



SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2025 - 2035



Improving and Safeguarding
Social Wellbeing in
Northern Ireland



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte
Mánnystrie O Poustie
www.health-ni.gov.uk

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Minister's Foreword

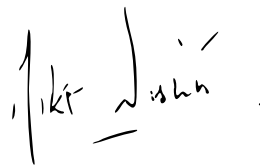
This strategy sets out a vision and actions to develop a sustainable social care workforce over the next ten years. The strategy will drive our work and ultimately help support social care services to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities now and in the future.



I really value social care services. They make a huge contribution to the quality of life for many people. As of 30th September 2024, there are 40,532 registered social care practitioners which is the largest workforce across the Health and Social Care sector.

The role of social care varies across the full range of services. This includes supporting children or adults to stay safe and well, to grow and develop and to achieve life goals. Social care practitioners work to an agreed set of values in order to provide respectful, compassionate and personal centred care and support. These values underpin their relationships with people using social care services.

Social care services are sometimes unsung, and I want to change that. My vision and the vision of this strategy is to ensure that we have a social care workforce for children and adult services that is respected, well trained, adequately resourced and supported to deliver high quality care to those in need.



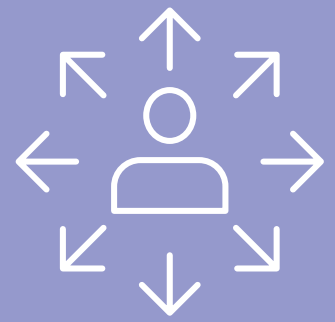
Mike Nesbitt
Minister For Health

"I have had social care support since I was a child as I have a learning disability. The support I got from social care practitioners helped me develop my life for the future and gave me independence. I still receive social care support. I feel the support has helped me achieve a better quality of life. I have really been supported to have confidence, to live in my own home and to go on holiday and to make my own choices - things I was always told I would not be able to do as someone with a learning disability."

Gerard McWilliams,
service user

Introduction

The delivery of social care to the people of Northern Ireland is dependent on a workforce that works in adult and children services across statutory, private, community and voluntary settings.



The social care workforce is the largest workforce in the Health and Social Care sector. However, they are often under recognised for the skilled, person centred care and support they provide. In addition, as members of local communities, they contribute greatly to the wider socio-economic prosperity and sustainability of Northern Ireland.

In 2018, The “Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026: Delivering for Our People” set out ambitious goals aimed at matching the workforce with a transformed health and social care system.

This strategy builds on these ambitions and sets out how we will attract, grow, retain and develop the social care workforce and, in doing so, ensure the provision of a high quality service, founded on the right values and attributes that service users and families deserve. In addition, we want to support the workforce so that it can meet the needs of the people they support now, and in preparation for future challenges and the rising demand for social care services.

Seven key priorities and twenty two actions have been identified. The actions will be a mixture of short, medium and long-term activities which will be delivered through co-production, engagement and partnership with their workforce, their employers, service users, carers, trade unions, commissioners, educators and statutory bodies.

Some of these actions have already commenced and further development of these will be our first priority. These include work led by the Fair Work Forum to improve, where appropriate, pay, terms and conditions for the workforce, supporting the roll out of the Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice and further development of the Care in Practice Framework across adult services and children services.

Whilst some of the actions can be implemented with minimal funding, others will be dependent on the availability of additional funding and resources. An implementation and costing plan will be finalised in partnership with the adult and children social care workforce workstreams under the auspices of the Department of Health’s Social Care Collaborative Forum and the Children’s Social Care Strategic Reform Board.



Who this Strategy is for

This strategy describes this workforce as social care practitioners and relates to social care practitioners paid/commissioned by Health and Social Care Trusts and the Department of Health. These social care practitioners may be working in statutory, private, community and voluntary settings across the full range of adult and children social care services.



This includes personal assistants who are employed via direct payments under the Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 and those paid for by the Independent Living Fund.

It does not include those staff who are required to hold a professional qualification to gain employment within the health and social care system, with the exception of some management functions where these staff are managing social care services. For example, social workers, nurses, occupational therapists who may manage social care services such as day or residential services.

Nor does it include foster carers or host/adult placement carers.

While we fully recognise that these staff and unpaid carers play a very important role in the provision of social care, support and development priorities for these individuals are already set out in other planning documents and strategies.

Social care practitioners provide care and support across a range of diverse roles and have a wide range of job titles. Therefore, it is not practical to provide a definitive list, but examples of such roles include family support workers, day care/day opportunity workers, support workers in children and adult residential homes, nursing homes, supported living facilities and home care workers.





The Vision

To develop a highly motivated, skilled, confident and value driven social care workforce that is recognised and feels valued for the contribution it makes to service users and to society.





Use research and evidence to determine how best to support and develop the workforce.



Use data to determine the future demand and supply of the workforce and identify gaps in provision.



Work collaboratively with partners to increase public understanding of social care.



Engage on an ongoing basis with members of the workforce and employers to ensure social care is seen as a career of choice.

What we will do to achieve this



Support employers to recruit and retain the right people, with the right attributes and values.



Support employers to put measures in place to support, train and develop their workforce.



Ensure that career development opportunities are made available to staff.



