



Shropshire
Council

Shropshire Council Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026-2031



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Part 1: Introduction

This workforce strategy for Adult Social Care in Shropshire demonstrates our ongoing passion and ambition to make a positive difference to people's lives. Alongside partners from health, the voluntary and private sector, we concentrate on identifying the most appropriate support as early as possible, in order that people can remain in the heart of their communities, where they belong, and be somewhere they can call home and be safe.

We are proud of all our care workforce; they are dedicated, committed and put people at the heart of all we do; for us it 'starts with you'. Our workforce is critical to our ability to deliver social care to the residents of Shropshire. This plan shows how we will recruit and retain staff across the Adult Social Care sector in Shropshire.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework for a highly functioning and fully staffed social care workforce, that achieves the regulatory standards to meet the needs of people with care and support needs within Shropshire. The workforce should be appropriately inducted, trained, and prepared to drive the delivery of good quality services for local people.

Across Shropshire recruitment continues to be a challenge. This plan will outline initiatives and solutions to address this, as well as work to ensure we reduce our agency workforce and provide stability for our colleagues, partners and the people of Shropshire.

Personal, professional and career development planning with clear and achievable career pathways is at the heart of retaining a high performing and satisfied workforce. In addition to this, quality and strengths-based supervision build a solid foundation for the services delivered. Having a strong and stable leadership, and clear organisation structures and accountabilities which centre on driving quality of care in an efficient way will support the achievement of our vision.

We will work with colleagues across the Council to ensure we find the best, most efficient solutions to workforce challenges, together this will ultimately support the delivery of adult social care in Shropshire.



Part 2: Adult Social Care in Shropshire Council

2a: About Shropshire Council

Social care has a vital role to play in realising our commitment to deliver services within a stretched health and care system, using strengths and outcome focussed approaches to support people's independence and wellbeing.

Our workforce is central to that ambition, working together in a complex multi-disciplinary arena is essential in ensuring the best care and outcomes for our residents with care and support needs.

Within Adult Social Care we have a stable senior leadership team and committed workforce which has put us in a strong position.

Our overarching [Shropshire Council Workforce Strategy 2022-2025](#) supports the Council's key ambitions outlined in [The Corporate Plan 2026-2030](#) by identifying what capacity, capability and diversity of workforce and how it needs to operate to deliver outcomes for the residents of Shropshire.

The strategy helps provide the direction and to ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost. It is driven by The Corporate Plan which enables the overall organisational strategy, setting out clear priority ambitions focused on:

- A financially sustainable council, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel
- Communities connected by well-maintained roads, accessible transport and infrastructure
- Safe, inclusive places with homes that meet people's needs
- Opportunities for people to be healthy and thrive at every stage of life
- An environment that harnesses natural assets and supports wellbeing
- A thriving economy that benefits everyone

The Council is in a process of transformation and has recently published its Improvement Plan which focuses on transforming the operating model, strengthening financial management, and implementing a new People Plan [The People Plan 2025-2030](#). The People Plan has an overarching vision of creating a workforce that is supported and enabled to excel.

Adult Social Care Values and Principles

In Adult Social Care we are committed to working with community and health partners to ensure that people are supported to achieve their personal goals. Whilst doing this we will promote safety, whilst understanding each person's right to independence and choice, and to live in communities that are healthy and safe, where people can thrive and belong. Following extensive consultation with people to whom we provide a service; our staff and our partners have agreed seven principles and vision:

We will support adults, carers and families, to

1. Lead the life they want to live
2. Live in a place that they call home
3. Be part of a healthy, safe community where they belong
4. Share power equally between partners
5. Ensure that they are protected and safeguarded from harm
6. Use resources well

7. Provide opportunities to learn which are diverse and inclusive.

Shropshire Council Values

Our values define how we work and our underpinning ethos, placing the individual at the centre of everything we do. Our priority is to enable independence and wellbeing.



