n=52,205

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[6] Annual Population Survey – Welsh language: https://gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-april-2020-march-2021

5.1.6 Working patterns

Working patterns for those in local authority and commissioned services are broadly similar for full time (36hrs+). There is a marked difference in the number working up to 16 hours a week between commissioned services and local authorities.

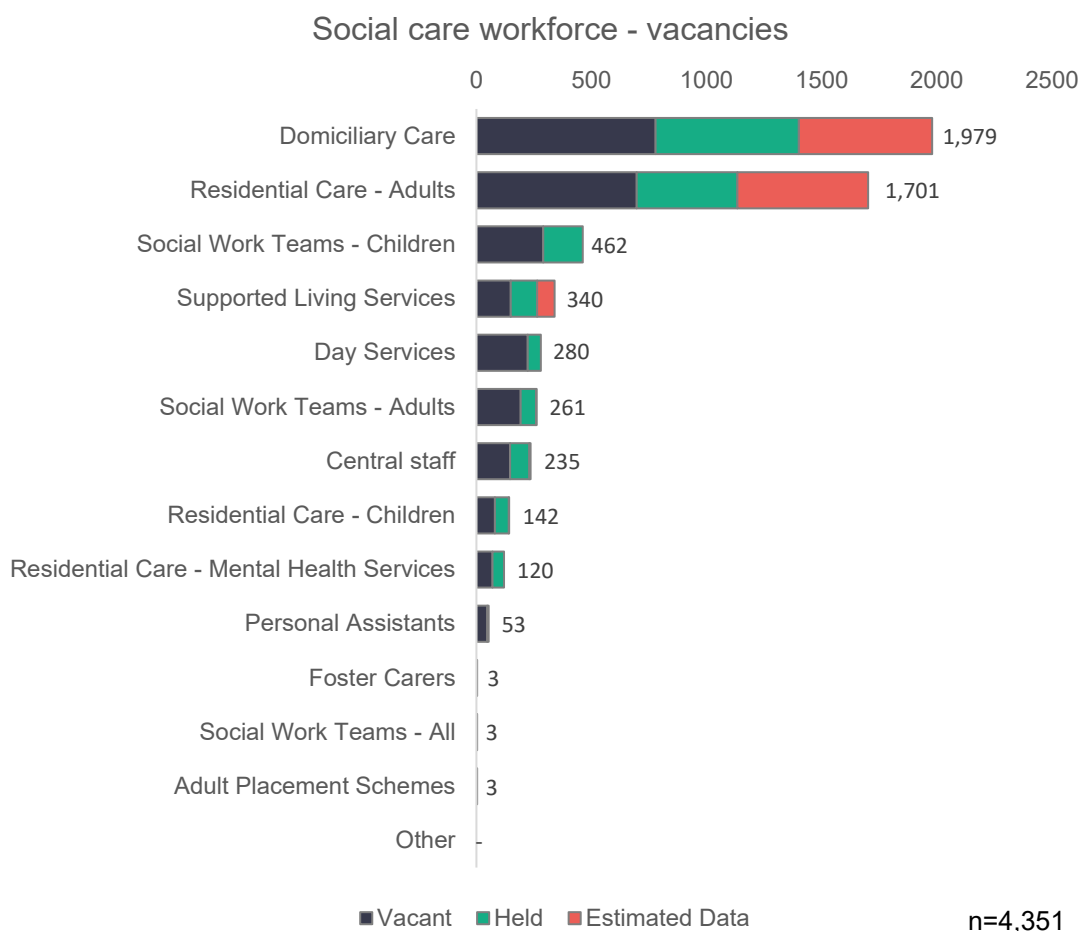Social care workforce - working patterns

n=52,144

5.1.7 Vacancies

The number of vacancies reported in the workforce data collection process was 2,676. An additional 1,675 posts were being 'held vacant'[7] by employers.

Using the same methods for estimating the total social care workforce in Wales, we can estimate an additional 1,230 posts that are vacant or held vacant in the sector, giving a total of 5,581 (+/- five per cent) posts vacant or held. This represents 6.1 per cent of the total workforce.

It's estimated that 68 per cent (3,772) of these vacancies are in commissioned services with the remaining 32 per cent (1,809) in local authority run services.

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[7] A held vacant post is a vacant post, that is purposely left unfilled by the employer.

Social care workforce - vacancies

Category	Value
Domiciliary Care	1,979
Residential Care - Adults	1,701
Social Work Teams - Children	462
Supported Living Services	340
Day Services	280
Social Work Teams - Adults	261
Central staff	235
Residential Care - Children	142
Residential Care - Mental Health Services	120
Personal Assistants	53
Foster Carers	3
Social Work Teams - All	3
Adult Placement Schemes	3
Other	-

■ Vacant ■ Held ■ Estimated Data

n=4,351

5.1.8 Staff turnover

We requested information about starters and leavers. It was reported that 10,423 people started a new role in social care in Wales and 7,987 left social care during the year. From these data we can calculate an overall net increase of +2,436* staff in the social care sector in Wales in 2020 to 2021.

*Data for this question was only provided by 81 per cent of identified services, so it's an underestimate. The actual number is estimated to be between +2,754 and +3,044.
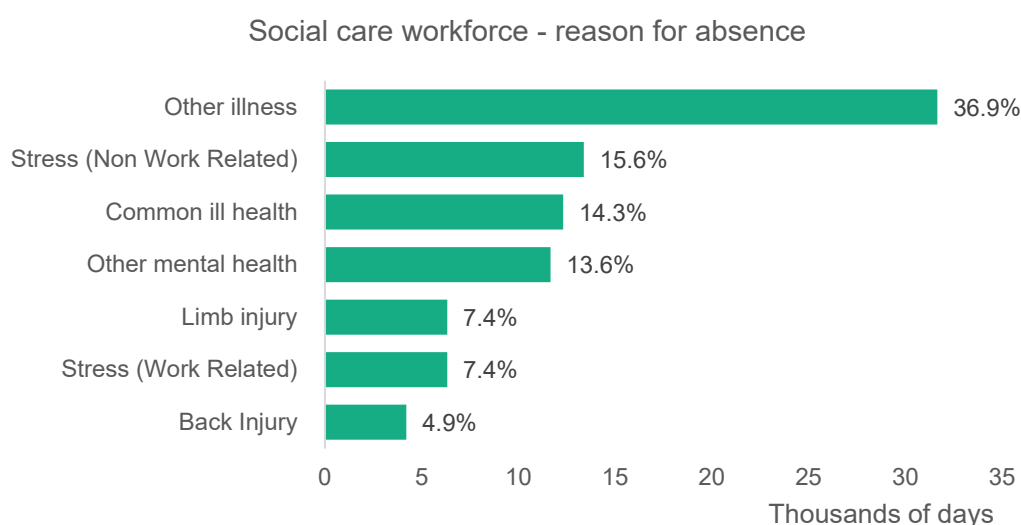
Turnover by service area is shown in the table below:

Row labels	Joiners	Leavers	Net change
Adult placement schemes	18	5	+13
Central staff	230	172	+58
Day services	99	151	-52
Domiciliary care	3,722	2,645	+1,077
Foster carers	595	147	+448
Other	6	2	+4
Personal assistants	3	24	-21
Residential care – adults	3,665	3,140	+525
Residential care – children	285	119	+166
Residential care – mental health services	409	303	+106
Social work teams – adults	205	179	+26
Social work teams – all	92	28	+64
Social work teams – children	417	304	+113
Supported living services	677	768	-91
Grand total	10,423	7,987	+2,436

5.1.9 Sickness

We requested information about sickness in the workforce data collection process. Completion of these data was optional for commissioned services. The data we received showed 85,848 days lost to sickness, but this is an underestimate given the data we received was incomplete. Seventy-six per cent of the days were recorded as lost to long-term sickness and 24 per cent to short-term.

The reasons given for sickness absence in the 2021 collection are:
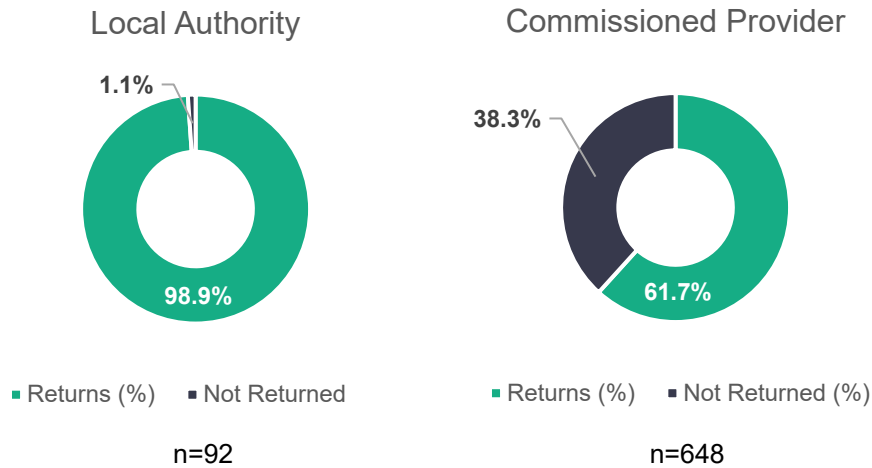
Social care workforce - reason for absence

'Other illnesses' were the dominant category, accounting for more than a third of all reported sickness absence. Mental health issues (including stress) accounted for 36.5 per cent of sickness absence, with the remaining third relating to back or other limb injuries and 'common ill health' (for example, colds, flu and gastrointestinal illnesses).

We didn't collect sufficient data in this survey to explore these categories in more detail. We intend to expand this part of the survey in future.
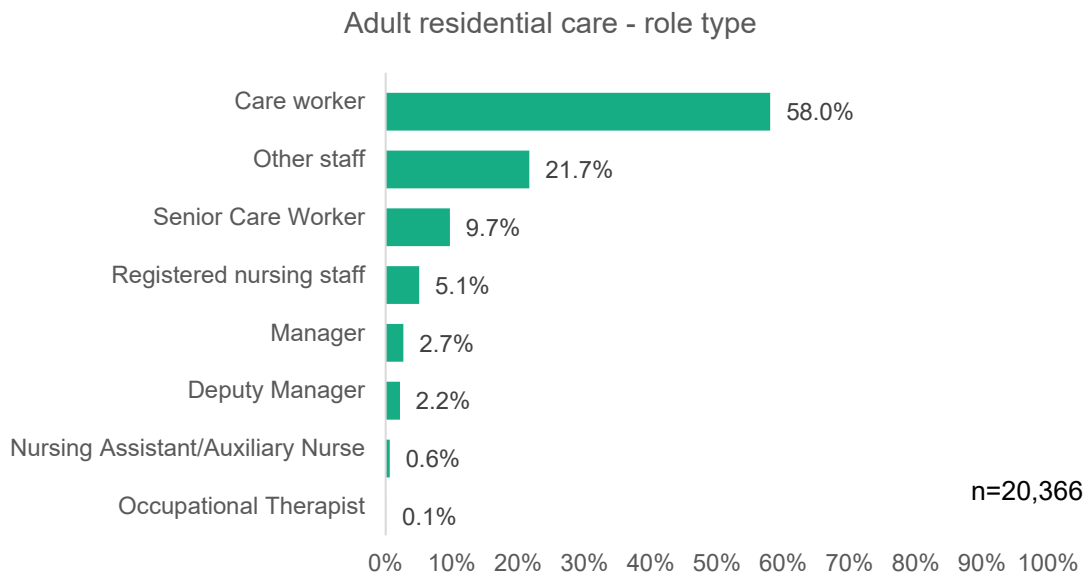
5.2 Adult residential care

We received information about 20,366 workers in the adult residential care sector. From this, we estimate that about 30,531 people work in adult residential care in Wales. This is the largest group of staff, making up almost one in every three people working in frontline social care in Wales. We estimate that commissioned adult residential care services employ more than five times the number of people than local authority-run services.

Return rates for local authority-run services were much higher than those from commissioned services, as we see below.

Local Authority

1.1%

98.9%

■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned

n=92

Commissioned Provider

38.3%

61.7%

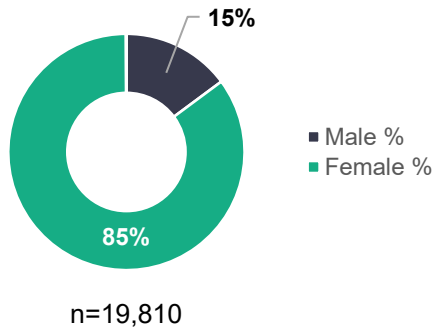■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned (%)

n=648

5.2.1 Adult residential care – role type

Care workers make up 58 per cent of the adult residential care workforce, as shown below. The next largest category is 'other' and is likely to include ancillary and administrative staff.

Adult residential care - role type

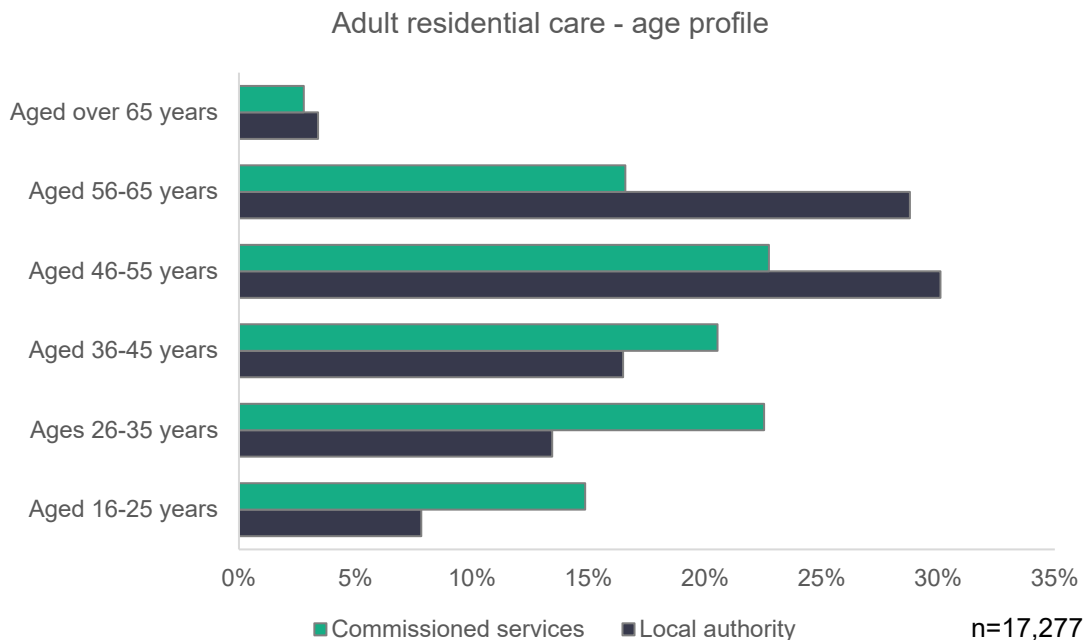| Role	Percentage
Care worker	58.0%
Other staff	21.7%
Senior Care Worker	9.7%
Registered nursing staff	5.1%
Manager	2.7%
Deputy Manager	2.2%
Nursing Assistant/Auxiliary Nurse	0.6%
Occupational Therapist	0.1%

n=20,366

5.2.2 Adult residential care – gender

The gender split for adult residential care is broadly in line with what we see across the whole social care workforce in Wales, with women occupying most posts.
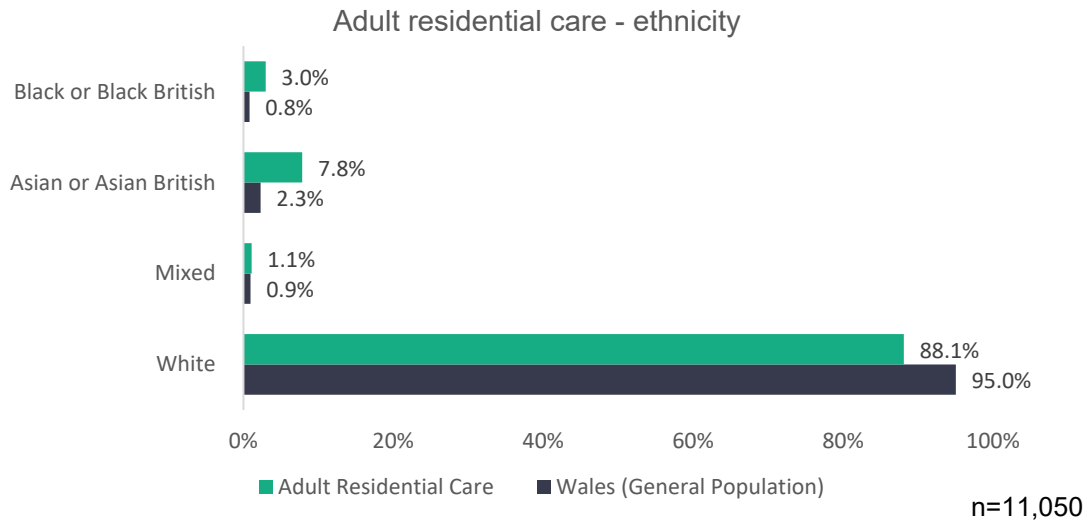

n=19,810

5.2.3 Adult residential care – age profile

The age profile for adult residential care workers is broadly similar to the general social care workforce. A higher proportion of those working in local authority adult residential care are in older age groups, where workers in commissioned adult residential care are more equally spread out across the age groups. Broadly similar proportions (3.4 per cent, 2.8 per cent) are in the over 65 years age group in local authorities and commissioned services.