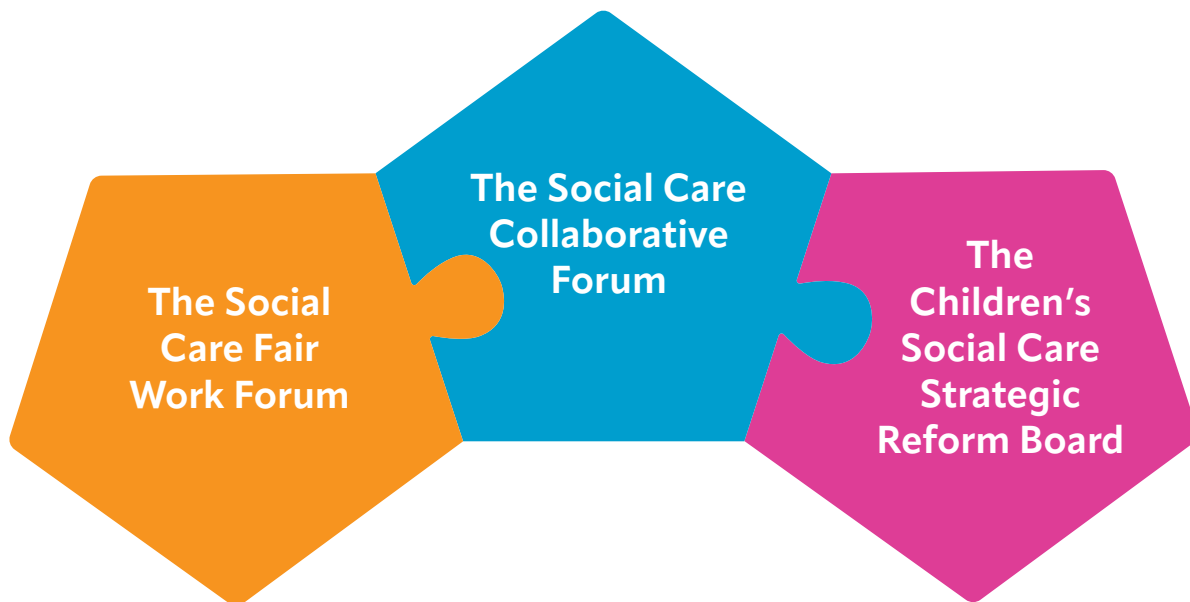
Support commissioners and service providers to understand their local population and plan for their local social care workforce.



Governance and Monitoring Arrangements



The Department of Health has established the following forums and will use these as the key mechanism to review progress of the strategy implementation:



The **Social Care Fair Work Forum** is made up of representatives of employers, trade unions, government departments and other statutory agencies who are working together to influence priorities and policy regarding fair work in the social care sector in Northern Ireland. A key first step for the Forum is to build a case for change that the independent sector should be, at least, a Real Living Wage sector and, in the longer term, the vision should be to equalise pay and conditions across all the social care sectors where required.

The **Social Care Collaborative Forum** and the **Children's Social Care Strategic Reform Board** have been established in response to the Department of Health's proposals to reform adult social care and children services. These Forums are made up of representatives from statutory, community, voluntary, private organisations, service users, carers, trade unions and other government departments who are involved in supporting the delivery of social care and have an invaluable part to play in the transformation of social care.

The most important indicators of whether we are getting it right is what service users and the workforce tells us. We are committed to co-production with service users and regular and effective workforce engagement. We will use the outputs from this engagement to inform our activity, to sense check the impact of activity and to correct where we are not getting things right. We will also use other metrics such as complaints, compliments and workforce data.



Context

A recurring message emerging from regional reviews and strategies is that a skilled and competent social care workforce is central to the reform of the health and social care system in Northern Ireland.



The social care workforce is fundamental to supporting independent living, health and wellbeing, meeting social and emotional needs, and addressing social isolation.

“The workforce is also the most valuable asset in social care, and can, at its best, be at the forefront of empowering people’s independence and choice and improving their social inclusion, participation and social wellbeing. Delivering this vision requires a confident, capable and well-trained workforce.”

The Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026:
Delivering for Our People.



“There are considerable strengths within Northern Ireland and its communities, and the quality and commitments of its workforce and many of its statutory and VCS services.”

The Northern Ireland Review of Children’s Social Care Services Report. Prof Ray Jones, 2023.



"Having the right people, in the right place, at the right time requires a workforce which is safe, effective, and agile in its responsiveness to changing service user needs. The skill and capacity of the social care workforce is integral to the delivery of high-quality social care and successful transformation of service provision."

Social Care Matters, NISCC, 2017.

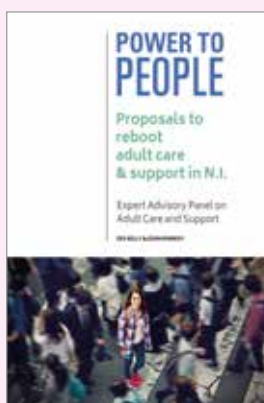


"Insufficient capacity in social care has a serious impact across the system in terms of increased GP appointments, emergency department attendance, higher rates of hospital admission and delayed discharge from hospital."

Bengoa et al, DOH, 2016.

The Commissioner for Older People - the need for a well-trained social care workforce that is respected, and appropriately rewarded with options for career progression

Bengoa et al, DOH, 2016.



"We need a new model, one which recognises and builds on the skills and expertise of staff by empowering them to make decisions and create a more human and relationship-centred ethos into social care... Crucially, within that model, the care sector should be raised above the bottom of the pay market to enhance its ability to attract the best people... We also need to proactively improve the status of care work within society."

Power to People, DOH, 2016.

However, for some social care practitioners, low pay, unfavourable terms and conditions, unsociable hours can lead to low morale, resulting in a high turnover of the workforce. Investment in learning and development of social care practitioners can be varied across organisations and in some areas, there are also few career progression opportunities, which may discourage people from choosing social care as a long term employment option.

Recognising and valuing the hard work and dedication of social care practitioners is crucial to attracting and retaining talent and encouraging long term commitment to the sector.

Furthermore, social care practitioners are providing care and support to people with multi-faceted and complex physical, emotional and mental health needs. It is envisaged that this will increase due to an ageing population, rates of poverty and increasing health inequalities.

The most recent ONS data from 2021¹ suggested that over the 25 years from mid-2021 to mid-2046 the population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase to 2 million. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to grow by 49.2% by mid-2046. The number of children is projected to fall by 14.6%, but despite this, the rate of demand for children's social care services has increased.

