



# Social Worker Workforce Planning 2014 - 15

A national report on the social worker workforce in Wales



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This report is also available in Welsh.

## Executive summary

The Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales (Data Unit) was commissioned by the Care Council for Wales to undertake an analysis of social worker workforce in Wales for 2014-15 financial year and projected workforce needs for the next three years. The key points from the 2014-15 analysis are as follows:

### All social workers

- Nearly 4,000 social workers were employed in local authorities at the end of March 2015. This represents a 1% decrease compared to the number employed in 2014.
- The number of Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) employed has decreased by 0.8% since 2014, from 3,650 to 3,625.
- In 2015, 81% of social workers working in social services departments were female. This has been the case since the data collection began in 2009.
- Newly qualified social workers joining the service decreased by 16% with 156 people joining during 2014-15 compared to 185 in 2013-14.
- Social workers who started a role in 2014-15 from a local authority outside of Wales increased by 41%, with 24 compared to 17 in 2013-14.

### Adults' Services

- The number of social workers employed in Adults' Services saw a decrease where the number employed has fallen by 3.6% since 2014 – the first decrease in more than five years.
- At 31 March 2015, vacancies in Adults' Services remains the same for the third consecutive year at 4% WTE social worker posts being vacant.
- During the next three years to 2017-18, the number of (WTE) employed in Adults' Services is projected to increase by 2%.

### Children's Services

- Since 2014, the number of social workers employed in Children's Services has increased by 0.4%.
- Social workers leaving to another local authority in Wales has increased by 7 people (15%), and leavers to the independent sector has doubled from 13 to 26 since 2013-14.
- At 31 March 2015, vacancies in Children's Services has increased to 9% WTE social worker posts being vacant, compared to 7% in 2014.
- During the next three years to 2017-18, the number of WTE employed in Children's Services is projected to increase by 3%.

### Non-operational roles and other service areas

- Around 710 social workers were employed in non-operational and other roles where a social work qualification was deemed to be essential at the end of March 2015, compared to 700 in 2014.
- Since 2014, the number of social workers employed in non-operational roles and other service areas has increased by 1.4%.
- At 31 March 2015, vacancies in non-operational roles and other service areas has remained unchanged from the figure in 2014 at 4%.
- During the next three years to 2017-18, the number of WTE social workers employed in non-operational roles and other service areas is projected to decrease by 1%.

## Background

The Care Council for Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Welsh Government, the Association of Directors for Social Services (ADSS) Cymru and the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales (Data Unit) work in partnership to collect, analyse and report on social worker workforce planning (SWWP) data from local authorities in Wales. The aim of this work is to underpin planning for future workforce needs and to inform the commissioning of social worker training in Wales.

Data used in this report is drawn from submissions from each of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Each was asked for data relating to their social worker complement for 2014-15 and to project staffing figures for the three years from 2015-16 to 2017-18<sup>1</sup>. Information on staff numbers was post-populated from validated data collected by the Welsh Government via the annual staffing collection on local authority social services staff. Social worker registration data from the Care Council for Wales is used to compliment this report to show the age and gender profile of the social worker workforce.

At certain points in this report, the Welsh local authorities are grouped into regions, as follows.

**North Wales** – Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham

**Mid & West Wales** – Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot

**South East Wales** – Bridgend, The Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport

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<sup>1</sup> It was agreed with the Care Council and participating local authorities to reduce the period of projection from five years to three years at the outset of the 2014-15 data collection.

## Introduction

This is the seventh annual report on the local authority social worker workforce in Wales. It looks at overall workforce numbers and how these have varied over time. Sections of the report look specifically at the variation in workforce numbers in three distinct areas:

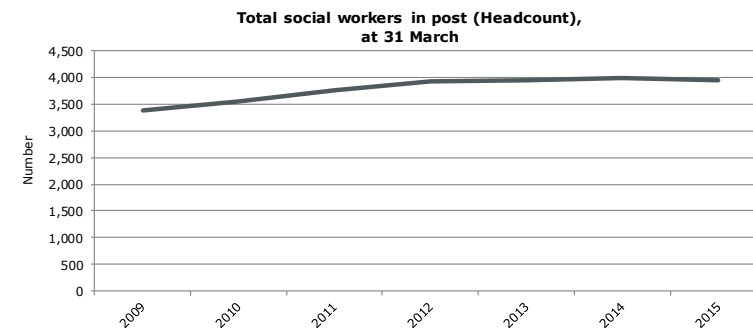
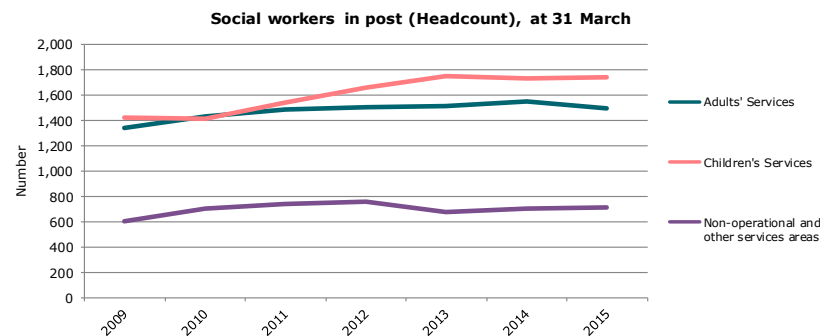
- Adults' Services;
- Children's Services; and
- Other local authority roles where a social worker qualification is deemed to be necessary.

The report also considers the projected demand for social workers over the next three years, based on estimates provided by the 22 local authorities.

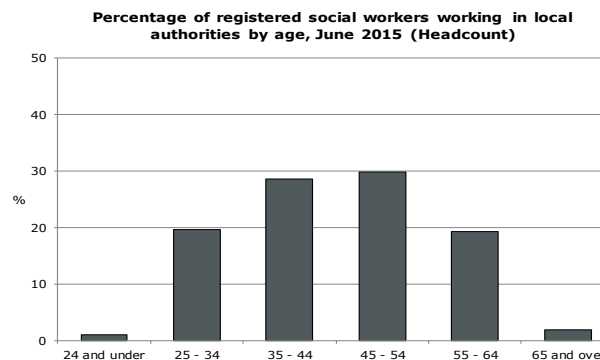
## Overall current social worker workforce profile

Nearly **4,000 social workers** were employed in local authorities at the end of March 2015. This represents a 1% decrease compared to the number employed in 2014. The number of Whole Time Equivalents (WTEs)<sup>2</sup> employed has also decreased by 0.8% since 2014, with a total of almost 3,650 WTEs at the end of March 2015. Overall, the WTE staff establishment has decreased by 0.5% since March 2014.

The largest decrease was in Adults' Services, where the number employed has fallen by 3.6% since 2014, this was the first decrease in more than five years. Over the same period the number employed in Children's Services has increased by 0.4%. The number employed in non-operational and other service areas roles has increased by 1.4% since 2014. The WTE staff establishment has decreased by 3.5% in Adults' Services and increased by 2.4% in Children's Services since March 2014.

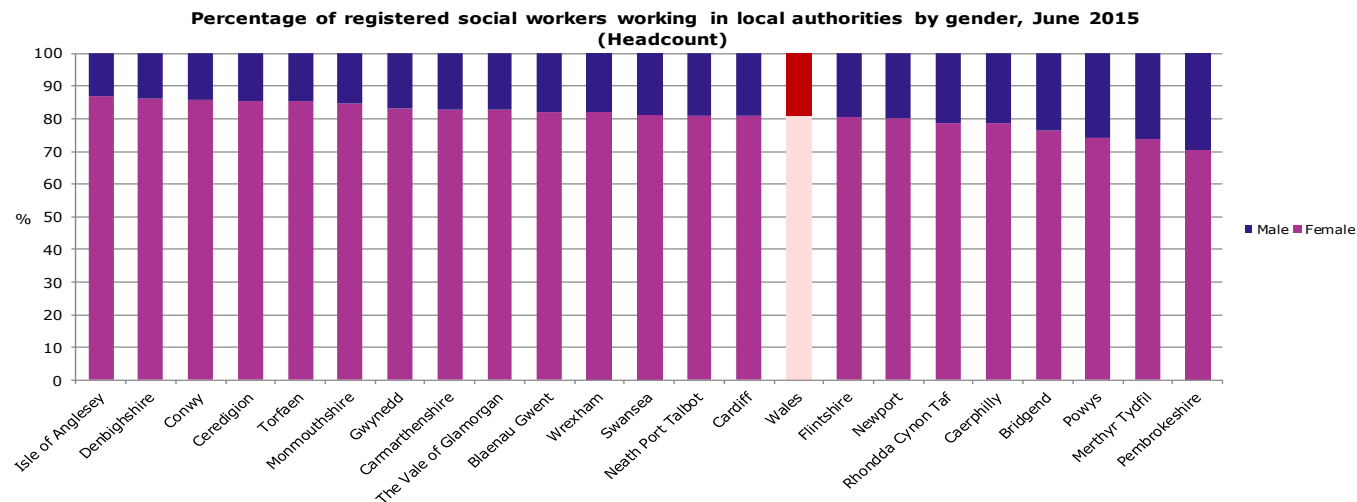


The Care Council for Wales register of social workers shows that the majority (51%) are aged 45 or over and 21% are aged 55 or over. This is a slight change compared to 2014 where 52% of staff were aged 45 or over. The percentage aged 55 or over remained the same.