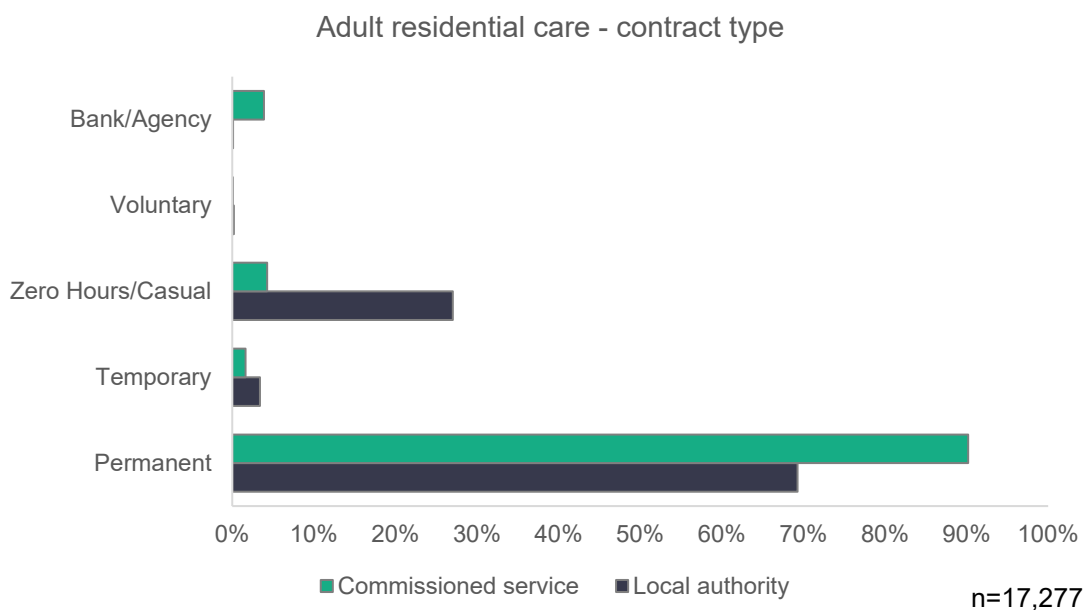Adult residential care - age profile

n=17,277

5.2.4 Adult residential care – ethnicity

Local authorities and providers reported that the proportion of Black or Black British, and Asian or Asian British workers is higher in adult residential care than in the general population of Wales.

Adult residential care - ethnicity

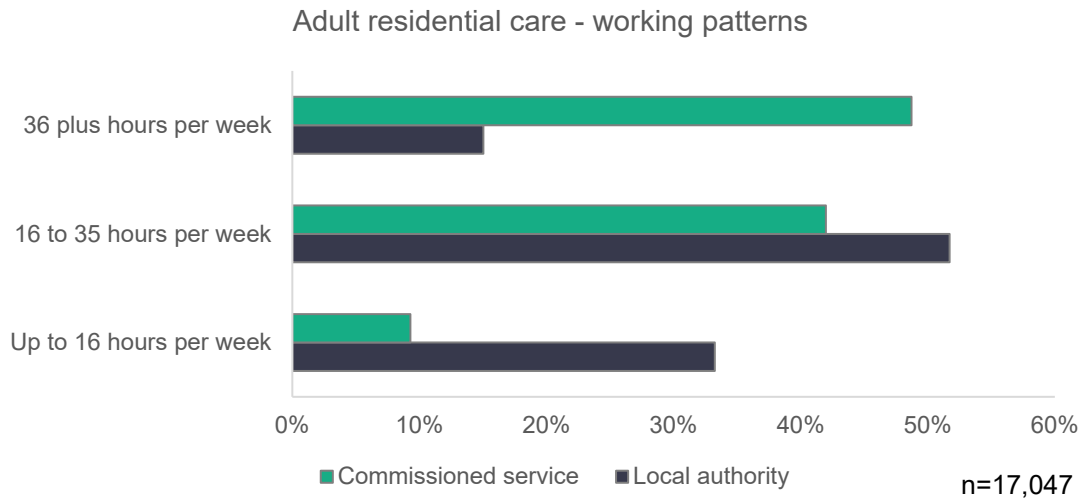|	Adult Residential Care	Wales (General Population)
Black or Black British	3.0%	0.8%
Asian or Asian British	7.8%	2.3%
Mixed	1.1%	0.9%
White	88.1%	95.0%

n=11,050

5.2.5 Adult residential care – contract type

More than 90 per cent of staff employed in commissioned adult residential care are employed on a permanent basis. The picture for local authority adult residential care looks slightly different, with only 69.3 per cent of these staff employed on a permanent basis. Just over one in every four people who work in local authority adult residential care are employed on a casual/zero hours contract. This represents an estimated 1,191 people.

Adult residential care - contract type

	Commissioned service	Local authority
Bank/Agency		
Voluntary		
Zero Hours/Casual		
Temporary		
Permanent		

n=17,277

5.2.6 Adult residential care – working patterns

More than a third (33.24 per cent) of those working in local authority adult residential care work less than 16 hours per week, while fewer than 10 per cent of the commissioned adult residential care workforce works less than 16 hours per week. Nearly half (48.7 per cent) of those in commissioned adult residential care work full-time hours.
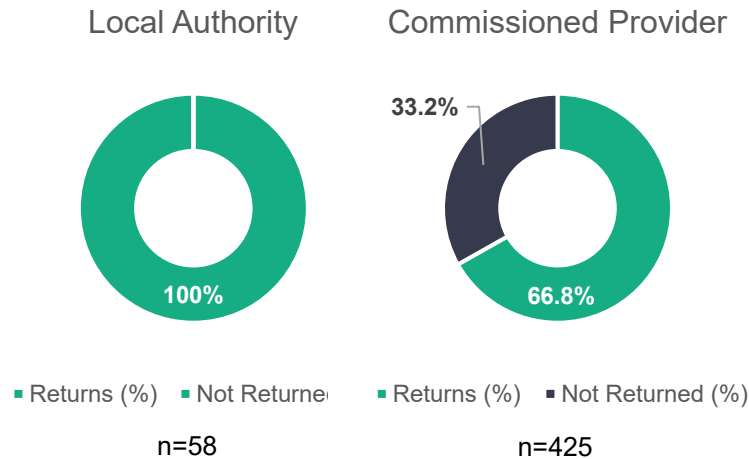
Adult residential care - working patterns

n=17,047

5.2.7 Adult residential care – vacancies

Adult residential care accounted for the second highest number of vacancies in the survey, with about 1,701 vacancies on 31 March 2021. This means that 5.3 per cent of jobs in adult residential care were unfilled. There were slightly more vacancies in commissioned services (6.3 per cent) than local authority-run services (5.2 per cent).

5.3 Domiciliary care

We received information about 15,189 domiciliary care workers, representing 100 per cent (4,201) of the local authority domiciliary care workforce, but only 66.8 per cent of the commissioned domiciliary care workforce.
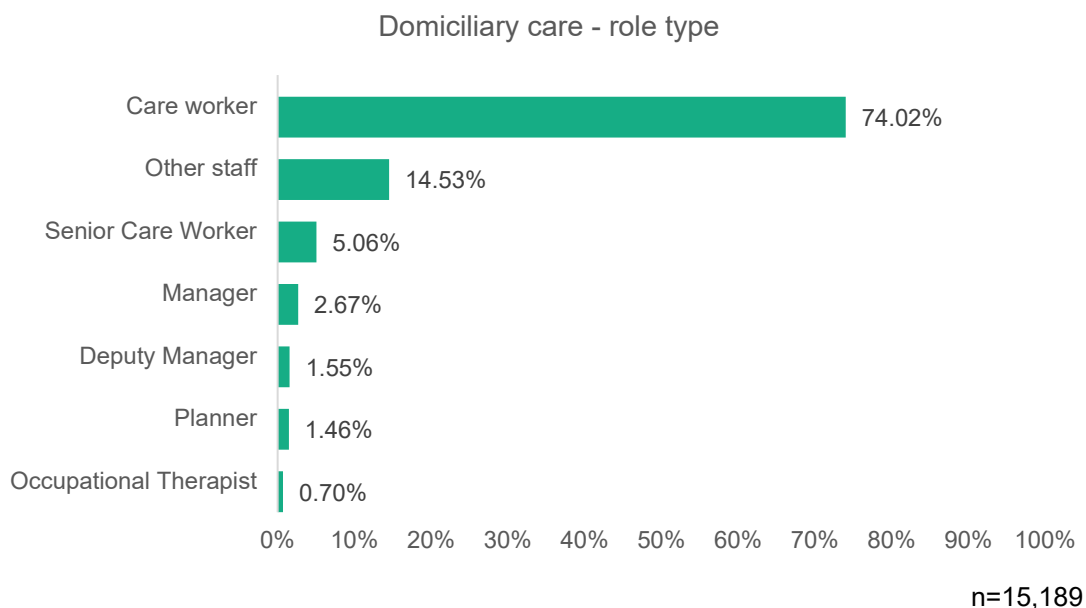
Local Authority   Commissioned Provider

- Returns (%) - Not Returned

n=58

- Returns (%) - Not Returned (%)

n=425

We cross-referenced this information with the number of people registered to provide domiciliary care on 1 April 2021. These data[8] suggest 23,108 people work in domiciliary care across Wales. Given registration is mandatory, this is likely to be a more accurate representation of the number of domiciliary care workers in Wales. Domiciliary care represents 22.8 per cent of all workers in the social care sector in Wales and is the second largest service.

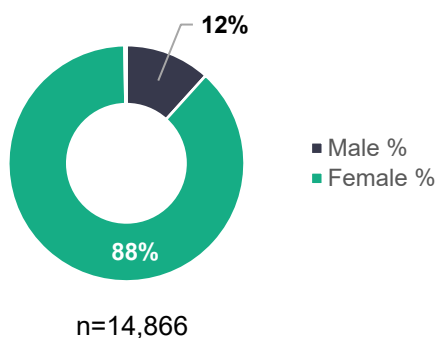[8] Data and information on the social care workforce in Wales. | Social Care Wales

5.3.1 Domiciliary care – role type

Care worker roles make up most staff in this service area, as expected.
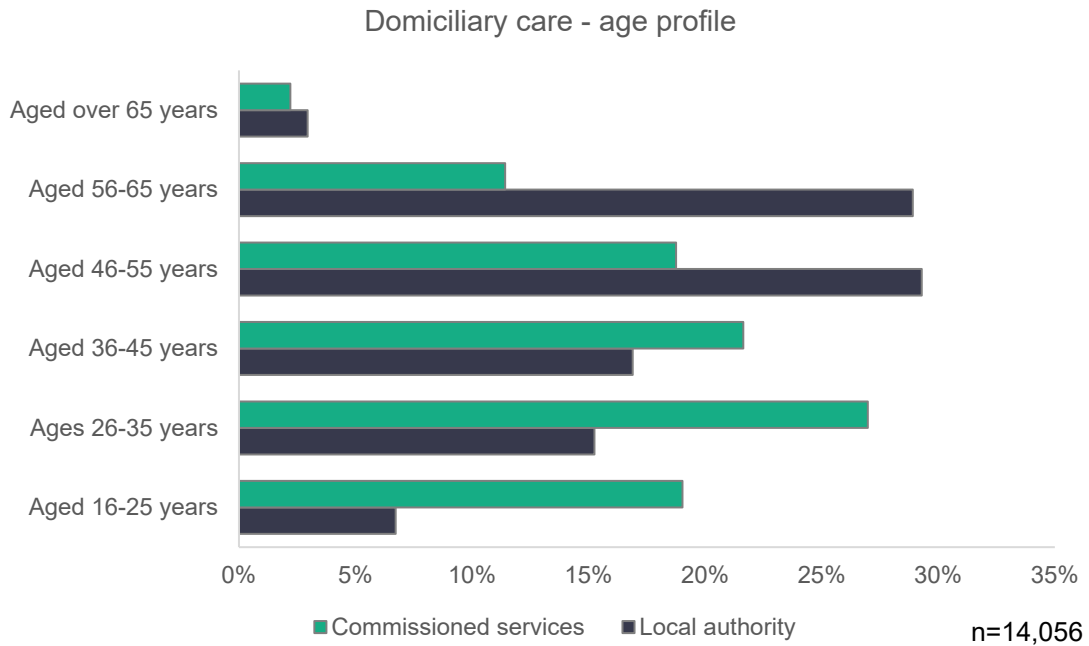
Domiciliary care - role type

Role	%
Care worker	74.02%
Other staff	14.53%
Senior Care Worker	5.06%
Manager	2.67%
Deputy Manager	1.55%
Planner	1.46%
Occupational Therapist	0.70%

n=15,189

5.3.2 Domiciliary care – gender

The proportion of female workers to male workers is slightly above what we see in the overall social care workforce, with women occupying 88 per cent of domiciliary care roles compared to 81 per cent in the overall workforce. Thirty-eight workers in domiciliary care were reported as being gender fluid.

12%

- Male %
- Female %

88%

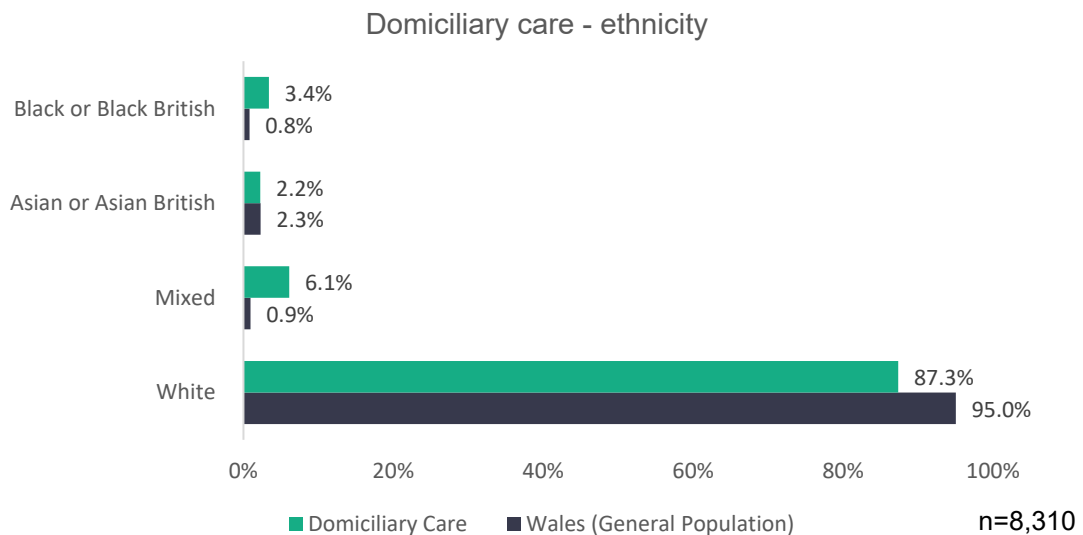n=14,866

5.3.3 Domiciliary care – age profile

Age profiles are broadly similar to the overall social care workforce in Wales. The survey showed that younger people are more likely to work in

commissioned services and older people more likely to work in local authority-run domiciliary care.