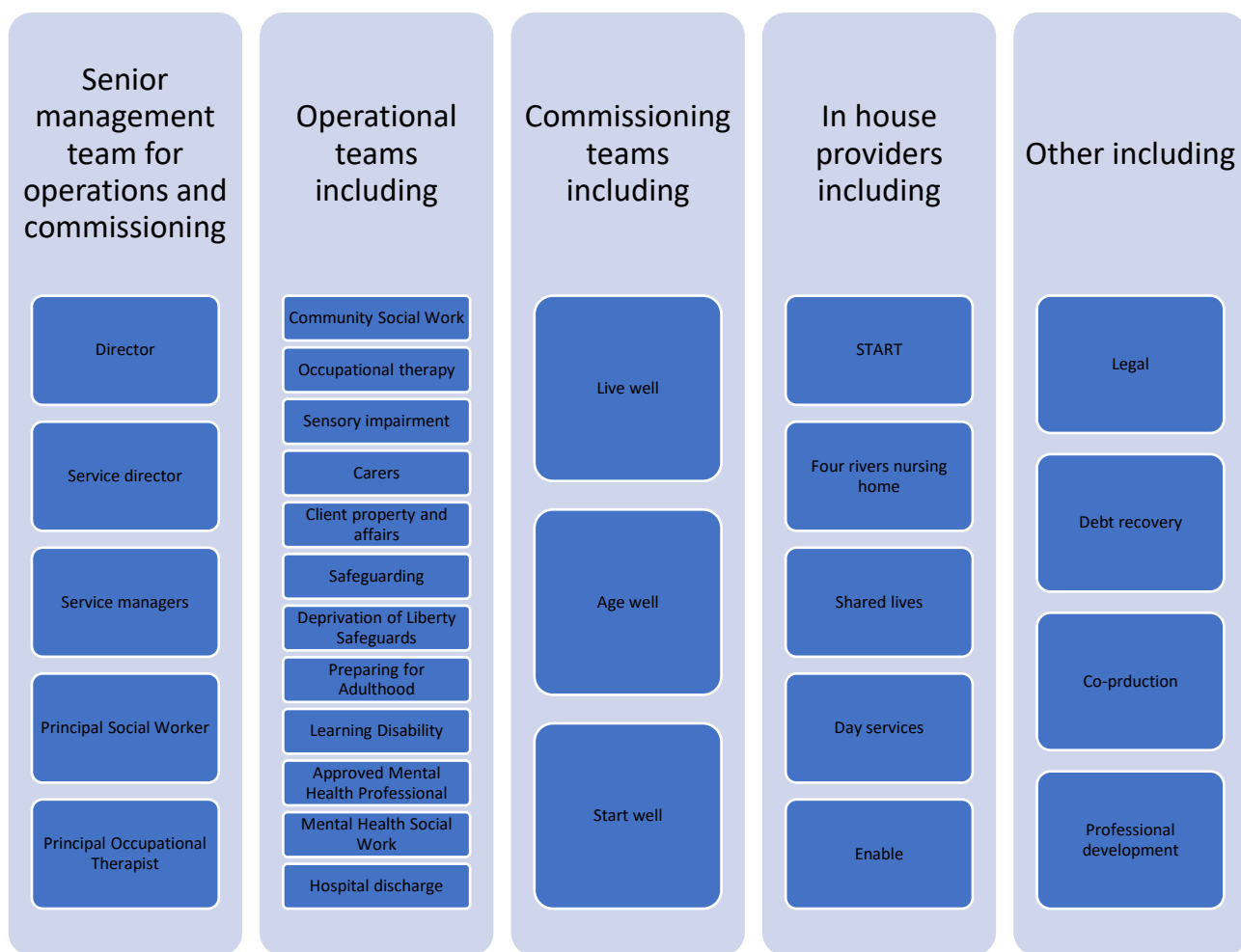
2b. Our workforce

Within the Council our adult social care workforce is made up of a wide range of skills, experiences, and knowledge, primarily split into three main areas; operations (which included Social Work and Occupational Therapy), commissioning and in-house providers. The work is supported by other teams within the Council including finance, professional development and legal.