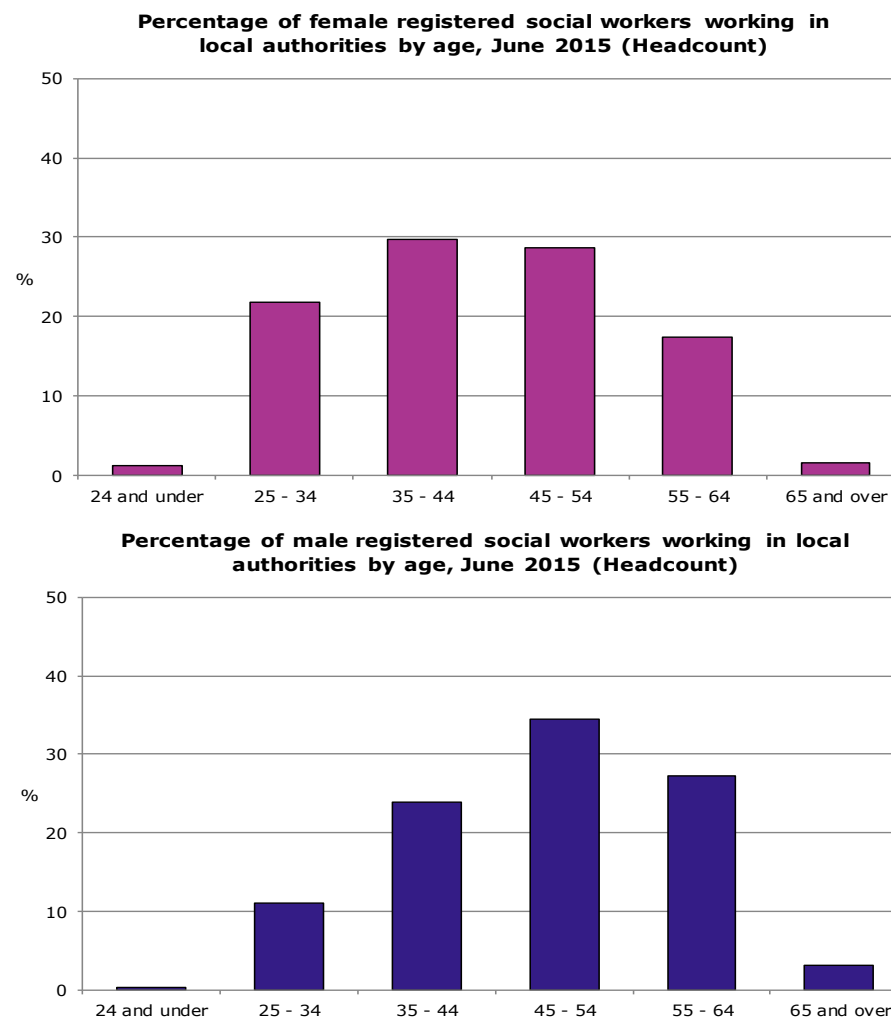
<sup>2</sup> Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) is the proportion of the standard full time working hours that an employee is contracted to work for. It is defined as contract WTE i.e. 37 contracted/standard hours.

In 2015, the majority of social workers working in social services departments were female (81%). This has been the case since the collection began in 2009. Across Wales this ranged from 71% in Pembrokeshire, to 87% on the Isle of Anglesey.



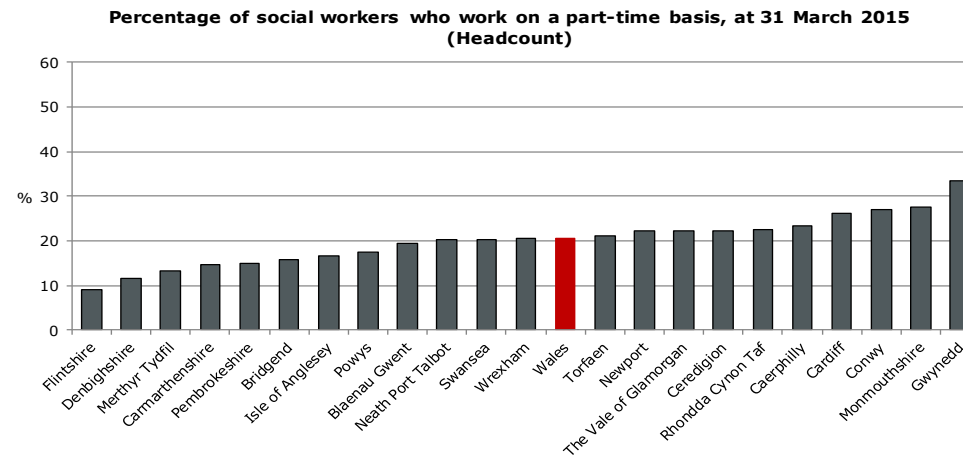
In June 2015, 65% of male social workers employed in local authority social services were aged 45 or over, compared to 48% in the female social worker workforce, in 2014 the figures were 66% and 49% respectively. 30% of male social workers were aged 55 or over, compared to 19% of female social workers, this age profile for male and female social workers has remained the same as 2014.





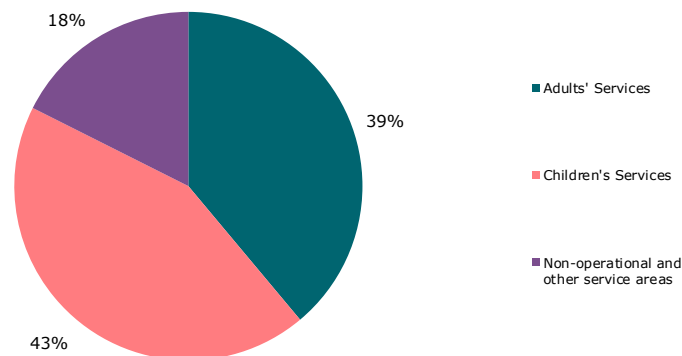
At 31 March 2015, 21% of all social workers were employed on a part-time basis compared to 20% in 2014. In Mid & West Wales, 18% were employed on a part-time basis, compared to 19% in 2014. In North Wales, 21% were employed on a part-time basis compared to 20% in 2014. In South East Wales, the figure is 22% compared to 21% in 2014.

At a local authority level, the percentage of part-time social workers ranged from 9% in Flintshire, to 33% in Gwynedd. This has remained similar to the range in 2014, with Merthyr Tydfil being the lowest (7%) and Monmouthshire being the highest (33%).

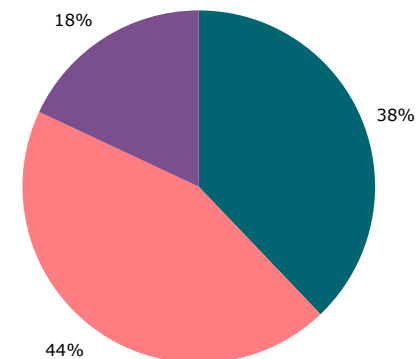


At 31 March 2015, 44% of local authority social workers work in Children's Services, compared to 43% in 2014. 38% worked in Adults' Services, compared to 39% in 2014, and 18% in other roles where a social worker qualification is necessary, the same as in 2014.

