



Social Worker Workforce Planning 2015 - 16

A national report on the social worker workforce in Wales



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This report is also available in Welsh.

Social Worker – Key Infographics 2015-16

Social workers in all service areas, 2015-16

 **79%**
work full time

21% 
work part time

 **8%**
posts are vacant

 **2%**
filled by
agency workers

Starters
 **35%**
newly qualified

 **24%**
from a Welsh
local authority

 **4%**
from the
independent sector

Leavers
 **20%**
retired, ill health
or death

 **17%**
to a Welsh
local authority

 **8%**
to the
independent sector

Social workers in Adults' Services, 2015-16

 **73%**
work full time

27% 
work part time

 **7%**
posts are vacant

 **2%**
filled by
agency workers

Starters
 **33%**
newly qualified

 **26%**
from a Welsh
local authority

 **5%**
from the
independent sector

Leavers
 **26%**
retired, ill health
or death


 **13%**
to a Welsh
local authority

 **5%**
to the
independent sector

Social workers in Children's Services, 2015-16

 **80%**
work full time

20% 
work part time

 **9%**
posts are vacant

 **3%**
filled by
agency workers

Starters

 **45%**
newly qualified

 **24%**
from a Welsh
local authority

 **5%**
from the
independent sector

Leavers

 **12%**
retired, ill health
or death


 **22%**
to a Welsh
local authority

 **12%**
to the
independent sector

Social workers in non-operational roles and other service areas, 2015-16

 **87%**
work full time

13% 
work part time

 **5%**
posts are vacant

 **2%**
filled by
agency workers

Starters

 **5%**
newly qualified

 **20%**
from a Welsh
local authority

 **0%**
from the
independent sector

Leavers

 **25%**
retired, ill health
or death

 **12%**
to a Welsh
local authority

 **5%**
to the
independent sector

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 the 2015-16 financial year and projected workforce needs for the next three years. The **key points** from the 2015-16 analysis are as follows:

All social workers

- Nearly **3,900** social workers were employed in local authorities at the end of March 2016. This represents a **3% decrease** compared to the number employed at the end of March 2015.
- The number of Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) employed has **decreased by 3%** since 2015, from 3,625 to 3,530.
- In 2016, **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 4%** with 149 people joining during 2015-16 compared to 156 in 2014-15.
- Social workers who started a role in 2015-16 from a local authority outside of Wales **decreased by 8%**, with 22 compared to 24 in 2014-15.

Adults' Services

- The number of social workers employed in Adults' Services saw a decrease where the number employed has **fallen by 3.9%** since 2015 – follow the same trend as the decrease the previous year.
- At 31 March 2016, vacancies in Adults' Services had **increased** from the previous year - to 7% of WTE social worker posts being vacant compared to 4% in 2015.
- During the next three years to 2018-19, the number of WTE employed in Adults' Services is projected to **increase by 5%**.

Children's Services

- Since 2015, the number of social workers employed in Children's Services has **decreased by 0.7%**.
- Social workers leaving to a local authority outside Wales decreased by 15 people (60%), while leavers to the independent sector decreased from 26 in 2015 to 24 in 2016.
- At 31 March 2016, vacancies in Children's Services **increased slightly to 9.2%** of WTE social worker posts being vacant, compared to 8.7% in 2015.
- During the next three years to 2018-19, the number of WTE employed in Children's Services is projected to **increase by 3%**.

Non-operational roles and other service areas

- Around **660** 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 2016, compared to 710 in 2015.
- Since 2015, the number of social workers employed in non-operational roles and other service areas has **decreased by 7%**.
- At 31 March 2016, vacancies in non-operational roles and other service areas has **increased to 5.5%** compared to 4% in 2015.
- During the next three years to 2018-19, the number of WTE social workers employed in non-operational roles and other service areas is projected to increase 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 2015-16 and to project staffing figures for the three years from 2016-17 to 2018-19¹. 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

¹ 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 eighth 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:

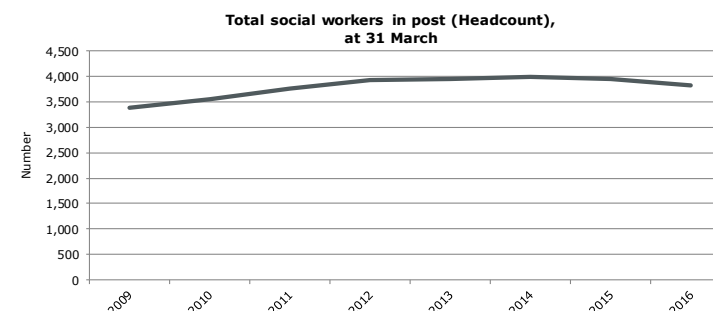
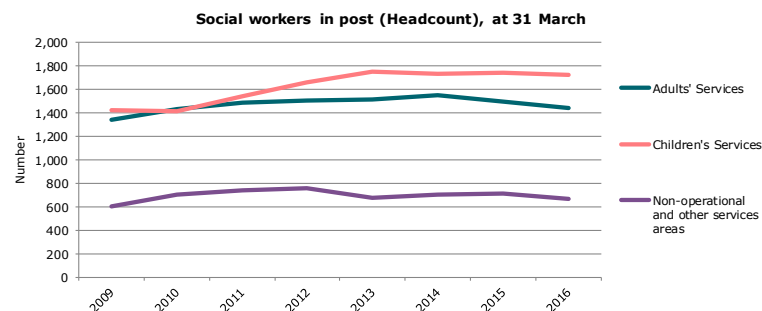
- Adults' Services;
- Children's Services; and
- Other local authority roles where a social worker qualification is deemed to be necessary.

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

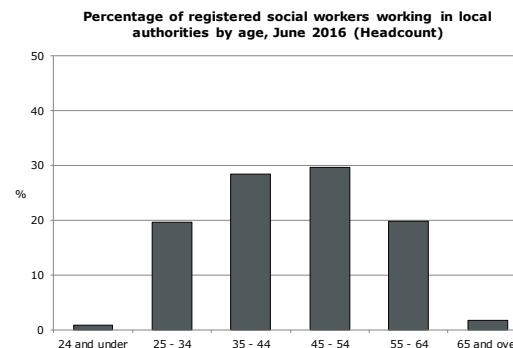
Overall current social worker workforce profile

Nearly **3,900 social workers** were employed in local authorities at the end of March 2016. This represents a 3% decrease compared to the number employed in 2015. The number of Whole Time Equivalents (WTE)² employed has also decreased by 3% since 2015, with a total of almost 3,550 WTEs at the end of March 2016. Overall, the WTE staff establishment has decreased by 1% since March 2015.

The largest decrease was in Adults' Services, where the number employed has fallen by 3.9% since 2015, this decrease followed the same pattern as the previous year. Over the same period the number employed in Children's Services has decreased by 0.7%. The number employed in non-operational and other service areas roles has decreased by 7% since 2015, this represents 49 people. The WTE staff establishment has increased by 0.8% in Adults' Services and decreased by 0.1% in Children's Services since March 2015.

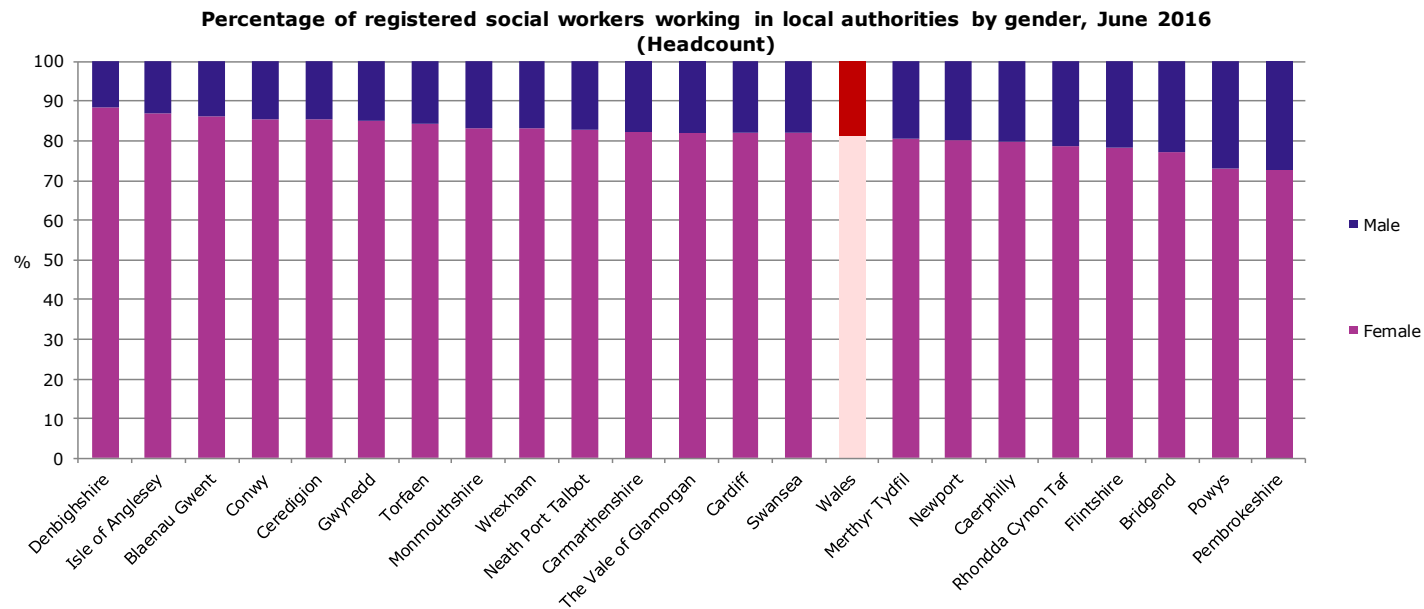


The Care Council for Wales register of social workers shows that the majority (51%) are aged 45 or over and 22% are aged 55 or over. This is the same compared to 2015 where 51% of staff were aged 45 or over. The percentage aged 55 or over was 21% in 2015.