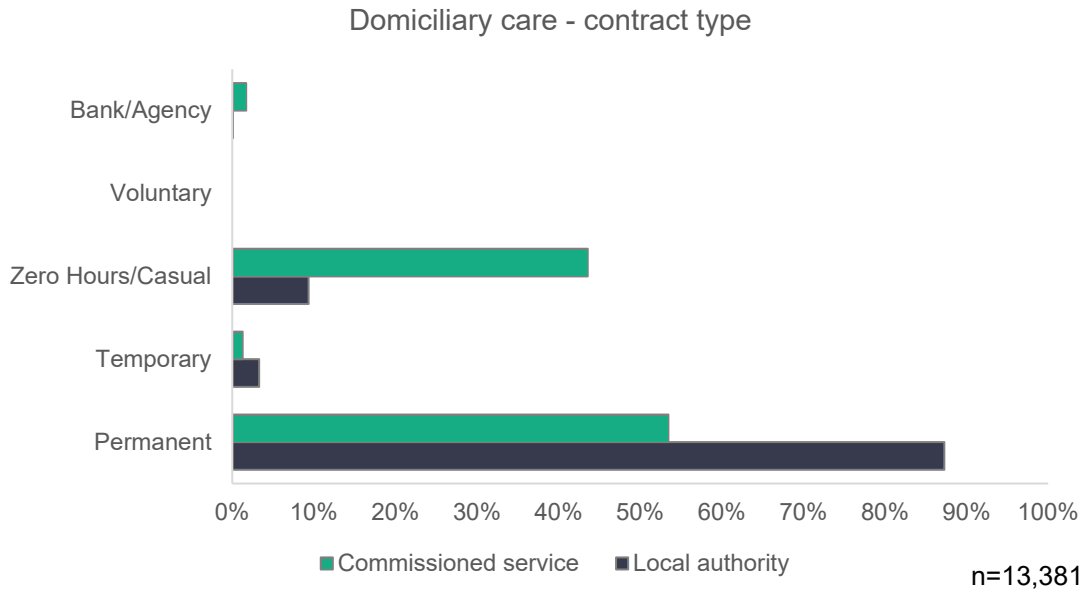**Domiciliary care - age profile**

n=14,056

5.3.4 Domiciliary care – ethnicity

People from diverse ethnic backgrounds represent a higher proportion of the domiciliary care workforce than we would see in the general population.

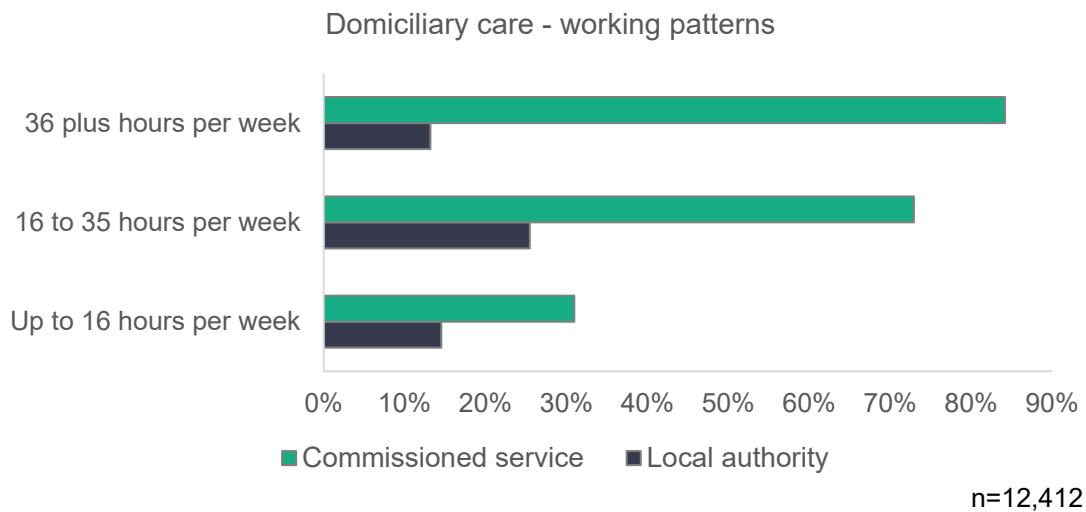**Domiciliary care - ethnicity**

n=8,310

5.3.5 Domiciliary care – contract type

87.3 per cent of staff employed in local authority domiciliary care services are employed on a permanent basis. This drops to 53.5 per cent for commissioned services. Nearly 44 per cent of staff employed in commissioned domiciliary care are on casual or zero hours contracts.

Domiciliary care - contract type

n=13,381

5.3.6 Domiciliary care – working patterns

Working patterns for domiciliary care are not dominated by any one group, although those working part-time hours are slightly in the majority. Local authorities are more likely to offer contracts with fewer hours than commissioned services, with 27.3 per cent of local authority domiciliary care employees working up to 16 hours a week.

Domiciliary care - working patterns
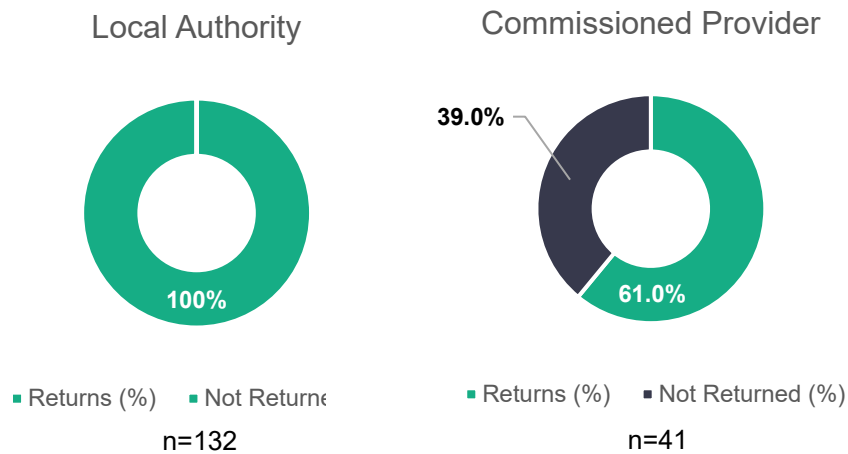
n=12,412

5.3.7 Domiciliary care – vacancies

Domiciliary care vacancies make up more than 35 per cent of the total vacancies in social care in Wales, representing an estimated 1,979 vacancies. This is the highest number of vacancies in any service in social care in Wales despite it being the second largest service. About 7.9 per cent of roles are unfilled.
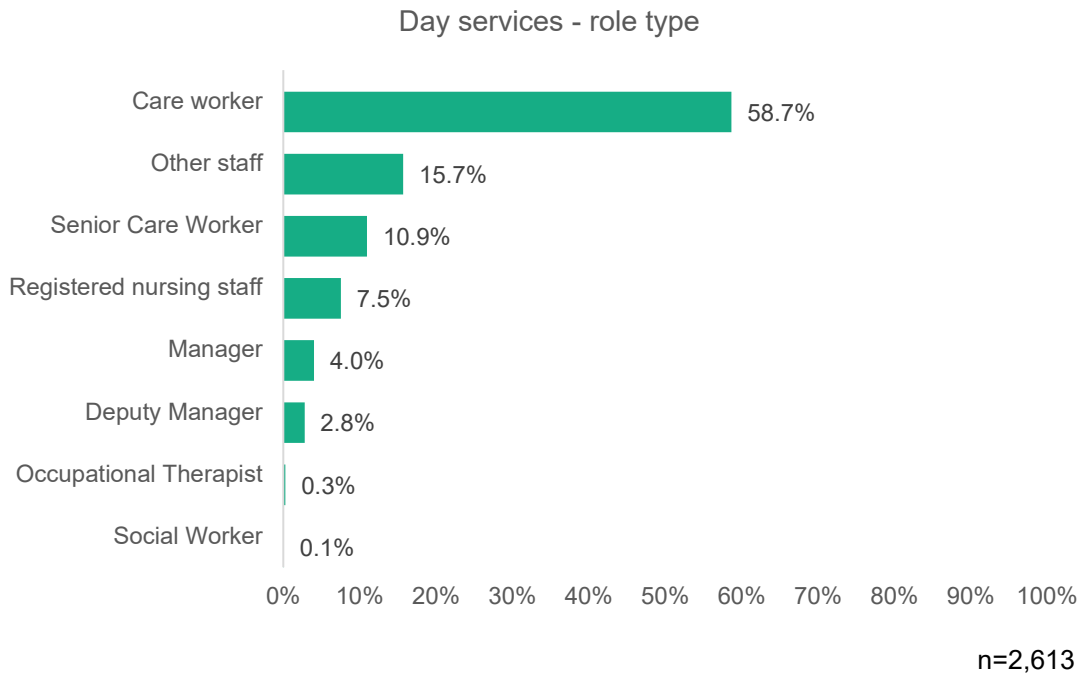
5.4 Day services

We estimate that 2,857 ($^+$/- five per cent) people work in the day services sector in Wales (2,231 in local authority-run services and 626 in commissioned services). These workers represent 3.2 per cent of the total social care workforce in Wales. Day services had the lowest number of returns from commissioned providers.
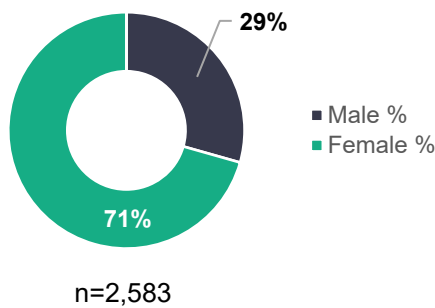
Local Authority

Commissioned Provider

39.0%

100%

61.0%

- Returns (%) - Not Returne

- Returns (%) - Not Returned (%)

n=132

n=41

5.4.1 Day services – role type

The day services workforce is made up of the following roles.

Day services - role type

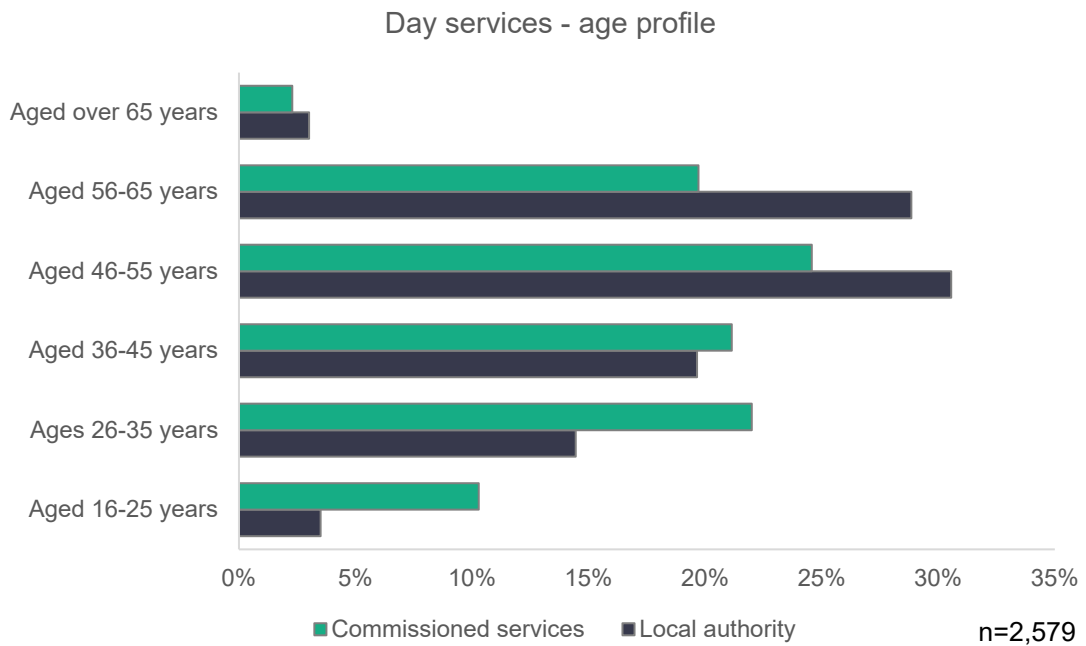| Role	Percentage
Care worker	58.7%
Other staff	15.7%
Senior Care Worker	10.9%
Registered nursing staff	7.5%
Manager	4.0%
Deputy Manager	2.8%
Occupational Therapist	0.3%
Social Worker	0.1%

n=2,613

5.4.2 Day services – gender

We see a significant change in gender representation with those who work in day services in Wales, with 29 per cent of the sector occupied by men. This is 10 per cent more than we see in the general social care workforce population.
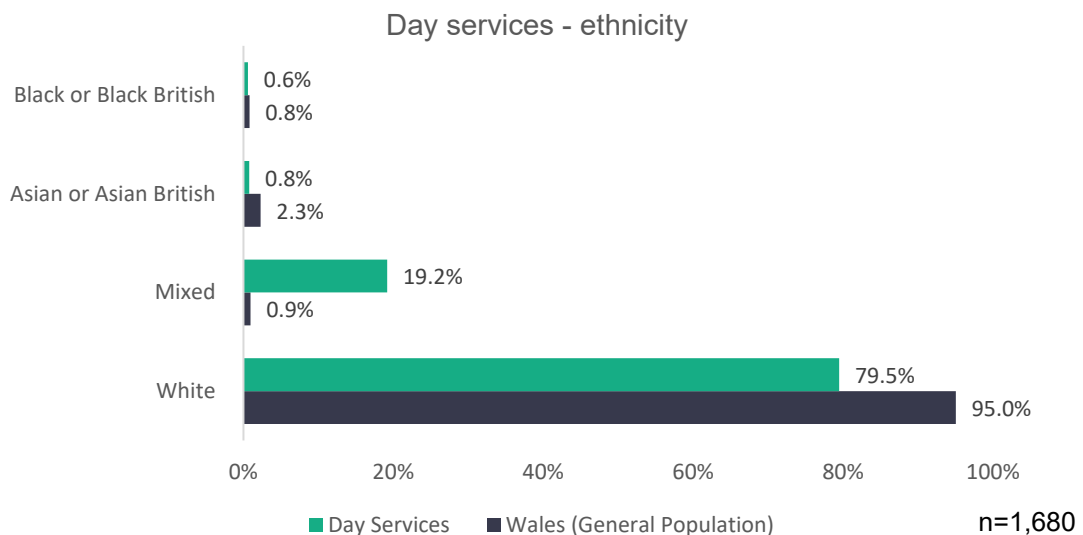
Male %: 29%
Female %: 71%

n=2,583

5.4.3 Day services – age profile

As in residential and domiciliary care services, we see the same differences across age groups across local authority-run and commissioned services.

Day services - age profile

Commissioned services ■ Local authority
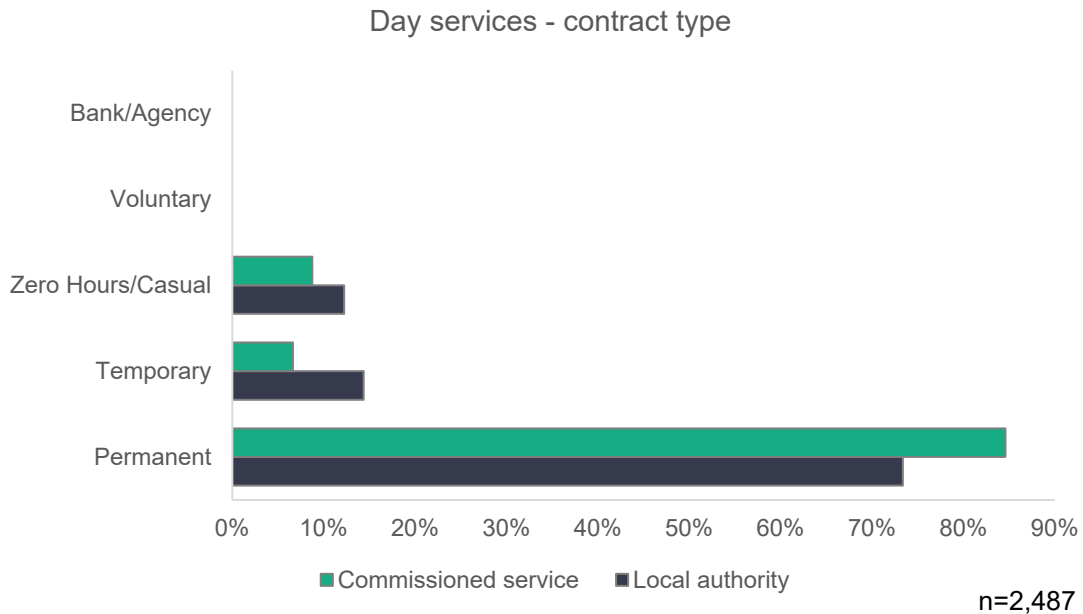
n=2,579

5.4.4 Day services – ethnicity

Workers with mixed ethnic backgrounds are significantly more represented in the day services sector than we would expect to see in the general population of Wales. Nearly one in five workers in day services were reported to be from a mixed ethnic background.