**Social workers in post by service area, at 31 March 2014 (Headcount)**



**Social workers in post by service area, at 31 March 2015 (Headcount)**

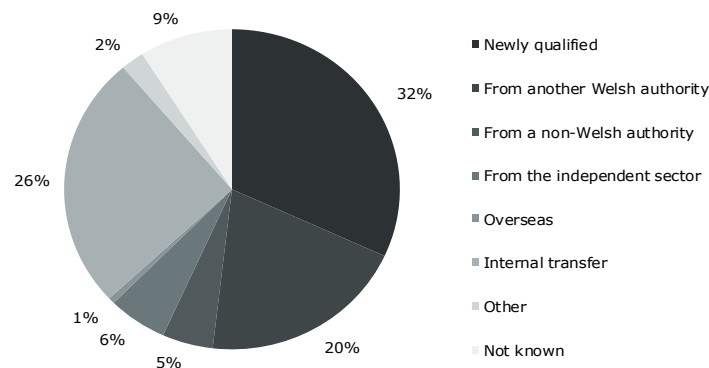
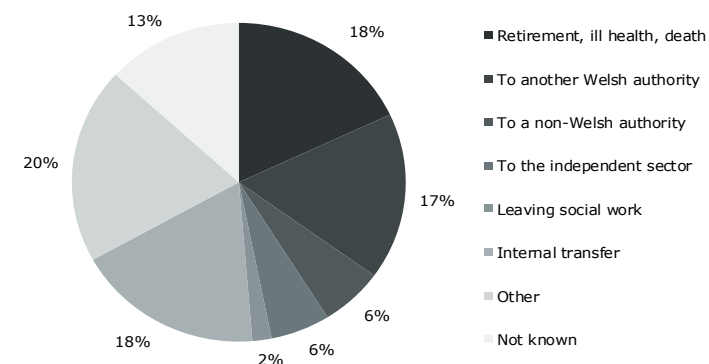


At 31 March 2015, North Wales had 42% of its social workers in Adults' Services, compared to 47% in 2014. 38% were in Children's Services an increase from 35% in 2014. In Mid & West Wales, the proportion decreased from 34% to 33% in Adults' Services. Children's Services saw a decrease from 50% in 2014 to 48% in 2015. In South East Wales the proportion increased from 38% to 39% in Adults' Services and increased from 43% to 44% in Children's Services. In 2015, Mid & West Wales saw an increase of 3 percentage points to 19% in social workers employed in non-operational and other service areas. North Wales increased by 1 percentage point to 19% whereas South East decreased by 1 percentage point to 17%.

**Percentage of social workers by service area and region, at 31 March (Headcount)**

	Adults' Services (%)				Children's Services (%)				Non-operational and other service areas (%)			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
North Wales	45	45	47	42	35	38	35	38	19	17	18	19
Mid & West Wales	34	35	34	33	47	50	50	48	19	15	16	19
South East Wales	38	37	38	39	43	44	43	44	20	18	18	17
<b>Wales</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>

The number of newly qualified social workers joining the service decreased by 16% with 156 people joining in 2014-15 compared to 185 in 2013-14. During 2014-15, 123 (79%) of these joined Children's Services, with 33 (21%) joining Adults' Services and none joining into other roles. 10 people left social work during 2014-15, compared to 21 in 2013-14. 4 (40%) of these left roles in Adults' Services, 5 (50%) left Children's Services and 1 (10%) left from other roles where a social worker qualification is necessary.

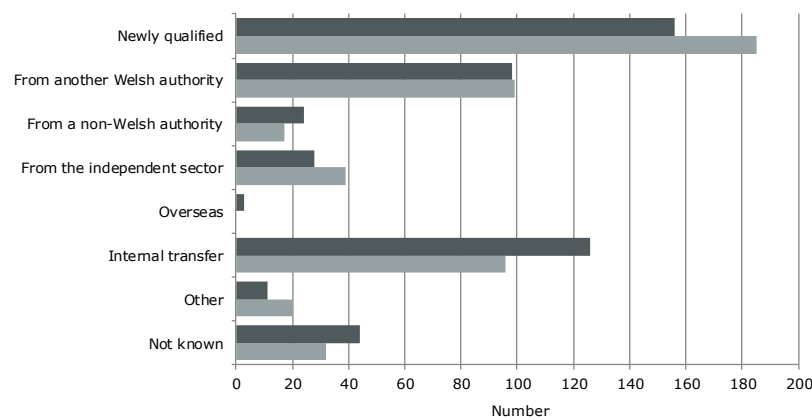
**All starters, 2014-15 (Headcount)****All leavers, 2014-15 (Headcount)**

## Newly qualified starters by service area and region, during the year (Headcount)

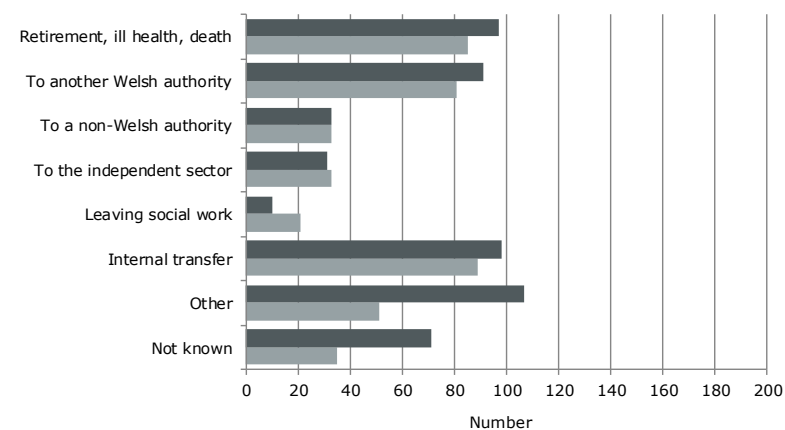
	Adults' Services				Children's Services				Non-operational and other service areas			
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
North Wales	6	9	6	7	17	22	23	14	5	3	1	0
Mid & West Wales	5	12	12	14	48	25	43	44	1	0	0	0
South East Wales	22	12	21	12	76	77	79	65	1	0	0	0
<b>Wales</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

Starters from another Welsh local authority decreased by 1% with 98 social workers compared to 99 in 2013-14. Social workers who started from a non-Welsh authority increased by 41%, with 24 compared to 17 in 2013-14. Leavers who left a social work post due to retirement, ill health or death increased by 14% with 97 leavers compared to 85 in 2013-14. The number of starters and leavers due to unknown reasons has increased between 2013-14 and 2014-15. Leavers due to other reasons also increased by 110% over the same period from 51 to 107.

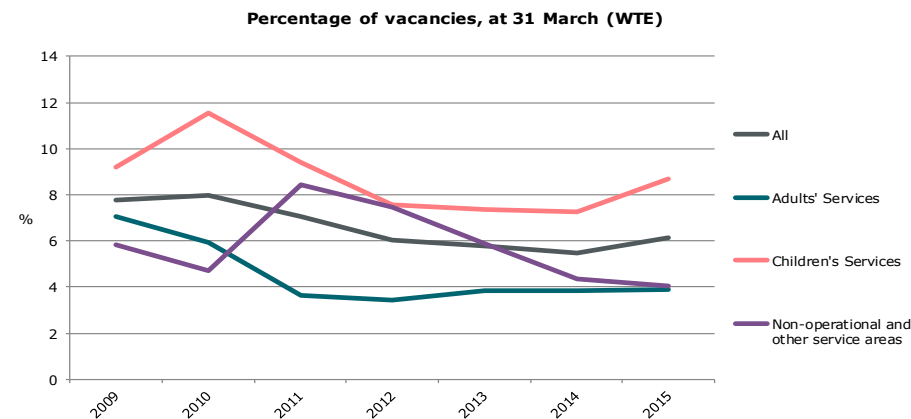
All starters (Headcount)



All leavers (Headcount)

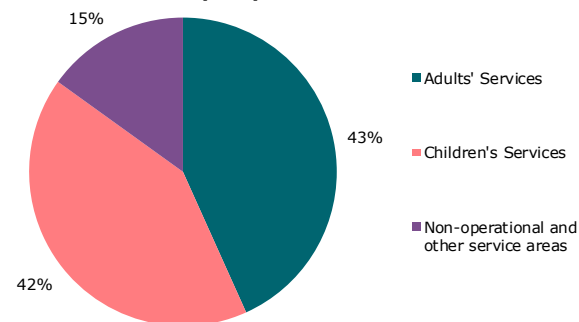


6% (236) of WTE social worker posts were vacant at 31 March 2015, compared to 5% (212) in 2014. This goes against the trend of the steady decrease in the overall number of vacancies since 2010. 2015 has also seen an increase in the number of vacancies in Children's Services increasing from 7% to 9% since 2014. Vacancies in Adults' Services remains the same for the third consecutive year at 4%. For 2015, vacancies in non-operational and other service areas also remained unchanged from 2014 at 4%.