This is evident from the rise in the number of children in care and the numbers being referred to family support hubs and statutory children's services.²

In addition, dementia prevalence is predicted to increase by 51% in Northern Ireland by 2040 (from 24,700 today to 37,409 by 2040) which is the largest increase of anywhere in the UK.³ It is also estimated that 30% of people with Down's Syndrome over the age of fifty will develop dementia.⁴

The Mental Health in Northern Ireland Fundamental Facts 2023⁵ report outlines that people in the most deprived areas (30%) are more likely to have a probable mental illness compared to those in least deprived areas (20%); and poverty, particularly child poverty is a key contributor, with one in four (24%) children in Northern Ireland living in poverty. Stable housing is also a key driver of wellbeing with almost 70% of people experiencing homelessness having a diagnosed mental health condition. The report also highlights that one in five adults and one in eight children in Northern Ireland have a probable mental illness.

This places increased pressure on our social care workforce which is not growing at a pace to keep up with these demands. These changes need to inform the commissioning of services at local and regional level, and they are likely to place considerable pressure on the social care sector.

It is essential to address these challenges to ensure that there is a stable, skilled and sustainable workforce for social care services to deliver care now and into the future.



The Purpose of Social Care

The purpose of social care is to improve the social well-being of the population.



Social well-being is about the quality of our personal and social relationships and being treated with dignity and respect. It applies to many areas of our lives and at all ages. Because social well-being affects how we feel about ourselves and about our relationships with the people we share our lives with, it can have a significant impact on our overall quality of life.



Relationships and Belonging

Participating in family, social and community life

Social care practitioners support people to:

- ✓ Build and maintain relationships with others, including family and friends
- ✓ Engage in positive and enjoyable social experiences with others



Independence and Responsibility

Supporting people to make choices

Social care practitioners support people to:

- ✓ Develop and maintain independence as appropriate
- ✓ Have meaningful lives
- ✓ Make choices about how they live their life and about the care and support they receive



Quality of Life



Self-Worth



Purpose and Meaning

Supporting people to live their lives in a way which has meaning and value to them

Social care practitioners support people to:

- ✓ Develop their strengths and abilities
- ✓ Take part in activities they enjoy and make them feel good about themselves



Safe and Well

Supporting people to stay safe and well

Social care practitioners support people to:

- ✓ Keep healthy and well
- ✓ Feel safe

Social care practitioners act in the best interests of the people they support

The unique contribution each social care practitioner makes to social well-being involves both their specific job role and the unique circumstances and needs of the individual they are supporting. The skills and qualifications required to be a social care practitioner are determined by the responsibilities of the role or job function and the nature of the care and support required by the individual or family. .

A Value Based Role

Values are central to working in social care and are demonstrated by the way that social care practitioners behave towards the people for whom they care.

The quality of relationship between the social care practitioner and the people they support is always at the heart of good quality social care. Social care practitioners need to know how to connect and communicate with people and having a common set of values helps social care practitioners to build trustworthy relationships, and to provide person-centred care that is underpinned with respect and dignity.

These values are embodied in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's (the Social Care Council) Standards of Conduct and Practice for social care workers.⁶

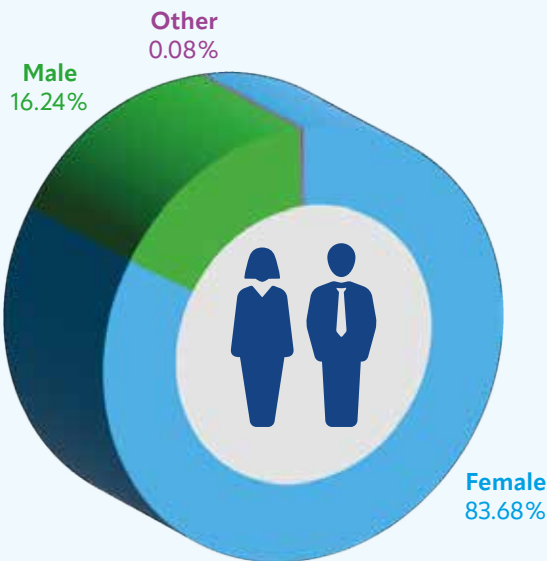


The Social Care Workforce in Northern Ireland

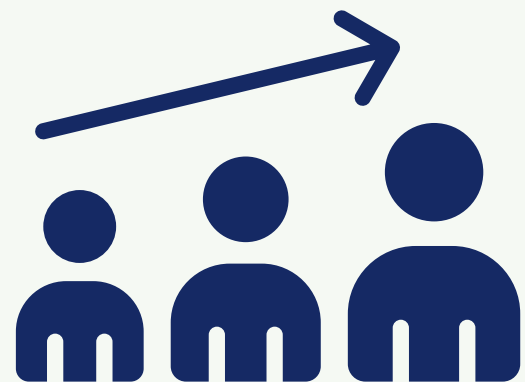
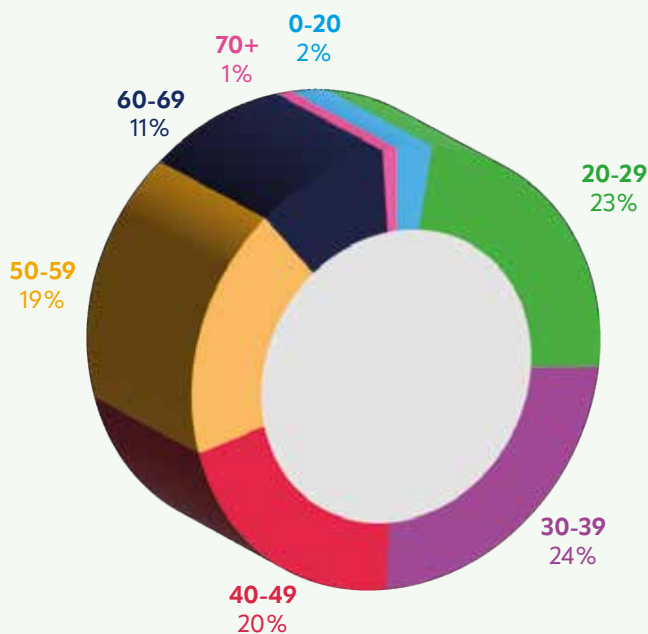
Profile of the social care workforce as at 30 September 2024.