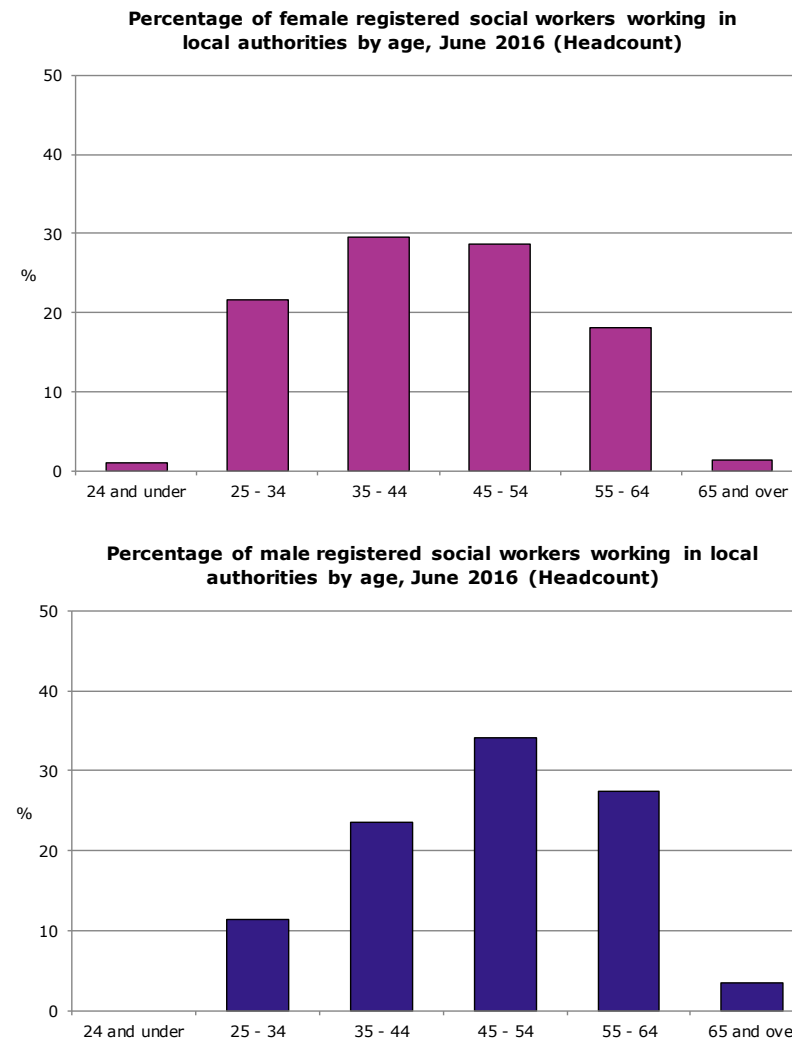


² Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) is the proportion of the standard full time working hours that an employee is contracted to work for. It is defined as contract WTE i.e. 37 contracted/standard hours.

In 2016, 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 73% in Pembrokeshire, to 88% in Denbighshire.

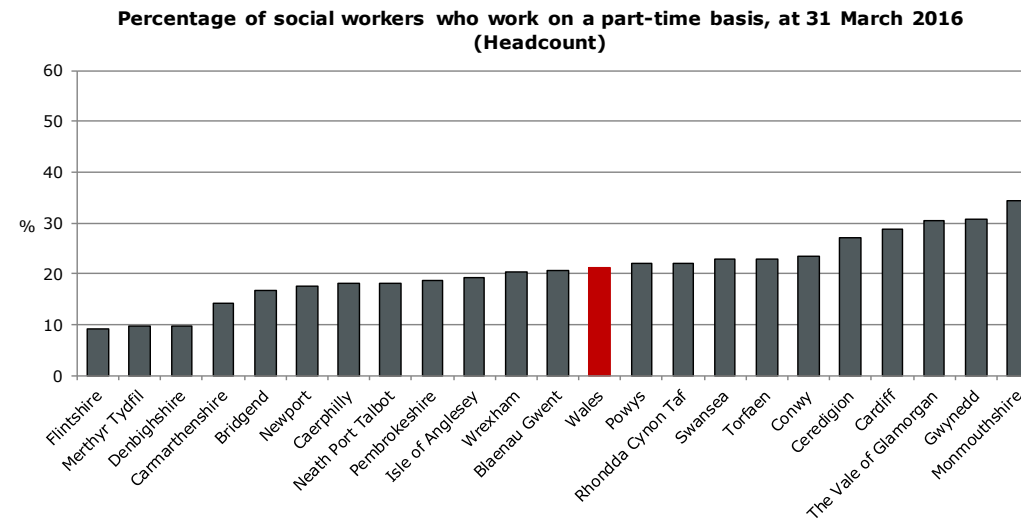


In June 2016, 65% of male social workers employed in local authority social services were aged 45 or over, compared to 48% in the female social worker workforce, in 2015 the figures were the same. 31% of male social workers were aged 55 or over, compared to 19% of female social workers, this age profile for male and female social workers in 2015 was 30% and 19%, respectively.



At 31 March 2016, 21% of all social workers were employed on a part-time basis, the same as in 2015. In Mid & West Wales, 20% were employed on a part-time basis, compared to 18% in 2015. In North Wales, 20% were employed on a part-time basis compared to 21% in 2015. In South East Wales, the figure was 23% compared to 22% in 2015.

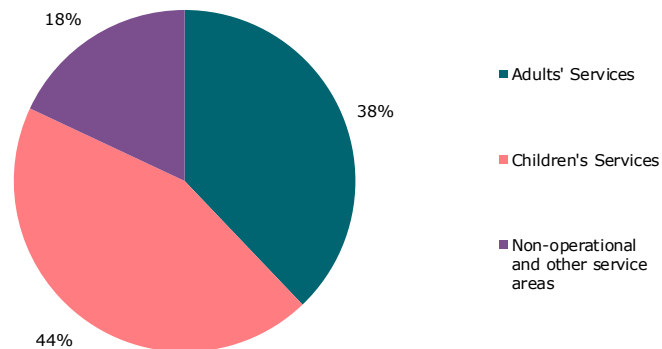
At a local authority level, the percentage of part-time social workers ranged from 9% in Flintshire to 35% in Monmouthshire. This has remained similar to the range in 2015.



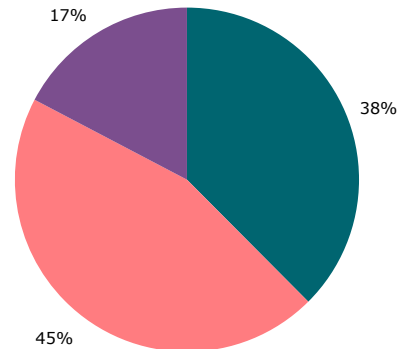
Overall current social worker workforce profile

At 31 March 2016, 45% of local authority social workers work in Children's Services, compared to 44% in 2015. 38% worked in Adults' Services, the same as in 2015, and 17% in other roles where a social worker qualification is necessary, compared to 18% in 2015.

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



Social workers in post by service area, at 31 March 2016 (Headcount)



At 31 March 2016, North Wales had 42% of its social workers in Adults' Services, the same as in 2015. 40% were in Children's Services, an increase from 38% in 2015. In Mid & West Wales, the proportion remained the same at 33% in Adults' Services. Children's Services also remained the same as in 2015 at 48%. In South East Wales the proportion remained the same at 39% in Adults' Services and increased from 44% to 45% in Children's Services. Mid & West Wales had the same proportion of social workers employed in non-operational and other service areas as in 2015 (19%). North Wales decreased by 1 percentage point to 18% and South East decreased by 1 percentage point to 16%.

