

Healthcare – skills overview

Dorset LSIP overview – March 2023

Introduction:

This short paper is intended to form part of the evidence that informs the development of the Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan. It is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the skills landscape relating to the relevant healthcare sector. Rather, it is intended to be an overview of some of the main broad trends that have been highlighted in relevant research. It is intended to sit alongside the other work that has been developed to inform the Dorset LSIP – notably the direct business consultations, and analysis of other secondary data such as skills demand in job postings.

Healthcare:

Today's health sector is dealing with the dual pressures of increased volume of demand for its services and the growing complexity of its delivery. The volume of demand is being pushed by a range of factors including demographics (ageing population), pressures around greater efficiency, and rising expectations from both clinicians and the public about what is treatable. Expectations have been fuelled by an increasing range of treatments and techniques as a result of scientific breakthroughs and innovation.

The sector is also seeing an increase in complexity both in terms of technical knowledge and practice as healthcare is requires a greater level of technical understanding. It is also seeing an increase in complexity in terms of how its organisation and workforce are organised. The complexity of the health sector is also enhanced when the diverse range of organisations are taken into account.

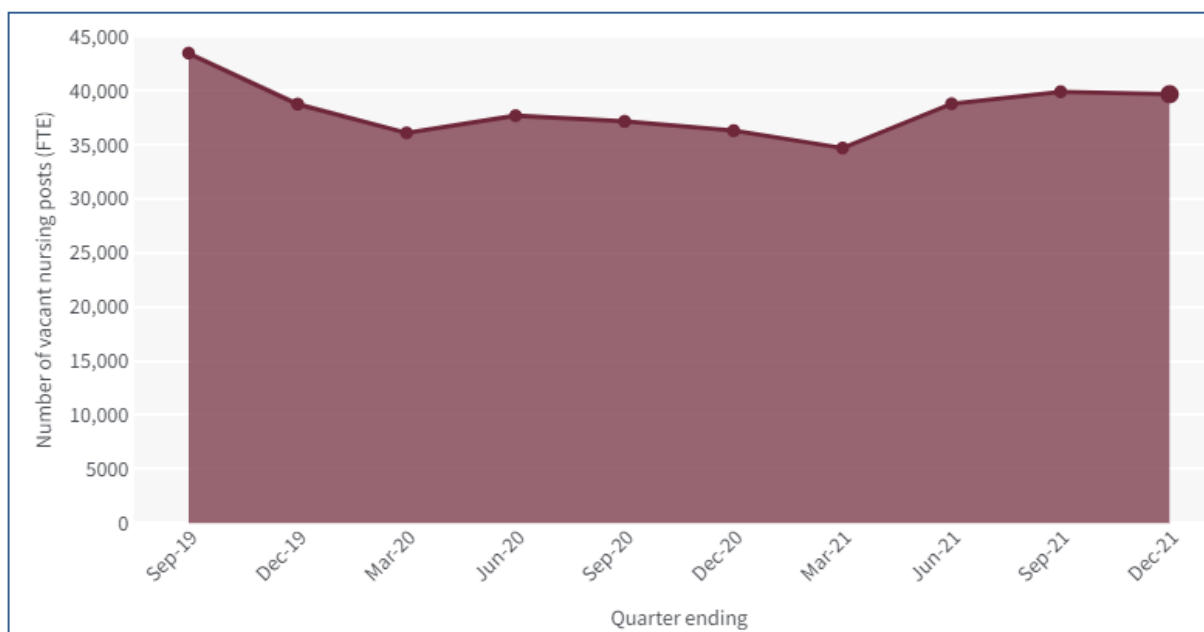
One of the key issues facing the sector is staff retention. According to the NHS, the [turnover rate for nurses was between 10% and 12%](#) and with [18% of doctors](#) considering leaving the profession in 2021. A study by the British Medical Association found that nearly [half \(44%\) of doctors in the UK reported experiencing burnout, with long hours and high levels of stress being the key concerns](#). In addition, a survey by the Royal College of Nursing revealed that in 2022, [83% of nurses experienced high levels of stress at work](#). The situation is worse in social care. One-in-three care workers left their job in 2020–21, seriously affecting continuity of care. [Care England reports that 95% of care providers were struggling to recruit staff, and 75% were struggling to retain their existing staff](#).

The sector experiences very high staff turnover rates when compared to other sectors. Staff turnover in social care is around 30% (and around 50% for younger staff). [Vacancies within social care represent over 10% of all posts, and the average age of the workforce is increasing](#). There is also a high prevalence of roles with little job security. It is estimated that one-quarter of the care workforce are on zero-hour contracts (compared to 3% in wider economy). Increasing vacancy levels (the highest on record) are occurring at the same time as demand is increasing – primarily due to ageing in the wider population.