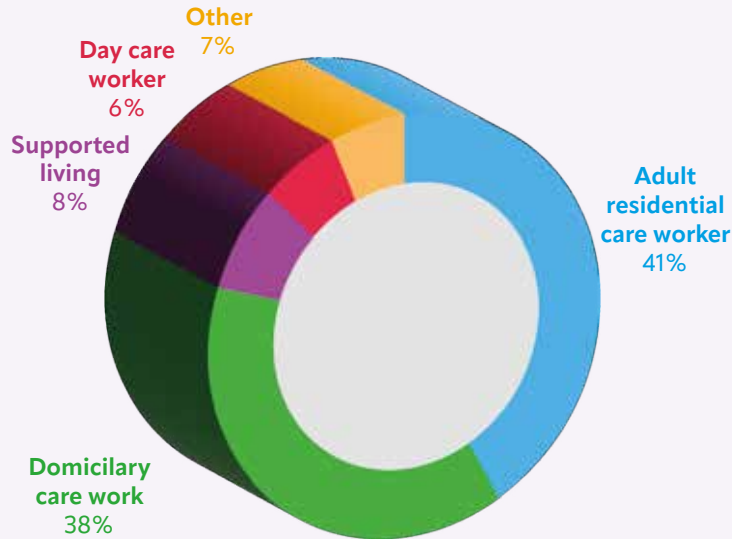
The social care workforce - size and gender



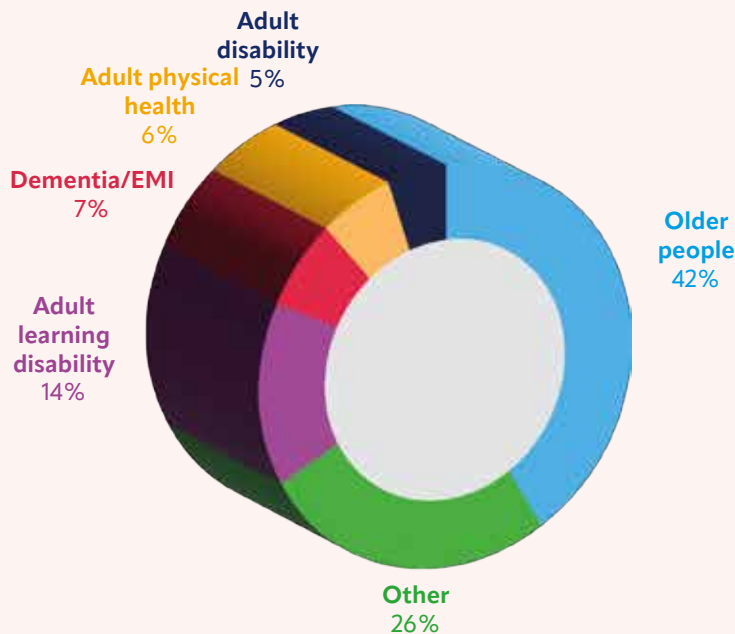
The social care workforce - age profile (49% of the workforce are less than 39 years old)



Employment in social care - settings



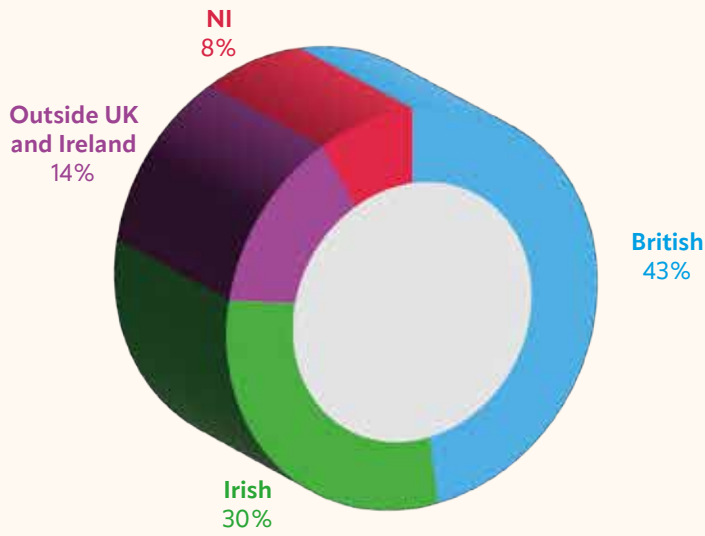
Employment in social care - service user groups



The majority of service users supported by social care workers are older people. The 'other' category includes services in Mental Health, Addiction, Homelessness, Looked After Children, Justice, Education, Family Services and Sensory Support.