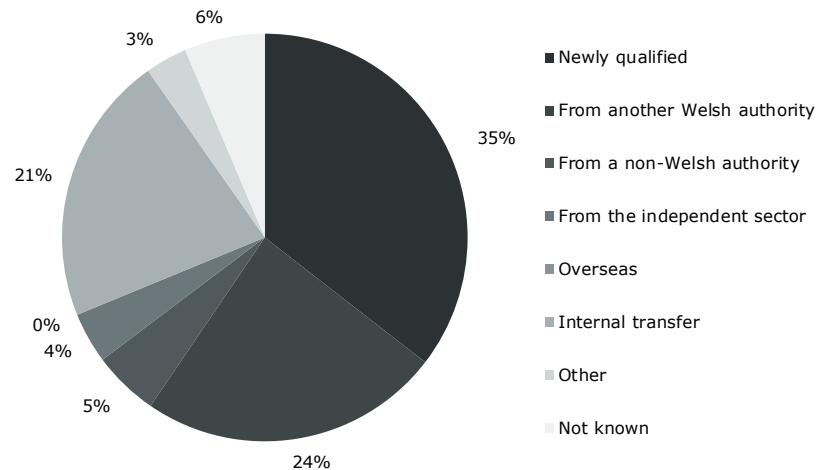
Percentage of social workers by service area and region, at 31 March (Headcount)

	Adults' Services (%)					Children's Services (%)					Non-operational and other service areas (%)				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
North Wales	45	45	47	42	42	35	38	35	38	40	19	17	18	19	18
Mid & West Wales	34	35	34	33	33	47	50	50	48	48	19	15	16	19	19
South East Wales	38	37	38	39	39	43	44	43	44	45	20	18	18	17	16
Wales	38	38	39	38	38	42	44	43	44	45	19	17	18	18	17

Overall current social worker workforce profile

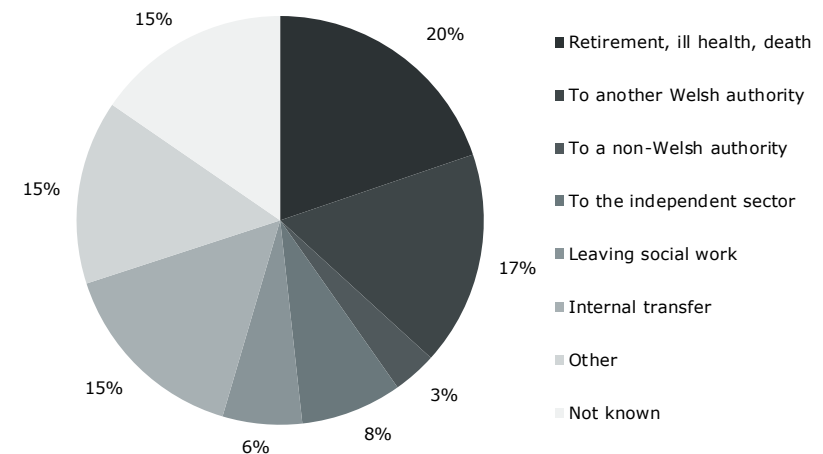
The number of newly qualified social workers joining the service decreased by 4% with 149 people joining in 2015-16 compared to 156 in 2014-15. During 2015-16, 98 (66%) of these joined Children's Services, with 48 (32%) joining Adults' Services and 3 (2%) people joining into other roles. 29 people left social work during 2015-16, compared to 10 in 2014-15. 17 (59%) of these left roles in Adults' Services, 9 (31%) left Children's Services and 3 (10%) left from other roles where a social worker qualification is necessary.

All starters, 2015-16 (Headcount)^(a)



(a) Due to rounding, data labels may not total 100%

All leavers, 2015-16 (Headcount)^(a)

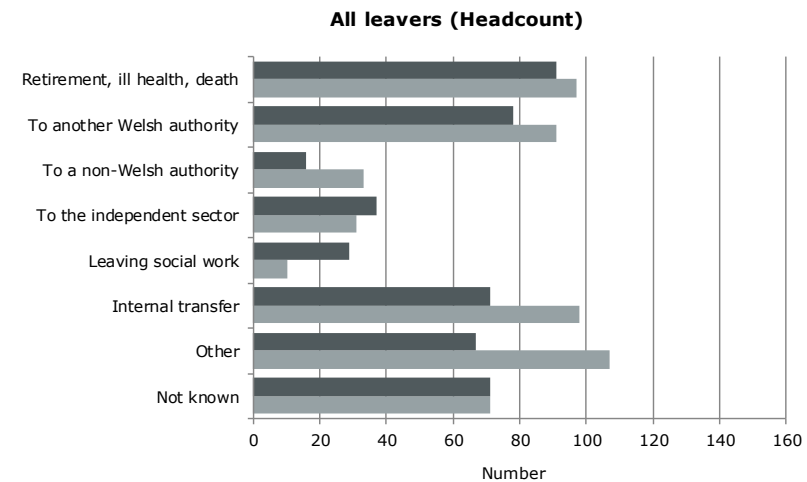
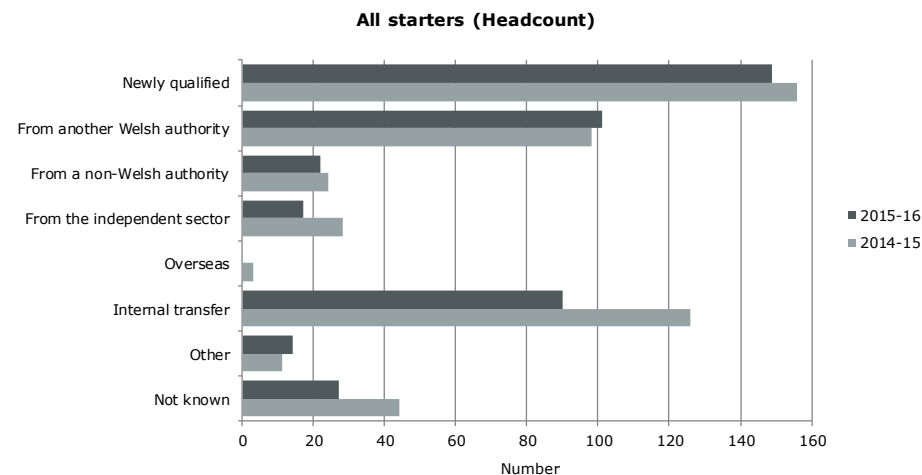


(a) Due to rounding, data labels may not total 100%

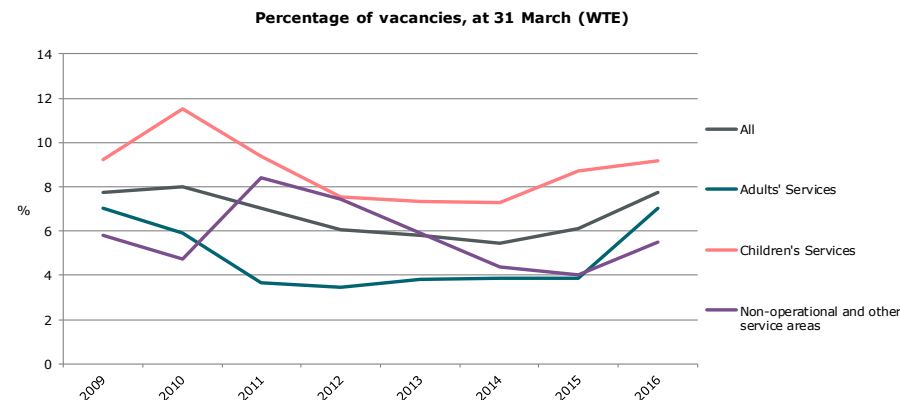
Newly qualified starters by service area and region, during the year (Headcount)

	Adults' Services					Children's Services					Non-operational and other service areas				
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
North Wales	6	9	6	7	7	17	22	23	14	10	5	3	1	0	1
Mid & West Wales	5	12	12	14	21	48	25	43	44	18	1	0	0	0	0
South East Wales	22	12	21	12	20	76	77	79	65	70	1	0	0	0	2
Wales	33	33	39	33	48	141	124	145	123	98	7	3	1	0	3

Starters from another Welsh local authority increased by 3% with 101 social workers compared to 98 in 2014-15. Social workers who started from a non-Welsh authority decreased by 8%, with 22 compared to 24 in 2014-15. Leavers who left a social work post due to retirement, ill health or death decreased by 6% with 91 leavers compared to 97 in 2014-15. The number of starters due to unknown reasons decreased between 2014-15 and 2015-16, whereas the number of leavers due to unknown reasons has remained the same. Starters due to other reasons increased, whereas leavers due to other reasons has decreased by 37% over the same period from 107 to 67.

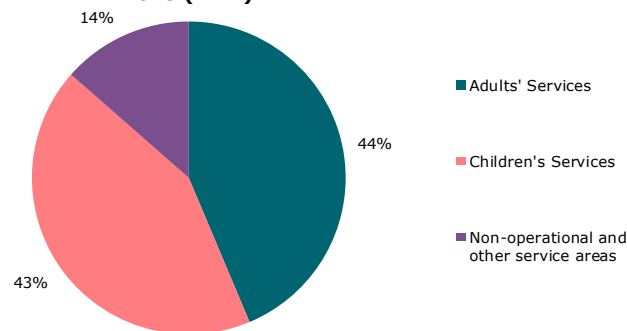


8% (297) of WTE social worker posts were vacant at 31 March 2016, compared to 6% (236) in 2015. This follows the trend seen in 2015 where there was an increase in the overall number of vacancies compared to the previous year. 2016 has also seen the number of vacancies in Children's Services increase from 8.7% to 9.2% since 2015. Vacancies in Adults' Services has increased from 4% to 7%, the first increase since 2013. For 2016, vacancies in non-operational and other service areas also increased from 4.0% to 5.5% compared to 2015.