Day services - ethnicity

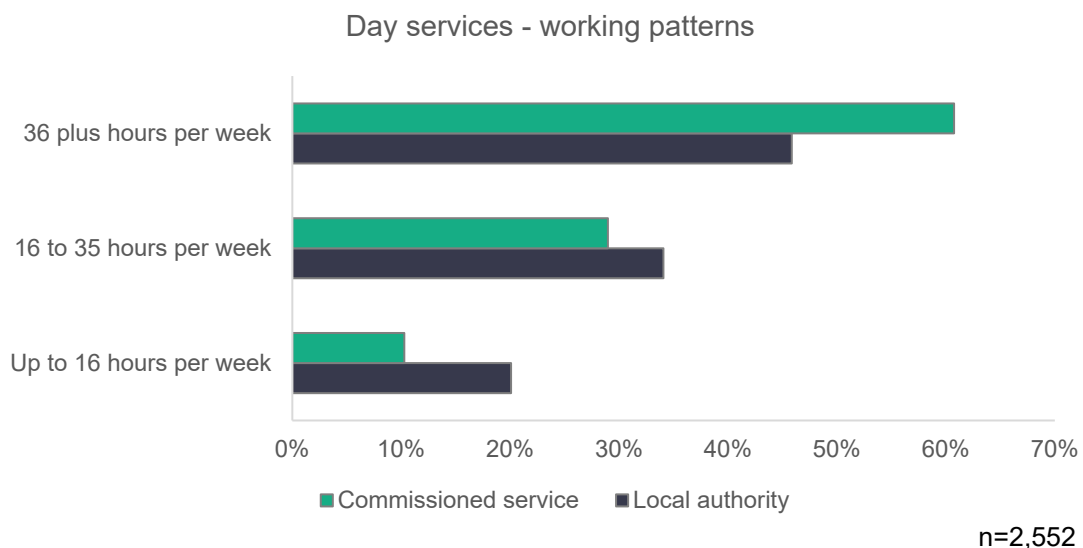Day Services ■ Wales (General Population)

n=1,680

5.4.5 Day services – contract type

Most staff working in day services are employed on a permanent basis. But there are significant proportions of staff who work on temporary and casual or zero hours contracts. These are higher in local authority-run services (26.6 per cent) than in commissioned services (15.4 per cent). The survey suggested that bank or agency staff are not used in day services in Wales, although we can't discount this due to lower returns from commissioned services.

Day services - contract type

n=2,487

5.4.6 Day services – working patterns

The proportion of those working full-time hours is slightly higher in local authority-run day services than in commissioned services, with 60.9 per cent working 36 hours or more per week.

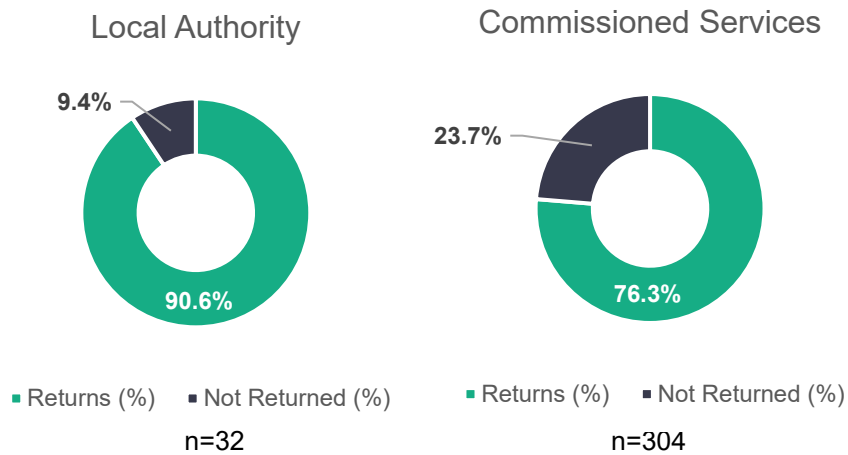Day services - working patterns

n=2,552

5.4.7 Day services – vacancies

The survey showed there were 280 vacancies. Fifty-seven of these posts were held vacant by employers. Day services make up about five per cent of the total social care vacancies in Wales.
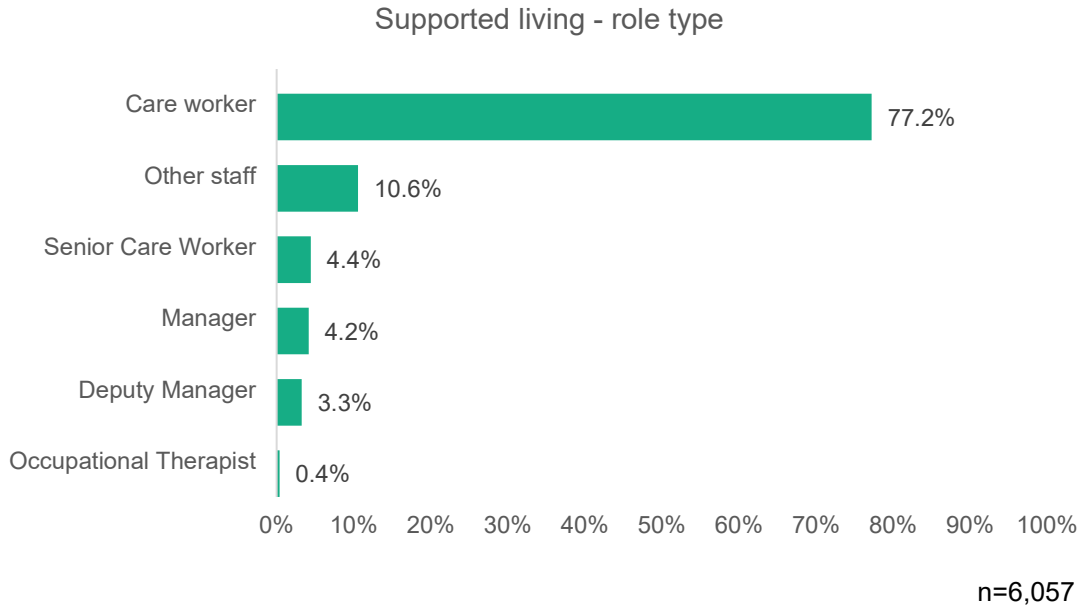
5.5 Supported living

Neither local authority-run services nor commissioned services were able to provide complete returns for supported living services. We estimate that 7,750 people (+/- five per cent) work in this sector (996 for local authority-run services and 6,754 for commissioned services). This represents 8.6 per cent of the total social care workforce in Wales.
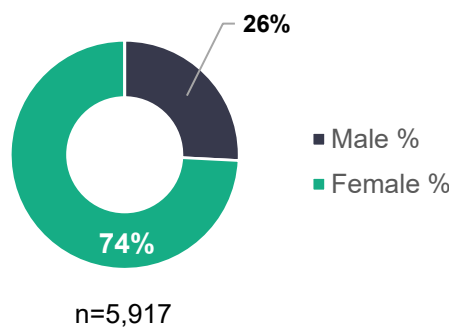
Local Authority

9.4%

90.6%

■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned (%)

n=32

Commissioned Services

23.7%

76.3%

■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned (%)

n=304

5.5.1 Supported living – role type

The supported living workforce is made up of the following roles.

Supported living - role type

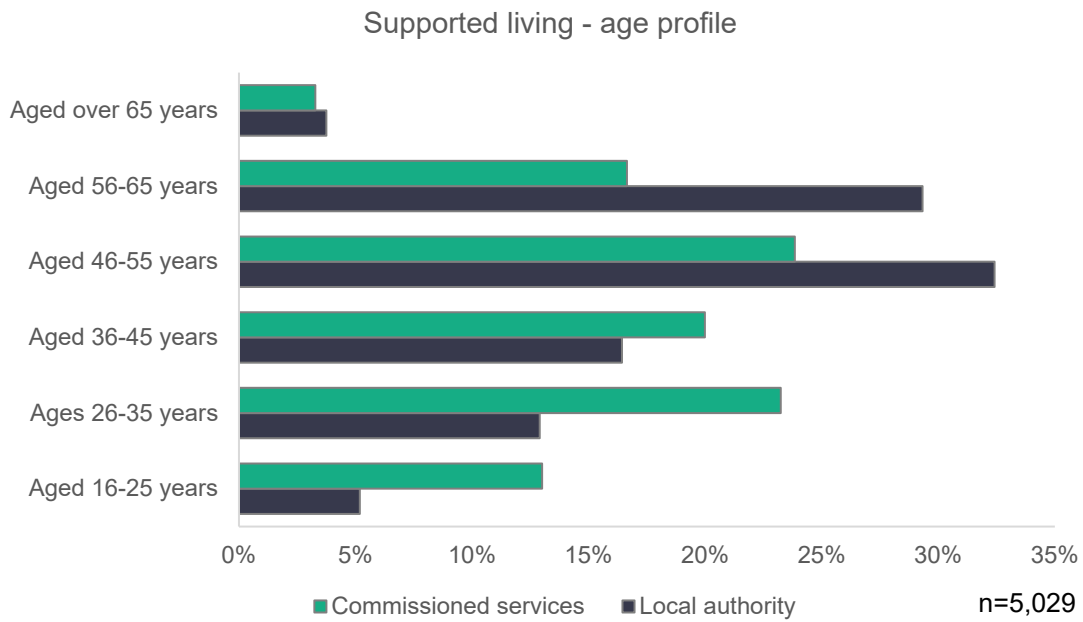| Role	Percentage
Care worker	77.2%
Other staff	10.6%
Senior Care Worker	4.4%
Manager	4.2%
Deputy Manager	3.3%
Occupational Therapist	0.4%

n=6,057

5.5.2 Supported living – gender

One in every four workers in supported living is male. This is higher than the one in five seen in the general social care workforce.
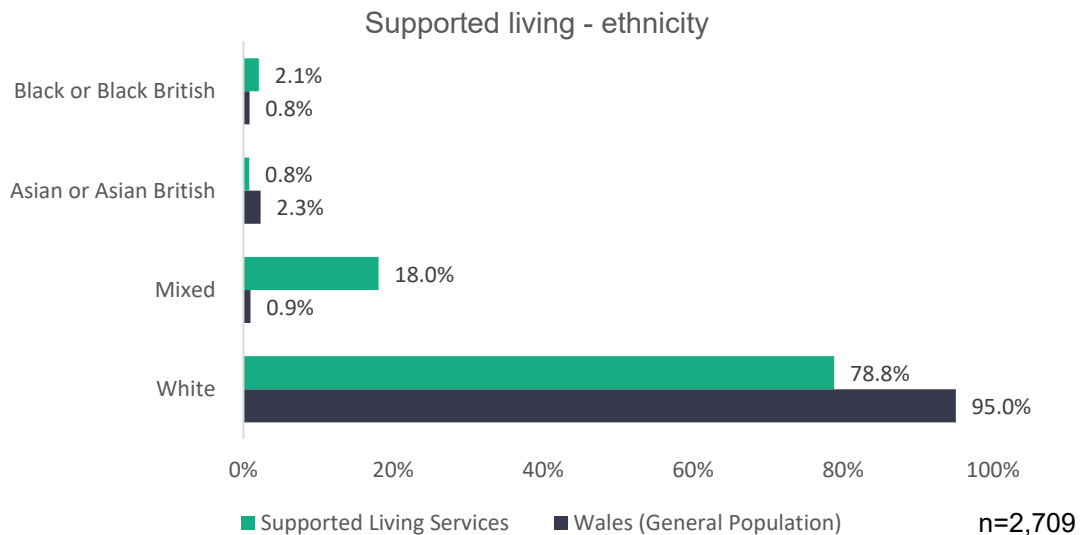
- Male %: 26%
- Female %: 74%

n=5,917

5.5.3 Supported living – age profile

Workers aged 46 and over form most of the workforce in local authority-run services. The distribution of workers in commissioned supported living services is more evenly spread across age groups with a slight bias toward those in the 26 to 35 year and 46 to 55 year age groups.

Supported living - age profile

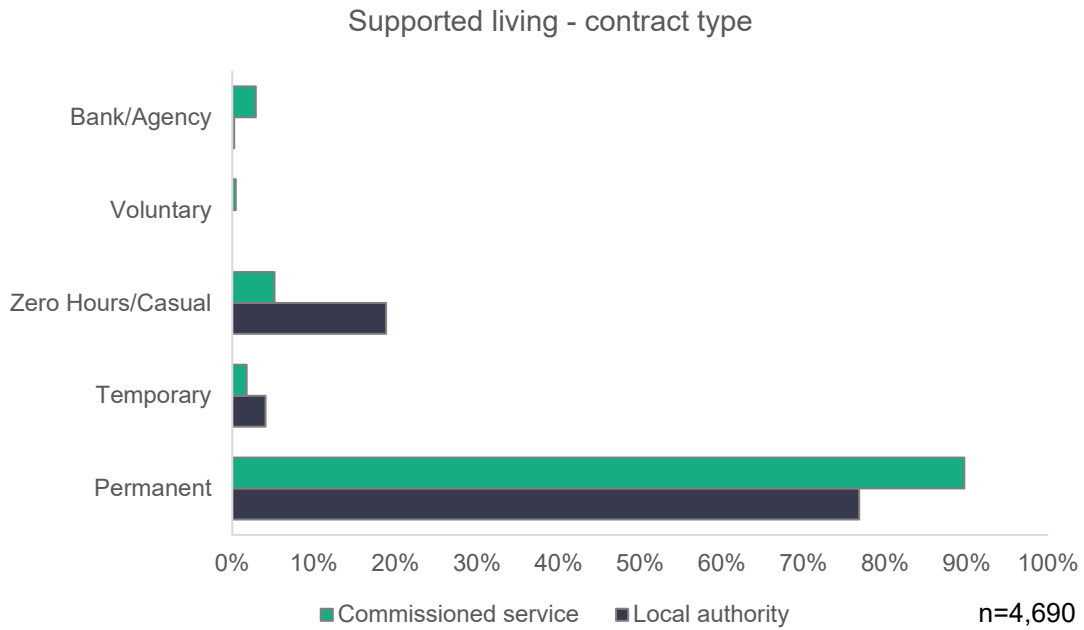Commissioned services ■ Local authority

n=5,029

5.5.4 Supported living – ethnicity

As with domiciliary care, nearly one in every five workers in the supported living sector are reported as having mixed ethnicity. This compares to about one per cent of the general population of Wales.

Supported living - ethnicity

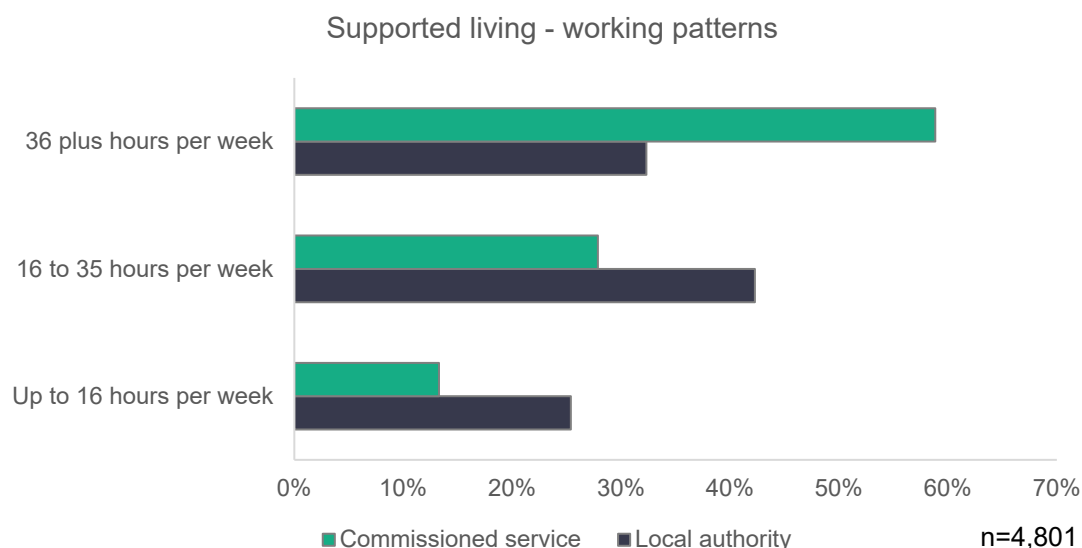■ Supported Living Services ■ Wales (General Population)

n=2,709

5.5.5 Supported living – contract type

Most workers (87.4 per cent) in supported living services are on permanent contracts. A higher proportion of workers (89.7 per cent) in commissioned services are on permanent contracts than in local authority-run services (76.8 per cent). Local authorities employ more workers on casual or zero hours contracts (18.9 per cent) than commissioned services (5.2 per cent).

Supported living - contract type

n=4,690

5.5.6 Supported living – working patterns

There is a noticeable difference in working patterns between commissioned services and local authority-run services. Working patterns in commissioned services are skewed towards full-time working (58.8 per cent) at 36 hours plus per week), with more workers in local authority-run services on part-time hours (42.3 per cent).