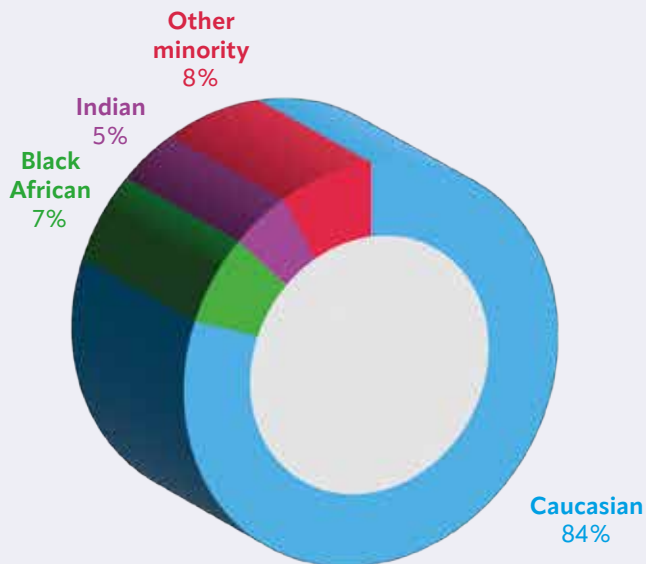
The social care workforce - nationality

(58% of registrants have nationality recorded on their registration application)



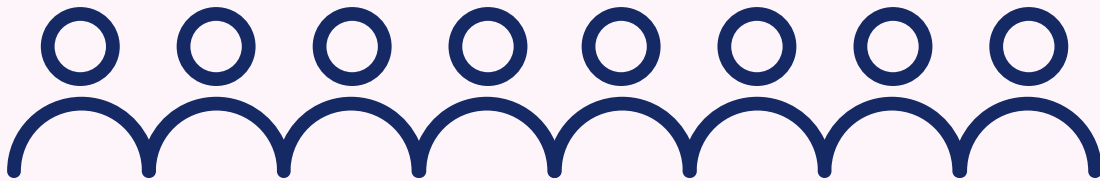
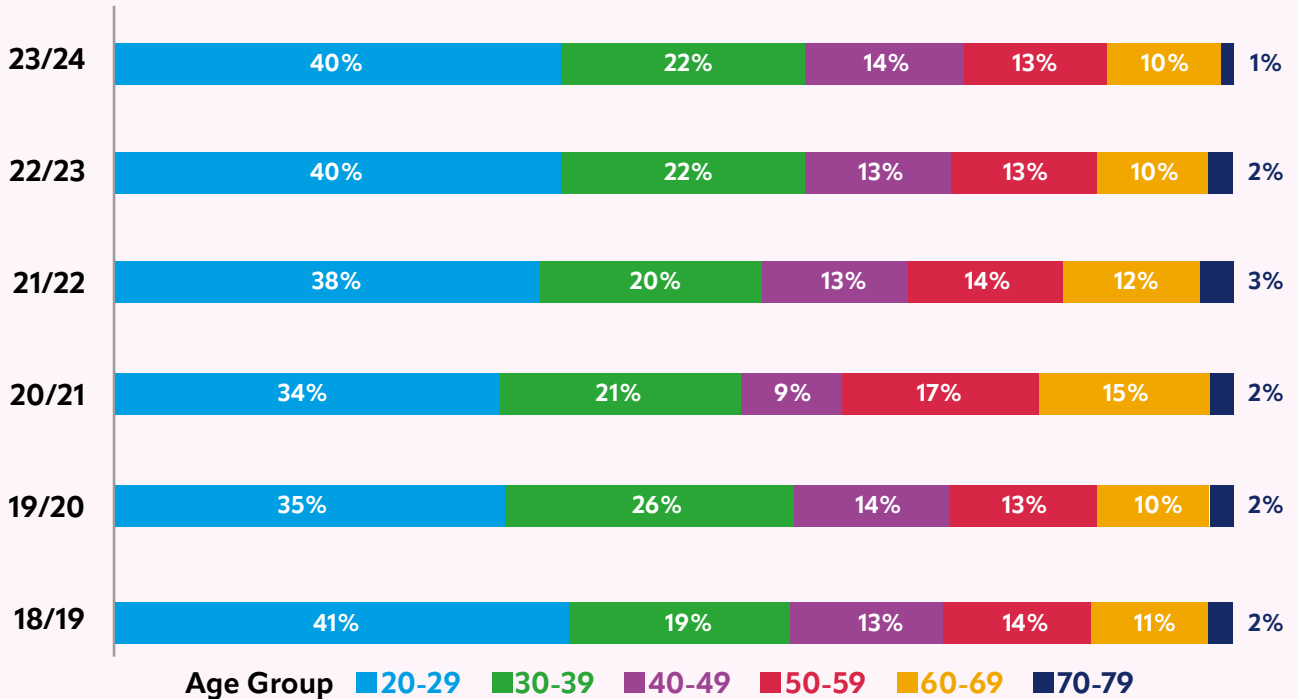
The social care workforce - ethnicity

(72% of registrants have ethnicity recorded on their registration application)

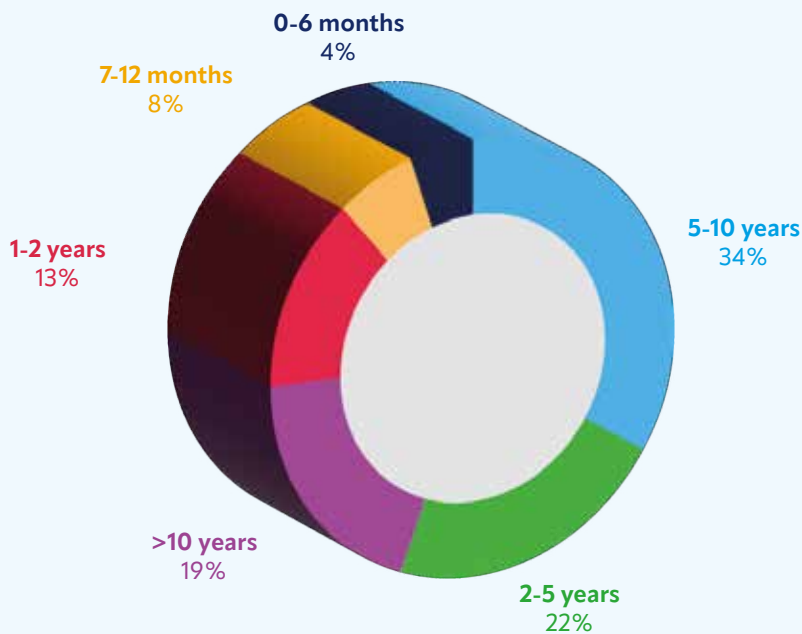


The social care workforce - turnover

Proportion of social care register leavers by age group between 1 April 2018 - 29 February 2024