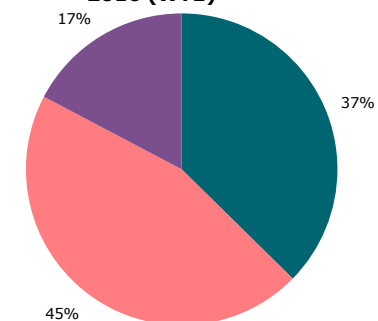
12% (35) of the total WTE vacancies were being 'held open'³ at the end of March 2016, compared to 9% (22) in 2015. The number of WTE vacancies held open in Children's Services increased from 10 to 16 between 2015 and 2016, with 45% of all vacancies 'held open' at end of March 2016. 37% were in Adults' Services and 17% in other roles. This compares to 44% in Adults' Services, 43% in Children's Services and 14% in other roles at the end of March 2015.

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



(a) Due to rounding, data labels may not total 100%

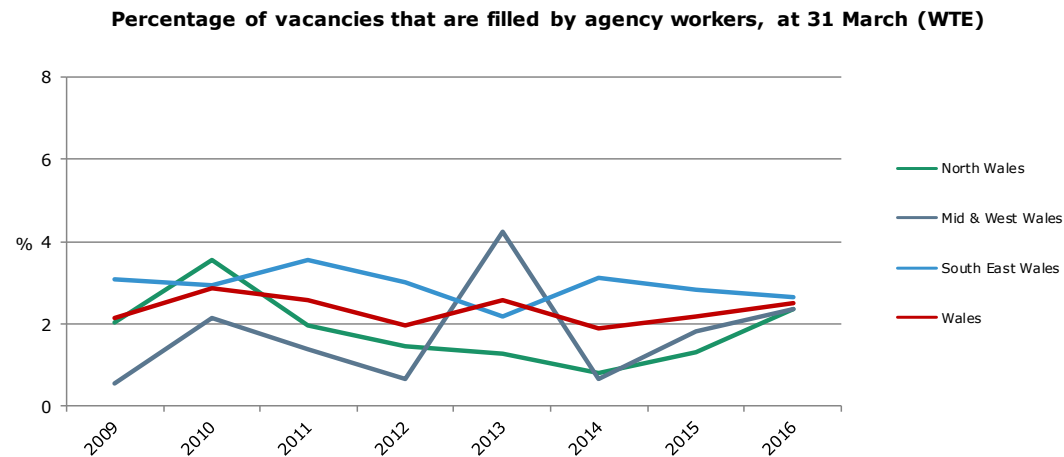
Proportion of 'held open' vacancies, at 31 March 2016 (WTE)^(a)



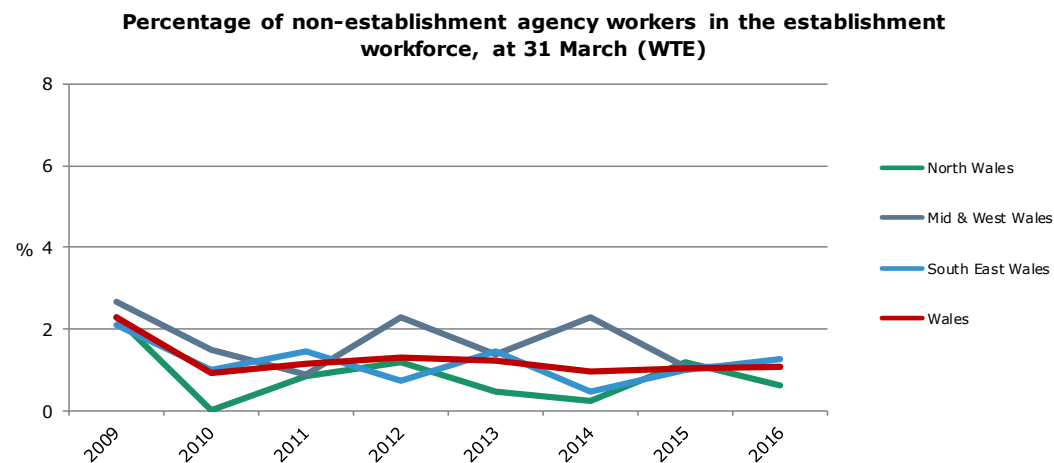
(a) Due to rounding, data labels may not total 100%

³ 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 1.8% in 2015 to 2.3% in 2016. In North Wales, the use of agency workers also increased, from 1.3% to 2.3%, in South East Wales it decreased slightly from 2.8% to 2.7%. The overall effect was that the Wales figure increased from 2.2% to 2.5% between 2015 and 2016.



In local authorities, other agency workers that are not part of the funded establishment are used to supplement the social worker workforce. In 2016, Mid & West Wales used agency staff to provide the equivalent of a further 1.1% of their overall WTE establishment the same as in 2015, in North Wales it was 0.6% compared to 1.2% in 2015, and in South East Wales it was 1.3% compared to 1.0% in 2015.

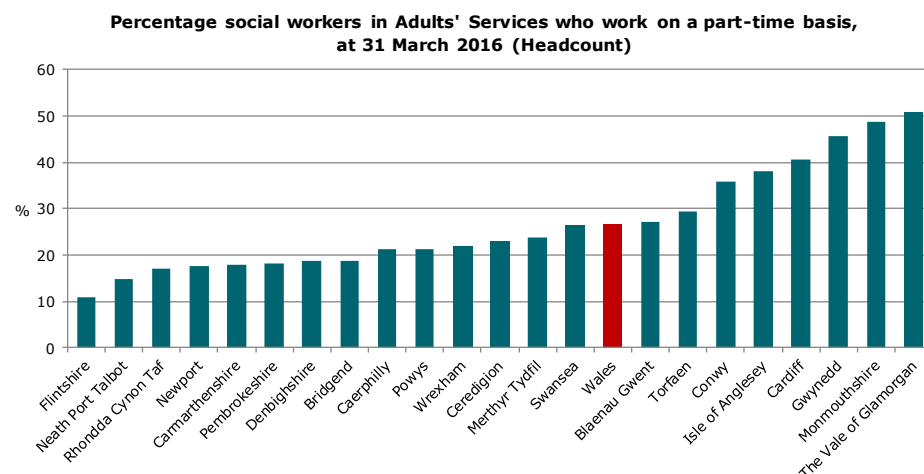


Adults' Services

Adults' Services employed 1,438 social workers at the end of March 2016. This was 38% of the total number of social workers employed by the local authorities, the same as in 2015.

Since 2015, the number of social workers employed in Adults' Services decreased by 3.9% (58 people).

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



Regionally, the use of part-time social workers in Adults' Services varied, with 21% in Mid & West Wales the same as in 2015, 29% in South East Wales compared to 28% in 2015 and 28% in North Wales compared to 30% in 2015.

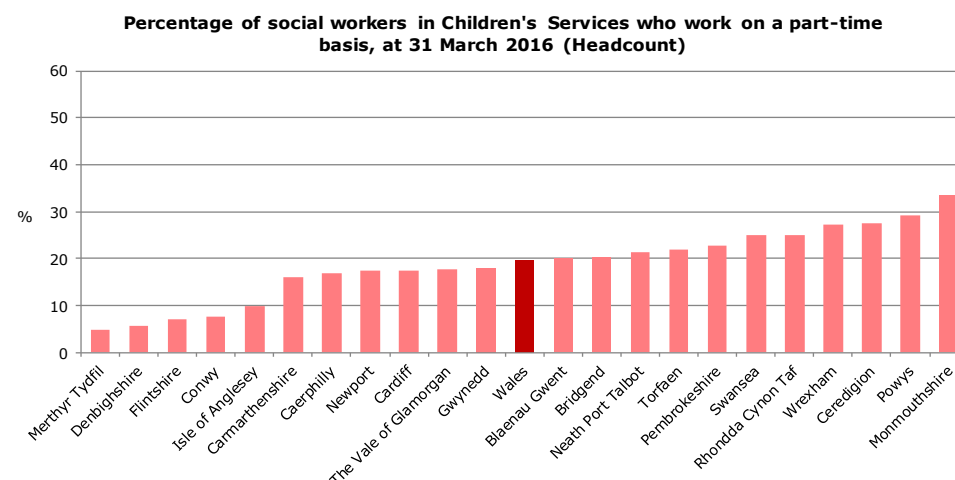
In 2016, Adults' Services filled 2.5% of their established funded WTE with agency workers compared to 1.4% in 2015. The use of agency workers in Adults' Services increased for the second consecutive year, by 1.1 percentage points in 2016. Mid & West Wales had the largest from 1% to 3.8% between 2015 and 2016.

Children's Services

Children's Services employed 1,729 social workers at the end of March 2016. This was 45% of the total number of social workers employed by the local authorities, compared to 44% in 2015.

Since 2015, the number of social workers employed in Children's Services has decreased by 0.7% (13 people). This follows an increase of 0.4% between 2014 to 2015.