Below is the current workforce data which has helped to inform our strategy:

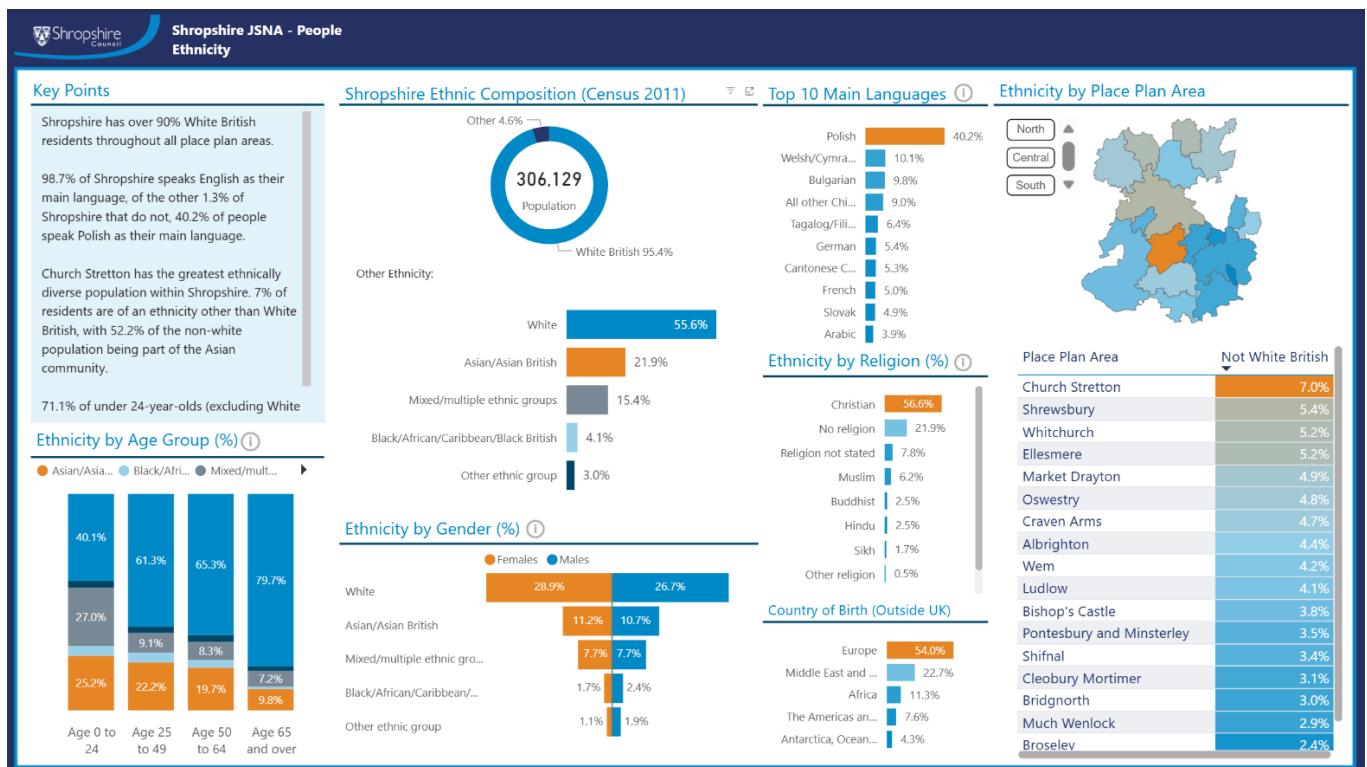
Our Teams:

We have a range of teams within Adult Social Care; these include:



Diversity and our workforce

As a Council we recognise and celebrate diversity. We know that a diverse workforce is required to meet the diverse needs of our population. Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (see infographic below) shows that Shropshire is a predominantly white population with Polish being the most spoken language after English.



The Council has an Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Group to provide strategic direction and oversight of Shropshire Council's efforts to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The group will ensure that the Council meets its equality duties in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty¹ placed upon us as a local authority under the Equality Act 2010, and fosters an inclusive environment for all employees, service users and the wider community. Staff with protective characteristics are encouraged to access staff networks which have a strong link to this strategic group and to the People Board.

2c: Recruitment

Recruitment across the sector is an ongoing challenge; however, by delivering the themes within the ASC workforce plan, we have several strategies to achieve this. We believe that Shropshire is a great place to live and work. We will explore creative ways of engaging people who may wish to come and work for Shropshire Council. These include:

- Identifying and contacting people who are interested in completing a job application
- Redesigning job adverts to emphasise the benefits to working with Shropshire Council
- Use of rolling adverts for the vacancies we have
- Use of social media to aid recruitment
- Celebrating annual events (such as Social Work week, Occupational Therapy week and Carers week)

Routes to recruitment

The Council has four main routes to recruit staff into Adult Social Care (see below). These are described below:

¹ [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities)

- i. Traditional; through advertising of vacancies
- ii. Apprenticeships
- iii. Retention of Social Work students into Social Work posts
- iv. Promotion of staff into more Senior roles

Traditional recruitment routes

We are working with HR colleagues to look at how we can develop our internet landing page and improve the recruitment portal, as part of this work we have:

- Conducted a new starter survey to inform how the first 6 months at Shropshire Council has been for new starters
- Reviewed the induction checklist and process
- Launched a new landing page for recruitment – (sections are still in progress pending service specific information) this builds on the employer branding, user experience of searching for roles and also provides more information for those looking for work experience and apprenticeships.
- Increased attendance at Job Centre Plus recruitment events and other job fayres.
- Increased attendance at school and college careers events and provided information sessions on T levels, apprenticeships and careers at Shropshire Council.
- Reviewed the application form used in recruitment
- Reviewed the exit process to enable more meaningful data to be collected to provide further insight as to why employees leave and to simplify the process for managers
- We recognise that some posts are hard to recruit to and we are considering the introduction of welcome and retention payments. We acknowledge that we have some hard to recruit to teams and that the traditional method is not sufficient to meet recruitment needs.

Apprenticeships

The Social Work apprentice programme has been running since 2019. Cohorts for the apprenticeship are sourced from Social Care Practitioners who are already employed within Adult Social Care. This gives us the opportunity to invest in our own staff and grow our own Social Workers. The number of places offered are determined by workforce planning and future workforce needs. It allows staff to train and qualify without accruing a debt. As such it gives opportunities to our residents including those who might not be able to sustain themselves through traditional qualification routes. This approach has been extremely successful. To date we have trained 16 Social Work apprentices who are now in qualified Social Work posts within Adult Social Care, and we have a further 19 in training.

100%!

In Adult Social Care in Shropshire 100% of our apprentices have completed their training, and 100% of them have started their Social Work career with us. Many remain with us; some are now Seniors and others are engaged in further professional training. This is an incredible return on investment and a demonstration of our commitment to our staff and their development.

The apprenticeship scheme provides a steady flow of qualified social workers, who once they take up their social work post release the Social Care Practitioner post which is easier to recruit to.

We have opportunities for, Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment apprenticeships, nursing apprenticeships and apprenticeships for commissioners. We will develop the offer for Occupational Therapy apprenticeships.

Some senior staff are also undertaking Leadership apprenticeships.

The ambition is to develop a process so that apprentices are automatically offered a Social Work post on qualifying.

Recruitment of Social Work students into Social Work posts

We have a strong record of recruitment from student Social Workers who have been on their final placement in Adult Social Care. Each year we support approximately 20 students on placement (including apprenticeships, and students from Children's Social Care). We work with students to assist them in identifying vacancies and applying for posts (via the traditional route). On average we recruit 4 Social Work students from traditional routes into Social Work posts a year.

Staff progression

We have a strong focus on growing our own, and a good track record of supporting staff into more Senior roles. Our CPD offer is described later. Some examples are given below



Tanya Miles, started with Shropshire Council in 1998 as a Social Worker. Is now the Chief Executive



Tamsin Waterhouse, started as a Newly Qualified Social Worker in 1993. Has been supported to training as an AMHP, BIA, PE, and to complete her Leadership Post-Graduate Diploma. Is now Principal Social Worker



Roz Badiali-Ryder. Started as a care worker and then a SW assistant. She was sponsored by the Council to complete her Social Worker, BIA and PE training and is now ASYE lead. Won the silver Practice Educator of the Year Award in 2022



Chris Sheldon. Started as a Social Care Practitioner, was supported to complete the SW degree apprentice and PE training. Is now a Senior Social Worker. Won the Telford and Wrekin apprenticeship of the year award in 2024



Michelle Williams. Michelle started as a Care Assistant in one of the council owned care homes, she then obtained a Social Work Assistant role and was sponsored to do the Social Work degree. She graduated as a Qualified Social Worker in 2011. She is now Service Manager.