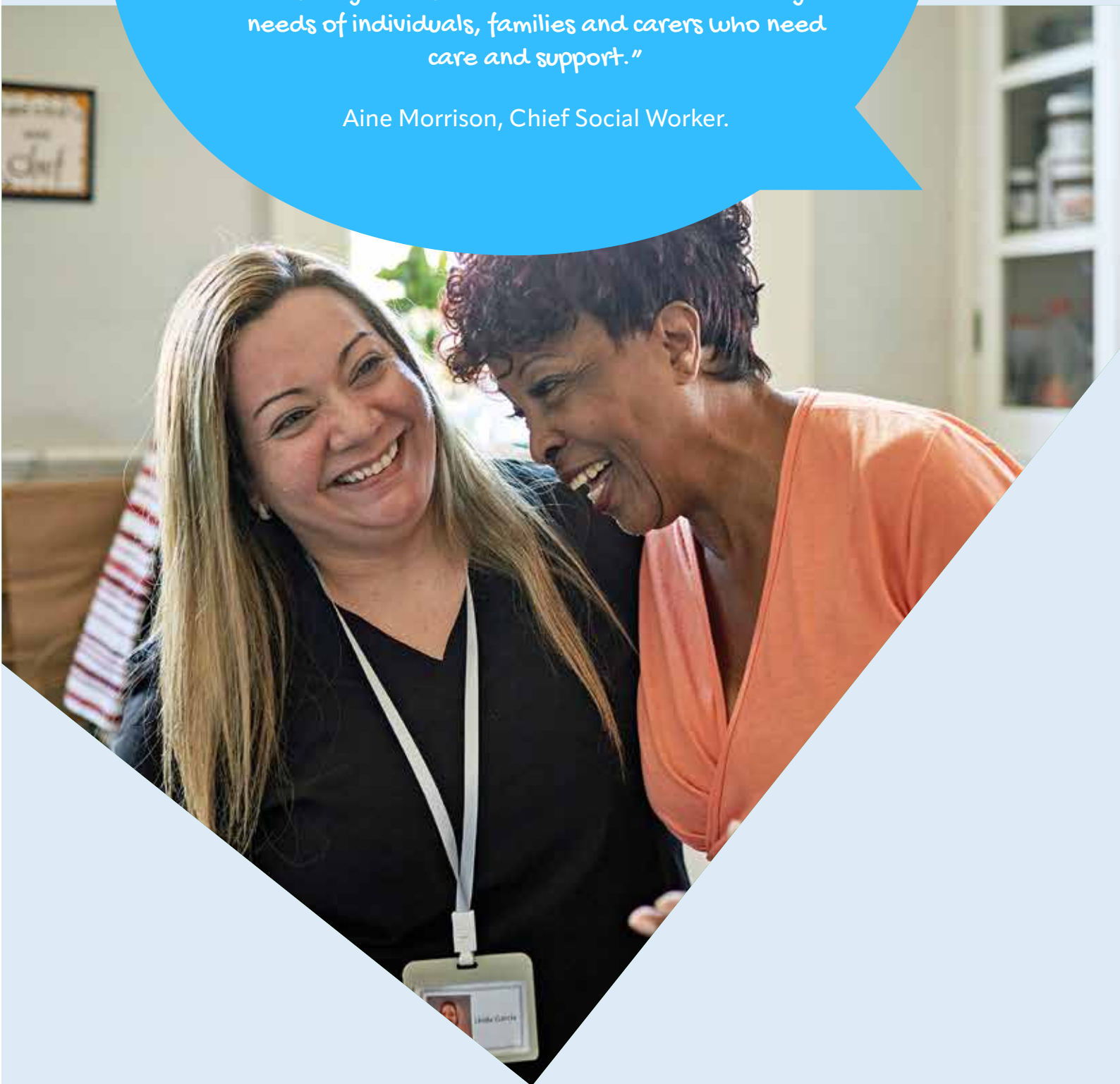
The social care workforce - stability



Despite the turn over in the workforce, the register also shows that 53% of social care workers have remained on the register for more than 5 years.

"This first ever strategy specifically for social care staff is a landmark step in recognising the vital and diverse roles that social care practitioners play. It provides a clear framework for recruiting, supporting and retaining a skilled and compassionate workforce, ensuring that social care can meet the evolving needs of individuals, families and carers who need care and support."

Aine Morrison, Chief Social Worker.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



Social Care Will Be an Attractive Career Choice

Why is this important?

We are experiencing a workforce shortage, and we are unable to meet the needs of those individuals who may be vulnerable or in need of support.

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Create a strong and recognisable brand for social care.
- ✓ Promote a positive image of social care as a rewarding, challenging and fulfilling career to increase the number of people choosing to work in social care.
- ✓ Increase public awareness to promote the many diverse roles and opportunities available for social care practitioners.
- ✓ Explore mechanisms/routes for international social care practitioners to join the workforce in Northern Ireland, as well as ensuring a variety of supports are in place.
- ✓ Promote a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
1	Improve, as required, the pay, terms and conditions of social care workers.	Social care will be an attractive career choice across all social care settings. Improve the sustainability of the workforce.	Improved, as required, pay terms and conditions. Reduction in the level of turn-over in the workforce.	Social Care Fair Work Forum Employers Commissioners Trade Unions
2	Implement a regional promotional campaign to encourage people to work in social care.	Social care will be seen as a rewarding and skilled occupation across all social care settings. Create a strong recognisable brand for the workforce.	Increase in the number of new social care registrants.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Social Care Strategic Reform Board Employers NISCC