20% of the social workers employed in Children's Services were employed on a part-time basis an increase from 19% the previous five consecutive years.

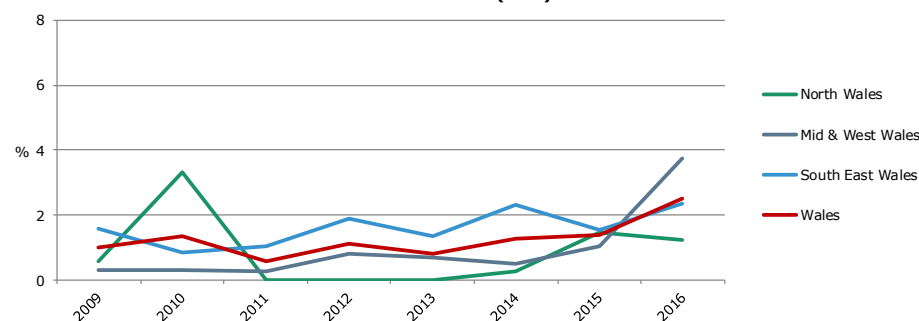


Regionally, the use of part-time social workers in Children's Services varied, with 14% in North Wales, the same as in 2015, 23% in Mid & West Wales compared to 21% in 2015, and 20% in South East Wales, the same as in 2015.

In 2016, Children's Services filled 2.9% of their established funded WTE with agency workers; a decrease compared to 3.0% in 2015. Between 2015 and 2016, both Mid & West Wales and South East Wales decreased their use of agency workers by 0.4 and 0.8 percentage points respectively. In North Wales there was an increase of 2.3 percentage points to 4.1%.

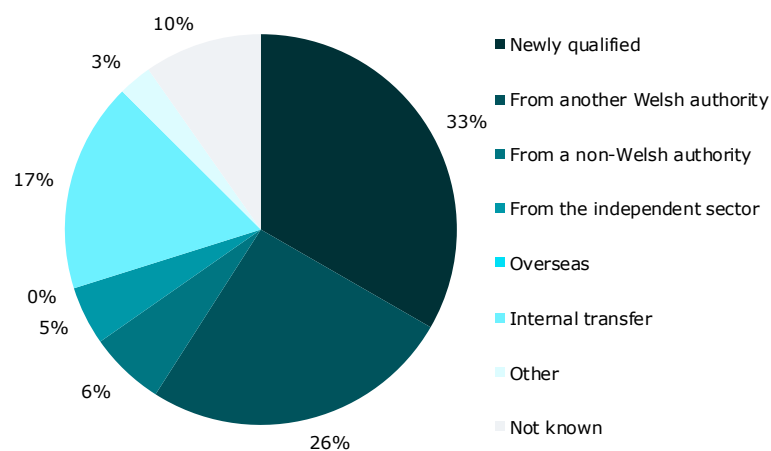
Adults' and Children's Services

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

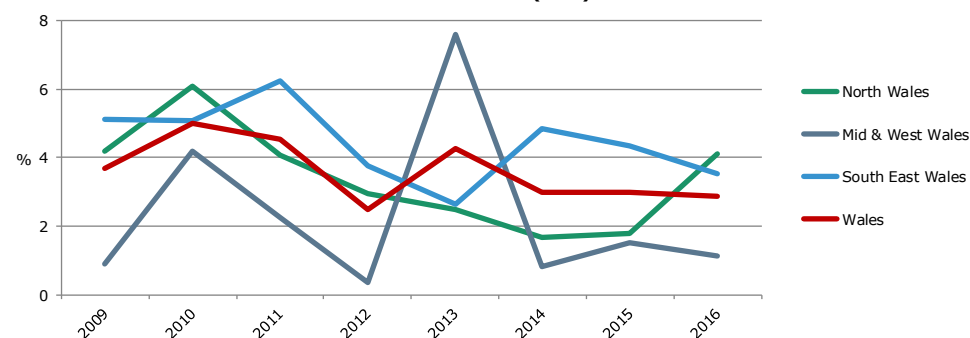


144 social workers 'joined' Adults' Services in 2015-16 compared to 110 in 2014-15. For 2015-16, 54% of these joined from other local authorities, the independent sector or from internal transfers, the same as 2014-15. 33% of those joining were newly qualified compared to 30% in 2014-15. 3% joined Adults' Services for other reasons, compared to none in the previous year. 10% of starters to Adults' Services joined for unknown reasons, compared to 15% in 2014-15.

Starters to Adults' Services, 2015-16 (Headcount)

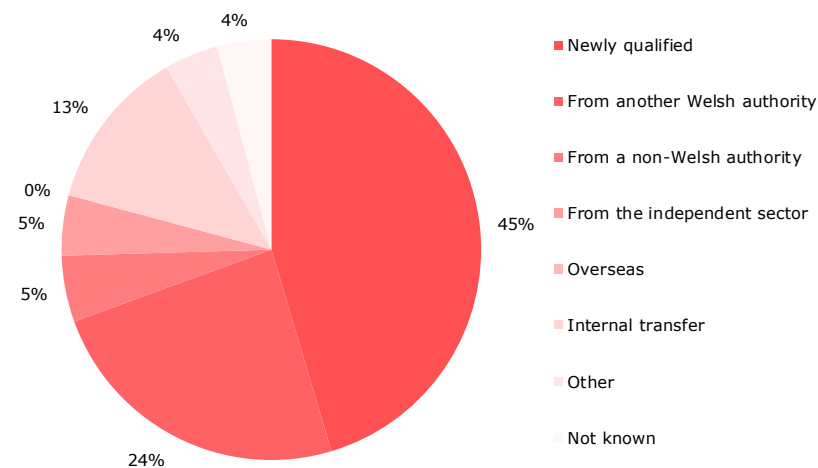


Percentage of Children's Services vacancies that are filled by agency workers, at 31 March (WTE)



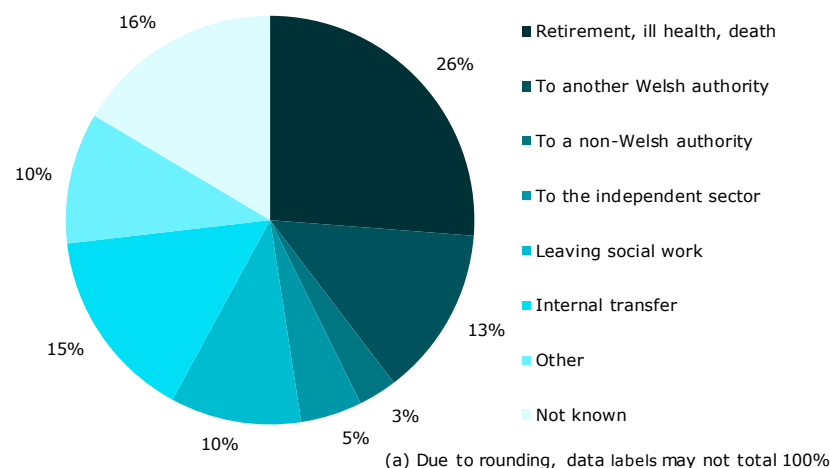
216 social workers 'joined' Children's Services in 2015-16 compared to 298 in 2014-15. For 2015-16, 45% of these were newly qualified, compared to 41% in 2014-15, with 46% joining from other local authorities, the independent sector or from internal transfers, compared to 49% in 2014-15. The origin of 4% of starters was not recorded by authorities, compared to 8% in 2014-15. 4% joined Children's Services for other reasons, compared to 2% in 2014-15.

Starters to Children's Services, 2015-16 (Headcount)



164 social workers left Adults' Services in 2015-16 compared to 157 in 2014-15. For 2015-16, 10% of these left the social work profession, compared to 3% in 2014-15. 26% retired and a further 21% moved to another local authority or the independent sector. 10% left Adults' Services for other reasons, while 16% of leavers' reasons were unknown to the authority. Other reasons included voluntary severance (1), redundancy (2), end of contract (2) and mutual agreement/settlement (3).

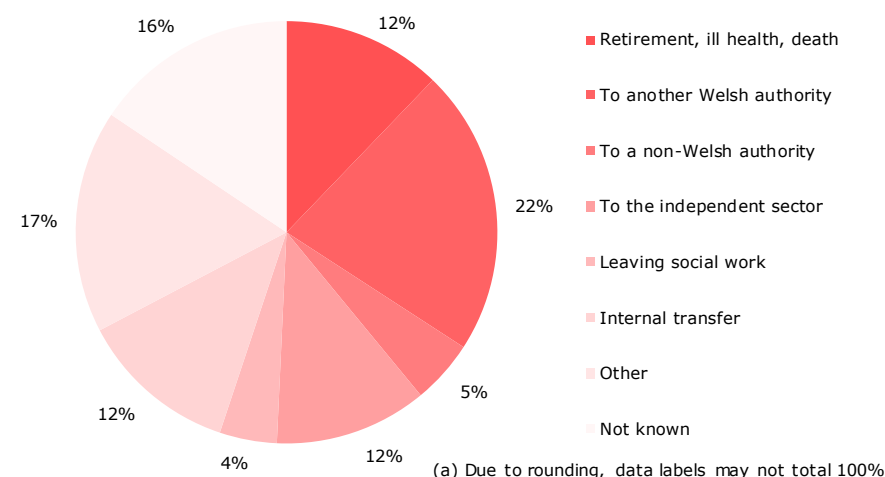
Leavers from Adults' Services, 2015-16 (Headcount)^(a)



The number of newly qualified starters to Adult's Services has increased by 15 people from 2014-15 to 2015-16, and those from another Welsh authority increased by 9 people. There was little change in the numbers in each of the other categories.