The difficulties around recruitment and retention issues (see later local evidence) means there are shortages in roles such as nurses in social care, registered nurses, registered care managers etc. Workforce shortages are cited as the single biggest challenge to the health and social care sector.

[Independent analysis points to an overall current workforce supply-demand gap of around 103,000 FTE across the NHS, community health service and general practice, accounting for both clinical and non-clinical staff \(around 7% of estimated workforce demand\). It is projected that this gap may grow even wider in the coming years – increasing to](#)

[c180,000 FTE by 2025](#). There are particular roles that are affected. For example, registered nurses accounted for around 2 out of every 5 vacancies in, even though they account for just over 1 in 4 staff. It is projected that there will be a shortage of around 50,000 registered nurses across England in the current year, and based on the supply pipeline this shortage is expected for at least the coming decade (although this is scenario-based projections and estimates differ across scenarios). [Whilst analysis suggests that the Government is on course to recruit its target of net 50,000 nurses by 2024, but that current recruitment doesn't seem to be having any meaningful impact on the true scale of nursing shortages, and that hitting the target will not solve the issue of workforce shortages. Demand for nurses is increasing more quickly than supply.](#)



Total number of vacant nursing posts in the NHS in England

Source: NHS Digital

It is also projected that there will also remain a considerable shortage of General Practice (GP) doctors over the coming decade. A pessimistic scenario is a shortage of c19,000 FTE, although the current policy scenario is for a shortage of c9,000. Taken in combination, these significant workforce shortages are expected to affect patient standards, with projections showing that it will be difficult to maintain patient standards at previous levels. Fixing these issues is not a short-term question, for example it takes a decade to train a GP. Therefore, longer-term workforce planning and development remains crucial.

There are specific activities which are suffering acute shortages. [For example, it is estimated that an additional 2,000 midwives and 500 obstetricians are required across the UK to operate at a level that is considered safe.](#)

The health sector, like other sectors, has a labour market resembling an 'hourglass'. It has a large number of people in relatively high-skilled, high-paid roles. However, it also has a large number of relatively low-skilled, low-paid and low-trust roles. It lacks a high quality 'intermediate' workforce that people can progress to and through. A lack of intermediate roles creates issues around progression. For the health sector there are particular issues around progressing through the Bands particularly the leap from a Band 4 (e.g. Assistant Practitioner) to Band 5 (registered Nurse) in the NHS. These are related to issues of regulation and compliance. For example, all student nurses must be

enrolled on a degree programme, meaning there are barriers to progression for those working in the sector who do not have A-Levels.

There are a range of commonly identified skills needs amongst support workers. The importance of 'statutory and mandatory' skills continues to be strong for all working in the health sector. These cover essential skills that enable patient care to be undertaken safely.

Like any dynamic sector, the skills and the composition of the workforce in the health sector will continue to require flexibility and change. High quality competences, qualifications and frameworks continue to be of importance, whilst the development of diverse channels of learning including E-learning and simulation continues to be of use.

[At present there are more than 70 apprenticeship frameworks applicable to roles within the health and care sectors. The most popular apprenticeships \(clinical and non-clinical\) were for roles such as nursing associates, registered nurses, senior healthcare support workers.](#)

Lack of tech skills in care workers and significant time constraints. [The care workforce is digitally under skilled. In addition, more than half of providers have 10 or fewer staff](#), which means that digital skills can be few and far between. Training is needed in, for example, electronic record keeping, inputting, and training on information governance standards.

On the workforce supply side, long training pathways for clinical staff and changes in service models, workforce composition (the skill mix) and working patterns over time all mean that health care workforce planning requires a comprehensive longer-term focus.

The recent report by the Health and Social Care Committee into 'workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care' included a set of recommendations relating to how to improve retention in the social care sector. Recommendations included introducing new regulations in which care workers initially employed on zero-contract hours are offered the choice of contract after three-months of employment. It also recommended the Government introducing an externally validated care certificate which is transferable between social care providers and between social care and the NHS. It also recommended that the UK Government should bring forward clear progression plans for those who want to continue professional development who enter social care and provide standardisation between training received in the sector to allow progress and recognition.

Labour demand – Dorset LSIP:

There were c47,000 jobs (2021) across the Dorset LSIP area in occupations associated with health and social care courses (SSA2) – which encapsulates medicine and dentistry, nursing, health and social care, and child development and well-being. This represents a considerable proportion of the workforce.