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
3	Support employers to use and develop ethical international recruitment practices to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce.	<p>An increased diversity in the workforce.</p> <p>Learning gained from best practice and ethics from other staff disciplines and countries.</p> <p>Employers will have access to guidelines and best practice that promote fair treatment and protect rights of international workers.</p> <p>Will prevent exploitation and unethical practices.</p> <p>Foster a culture of responsible recruitment.</p> <p>Create a welcoming and positive culture for international workers.</p>	<p>Improved support for the international workforce.</p> <p>Increased diversity in the workforce.</p>	<p>Social Care Collaborative Forum</p> <p>Children's Social Care Strategic Reform Board</p> <p>NISCC</p> <p>Trade Unions</p>
4	Develop information resources for overseas workers seeking employment in Northern Ireland.	<p>Empower overseas workers to make informed decisions.</p> <p>Promote fair treatment and ethical practices by educating overseas workers about their rights and protections in the workplace.</p> <p>Contribute to a more inclusive and diverse workforce.</p> <p>Prevent exploitation and unethical practices.</p>	<p>Improved support for the international workforce.</p> <p>Increased diversity in the workforce.</p>	<p>Social Care Collaborative Forum</p> <p>Children's Social Care Strategic Reform Board</p> <p>NISCC</p> <p>Trade Unions</p>
5	Support employers to use values-based recruitment processes.	<p>Staff with the right values and attributes will be recruited.</p>	<p>Improved quality of care to service users.</p> <p>Reduction in the level of turn-over in the workforce.</p>	<p>Employers</p> <p>NISCC</p>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Social Care Practitioners Will Be Recognised and Feel Valued for The Role They Deliver



Why is this important?

Feedback from some staff suggests that they do not feel valued, supported or recognised as skilled and respected workers within health and social care. This can lead to lack of engagement and motivation and ultimately staff leaving their jobs and the social care sector completely

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Ensure that there are a range of options for valuing and recognising the workforce.
- ✓ Support the health and wellbeing of social care practitioners to help create a more confident and sustainable workforce that can address the daily challenges that working in social care brings.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
6*	Improve, as required, the pay, terms and conditions of social care practitioners.	Social care practitioners feel recognised and valued for their contribution. Improve the sustainability of the workforce.	Social care practitioners will receive pay and conditions that are commensurate with the vital role they provide. Reduction in level of turn-over in workforce.	Social Care Fair Work Forum Employers Commissioners Trade Unions
7	Commissioning of HSC contracts will require employers to implement agreed pay, terms & conditions and training requirements.	Standardisation of pay and terms and conditions for commissioned services. Better staff satisfaction and retention, and ultimately, better outcomes for service users.	Improved staff retention rates.	Social Care Fair Work Forum Commissioners and Contract Managers

* This is an important key action required to meet priorities 1 and 2 and is therefore repeated here.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
8	Develop mechanisms to understand and support the health and wellbeing of the workforce.	Better understanding of the health and wellbeing of the workforce and the supports required.	Improved health and wellbeing. Improved staff retention rates.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Strategic Reform Board Employers NISCC
9	Develop and implement a regional supervision policy for social care practitioners.	Create a structured framework that supports the growth and well-being of social care practitioners.	Workforce is supported and developed. Improved staff retention rates.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Strategic Reform Board



- ▶ Confident
- ▶ Sustainable
- ▶ Vital role
- ▶ Better outcomes
- ▶ Satisfaction
- ▶ Recognised

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Social Care Practitioners Will Have Access to Qualifications and Opportunities to Develop and Progress Through On-Going Learning Relevant to Their Role and Function



Why is this important?

Social care practitioners need the right knowledge and skills to have energy, confidence and resilience in being able to adapt to changing social care needs. Learning and improvement opportunities are key to supporting staff in this process.

The DOH Learning and Improvement Strategy for Social Workers and Social Care Workers - 2019-2027 plots the course for the future development of the social work and the social care workforce.

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Ensure this strategy's commitment to learning and improvement is implemented by creating a learning culture in which social care practitioners are able to continuously improve their practice by developing their skills and knowledge. In doing so, we will support the development of knowledgeable and confident practitioners who are able to deliver safer and more sustainable services.
- ✓ Ensure social care practitioners can access training and qualifications tailored to individual circumstances. Such circumstances include the support of those living with multiple health conditions, childhood trauma, dementia, mental ill-health, autism and learning, physical and sensory disabilities.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
10	Implement the Care in Practice Framework (CIP).	<p>A culture of continuous learning and development.</p> <p>There will be an increase in staff who have training, development opportunities and qualifications relevant to their role and function.</p>	Improved quality of care.	<p>NISCC</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>Training Providers</p>

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
11	Roll out voluntary uptake of the Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice, leading to the creation and implementation of a requirement for NISCC registered social care practitioners to complete it.	<p>Standardisation of high quality training.</p> <p>Portability of qualification.</p> <p>Increased qualification profile of the workforce.</p>	Social care practitioners will provide safe and effective care.	<p>Social Care Collaborative Forum</p> <p>Children's Strategic Reform Board</p> <p>NISCC</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>Training Providers</p>
12	Ensure Personal Assistants employed through Direct Payments and ILF have the relevant skills and training to ensure safe care and support.	Learning and improvement will be strengthened and improved.	Personal Assistants will provide safe and effective care.	<p>HSC Trusts</p> <p>Personal Assistant Employers</p> <p>Training Providers</p>



- ▶ Resilience
- ▶ Learning
- ▶ Development
- ▶ Knowledge
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Skills

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Social Care Services Will Be Led by Effective and Compassionate Leaders and Managers



Why is this important?