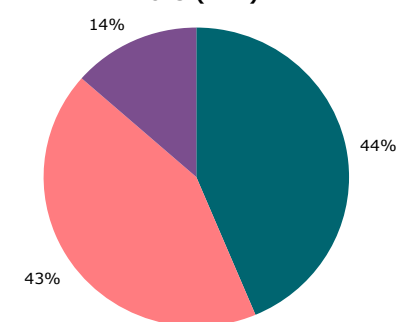


9% (22) of the total WTE vacancies were being 'held open'<sup>3</sup> at the end of March 2015, compared to 18% (39) in 2014. The number of WTE vacancies 'held open' in Children's Services decreased from 16 to 10 between 2014 and 2015, with 43% of all vacancies 'held open' at end of March 2015. 44% were in Adults' Services and 14% in other roles. This compares to 43% in Adults' Services, 42% in Children's Services and 15% in other roles at the end of March 2014.

**Proportion of 'held open' vacancies, at 31 March 2014 (WTE)**

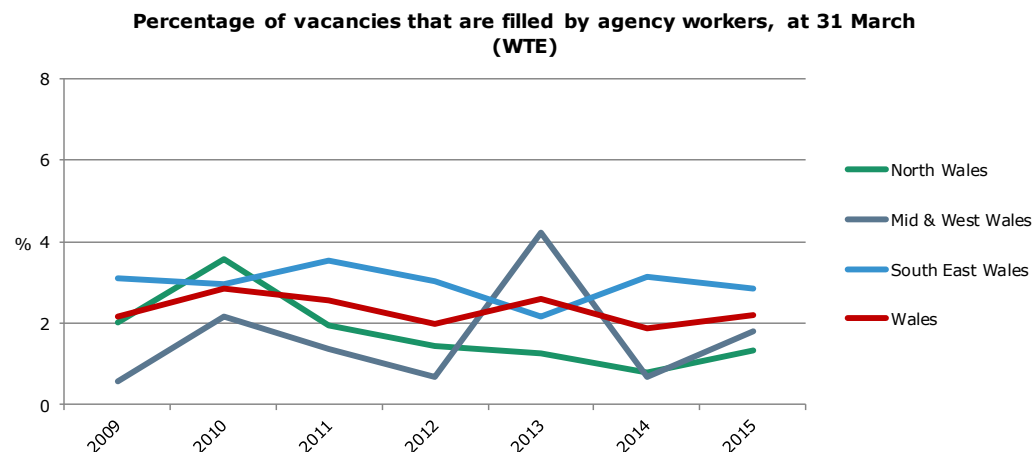


**Proportion of 'held open' vacancies, at 31 March 2015 (WTE)**

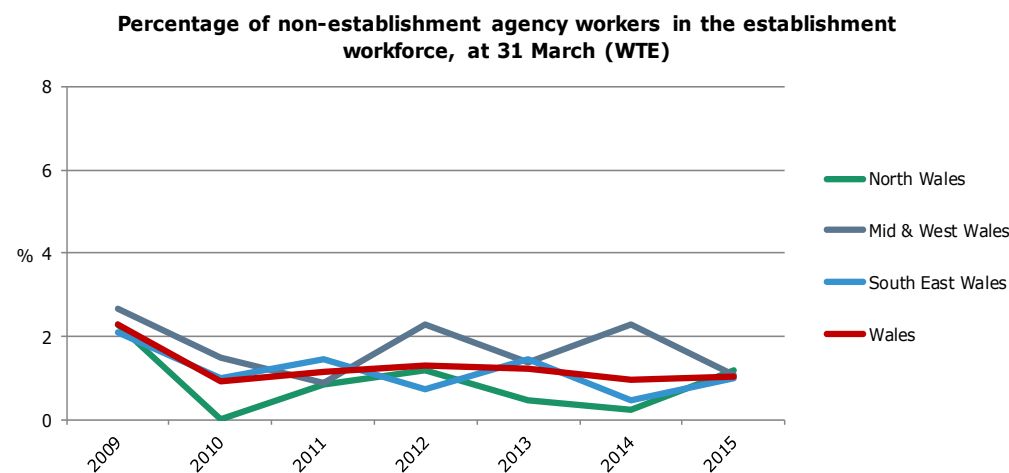


<sup>3</sup> Vacancies held open are vacancies at 31 March which are not being actively recruited for.

The use of agency workers to fill vacant posts continues across social services in Wales. In Mid & West Wales the use of agency workers increased from 0.7% in 2014 to 1.8% in 2015. In North Wales, the use of agency workers also increased, from 0.2% in 2014 to 1.2% in 2015. In South East Wales it decreased from 3.1% to 2.8%. The overall effect was that the Wales figure increased from 1.9% to 2.2% between 2014 and 2015.



In local authorities, other agency workers that are not part of the funded establishment are used to supplement the social worker workforce. In 2015, Mid & West Wales used agency staff to provide the equivalent of a further 1.1% of their overall WTE establishment compared to 2.3% in 2014, in North Wales it was 1.2% compared to 0.2% in 2014, and in South East Wales it was 1.0% compared to 0.5% in 2014.



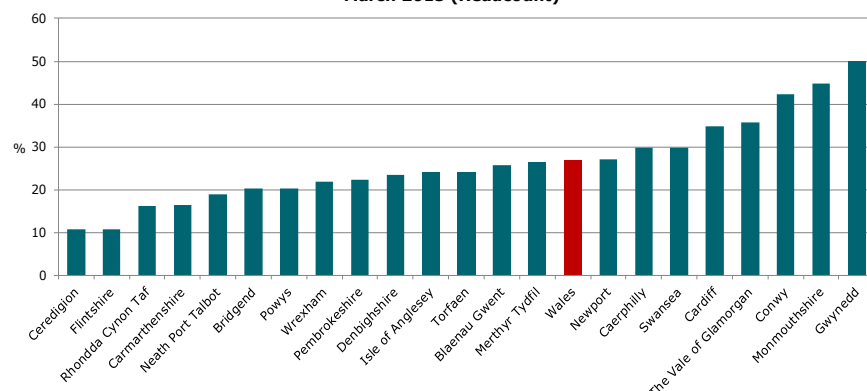
## Adults' Services

Adults' Services employed 1,496 social workers at the end of March 2015. This was 38% of the total number of social workers employed by the local authorities, compared to 39% in 2014.

Since 2014, the number of social workers employed in Adults' Services decreased by 3.6% (56 people).

27% of the social workers employed in Adults' Services were employed on a part-time basis. This figure has remained unchanged since 2013.

**Percentage social workers in Adults' Services who work on a part-time basis, at 31 March 2015 (Headcount)**



Regionally, the use of part-time social workers in Adults' Services varied, with 21% in Mid & West Wales compared to 24% in 2014, 28% in South East Wales the same since 2013 and 30% in North Wales compared to 27% in 2014.

In 2015, Adults' Services filled 1.4% of their established funded WTE with agency workers compared to 1.3% in 2014. The use of agency workers in Adults' Services has remained low and stable since 2009, although 2015 sees the level at its highest. Both North Wales and Mid & West Wales had an increase between 2014 and 2015.

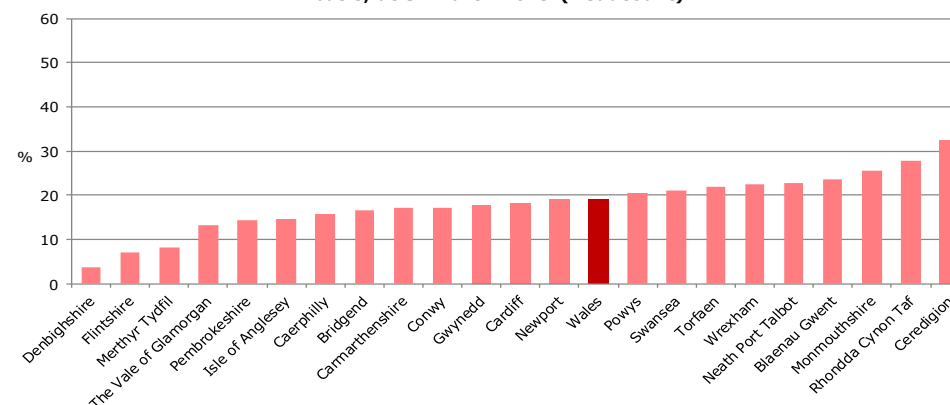
## Children's Services

Children's Services employed 1,742 social workers at the end of March 2015. This was 44% of the total number of social workers employed by the local authorities, compared to 43% in 2014.