Supported living - working patterns
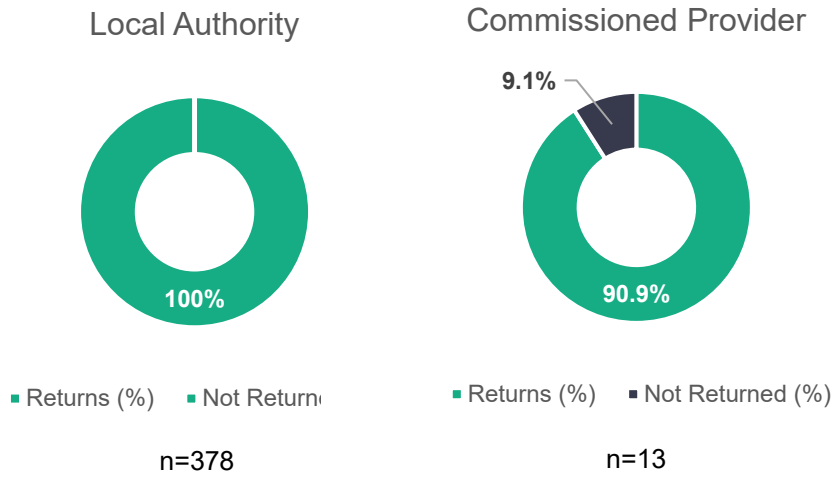

5.5.7 Supported living – vacancies

The survey reported 264 vacancies in supported living services, with 155 posts held vacant. We estimate an additional 76 vacant or held vacant posts in this part of the sector based on the proportion of services that provided data. This gives a total of 340 posts in the sector or about six per cent of all vacancies in the social care sector in Wales.

5.6 Social work teams

The data received for this section includes a range of role types under the 'social work' section of the survey. This includes a mix of frontline workers who don't need to be registered with us and social workers, who do.
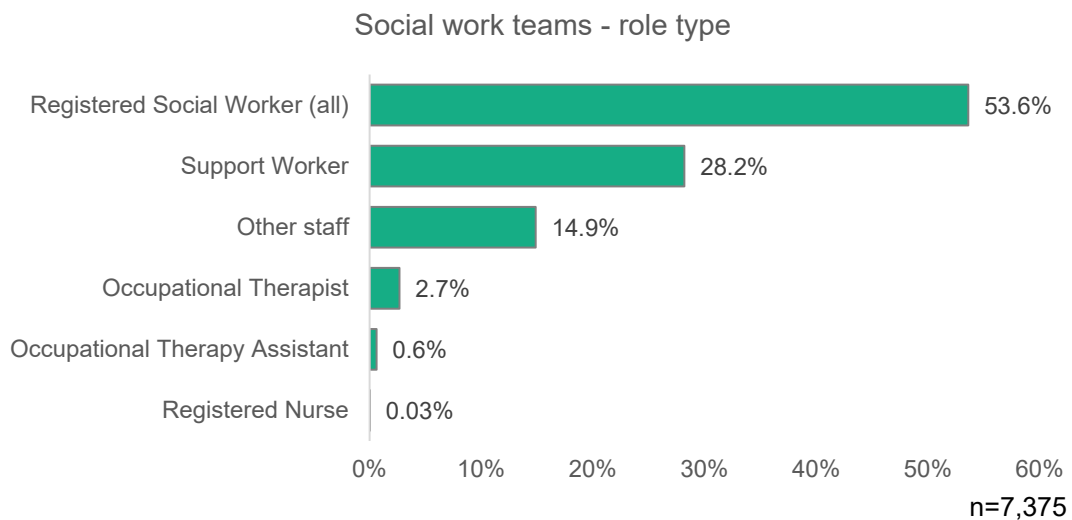
We received complete data from social work teams in local authorities and 90 per cent from social work teams in commissioned services. We estimate there are 7,375 people working in these roles. Of these, 3,976 work in children's

social care, 2,610 in adult social care and 789 in teams that work with both adults and children. Nearly all (98.11 per cent) these people work in local authority services.

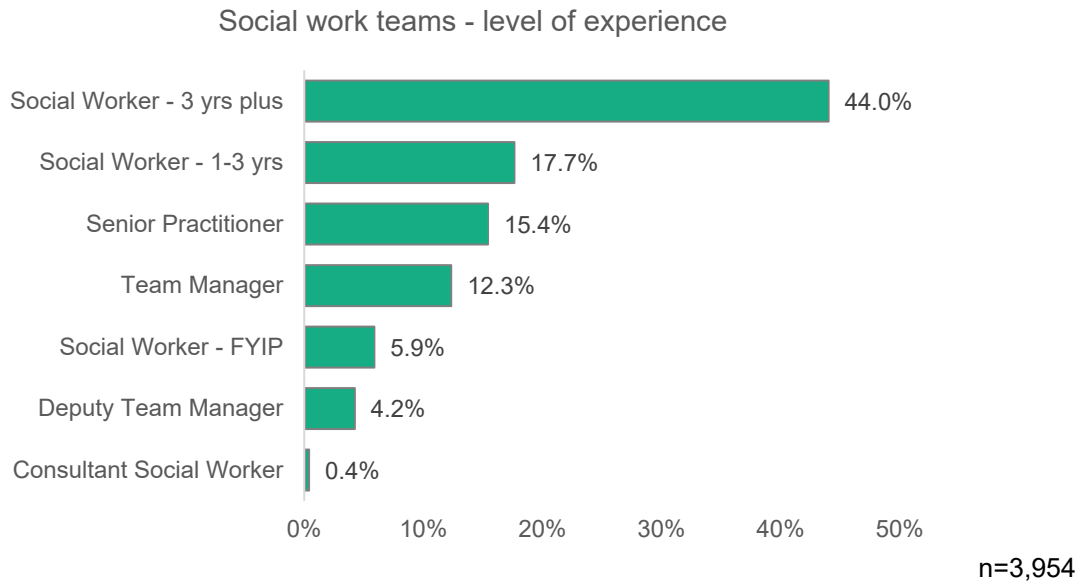| Local Authority	Commissioned Provider
■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returne	■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned (%)
n=378	n=13

5.6.1 Social work teams – role type

The survey shows there are 3,954 registered social workers working in frontline services. Comparing the number of social workers reported in this section to the number of social workers registered in Wales on 1 April 2021[9], we see a disparity that suggests that, of the number of social workers on the Register, only 61.1 per cent work as case holding practitioners and managers. With the data we have collected, we can't determine where the remaining registered social workers are employed, but it's assumed they occupy senior manager (director, head of service) posts, agency and freelance roles, as well as strategic and organisational development positions.

Social work teams - role type

Registered Social Worker (all)	53.6%
Support Worker	28.2%
Other staff	14.9%
Occupational Therapist	2.7%
Occupational Therapy Assistant	0.6%
Registered Nurse	0.03%

n=7,375

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[9] https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Social-Workers-factsheet-ENG-2021.pdf

Registered social worker roles are split into the sub-categories shown below.

Social work teams - level of experience

Role	%
Social Worker - 3 yrs plus	44.0%
Social Worker - 1-3 yrs	17.7%
Senior Practitioner	15.4%
Team Manager	12.3%
Social Worker - FYIP	5.9%
Deputy Team Manager	4.2%
Consultant Social Worker	0.4%

n=3,954

Nearly half of all registered social workers reported as occupying these posts have been qualified for three years or longer, with a further 15.4 per cent in senior practitioner roles and 12.3 per cent in managerial roles. Newly qualified social workers (first year in practice, FYIP) number 233 and make up just over five per cent of the total registered social worker numbers employed in frontline services.
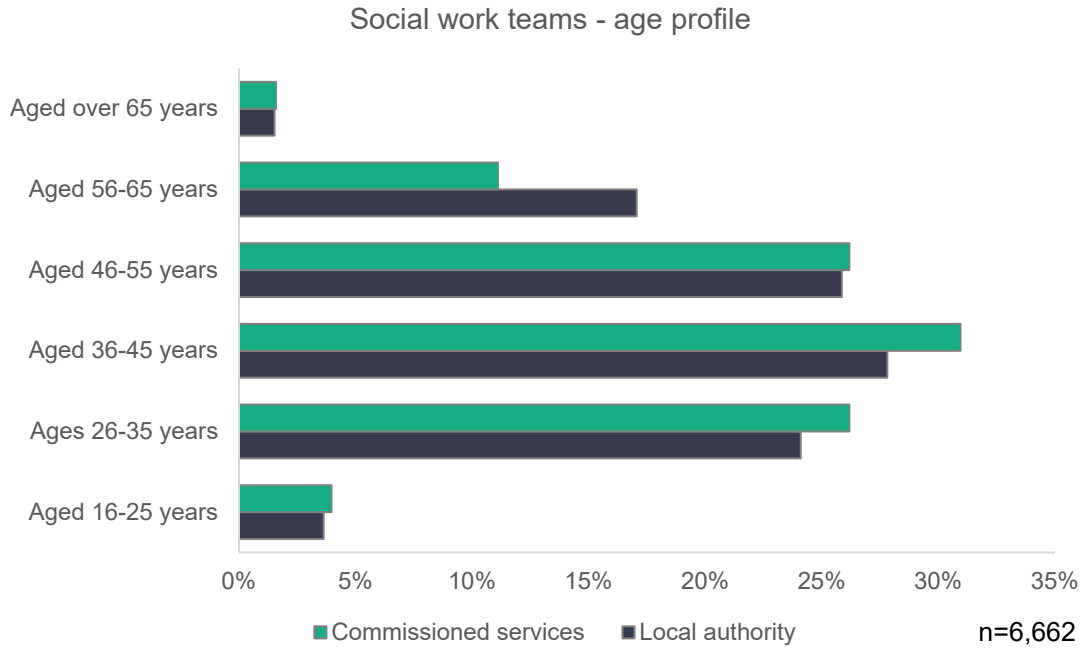
5.6.2 Social work teams – gender

Eighty-five per cent of people working in frontline services in Wales are women. This is slightly more than we see in the overall social care sector in Wales (81 per cent).
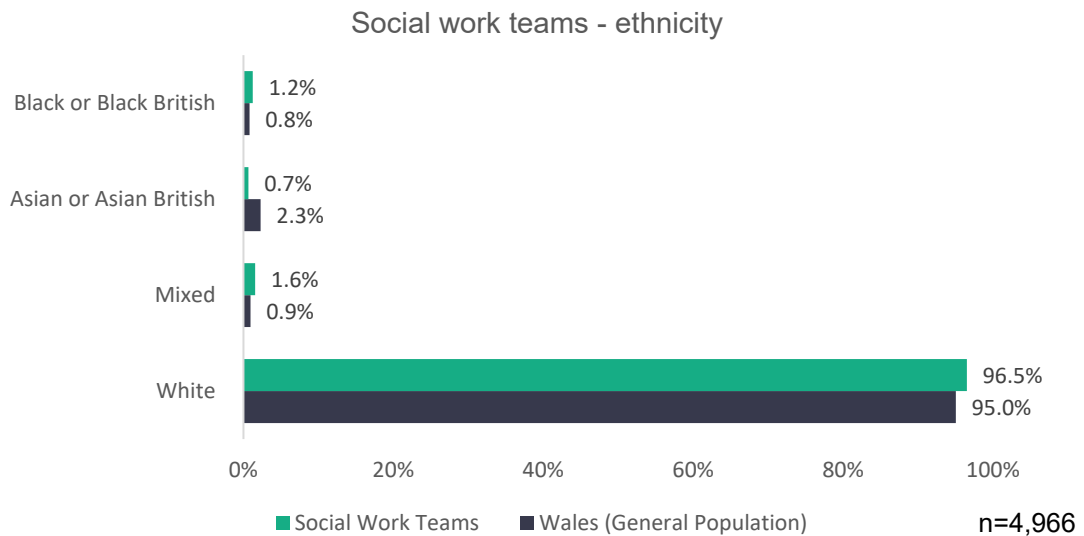

15%

Male %
Female %

85%

n=6,505

5.6.3 Social work teams – age profile

Age distributions for workers in frontline services are in line with what we expect to see across the age ranges with a slight bias towards the 56 to 65 year age group for those working in local authority services.

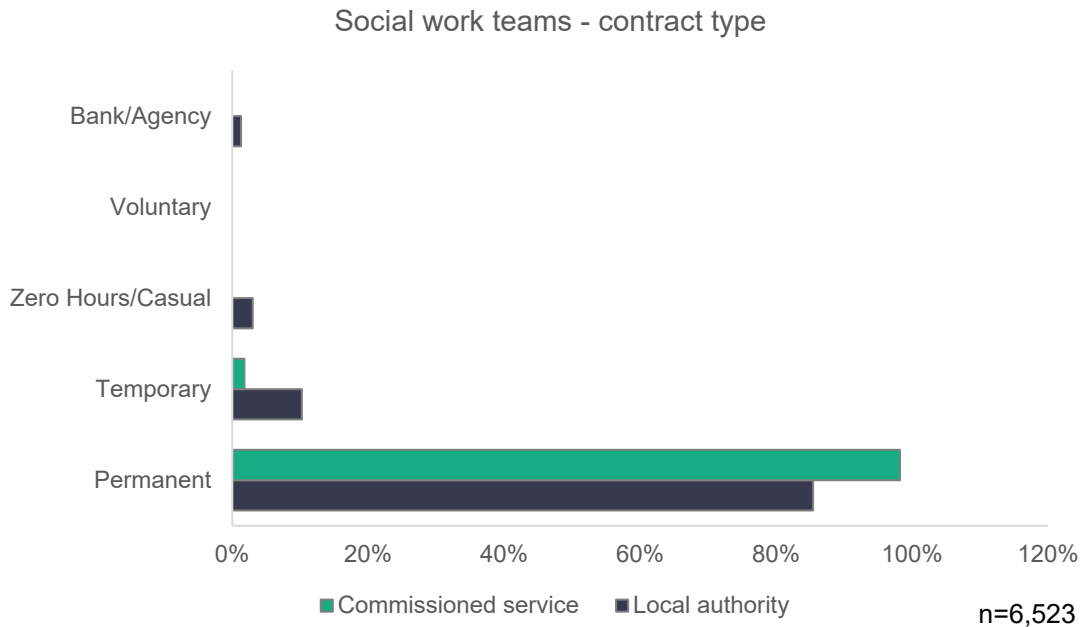**Social work teams - age profile**

n=6,662

5.6.4 Social work teams – ethnicity

The frontline workforce population is broadly comparable to the general population of Wales in terms of ethnicity.
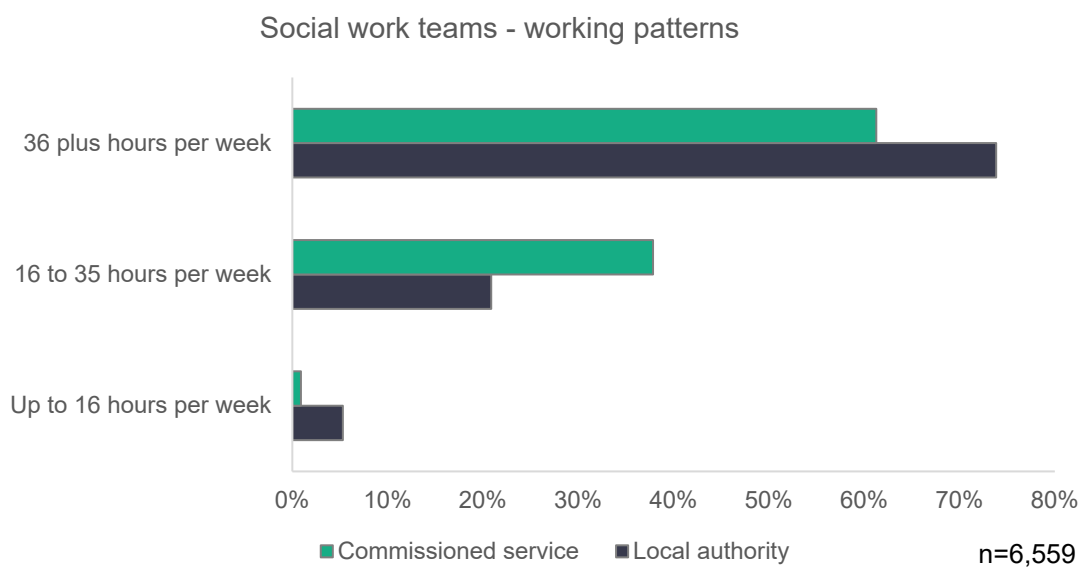
Social work teams - ethnicity

n=4,966

5.6.5 Social work teams – contract type

Most frontline workers (84.2 per cent) are employed on permanent contracts.

Social work teams - contract type

n=6,523

5.6.6 Social work teams – working patterns

Most frontline workers are contracted as full-time staff. The small number of frontline workers in the independent sector are twice as likely to work part-time than in local authorities.