Agency Workers

Adults Social Care in Shropshire have signed up to the West Midlands Memorandum of Commitment supported by the West Midlands Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) and West Midlands Employers. This will monitor and manage agency pay rate pressures, ensuring a fair, transparent and regionally aligned approach to workforce planning. Since signing up our use of agency workers has fallen by 30% with some applying for and accepting substantive positions. We

aspire to reduce this further. In addition we aspire to establish a bank (an on demand flexible and temporary workforce) for Social Workers and Social Care Practitioners to register with for additional work.

2d: Retention

We understand the challenges faced across the sector with recruitment and retention, in particular challenges across a rural county. In Adult Social Care in Shropshire 91% of the staffing budget is spent on employed staff and 9% on agency staff.

Retention figures for operational staff

Year	Voluntary leavers	All leavers
2022-23	9.97%	15.75%
2023-24	8.09%	12.9%
2024-2025	10.57%	13.05
2025-2026	8.06%	8.87%

The leadership team across ASC are supporting changing the culture to drive performance, quality care, increasing contact time and raising standards. We are working with our colleagues in resources to ensure all staff have access to the wellbeing offer. [Health and wellbeing - SC Intranet \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing). In addition to this, we now have wellbeing champions across the organisation and support is available for personal needs and goals as well as team and service specific initiatives.

Recent qualitative data from a small sample of staff who have returned to Shropshire Council showed that they valued the supportive relationships within the Council, and the underlying ethos of kindness.

Across Adult Social Care we have a number of initiatives in place which we believe will aid with staff retention. These are detailed below:

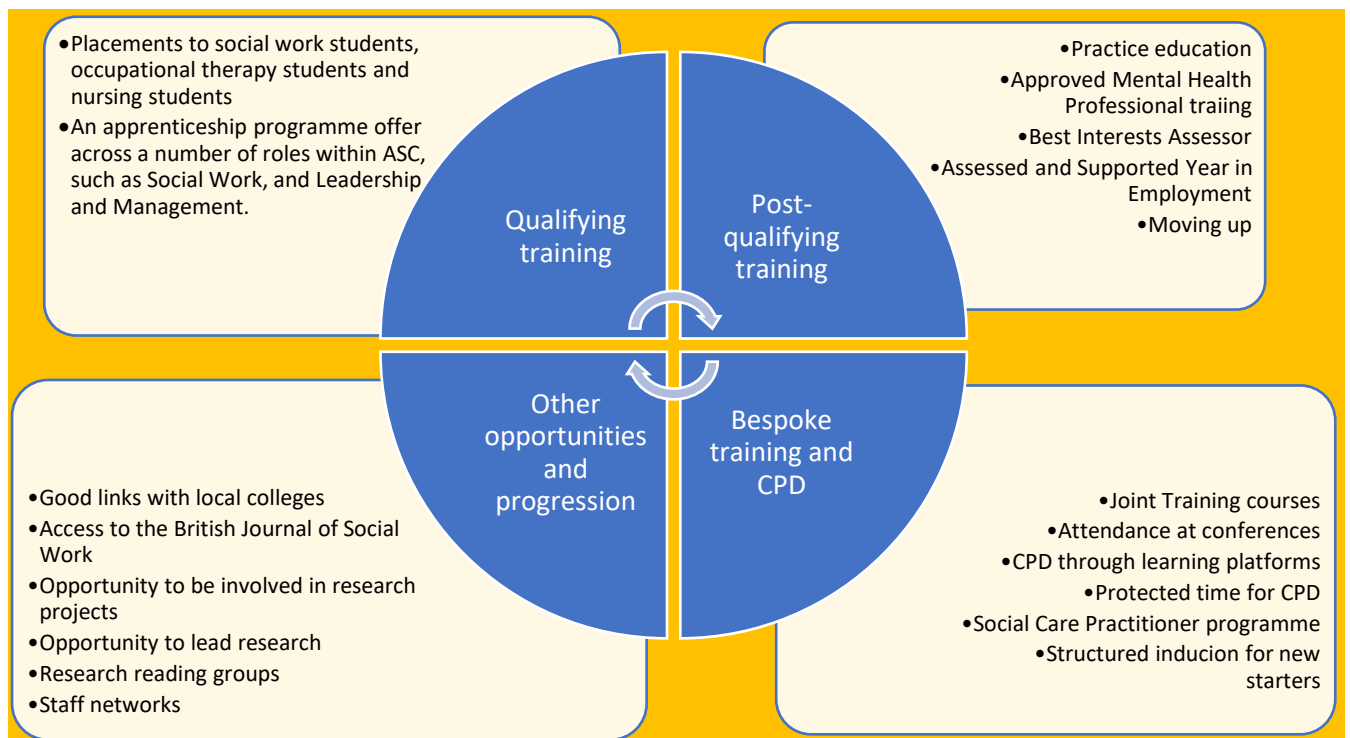
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

We provide an extensive Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs). The programme is coordinated by our ASYE lead. NQSWs attend monthly ASYE workshops, learning opportunities, peer support, direct observations of practice and feedback. They have protected time, reduced workloads, and additional supervision. Other new starters are able to attend the workshops.