Since 2014, the number of social workers employed in Children's Services has increased by 0.4% (7 people). This follows a decrease of 1% in 2014.

19% of the social workers employed in Children's Services were employed on a part-time basis for the fifth consecutive year.

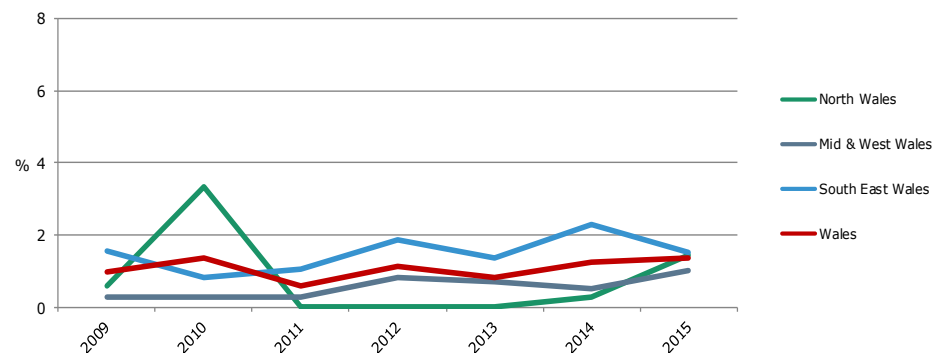
**Percentage of social workers in Children's Services who work on a part-time basis, at 31 March 2015 (Headcount)**



Regionally, the use of part-time social workers in Children's Services varied, with 14% in North Wales, compared to 16% in 2014, 21% in Mid & West Wales compared to 20% in 2014, and 20% in South East Wales compared to 19% in 2014.

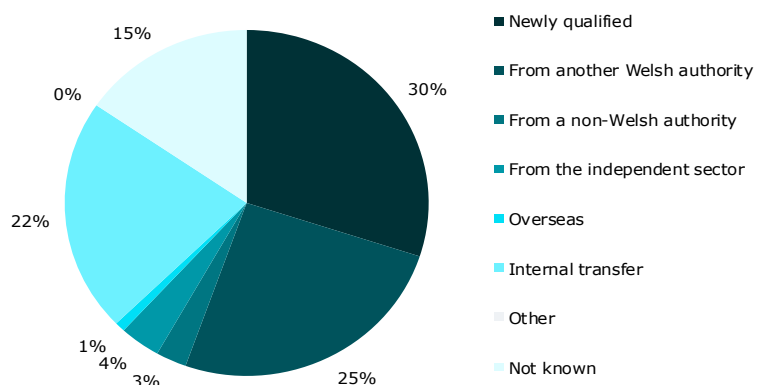
In 2015, Children's Services filled 3% of their established funded WTE with agency workers; the same as in 2014. Between 2014 and 2015, both Mid & West Wales and North Wales increased their usage of agency workers by 0.7 and 0.1 percentage points respectively. In South East Wales there was a decrease of 0.5 percentage points to 4.4%

Percentage of Adults' Services vacancies that are filled by agency workers, at 31 March (WTE)

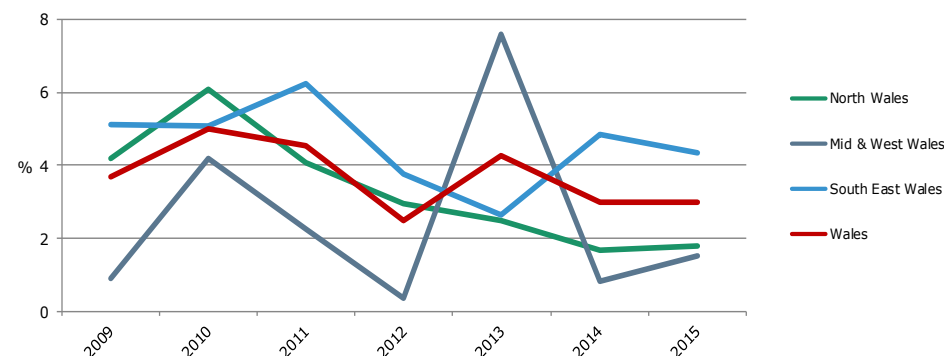


110 social workers 'joined' Adults' Services in 2014-15 compared to 107 in 2013-14. For 2014-15, 54% of these joined from other local authorities, the independent sector or from internal transfers, compared to 55% in 2013-14. 30% of those joining were newly qualified compared to 36% in 2013-14. No starters joined Adults' Services for other reasons, compared to 3% in 2013-14, and 15% of starters to Adults' Services joined for unknown reasons.

Starters to Adults' Services, 2014-15 (Headcount)

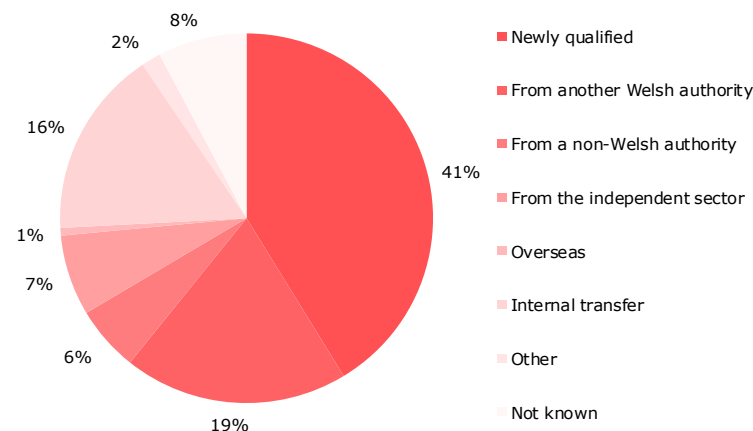


Percentage of Children's Services vacancies that are filled by agency workers, at 31 March (WTE)



298 social workers 'joined' Children's Services in 2014-15 compared to 302 in 2013-14. For 2014-15, 41% of these were newly qualified, compared to 48% in 2013-14, with 49% joining from other local authorities, the independent sector or from internal transfers, compared to 42% in 2013-14. The origin of 8% of starters was not recorded by authorities with 2% joining Children's Services for other reasons.

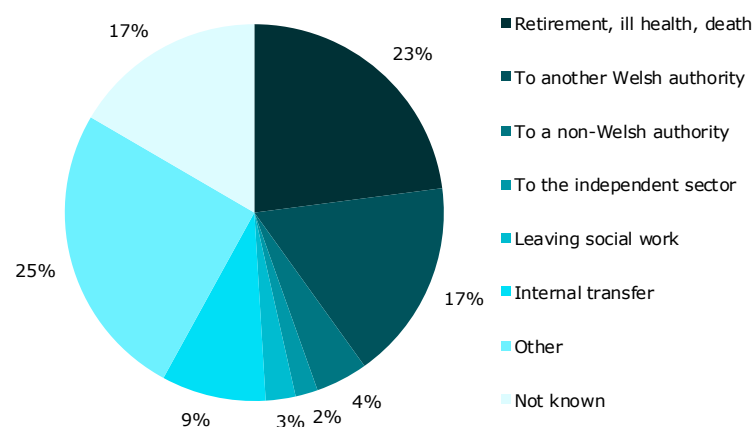
Starters to Children's Services, 2014-15 (Headcount)





157 social workers left Adults' Services in 2014-15 compared to 116 in 2013-14. For 2014-15, 3% of these left the social work profession, the same as in 2013-14. 23% retired and a further 24% moved to another local authority or the independent sector. 25% left Adults' Services for other reasons, while 17% of leavers' reasons were unknown to the authority. Other reasons included voluntary severance (17), redundancy (13) and mutual agreement/settlement (2).

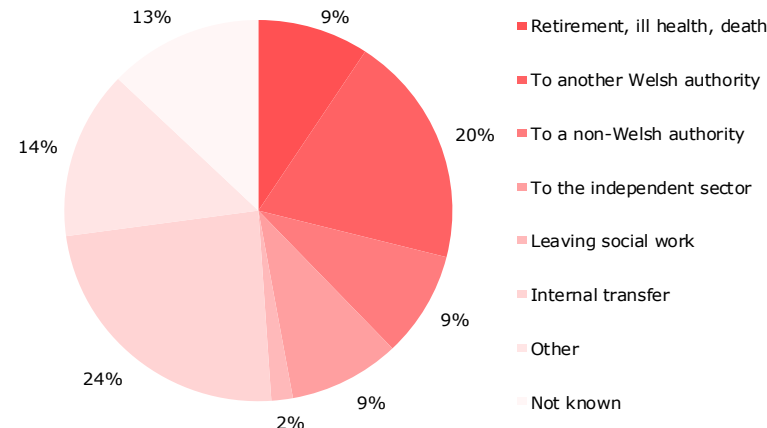
**Leavers from Adults' Services, 2014-15 (Headcount)**



The number of starters to Adult's Services has remained relatively stable from 2013-14 to 2014-15, with little change in the numbers in each category.