Social work teams - working patterns

n=6,559

5.6.7 Social work teams – vacancies and turnover

Frontline teams are carrying 726 vacancies (462 in children's social work teams, 261 in adult social work teams and three in teams that work with both adults and children). Taken together, these make up 13 per cent of the social care vacancies in Wales and represent a vacancy rate of 10 per cent of the social work team workforce. It's important again to clarify that these vacancies may cover any role type in the social work service, not just qualified social workers.
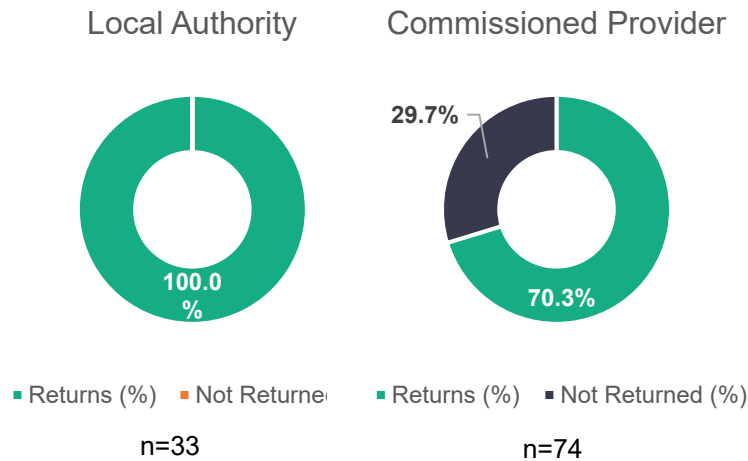
Of the vacant posts in frontline services in Wales, 239 (33 per cent) were held vacant by employers.

Data given to us suggests that 701 people joined the social work teams in 2021 and 507 left, giving a net increase of 199 staff.

When we only consider qualified social worker posts, these data show 412 joiners and 295 leavers, giving a net increase of 117.

5.7 Children's residential care

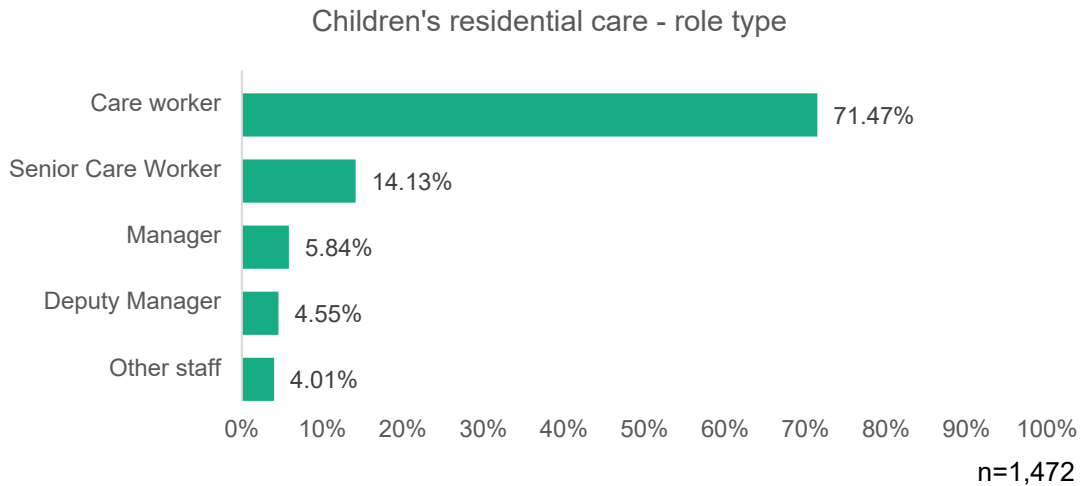All local authorities and just over 70 per cent of independent providers provided data about their children's residential care workers. It's estimated that 1,838 people ($^+$/- five per cent) work in children's residential care in Wales

Local Authority	Commissioned Provider

29.7%

100.0%

70.3%

■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returne ■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned (%)
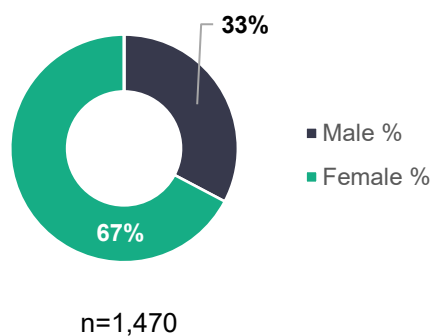
n=33   n=74

5.7.1 Children's residential care – role type

The children's residential care service is made up of the following role types, with more than 85 per cent of people working as care workers or senior care workers.

Children's residential care - role type

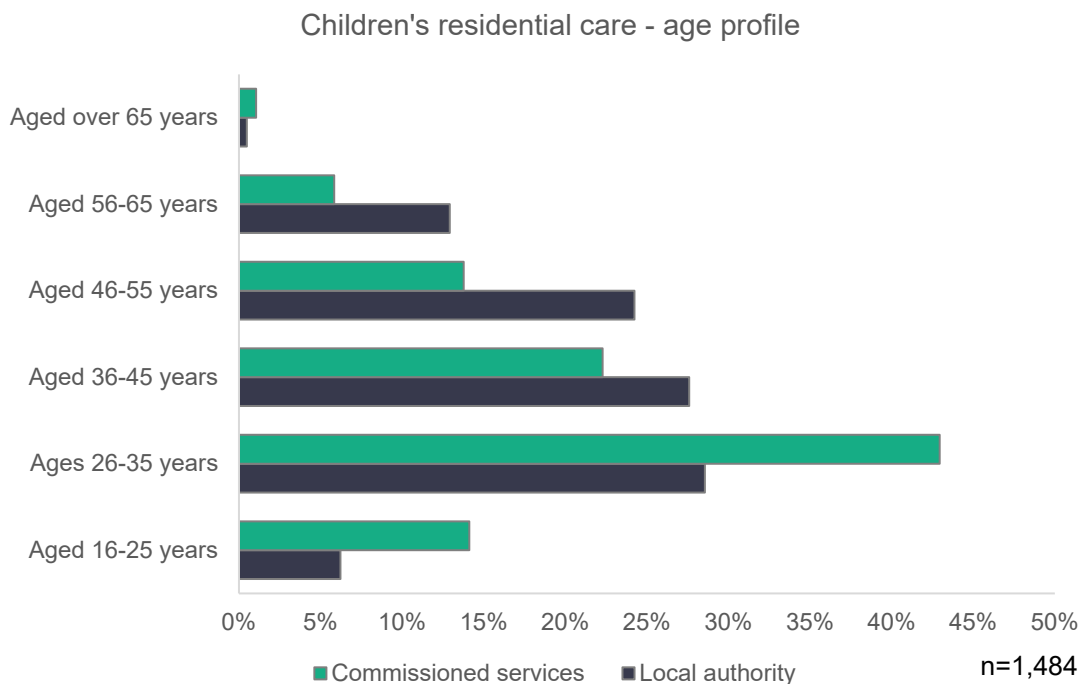| Role	%
Care worker	71.47%
Senior Care Worker	14.13%
Manager	5.84%
Deputy Manager	4.55%
Other staff	4.01%

n=1,472

5.7.2 Children's residential care – gender

The proportion of males who work in children's residential care is much higher than we see in the overall social care workforce. One in every three workers in this service area is male.

Male %: 33%
Female %: 67%

n=1,470

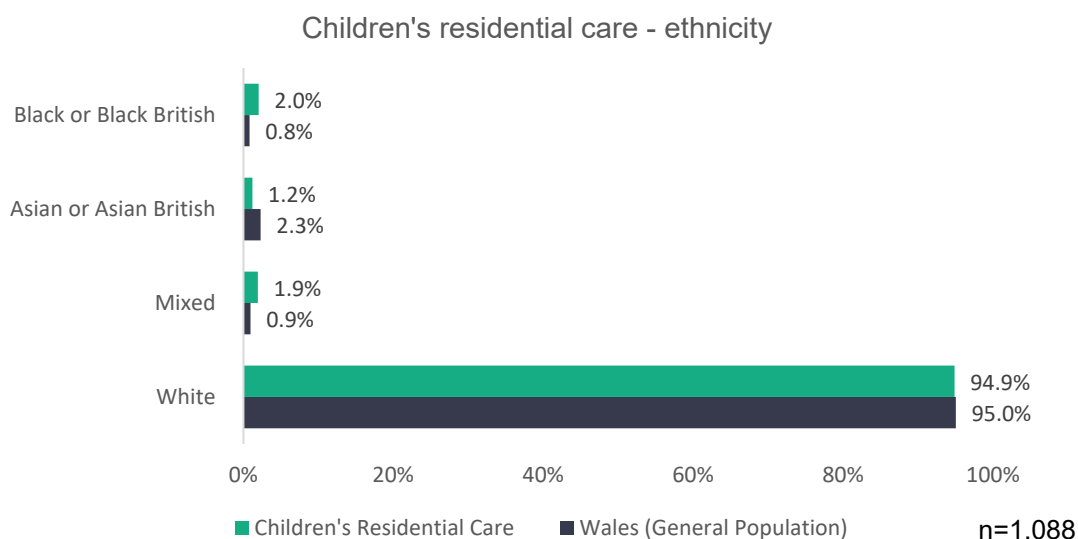## 5.7.3 Children's residential care – age profile

The ages of local authority workers in children's residential care follow the same distribution we see in the working age population. The proportion of younger (26 to 35 years) people is much higher in commissioned services. There is also a marked difference in the 16 to 25 year age group. This follows

what we have seen in other service areas, with younger workers far more likely to be employed in the independent sector.

Children's residential care - age profile

n=1,484

5.7.4 Children's residential care – ethnicity
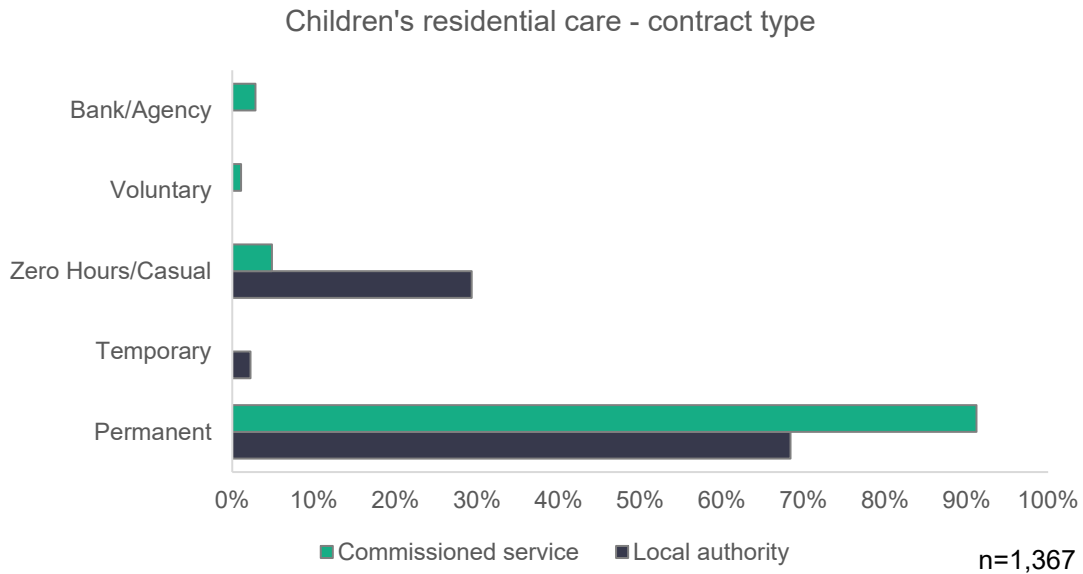
As with social work, ethnicity in children's residential care is broadly comparable to the general population of Wales.

Children's residential care - ethnicity

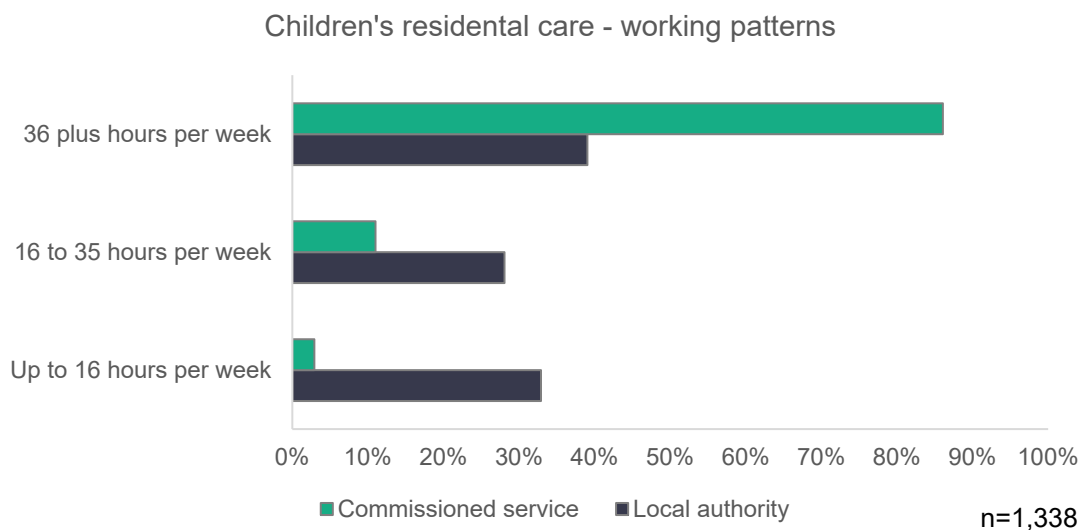|	Children's Residential Care	Wales (General Population)
Black or Black British	2.0%	0.8%
Asian or Asian British	1.2%	2.3%
Mixed	1.9%	0.9%
White	94.9%	95.0%

n=1,088

5.7.5 Children's residential care – contract type

The proportion of staff employed under casual or zero hours contracts is much higher in local authority-run services than in commissioned services. More than 90 per cent of those employed in independent children's residential care are employed on permanent contracts.

Children's residential care - contract type

n=1,367

5.7.6 Children's residential care – working patterns

Those working in local authority-run children's residential care are much more likely to work part-time. More than 85 per cent of those working in commissioned services work full-time hours.
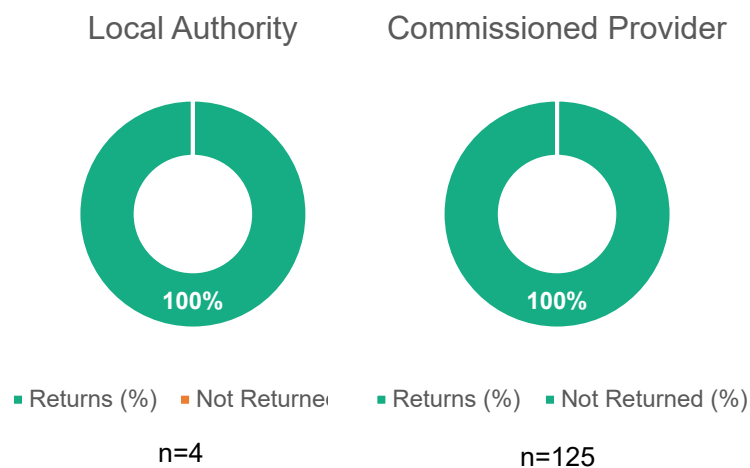
Children's residental care - working patterns

n=1,338

5.2.7 Children's residential care – vacancies

There were 141 vacancies reported in children's residential care with 61 posts held vacant. This represented 2.5 per cent of all social care vacancies in Wales. In total, we estimate there were 142 vacancies in children's residential care in Wales on 31 March 2021.

5.8 Residential care – mental health

All residential mental health services, both local authority-run and commissioned services, responded to the survey. There were 2,174 people working in this sector on 31 March 2021. The independent residential care sector for mental health is significantly larger than those services run by local authorities, with 140 people working in local authority-run services and 2,034 working in the independent sector.