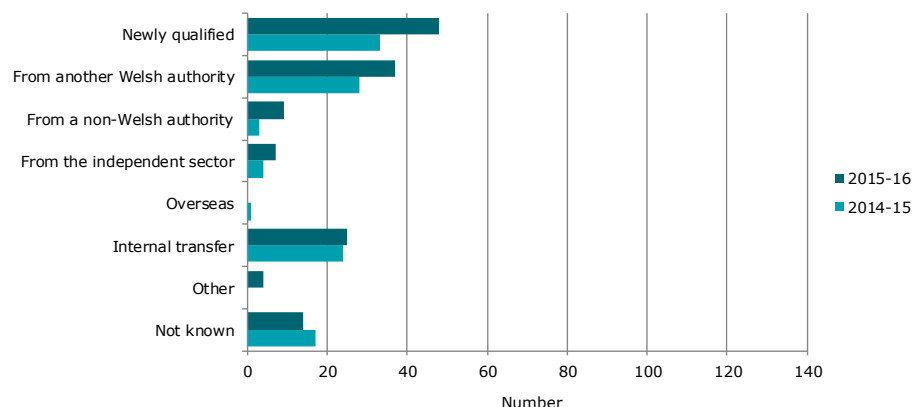
205 social workers left Children's Services in 2015-16 compared to 280 in 2014-15. For 2015-16, 4% of these left the social work profession compared to 2% in 2014-15. 39% moved to another local authority or the independent sector compared to 38% in 2014-15, and a further 12% retired compared to 9% in 2014-15. 17% left Children's Services for other reasons, while 16% of leavers' reasons were unknown to the authority. Other reasons included leaving by mutual agreement/settlement (2), dismissal (3), redundancy (3), joining an agency or public sector (5) and Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) (5).

Leavers from Children's Services, 2015-16 (Headcount)^(a)



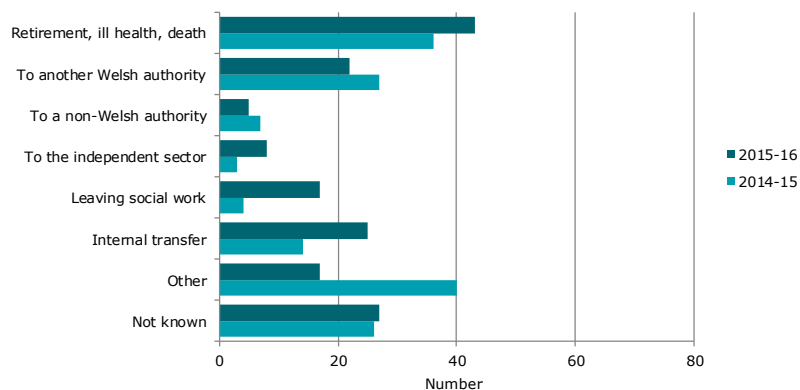
The number of newly qualified starters to Children's Services has decreased by 20% with 98 compared to 123 in 2014-15. Starters from another Welsh local authority decreased from 58 to 52 since 2014-15. Internal transfer have decreased by 22 people between 2014-15 and 2015-16. Starters who joined for unknown reasons have decreased by 14 people since 2015.

Starters to Adults' Services (Headcount)

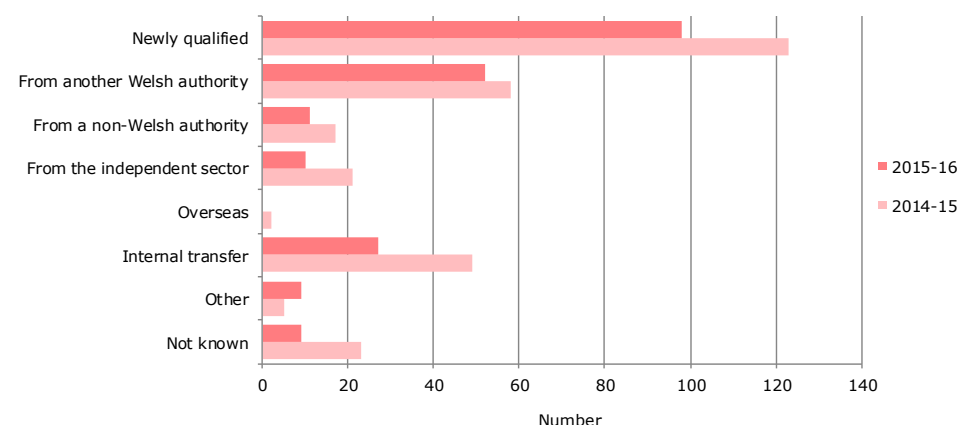


The number of social workers who left Adults' Services to another Welsh local authority has decreased by 19% from 27 to 22 between 2014-15 and 2015-16. The number of social workers who left on an internal transfer has increased from 14 to 25 people between 2014-15 and 2015-16. The number of social workers leaving for other reasons has decreased by 23 people compared to 2014-15.

Leavers from Adults' Services (Headcount)

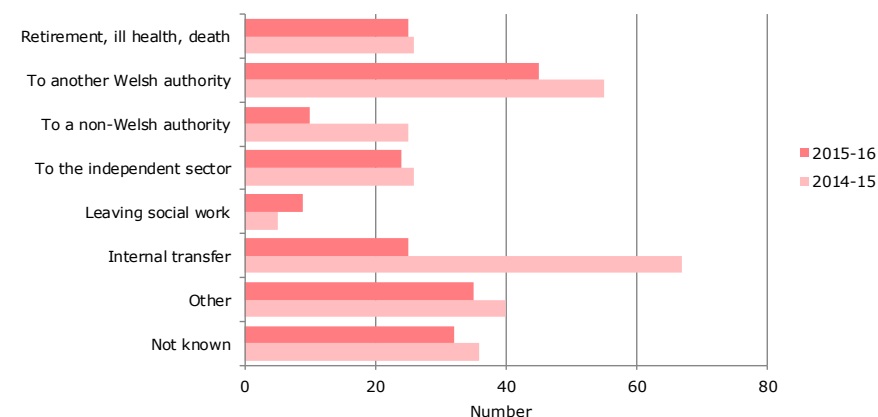


Starters to Children's Services (Headcount)



The number of social workers who left Children's Services has decreased by 27% from 280 to 205 since 2014-15. Social workers leaving to another Welsh local authority has decreased by 10 and leavers on internal transfers has fallen from 67 to 25 between 2014-15 and 2015-16. Other reasons for leaving decreased by 5 (from 40 to 35), with leavers due to unknown reasons decreasing by 4 people since 2014-15.

Leavers from Children's Services (Headcount)

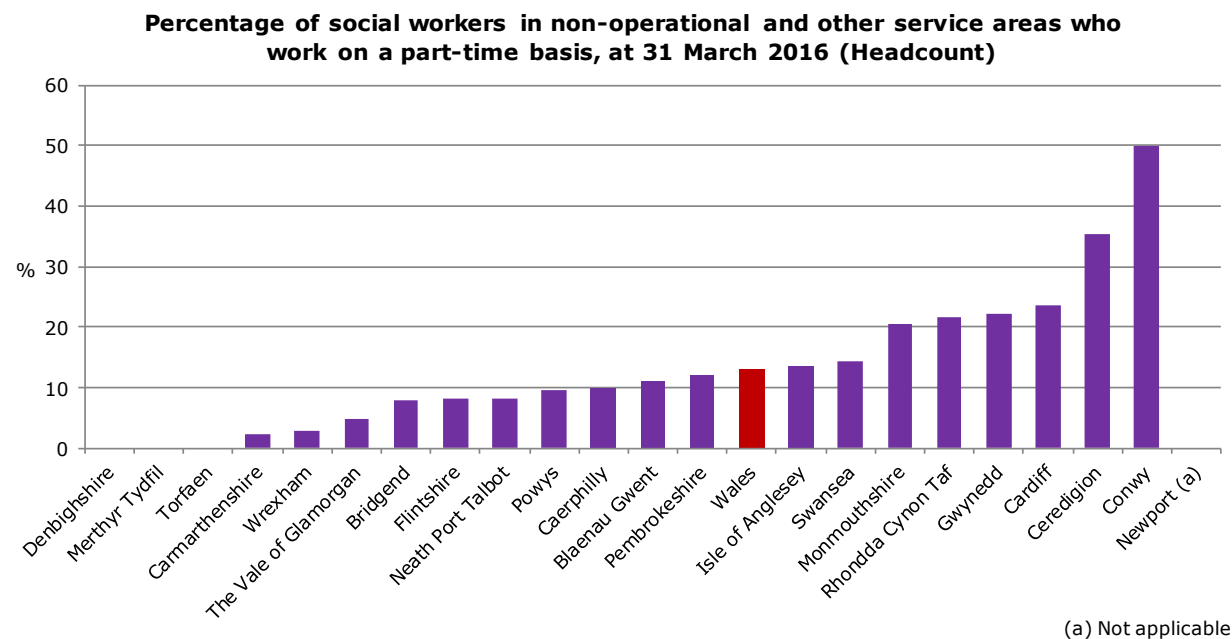


Social workers in non-operational roles and other service areas

Across Wales, around 660 people were employed in other roles where a social work qualification was deemed to be essential at the end of March 2016, compared to around 710 in 2015. This represents a decrease of 7% (49 people) compared to 2015. 17% of social workers across local authorities were in these roles at the end of March 2016, compared to 18% in 2015. 13% of these were employed on a part-time basis, compared to 11% in 2015.