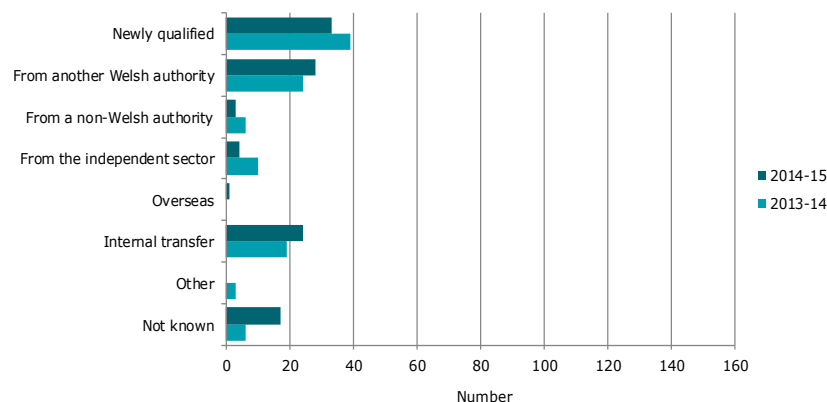
280 social workers left Children's Services in 2014-15 compared to 223 in 2013-14. For 2014-15, only 2% of these left the social work profession compared to 6% in 2013-14. 38% moved to another local authority or the independent sector compared to 37% in 2013-14, and a further 9% retired compared to 13% in 2013-14. 14% left Children's Services for other reasons, while 13% of leavers' reasons were unknown to the authority. Other reasons included redundancy (4), leaving by mutual agreement/settlement (3), joining an agency (11) and dismissal (5).

**Leavers from Children's Services, 2014-15 (Headcount)**

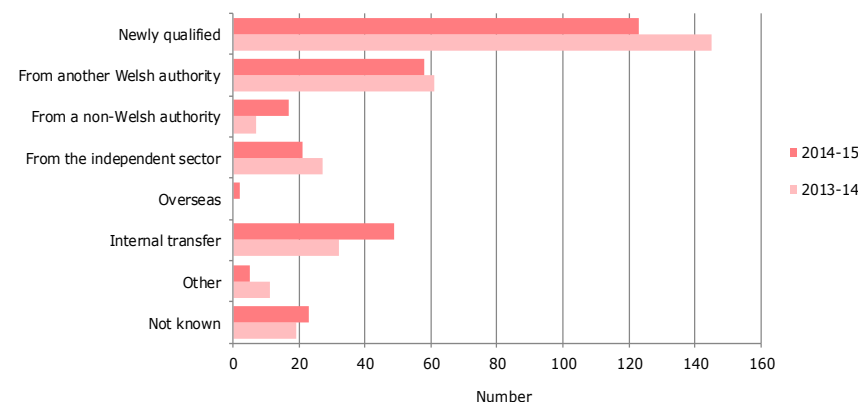


The number of newly qualified starters to Children's Services has decreased by 15% with 123 compared to 145 in 2013-14. Starters from another Welsh local authority has decreased from 61 to 58 since 2013-14. Starters who joined for unknown reasons have increased by 4 people between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Starters to Adults' Services (Headcount)



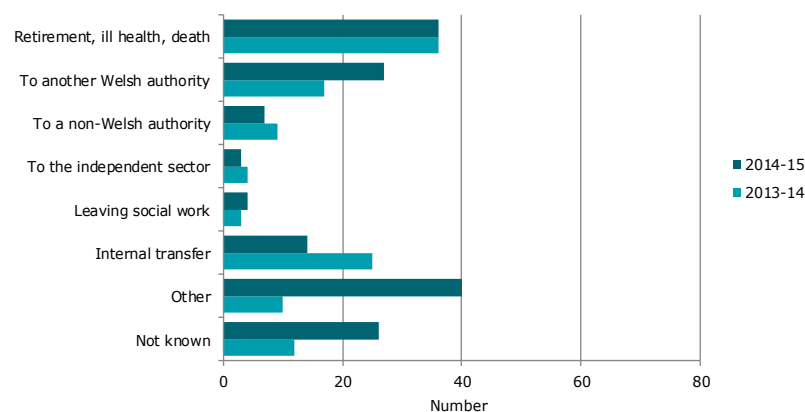
Starters to Children's Services (Headcount)



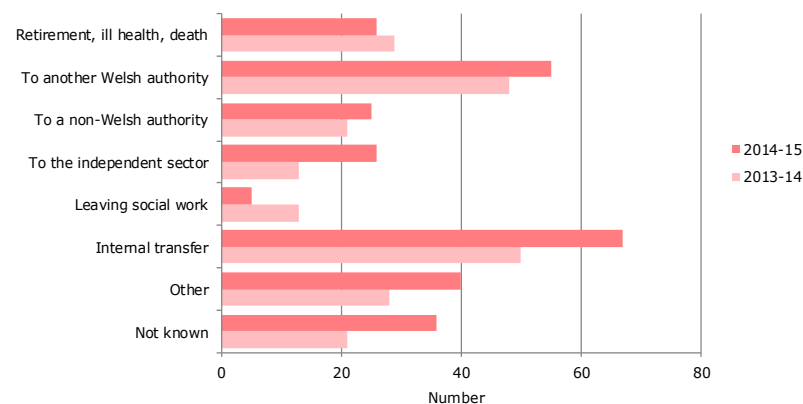
The number of social workers who left Adults' Services to another Welsh local authority has increased by 59% from 17 to 27 between 2013-14 and 2014-15. The number of social workers who left on an internal transfer has decreased by 44% compared to 2013-14.

The number of social workers who left Children's Services has increased by 26% from 223 to 280 since 2013-14. Social workers leaving to another Welsh local authority has increased by 7 and leavers to the independent sector has doubled from 13 to 26 since 2013-14. Other reasons for leaving has increased by 12 (from 28 to 40), with leavers due to unknown reasons increasing by 15 people since 2013-14.

Leavers from Adults' Services (Headcount)



Leavers from Children's Services (Headcount)

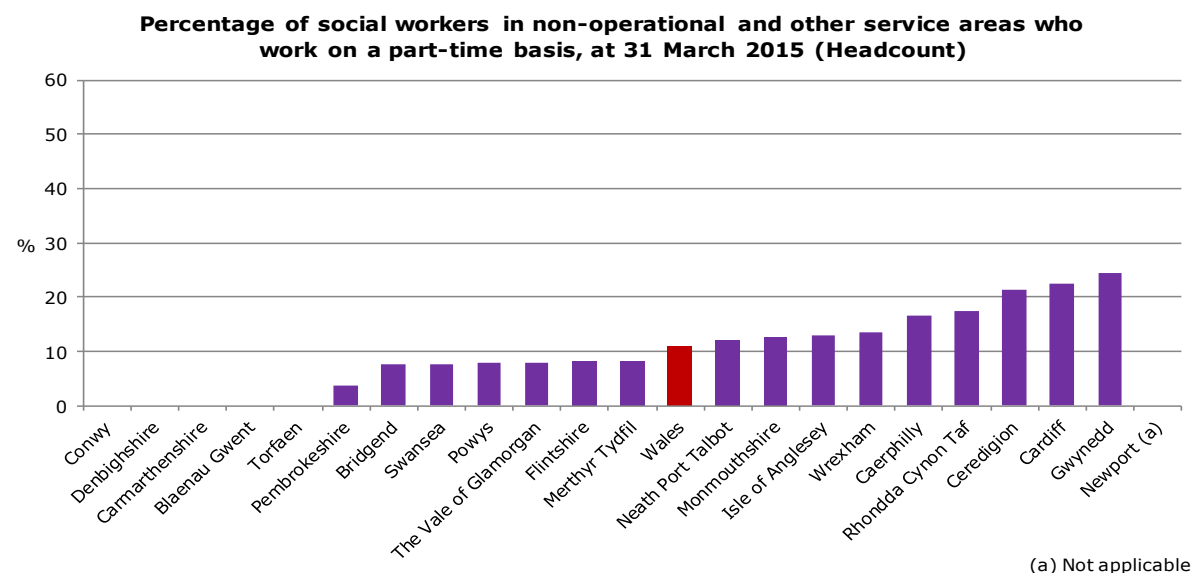


## Social workers in non-operational roles and other service areas

Across Wales, around 710 people were employed in other roles where a social work qualification was deemed to be essential at the end of March 2015, compared to 700 in 2014. This represents an increase of 1.4% (10 people) compared to 2013-14. 18% of social workers across local authorities are in these roles at the end of March 2015, the same as 2014. 11% of these were employed on a part-time basis, compared to 10% in 2013-14.