Associated Occupations

We have associated the following occupations with the chosen course areas.

47,231

Jobs (2021)
6% above National average

+0.4%

% Change (2021-2022)
Nation: +0.7%

£14.93/hr

£23.8k/yr

Median Wages

Nation: £15.61/hr; £26.6k/yr

Occupation	2021 Jobs	Annual Openings	Median Wages	Growth (2021 - 2022)	Location Quotient (2021)
Care Workers and Home Carers	10,760	416	£10.36/hr	+0.43%	1.28
Nurses	8,369	329	£18.58/hr	+0.51%	1.04
Nursing Auxiliaries and Assistants	4,476	178	£10.93/hr	+0.60%	1.14
Medical Practitioners	3,087	121	£33.57/hr	+0.13%	1.02
Nursery Nurses and Assistants	1,802	83	£9.47/hr	+1.33%	1.01
Human Resources and Industrial Relations Officers	1,383	61	£12.68/hr	+1.23%	0.62
Senior Care Workers	1,259	50	£10.72/hr	+0.40%	1.53
Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals n.e.c.	1,219	49	£12.32/hr	+0.25%	0.88
Housing Officers	1,000	97	£13.74/hr	+3.30%	1.19
Social Workers	847	31	£17.23/hr	+0.12%	1.02
Biological Scientists and Biochemists	813	23	£18.56/hr	+0.49%	0.81
Dental Nurses	771	35	£11.00/hr	-1.04%	1.17
Pharmacy and Other Dispensing Assistants	751	20	£9.96/hr	-2.53%	0.93
Youth and Community Workers	745	29	£13.15/hr	+0.13%	0.97
Laboratory Technicians	645	17	£11.19/hr	0.00%	0.87
Health Professionals n.e.c.	601	22	£16.04/hr	+0.17%	1.00
Protective Service Associate Professionals n.e.c.	600	18	£13.44/hr	+0.17%	1.05
Physiotherapists	528	21	£19.65/hr	+0.57%	0.99
Houseparents and Residential Wardens	521	21	£12.46/hr	+0.19%	1.26
Midwives	500	20	£20.96/hr	+0.60%	0.99

There c33,000 job postings in 2021 relating to the associated occupations across the Dorset LSIP area – by far the most significant demand in terms of broad sectors. Typically jobs are posted 5x before being filled (posting intensity of 5:1).

Job Postings Overview

33,105

Unique Postings
154,541 Total Postings

5 : 1




Posting Intensity

Regional Average: 3 : 1

35 days

Median Posting Duration
Regional Average: 34 days

Top Posted Job Titles

Job Title	Total/Unique (Jan 2021 - Dec 2022)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Support Workers	11,974 / 3,657	3 : 1 	35 days
Care Assistants	8,772 / 2,133	4 : 1 	35 days
Health Care Assistants	5,912 / 1,199	5 : 1 	36 days
Staff Nurses	15,417 / 1,114	14 : 1 	34 days
Registered Nurses	3,699 / 910	4 : 1 	33 days
Home Care Assistants	3,069 / 521	6 : 1 	36 days
Night Assistants	1,910 / 448	4 : 1 	37 days
Registered General Nurses	2,410 / 418	6 : 1 	36 days
Occupational Therapists	2,104 / 353	6 : 1 	37 days
Physiotherapists	1,772 / 339	5 : 1 	37 days
Night Nurses	2,597 / 274	9 : 1 	40 days
Recruitment Consultants	493 / 263	2 : 1 	34 days
Mental Health Practitioners	2,028 / 211	10 : 1 	33 days
Live-in Caregivers	626 / 207	3 : 1 	38 days
Advanced Practitioners	1,859 / 202	9 : 1 	40 days
Clinical Psychologists	1,454 / 201	7 : 1 	36 days
Care Workers	425 / 200	2 : 1 	36 days
Radiographers	705 / 194	4 : 1 	35 days
General Practitioners	468 / 193	2 : 1 	39 days
Human Resources Advisors	548 / 192	3 : 1 	33 days

Top Specialized Skills

Skill	Postings with Skill
Personal Care	5,482
Nursing	4,578
Mental Health	2,558
Midwifery	1,526
Home Health Care	1,412
Clinical Governance	1,321
Companionship	1,301
Medication Administration	1,283
Psychology	1,281
Meal Planning And Preparation	1,065
Auditing	1,034
Surgery	1,030
Risk Analysis	1,016
Physical Therapy	998
Employee Onboarding	967
Talent Recruitment	954
Learning Disabilities	929
Nursing Care	901
Occupational Therapy	891
Cooking	871

(Source: Lightcast, 2023)