Regionally, the use of part-time social workers in other roles varied with 12% in Mid & West Wales in 2016, compared to 8% in 2015; 14% in South East Wales in 2016, an increase of 1 percentage point compared to 2015; and 13% in North Wales, the same as 2015.

Across the 22 local authorities, the use of part-time social workers ranged from 0% in Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen to 50% (3 people) in Conwy. 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.

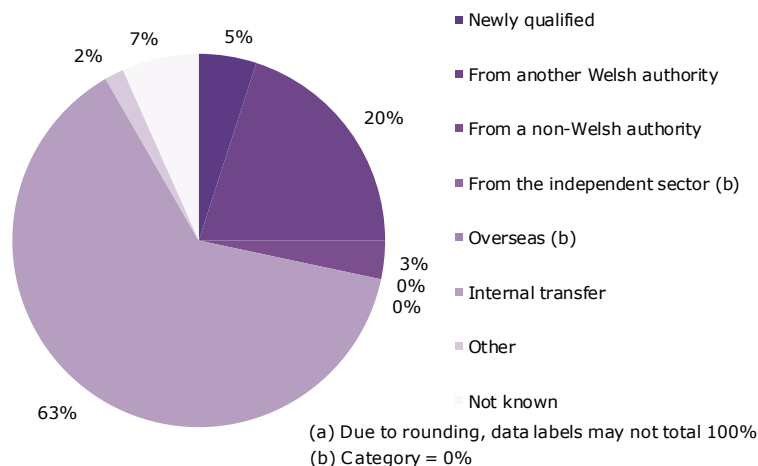


Non - operational roles and other service areas

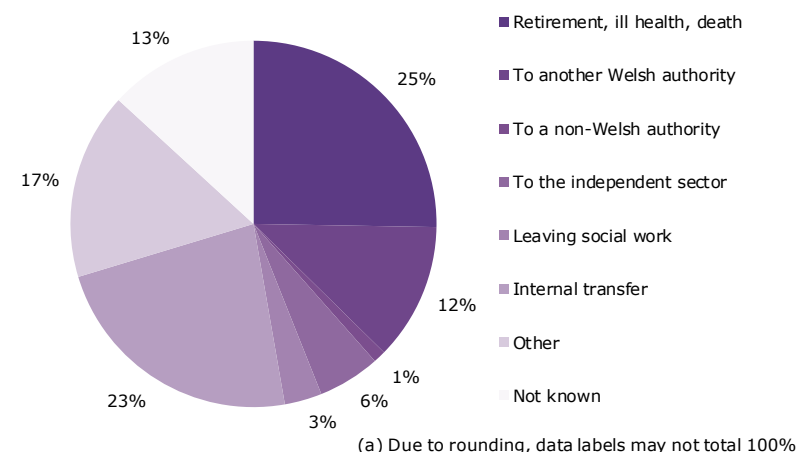
60 people (14%) 'joined' local authorities in non-operational or other service areas during 2015-16, compared to 82 in 2014-15. 38 (63%) of these were as a result of internal transfers, compared to 53 (65%) in 2014-15. There were 3 newly qualified starters in 2015-16. 14 (23%) coming from other local authorities or the independent sector, compared to 19 (23%) in 2014-15. 1 (2%) joined for other reasons compared to 6 (7%) in 2014-15. 4 people (7%) started in non-operational or other service areas for reasons not recorded by the local authority, compared to 4 (5%) in 2014-15.

91 people left non-operational roles or roles in other service areas during 2015-16, compared to 101 in 2014-15. 26 (29%) of these retired or left social work, compared to 36 (36%) in 2014-15. 12 (13%) moved on to roles within other local authorities compared to 10 (10%) in 2014-15, and 21 (23%) were transferred internally within the authority. 15 (16%) left these roles for other reasons compared to 27 (27%) in 2014-15. 12 people (13%) left for reasons that were not recorded by the local authority, compared to 9 (9%) in 2014-15. Other reasons for leaving included mutual agreement/settlement (1), Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) (1), early retirement (2), voluntary severance (3) and redundancy (4).

Starters to non-operational and other service areas, 2015-16 (Headcount)^(a)



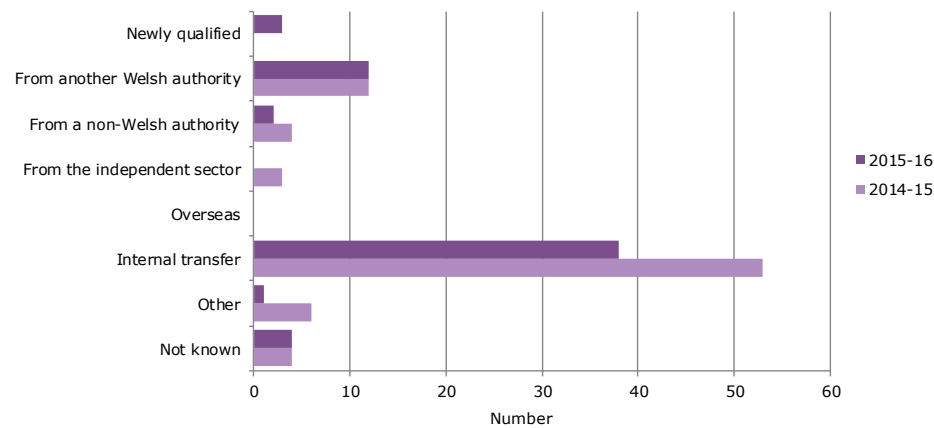
Leavers from non-operational and other service areas, 2015-16 (Headcount)^(a)



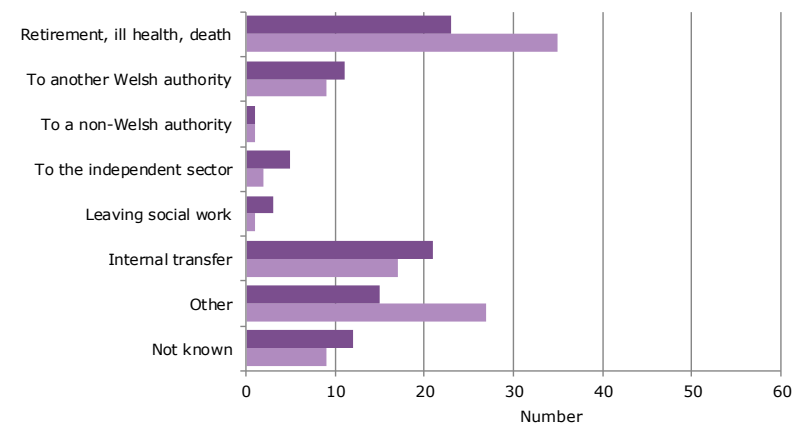
Non - operational roles and other service areas

During 2015-16, 38 people started roles in non-operational and other service areas as internal transfers, compared to 53 in 2014-15. 5 left these roles to go to the independent sector compared to 2 in 2014-15.