Regionally, the use of part-time social workers in other roles varied with 8% in Mid & West Wales, compared to 9% in 2013-14, 13% in South East Wales, an increase of 3 percentage points compared to 2014, and 13% in North Wales compared to 12% in 2013-14.

Across the 22 local authorities, the use of part-time social workers ranged from 0% in Conwy, Denbighshire, Carmarthenshire, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen to 24% in Gwynedd. There are no social worker posts in non-operational sections of Newport Social Services or other service areas, this has been the case since 2012-13.



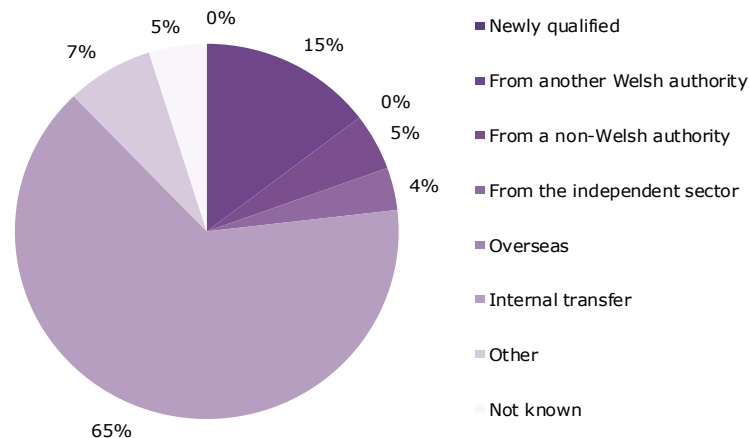
82 people (17%) 'joined' local authorities in non-operational or other service areas during 2014-15, compared to 79 in 2013-14. 53 (65%) of these were as a result of internal transfers, compared to 45 (57%) in 2013-14. There were no newly qualified starters in 2014-15. 19 (23%) coming from other local authorities or the independent sector, compared to 20 (25%) in 2013-14. 6 (7%) joined for other reasons compared to 6 (8%) in 2013-14. 4 people (5%) started in non-operational or other service areas for reasons not recorded by the local authority, compared to 7 (9%) in 2013-14.

101 people left non-operational roles or roles in other service areas during 2014-15, compared to 89 in 2013-14. 36 (36%) of these retired or left social work, compared to 25 (28%) in 2013-14. 10 (10%) moved on to roles within other local authorities compared to 19 (21%) in 2013-14, and 17 (17%) were transferred

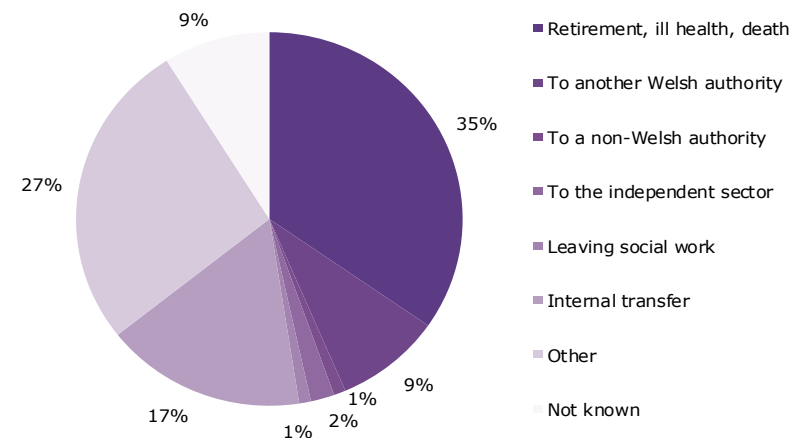
## Non - operational roles and other service areas

internally within the authority. 27 (27%) left these roles for other reasons compared to 13 (15%) in 2013-14. 9 people (9%) left for reasons that were not recorded by the local authority, compared to 2 (2%) in 2013-14.

**Starters to non-operational and other service areas, 2014-15 (Headcount)**

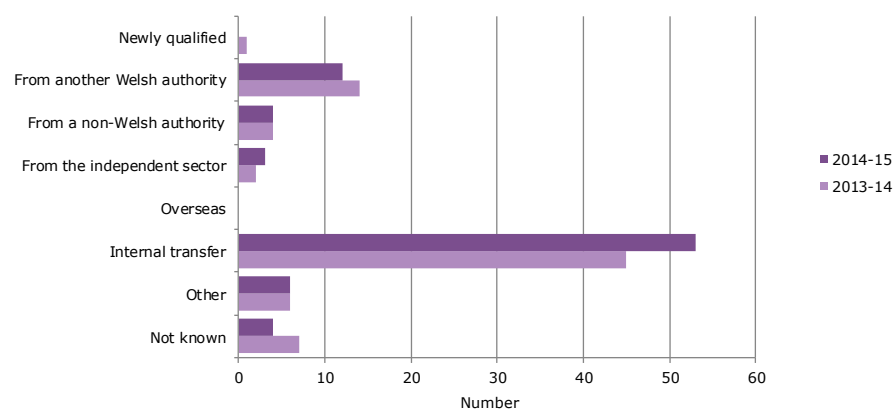


**Leavers from non-operational and other service areas, 2014-15 (Headcount)**

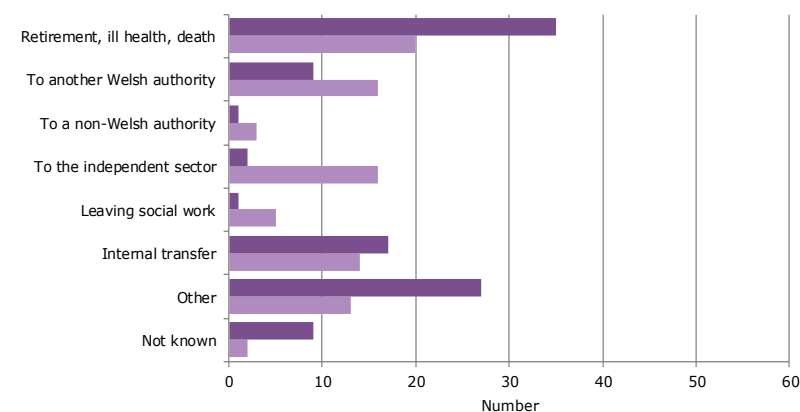


During 2014-15, 53 people started roles in non-operational and other service areas as internal transfers, compared to 45 in 2013-14. 2 left these roles to the independent sector compared to 16 in 2013-14.

**Starters to non-operational and other service areas (Headcount)**



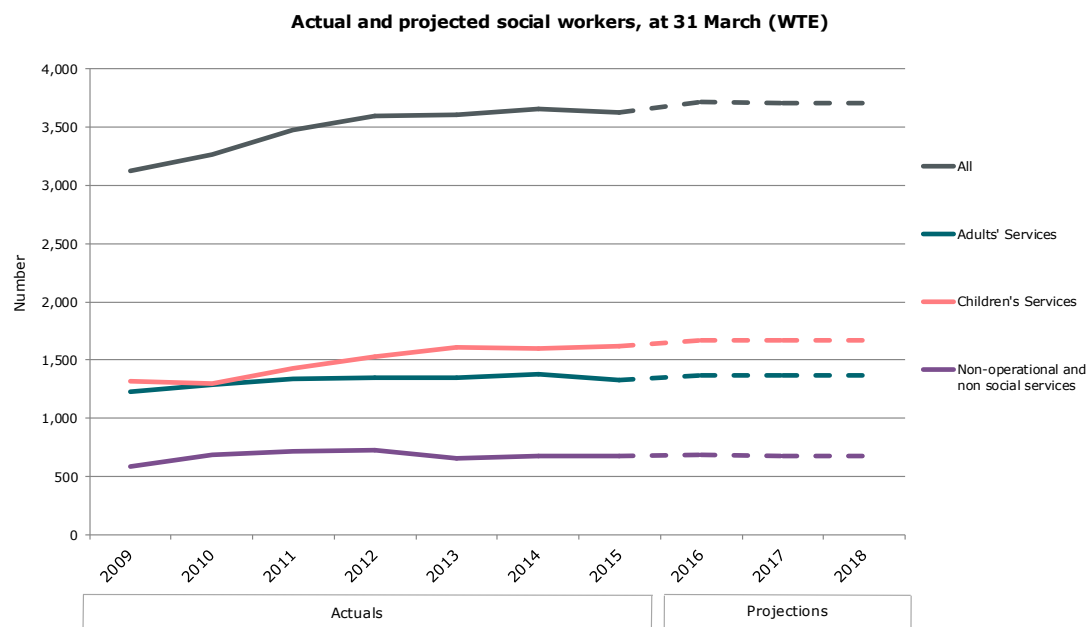
**Leavers from non-operational and other service areas (Headcount)**