The quality of social care leaders and managers is a key component of high quality, effective and value based service across all parts of the health and social care system. Social care leaders and managers also have a vital role in determining and delivering a vision for social care and in recognising and developing the valuable contribution of staff at all levels in social care services.

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Develop leaders and managers to foster a culture of empathy and compassion and, in so doing, create a positive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and motivated to give their best.
- ✓ Develop a strong community of capable, confident and compassionate leaders within social care services who are able to lead across the wider system.
- ✓ Develop leaders and managers to be able to identify training needs and implement programmes of learning and development.
- ✓ Develop and support leaders and managers to recognise the unique needs and challenges of families and individuals receiving care and create a supportive environment for both service users and social care practitioners.
- ✓ Support leaders and managers to operate effectively through robust and reliable governance.
- ✓ Develop leaders and managers' capability in the application of quality improvement methodologies.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
13	HSC contractual arrangements will include quality indicators for the development and support of leadership and management in the organisation.	Promote a culture of excellence within organisations. Improved service delivery and better outcomes for families and service users.	Improved leadership and management arrangements.	Commissioners Contract managers Employers

▶ Vision
▶ Empathy
▶ Reliable

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
14	Social care registered managers will have the NI Level 5 Leadership and Management qualification, or equivalent learning and development, specific to their service area in addition to any requirement for a professional qualification.	Leaders and managers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively lead and manage their teams. • be confident making informed decisions and drive positive change in their organisations. • will have enhanced credibility, respect and recognition among their peers and colleagues. 	Improved qualification profile of leaders and managers in social care. Improved confidence and effectiveness of social care leaders and managers.	NISCC Employers Training Providers Regulators
15	Review management and leadership qualifications for managers in children's services and implement recommendations.	An understanding of appropriate qualifications and an action plan to support leadership within children social care services.	Improved qualification profile of leaders and managers in social care.	Children's Social Care Strategic Reform Board NISCC Training Providers
16	Social care leaders will have access to qualifications at Level 6 and above that reflect the needs of social care.	Create strong social care leaders who can lead, influence and navigate the complex challenges within social care.	Improved qualification profile of leaders and managers in social care.	NISCC Employers Training Providers
17	Support the development of a learning culture for social care leaders and managers.	Leaders and managers will have greater skills and expertise.	Improved confidence and effectiveness of social care leaders and managers.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Strategic Reform Board NISCC Employers

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Social Care Workforce Will Be Strengthened by Strategic Workforce Planning



Why is this important?

Strategic workforce planning for the social care sector is crucial to provide clear direction, focus and make evidence-based decisions that will drive positive change in the social care sector. This is necessary to be able to allocate resources more effectively, plan for future workforce needs, and ensure the right people, with the right skills and attributes, are in place to provide quality care and support to families and service users.

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Improve the collation of social care workforce data.
- ✓ Analyse data to better understand the current state of the workforce, including composition, skills, and needs, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions to address any gaps or challenges.
- ✓ Develop a safer staffing model for social care that aligns with the forthcoming safe and effective staffing legislation.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
18	Produce an annual social care workforce analysis report and action plan.	Deliver valuable insights and information about the social care sector that supports policy makers, employers and stakeholders to make informed decisions, shape policies and deliver positive change within social care.	Improved workforce intelligence.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Strategic Reform Board NISCC Employers
19	Support the implementation of safe staffing legislation across relevant social care services.	Safe and effective staffing with requisite numbers, skills, values required to deliver high level quality care.	Improved quality of care.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Strategic Reform Board

- ▶ Analyse
- ▶ Challenge
- ▶ Plan

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

The Social Care Workforce Will Be Strengthened by Enhanced Digital Capabilities



Why is this important?

Enhancing the digital capabilities of the workforce will lead to better outcomes, increased productivity, more effective communication, and create a more effective social care workforce.

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Embrace technology advancements to create a more connected and accessible social care system that benefits both social care practitioners and service users;
- ✓ Use digital capabilities to promote safe and effective care and to improve communication and efficiencies in social care provision; and
- ✓ Ensure that social care practitioners have the ability to use developments such as real time data and electronic health records and smart home technology.

Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
20	Develop the social care workforce understanding of and capability in technological care systems and devices.	Social care practitioners will have enhanced technological capabilities to better support service users.	Increased use of technology by social care practitioners.	Social Care Collaborative Forum Children's Strategic Reform Board NISCC Employers

- ▶ Productive
- ▶ Connected
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Efficient
- ▶ Smart Technology
- ▶ Accessible

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7

We Will Extend Regulation of The Social Care Workforce



Why is this important?

Regulation of the social care workforce gives service users, families and the general public confidence that social care practitioners have the skills, values and attributes to provide safe and effective care.

As a registered workforce, social care practitioners must adhere to the Social Care Council's Standards of Conduct and Practice and undertake learning that supports their continuous professional development.

However, due to the primary and secondary legislative framework within which the Northern Ireland Social Care Council operates, there are a number of social care practitioners who are not required to be registered.

Therefore, we need to:

- ✓ Agree which roles should be included in any extension of regulation requirements.
- ✓ Make the required legislative amendments to extend the register of social care practitioners.

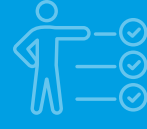
Action	What we need to do and how we are going to do it	What it will achieve	How will we know it made a difference	Who
21	Agree which roles should be included in any extension of regulation requirements.	An expansion of social care roles who are subject to NISCC registration. Increased confidence in the social care workforce as a trusted, respected and valued one.	Increase number of registrations subject to social care regulation standards and conducts of practice.	DOH in collaboration with all stakeholders
22	Amend the HPSS (NI) Act 2001 to enable the inclusion of additional roles for regulation.	Legislation will be amended.	Required amendments to legislation will be made.	DOH in collaboration with all stakeholders

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[https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/
publications/social-care-
workforce-strategy-2025-2035](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/social-care-workforce-strategy-2025-2035)



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