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



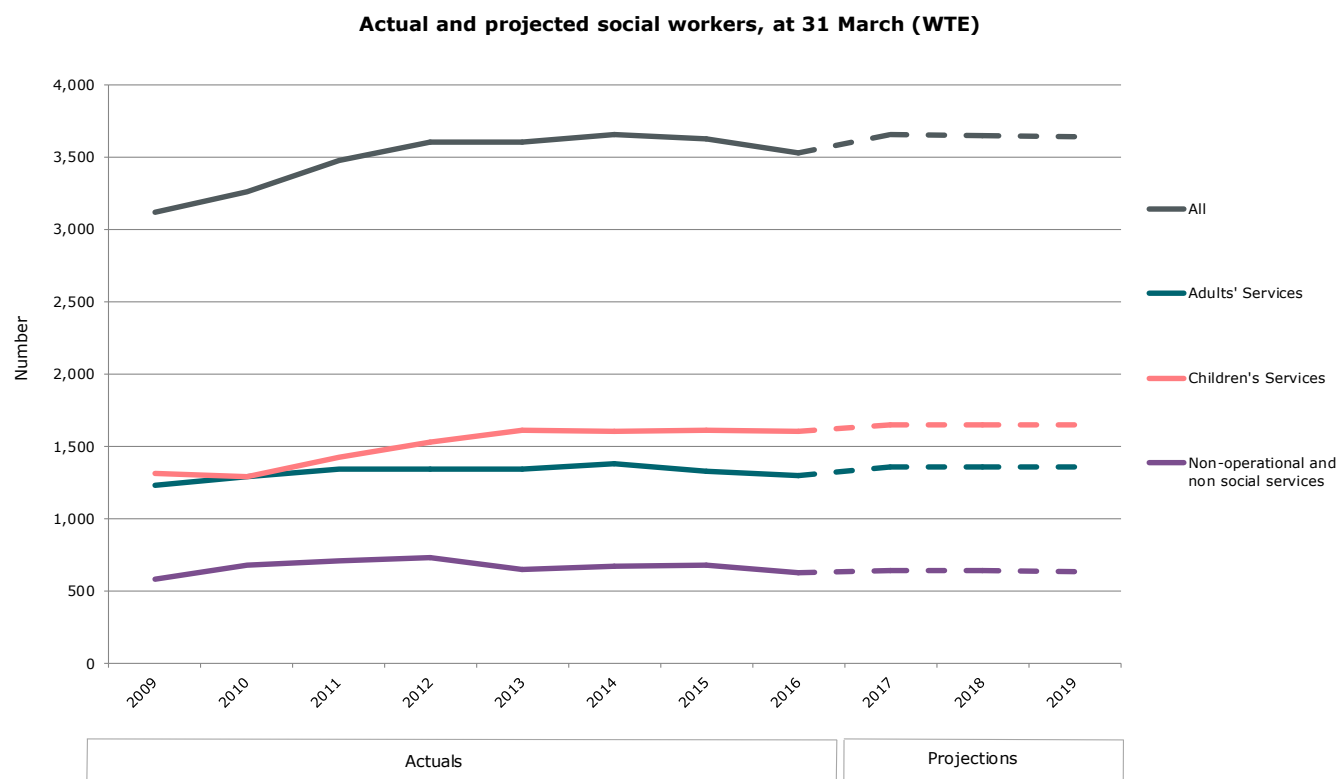
Leavers from non-operational and other service areas (Headcount)



Projected social worker workforce requirements

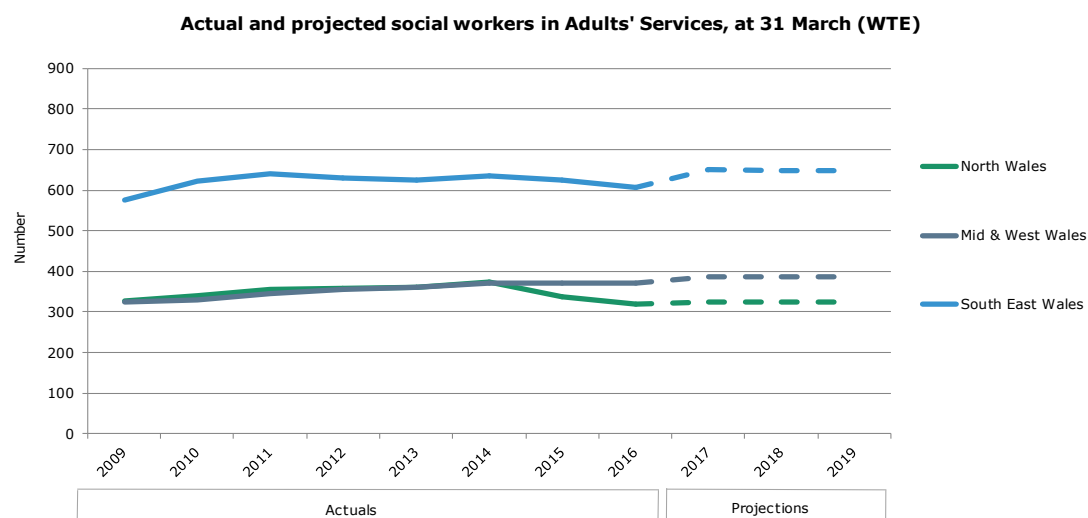
In 2014-15, local authorities projected an overall 2% increase to 3,705 WTE social workers by the end of 2017-18. Again in 2015-16, the total number (WTE) of local authority social workers is projected to increase, this time by 3% to a projected 3,644 WTE by the end of 2018-19.

Over the same three year period, the numbers employed in Adults' and Children's Services are projected to increase by 5% and 3% respectively, whilst the number employed in non-operational or other roles is projected to increase by 1%.

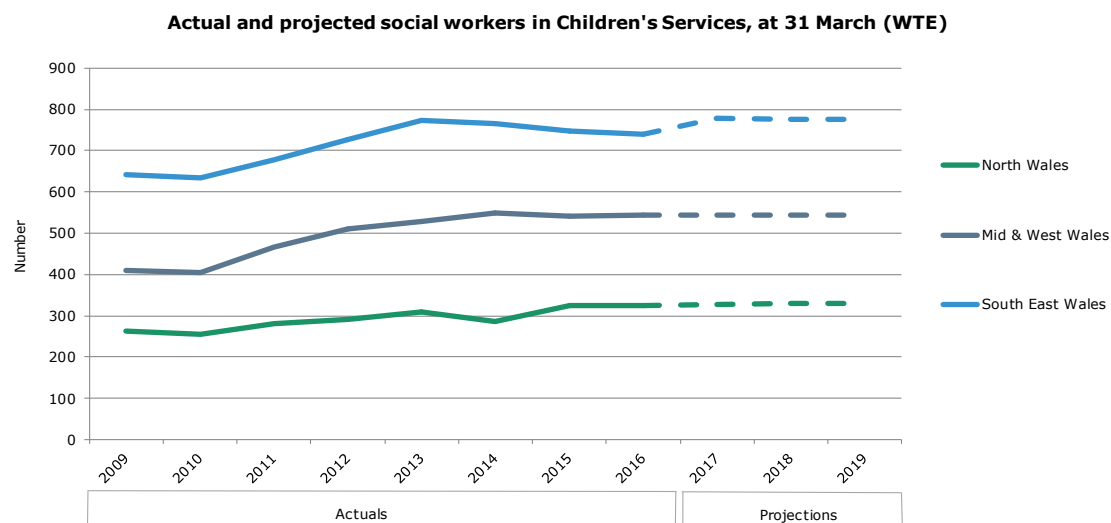


Projected social worker workforce

In Adults' Services, North Wales anticipate an increase of 1% in the number (WTE) of social workers by the end of 2018-19, Mid and West Wales anticipate an increase of 4% in the WTE, with South East Wales anticipating an increase of 7%.

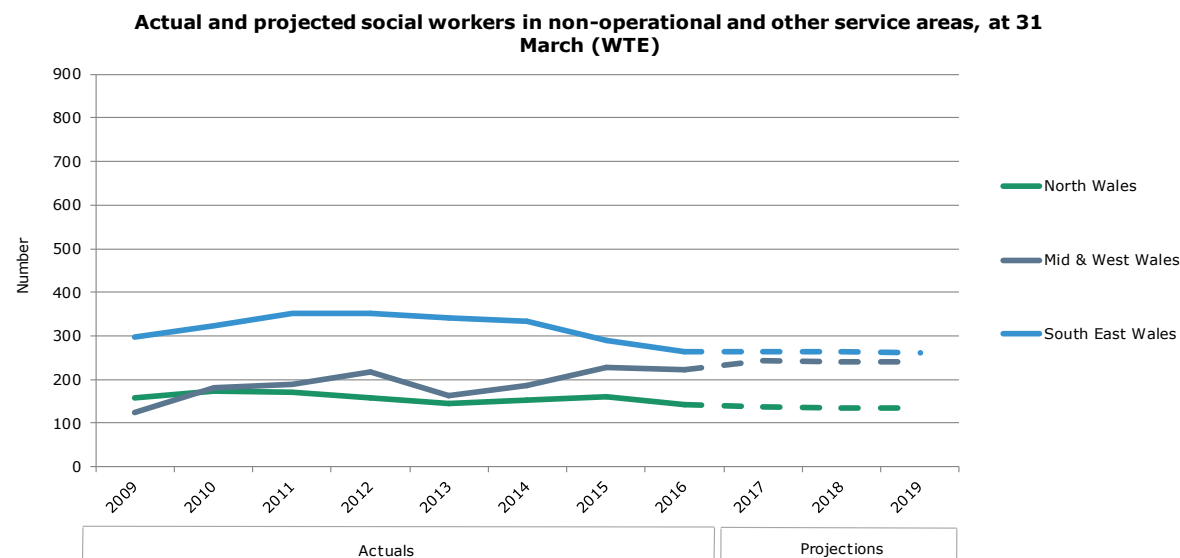


In Children's Services, North Wales anticipate a 2% increase in the number (WTE) of social workers by the end of 2018-19. Over the same three year period, Mid and West Wales anticipate no significant change while South East Wales anticipate a 5% increase in the number (WTE) of their social worker workforce.



Projected social worker workforce

In non-operational and other service areas, North Wales anticipate a 6% decrease in the number (WTE) of social workers by the end of 2018-19. Over the same three year period, Mid and West Wales anticipate an 8% increase and South East Wales anticipate the number of WTE in these roles will decrease by 1%.



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