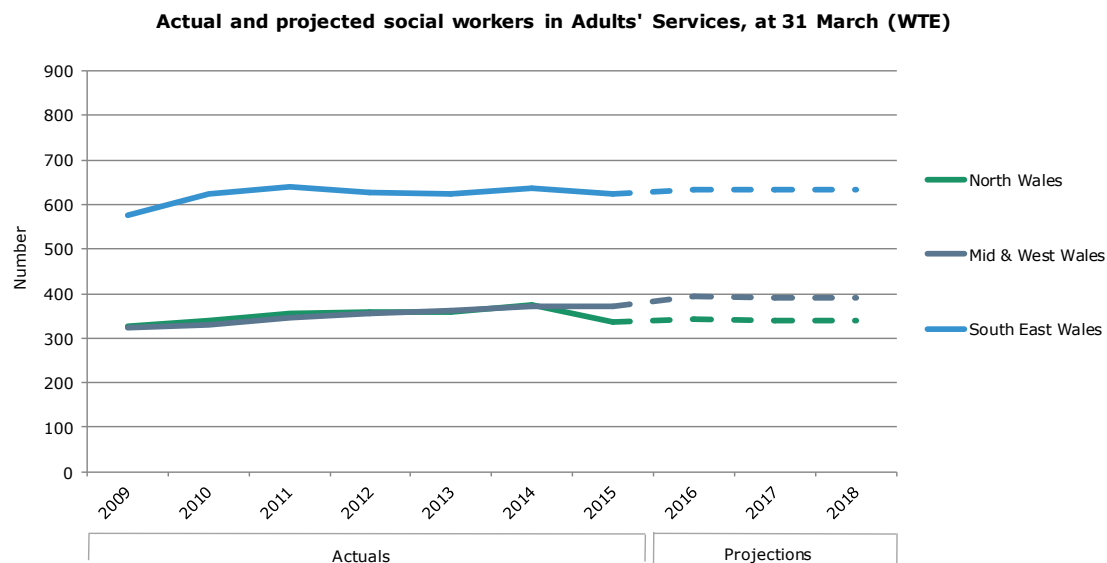
## Projected social worker workforce requirements

In 2013-14, local authorities projected an overall 2% decrease to 3,577 WTE social workers by the end of 2018-19. In contrast, in 2014-15 the total number (WTE) of local authority social workers is projected to increase by 2% to a projected 3,705 WTE by the end of 2017-18.

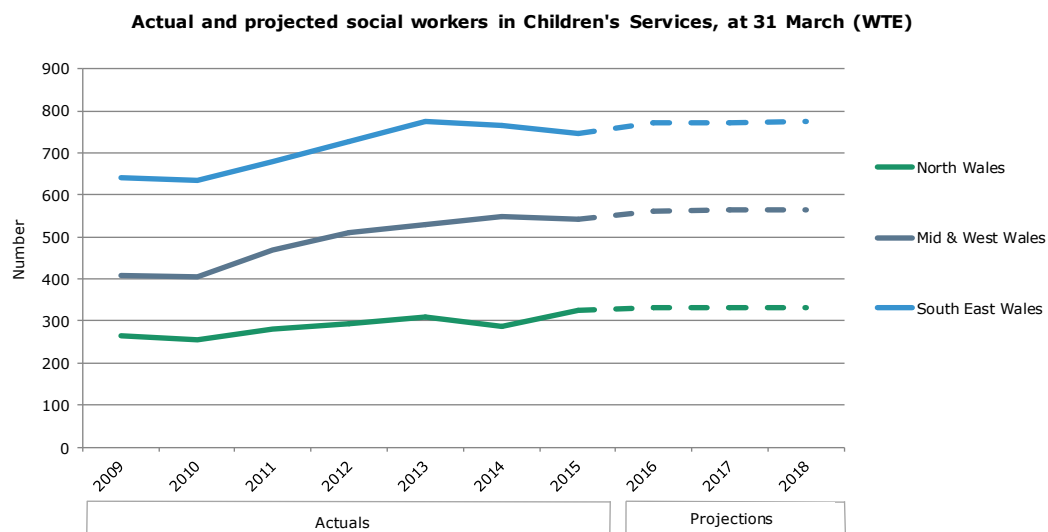
Over the same three year period, the numbers employed in Adults' and Children's Services is projected to increase by 2% and 3% respectively, whilst the number employed in non-operational or other roles is projected to decrease by 1%.



In Adults' Services, North Wales and South East Wales both anticipate an increase of 1% in the number (WTE) of social workers by the end of 2017-18, with an increase of 5% in the WTE anticipated for Mid and West Wales.

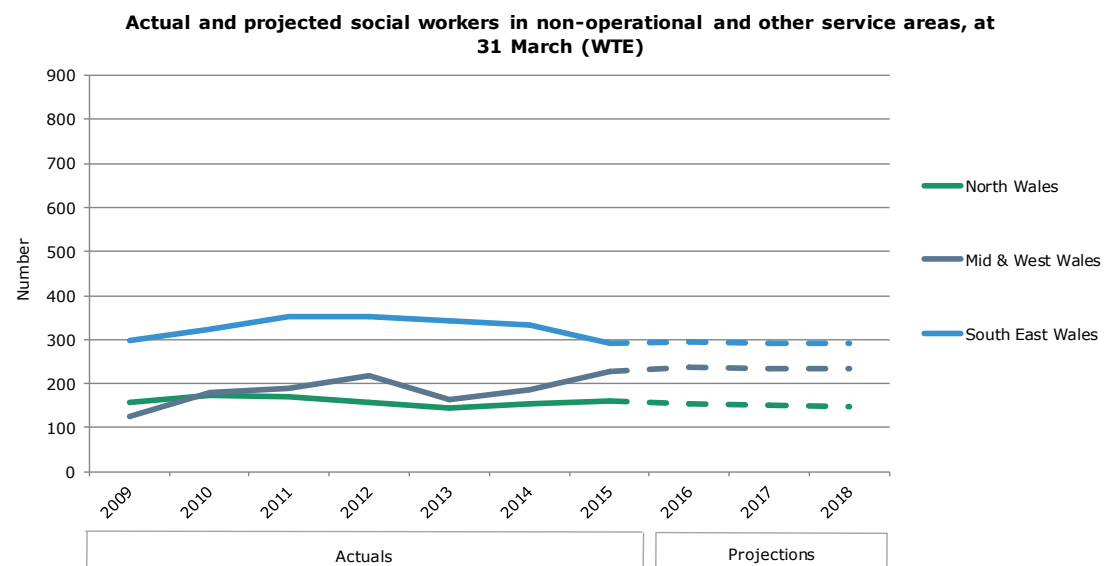


In Children's Services, North Wales anticipate a 2% increase in the number (WTE) of social workers by the end of 2017-18. Over the same three year period, Mid and West Wales anticipate a 4% increase and South East Wales anticipate a 4% increase in the number (WTE) of their social worker workforce.



## Projected social worker workforce

In non-operational and other service areas, North Wales anticipate a 9% decrease in the number (WTE) of social workers by the end of 2017-18. Over the same three year period, Mid and West Wales anticipate a 3% increase and South East Wales anticipate the number of WTE in these roles will remain the same.



The Data Unit is part of the local government family in Wales. We have long-standing, trusted and direct working relationships with local government. For many years we have been supporting the drive for improvement through a range of products and services specifically designed for local government. Many of these have also been used to support improvement in other public and private sector organisations.

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