Local Authority

Commissioned Provider

100%

100%

■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returne ■ Returns (%) ■ Not Returned (%)

n=4

n=125

5.8.1 Residential care, mental health – role type

The residential care workforce for mental health services is made up of the following role types.
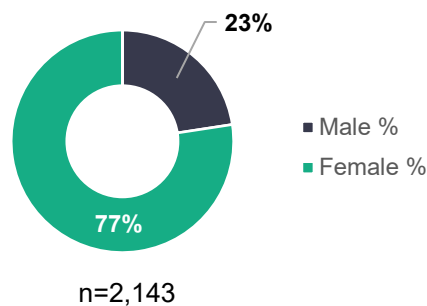
Residential care, mental health - role type

Role	%
Care worker	61.5%
Other staff	13.8%
Senior Care Worker	11.3%
Manager	4.3%
Registered nursing staff	4.2%
Deputy Manager	3.1%
Nursing Assistant/Auxiliary Nurse	0.9%
Occupational Therapist	0.6%
Social Worker	0.3%

n=2,174

5.8.2 Residential care, mental health – gender

Twenty-three per cent of the workforce for mental health residential care is male. This is slightly higher than we see in the overall social care workforce (19 per cent).
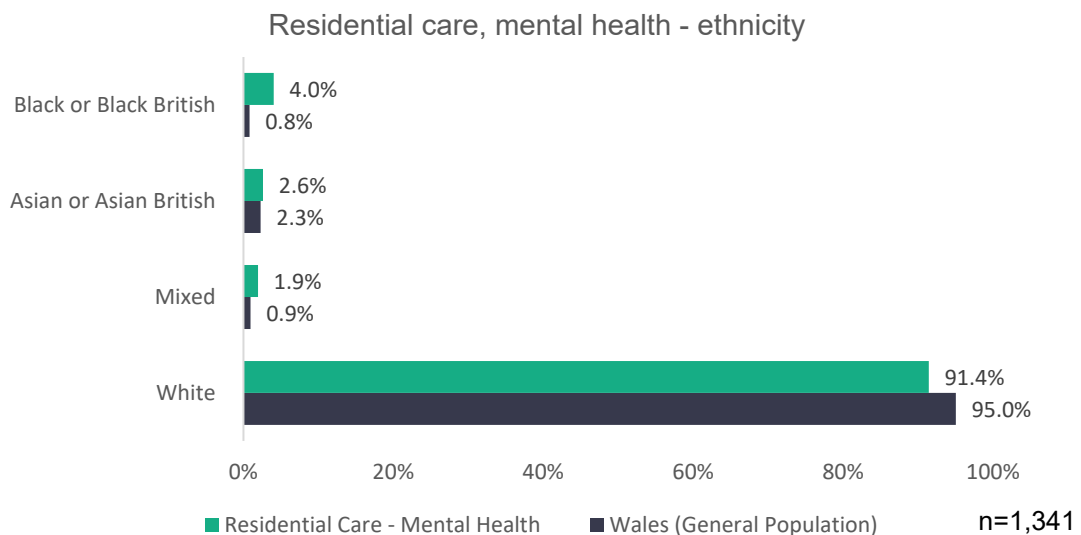
Male % 23%
Female % 77%

n=2,143

5.8.3 Residential care, mental health – age profile

The proportion of people in older age groups (46 years and over) is higher in local authority-run services than in commissioned services.

Residential care, mental health - age profile

Aged over 65 years

Aged 56-65 years

Aged 46-55 years

Aged 36-45 years

Ages 26-35 years

Aged 16-25 years

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35%

■ Commissioned services ■ Local authority

n=1,904

5.8.4 Residential care, mental health – ethnicity

Residential care workers in mental health services are slightly more likely to be from a diverse ethnic background than we would see in the general population in Wales.

Residential care, mental health - ethnicity

Black or Black British
4.0%
0.8%

Asian or Asian British
2.6%
2.3%

Mixed
1.9%
0.9%

White
91.4%
95.0%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Residential Care - Mental Health ■ Wales (General Population)

n=1,341

5.8.5 Residential care, mental health – contract type
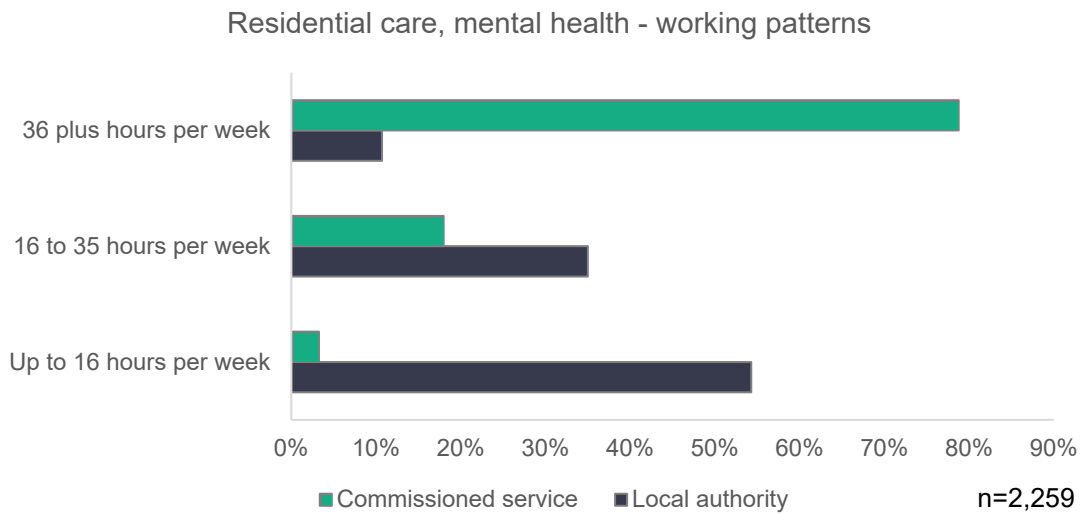
About half the workers in local authority-run services are employed on permanent contracts, compared to more than 90 per cent of those in commissioned services. Nearly 46 per cent of workers in local authority-run residential mental health services are employed on zero hours or casual contracts, compared to just under three per cent in commissioned services.

Residential care, mental health - contract type

n=1,920

5.8.6 Residential care, mental health – working patterns

As observed in other services, there's a much higher proportion of workers in commissioned services (78.8 per cent) employed to work full-time hours than in local authorities. More than half of people in local authority-run services are contracted to work up to 16 hours per week, compared with less than five per cent in commissioned services.

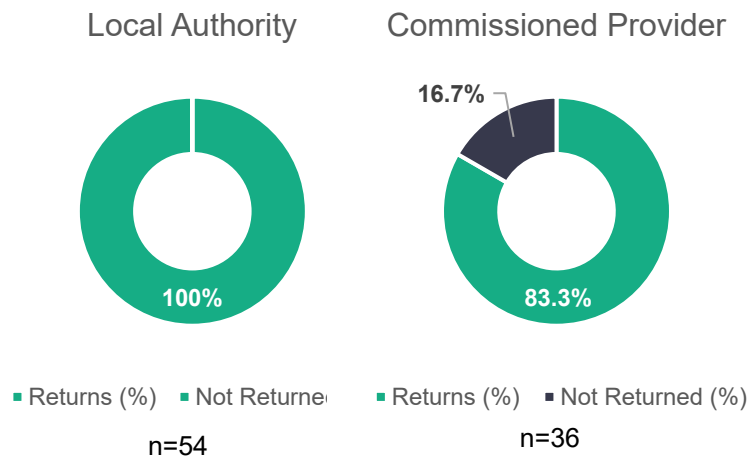Residential care, mental health - working patterns

n=2,259

5.8.7 Residential care, mental health – vacancies

The survey showed 120 vacant posts in residential services for mental health in Wales. This represents 2.2 per cent of all social care vacancies in Wales. Fifty of these posts were held vacant by employers.

5.9 Central services

Central services are comprised of back office, business support, domestic, catering and other ancillary posts needed by organisations as part of their day-to-day operations. All local authority central services and 83 per cent of commissioned provider central services responded to our survey.

We estimate there are 3,113 people employed in central services, with 2,574 employed by local authorities and 539 in commissioned services. This represents a little over four per cent of the total workforce in social care.

5.9.1 Central services – role type
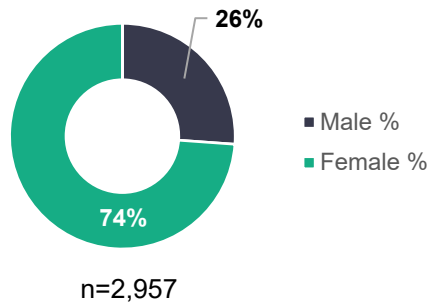
The workforce in central services is made up of the following role types.

Central staff - role type

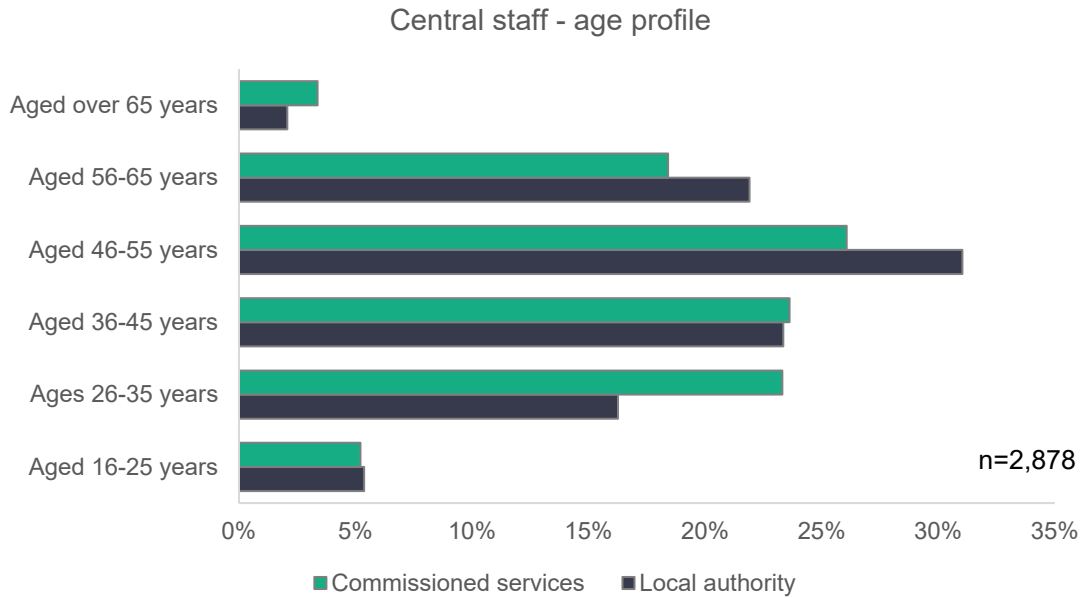| Role type	Percentage
Other staff	58.9%
Other manager - administrative, finance, HR, IT, information, other	10.8%
Support Officer	6.9%
Service Manager/Principal	6.1%
Operational Officer (Commissioning)	3.9%
Workforce Development Officer/ Training Officer	3.1%
Assistant Director/Head of Service	2.7%
Advisor/Planner	2.2%
Director	2.1%
Commissioning Manager	1.4%
Internal Quality Assurer	1.0%
Workforce Development Manager	0.5%
Assessor	0.5%

n=3,023

5.9.2 Central services – gender

One in four central services staff is male. This is slightly higher than we see in the overall social care workforce (19 per cent).
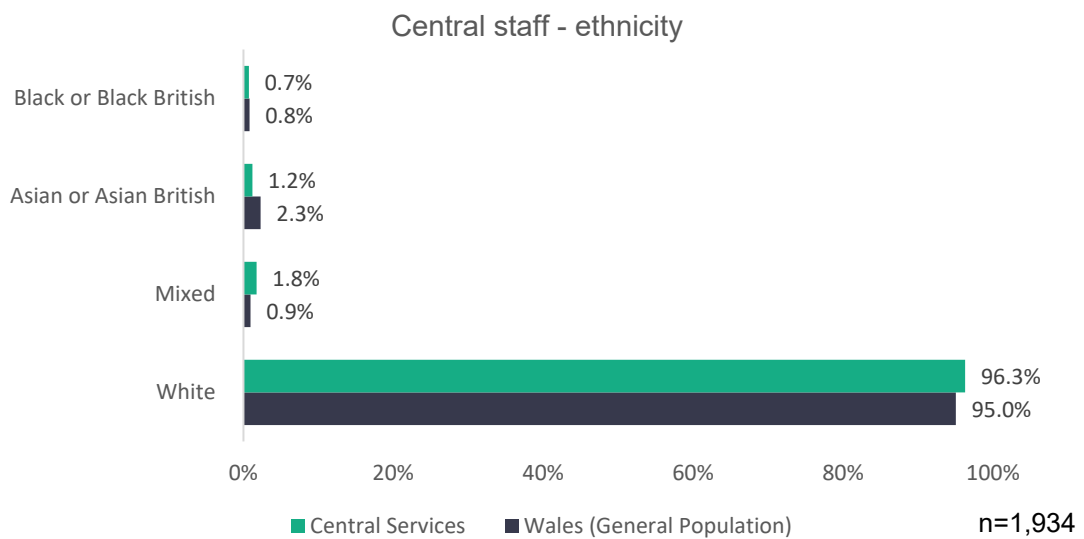

Male %: 26%
Female %: 74%

n=2,957

5.9.3 Central services – age profile

As with the staff categories reported in the other sections in this report, the proportion of younger workers (45 years and under) in local authorities tends to be greater in commissioned services.

Central staff - age profile

n=2,878

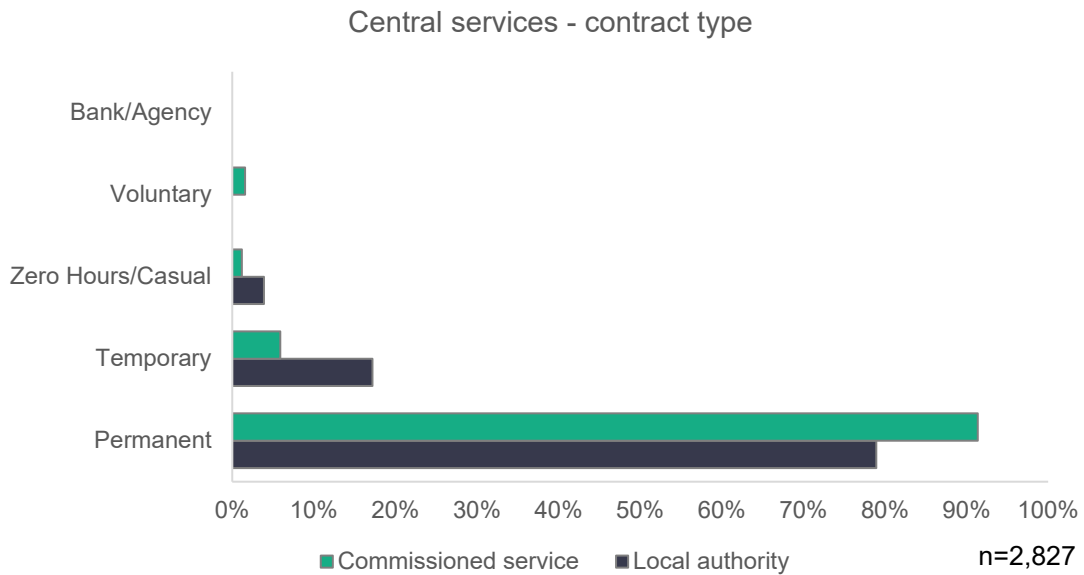■ Commissioned services ■ Local authority

5.9.4 Central services – ethnicity

The ethnic background of workers from central services mirrors the general population of Wales, with 96 per cent of workers reported as being from White backgrounds.
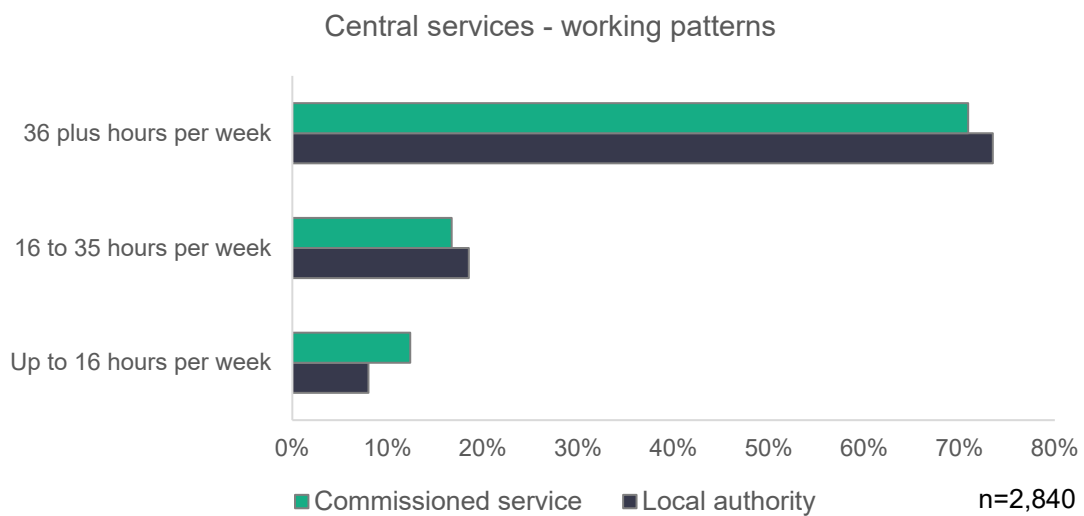
Central staff - ethnicity

Black or Black British	0.7% / 0.8%
Asian or Asian British	1.2% / 2.3%
Mixed	1.8% / 0.9%
White	96.3% / 95.0%

■ Central Services ■ Wales (General Population)

n=1,934

5.9.5 Central services – contract type

Nearly all workers in central services are employed on permanent contracts.

Central services - contract type

n=2,827

5.9.6 Central services – working patterns

Nearly 80 per cent of workers in central services work full-time hours, with minimal differences in the hours of workers in local authority-run and commissioned services.

Central services - working patterns

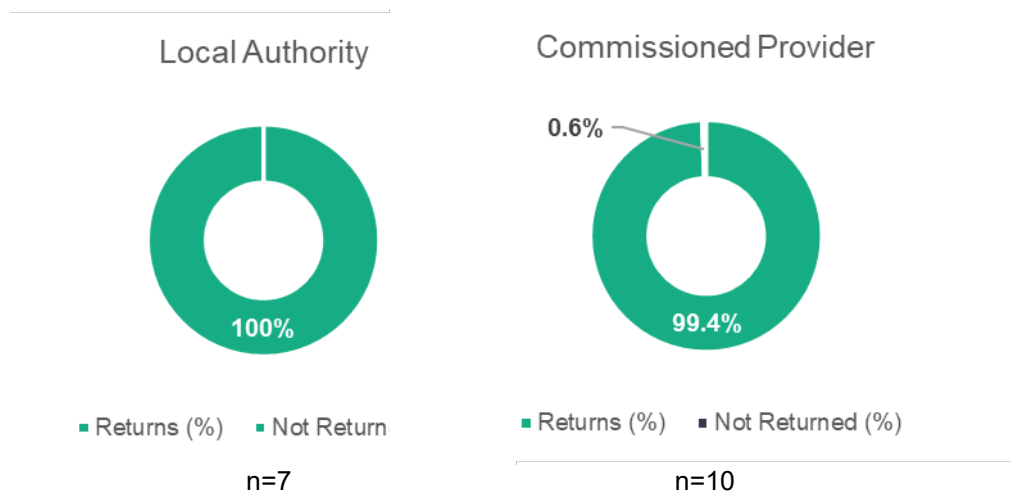n=2,840

5.9.7 Central services – vacancies

Central services have an estimated 235 vacancies representing 4.2 per cent of all social care vacancies in Wales. Eighty-four of these vacancies are held vacant by employers.

5.10 Personal assistants

Most organisations provided data about personal assistants. It's estimated there are 10,266 personal assistants in Wales (5,096 managed by local authorities and 5,170 working independently). But we don't have enough data for reliable analysis of the following characteristics:

- age profile
- ethnicity
- contract type
- vacancies.

The University of South Wales (USW) recently started a research project on personal assistants on behalf of the Welsh Government[10], to improve our collective knowledge and understanding.

Local Authority

100%

■ Returns (%) ■ Not Return

n=7

Commissioned Provider

0.6%

99.4%

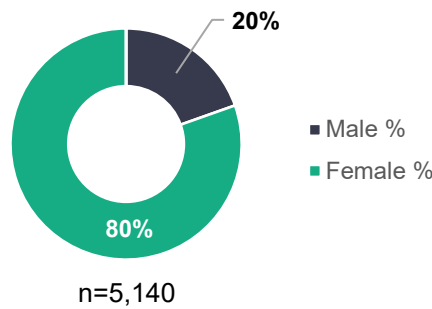■ Returns (%)   ■ Not Returned (%)

n=10

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[10] Survey on Personal Assistants: https://cavs.org.uk/2021/11/personal-assistants-in-wales-we-want-to-hear-from-you/

5.10.1 Personal assistants – role type

This category of worker has not been split into sub-roles, with all workers categorised under the role type of personal assistant.
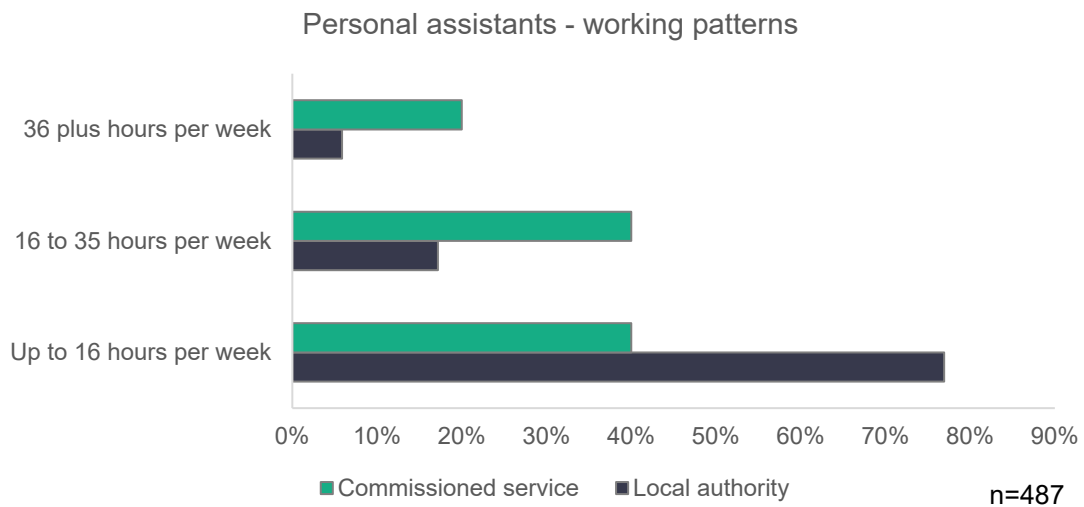
5.10.2 Personal assistants – gender

Four in every five personal assistants are female. This is consistent with the overall social care workforce (81 per cent female).

20%

■ Male %
■ Female %

80%

n=5,140

5.10.6 Personal assistants – working patterns

As with other services, personal assistants commissioned through local authorities were more likely to be on part-time contracts of up to 16 hours than those working independently.

Only 6.2 per cent of the overall personal assistant workforce is employed on a full-time contract, with 20 per cent of personal assistants who work independently employed full-time and 5.9 per cent of personal assistants commissioned through local authority arrangements working full-time.

Personal assistants - working patterns

36 plus hours per week

16 to 35 hours per week

Up to 16 hours per week

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%

■ Commissioned service   ■ Local authority

n=487

5.11 Other services

We collected information from other social care services during the 2021 workforce data collection exercise. These services included:

- adult placement schemes
- foster care services (including foster carers)
- other services.

Although these services are included in our overall estimates on the workforce, we didn't receive enough high-quality data to calculate reliable estimates for other attributes of these services. We will work with local authorities and providers to ensure better quality in 2022.

6. Lessons learned and next steps

Launching a new data collection process is difficult at the best of times. Launching the revised process during the coronavirus pandemic gave an additional set of challenges.

This first year of the new approach relied on local authorities collecting all data that related to services provided within their geographical boundaries. Some local authorities faced more significant challenges in collecting data than others.

It was also only when carrying out the data collection that some issues surfaced. These issues included misunderstanding of the requirements, bugs in the collection tools and the resources available in local authorities to carry out the collections during the pandemic.

After the collection, we held a 'lessons learned' workshop with all those who contributed. The purpose was to capture themes we hadn't picked up during the collection process, and it was an opportunity for data providers to tell us about their experience of the process.

We identified improvements to the structure of the survey and the way it was administered, including (but not limited to):

- a better user interface and more intuitive collection tools
- more process automation and validation
- better and more detailed documentation
- a more realistic timetable for collection
- minimising the duplication of effort in entering data into the portal and enabling the submission of multiple data files (bulk upload procedures)

- using codes that are consistent with agreed standards (such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as the standard of language fluency and the International Statistical Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes for sickness reasons).

Our analysis of the data also found opportunities to improve specific types of data, especially data about:

- personal assistants
- sickness
- foster carer and adult placement scheme
- ethnicity and other protected characteristics
- recruitment and retention
- learning and development
- provider characteristics.

The differences between local authorities in the quality and completeness of the data submitted suggested that some local authorities found the survey more challenging than others. Many local authorities said placing the responsibility to collect workforce data from all providers in their area was a significant burden on their limited resources and that it would be better to co-ordinate it from a single central point.

For this reason, we will collect this workforce data directly from providers in future. This change will allow providers who work across multiple local authorities to provide data once and will significantly reduce the burden of data collection for local authorities.

We will improve the tools, guidance and processes to improve the data quality and minimise the extra work required to respond to the survey. We will also engage with our stakeholders throughout the process to address any emerging issues.

We have also begun to investigate the long-term opportunity to merge additional data collection processes, for example, working with CIW to identify collaborating in our data collection. In the meantime, we will continue to improve the tools used for collection, adding extra validation for data on upload.

Appendix 1 - Data items

Setting type

- Adult placement schemes
- Residential care – adult
- Residential care – mental health services
- Residential care – children
- Domiciliary care
- Supported living services
- Day services

- Social work teams – adults
- Social work teams – children
- Social work teams – all
- Personal assistants
- Foster carers
- Central (support) staff

Role definition

- Adult placement manager
- Adult placement worker
- Adviser/planner
- Assessor
- Care worker
- Consultant social worker
- Deputy manager
- Deputy team manager (social work)
- Director
- Foster carer
- Head of service (assistant director)
- Internal quality assurer (IQA)
- Manager
- Nursing assistant/Auxiliary nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Occupational therapy assistant
- Other staff
- Other manager
- Personal assistant
- Physiotherapist
- Planner

- Registered nurse
- Registered nursing staff
- Senior care worker
- Senior practitioner
- Service manager/Principal officer
- Social care planning and commissioning manager
- Social care planning and commissioning operational officer
- Social care planning and commissioning support officer
- Social worker (2 to 3 years)
- Social worker (3+ years)
- Social worker (first year in practice)
- Speech and language therapist
- Support worker
- Team manager (social work)
- Workforce development manager
- Workforce development officer/Training officer

Age	Gender	Declared disability
16 to 24 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 64 65+	• Male • Female • Gender fluid • Non-binary	• Count of

Working hours per week	Contract status	Vacancies
• Up to 16 hrs • 16 to 36 hrs • 36 plus hrs	• Permanent • Temporary • Zero hours / Casual • Voluntary • Bank/Agency	• To be filled • Held vacant

Welsh language	

• Welsh language proficiency level
  ▪ No ability
  ▪ Welsh entry
  ▪ Welsh foundation
  ▪ Welsh intermediate
  ▪ Welsh advanced
• Proficiency (level 0 to 5)
	• English first language
	• Welsh first language
	• Other first language

Ethnicity	
• White Welsh • White British • White Irish • White European • White and Asian • White / Black Caribbean • White / Black African • White (other) • Black Welsh • Black British • Black Caribbean • Black African • Black (other)	• Asian Welsh • Asian British • Asian Pakistani • Asian Indian • Asian Chinese • Asian Bangladeshi • Asian (other) • Arabic • Mixed ethnicity • Mixed (other) • Other ethnicity • Gypsy / Traveller • Prefer not to say

Appendix 2 – Data processing and estimation methods

Completion rates

We received incomplete data in the 2021 workforce data collection, which has meant that we needed to use techniques to estimate certain figures presented in this report.

We received data from all local authorities in Wales. They were able to provide nearly all the data that related to services they were responsible for providing in-house. But there was variation in local authorities' ability to collect data from all commissioned services that operated in their areas.

There were 818 local authority services settings and of these 813 provided data (local authorities were split into service type and setting, such as care home, which is why this number far exceeds the 22 local authorities). This gives a response rate of 99.4 per cent. Of the 1,902 commissioned providers, 1,360 were able to provide data, giving an overall response rate of 71.5 per cent.

There was also a difference in response rates from different service areas of social care.

The response rates by type are shown in in the table below:

Service type	Percentage of settings reported (Local authority)	Percentage of settings reported (Commissioned services)
Adult placement schemes	100.0%	100.0%
Central staff	100.0%	83.3%
Day services	100.0%	61.0%
Domiciliary care	100.0%	66.8%
Foster carers	95.0%	96.8%
Other	-	100.0%
Personal assistants	100.0%	100.0%
Residential care – adults	98.9%	61.7%
Residential care – children	100.0%	70.3%
Residential care – mental health services	100.0%	76.0%

Social work teams – adults	100.0%	100.0%
Social work teams – all	100.0%	100.0%
Social work teams – children	100.0%	100.0%
Supported living services	90.6%	76.3%
Grand total	**99.4%**	**71.5%**

Data processing

We captured data online using our internal customer relationship management (CRM) system and then extracted it and prepared it for processing.

The data team sense checked and validated the data, and where there were issues or errors we contacted the local authority who provided the data to discuss and resubmit data where appropriate. This allowed us to reduce the likelihood of including data where a definition was misunderstood or where figures had been incorrectly entered.

The data was processed using MS Dynamics tools and further processed in MS Excel. As this was the first year of the data collection, the bulk of the data processing work was done manually. As we begin to understand how data is provided and the challenges we face in processing data, we will automate many of these validation, cleaning and pre-analysis processing tasks.

Once data had been through this validation process, we assessed the options for dealing with missing data. We were expecting incomplete data from this first collection and our plan for analysis accounted for this. Data about the characteristics of the workforce didn't need estimates. For most data we could process these as a sample of the overall population. Given the very large sample size for all service areas, the margin of error is relatively low – calculated to be <($^+$/-) one per cent, at a confidence level of 95 per cent for all service areas.

We were unsure of the quality of some data. For this collection we haven't included these datasets as we can't be confident of creating accurate estimations. We will work to improve the quality of data in our next collections.
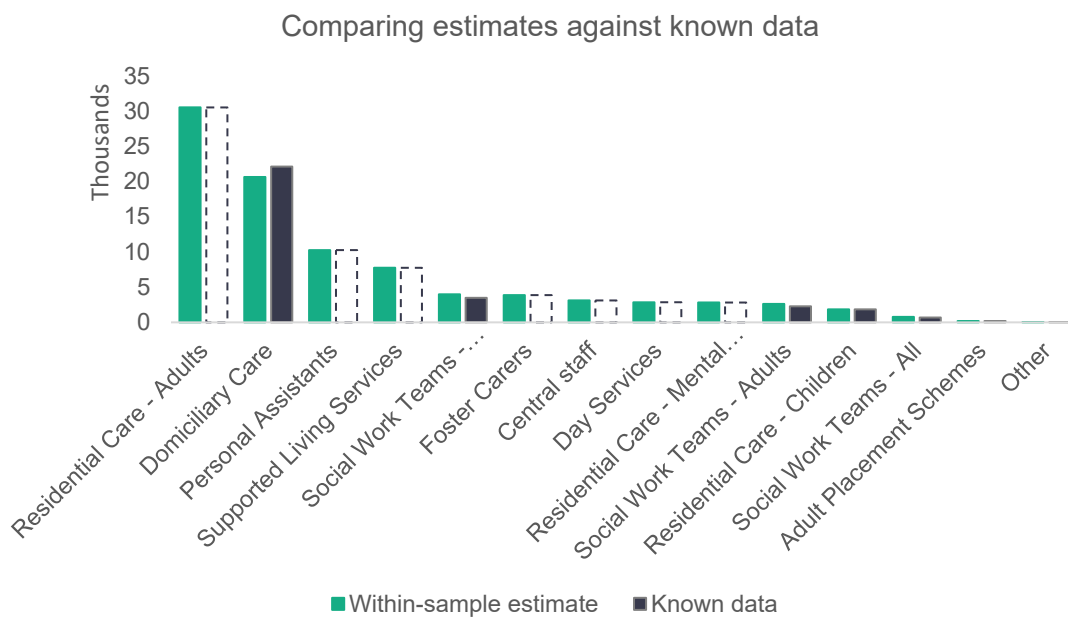
Estimation

Missing data meant we needed to use methods to create estimates of the total numbers of people working in social care. Our best method available to do this was extrapolation, which is a statistical method used to estimate unknown data from the known data.

We were able to collect the total number of services in each local authority and knew which of these services had provided us with data. We were able to use this with the data we had collected by each service type to create the estimates used in this report. We were then able to triangulate these estimates against other known data to assess their accuracy and estimate our rate of error. From this, we were able to create range estimates which incorporate our rate of error. Some estimates are assumed to be relatively accurate given the high number of returns. Service areas with lower response rates had the highest rates of error (up to +/-10.7 per cent for domiciliary care). The figures in the report represent the mid-point of these estimates. The overall error rate for the entire workforce estimation is about +/- five per cent.

The sources of reference data we used to test our estimations against were:

- the Register of Social Care Workers
- previous SCDWP data
- estimates in the workforce strategy.

Comparing estimates against known data

Assumptions

Our estimates are based on a number of assumptions. Most evident is that the size of providers for returned and missing data is broadly equal (that we're not missing all the larger providers, for example). It's also assumed that other data we used to triangulate our estimations against are accurate.