We now offer support to Social Workers in their second year of employment. This is run by our ASYE Lead who will work with the individuals to consider their ongoing professional development needs.

Continued professional development (CPD) and other learning opportunities.

In Shropshire Council our aim is to create conditions for 'excellence to thrive'. We have developed a career development pathway across ASC [People Directorate - Professional Development - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/people-directorate-professional-development-all-documents). This supports colleagues to plan their own personal development and explore all career pathways for themselves and their teams. This will include apprenticeships, continuous professional development, and training. We offer:



All of the above is supported by progression pathways, a CPD framework, the quality assurance framework, supervision and the annual personal development plan (with 6-month review points).

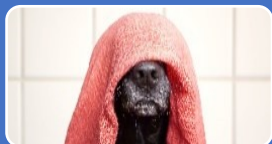
Workforce Initiatives

A number of other workforce initiatives are being delivered to support the retention of the workforce within Shropshire Adult Social Care. These include but are not limited to:



Communication

- Regular newsletters from the Chief Executive
- Weekly three minute briefs from the Principal Social Worker
- Conferences, training and events



Wellbeing

- Strong wellbeing offer within the Council
- Healthy lives social prescribing for staff
- Flexible working offer



Support

- Monthly supervision and peer supervision
- Coffee and chat with senior management
- Annual Personal Development Plan



Celebrating success

- Staff conference
- Nominations for national awards including the Social Worker of the Year awards



Diversity

- Shropshire Council Anti-Racism Forum
- Staff feedback groups
- EEDIB Strategy group

Celebrating success

We believe in the importance of recognising and celebrating success. We celebrate staff achievements and compliments and are also pleased to hear good news stories. We also nominate staff for regional and national awards. Some of our nominees and winners are pictured below:



Lorraine Currie; winner of the Local Government Chronicle Award for Outstanding Individual Contribution 2021



Roz Badiali-Ryder; winner of the Silver Award; Practice Educator of the Year, 2022, Adult Social Worker of the Year Awards



Sue Bunker; winner of the Gold Award, Team Manager of the Year, 2024, Adult Social Worker of the Year Awards



Chloe Lambert, winner of the Gold Award, Adult Social Worker of the year, 2024, Adult Social Worker of the Year Awards



South Shropshire Community Social Work team; finalists in the Team of the Year Award 2025, Adult Social Worker of the Year Awards



Shropshire Council Anti-Racism Forum chairs; finalists in the Social Justice category 2025, Adult Social Worker of the Year Awards



Kieran Jones (left) winner of the overall apprentice of the year (Shropshire) and Chris Sheldon, winner of the Shropshire Telford and Wrekin apprenticeship of the year award in 2024 in the Health and Social Care Category



Shropshire Council Anti-Racism Forum, finalists in the Local Government Chronicle Awards, Equality Diversity and Inclusion category

2e: Staff specialisms

Practice Educators: One of our main forms of recruitment into qualified posts is through the retention of students and apprentices once they qualify. Practice educators are therefore essential; they provide supervision, support and assessment for students/apprentices whilst on placement. The practice education training is also relevant to people in senior roles who are supervising others. They support NQSWs as well as other supervisees. On average we train 5 practice educators a year. We commission Practice Education training from local Universities but are aware that it does not need to be delivered by a university. We are therefore exploring the option of delivering this in-house which will save on costs.

Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs): By law we are required to ensure that we have Approved Mental Health Professionals available to meet the duties of the Mental Health Act which states: Section 13 (1): 'If a local social services authority have reason to think that an application for admission to hospital or a guardianship application may need to be made in respect of a patient within their area, they shall make arrangements for an Approved Mental Health Professional to consider the patient's case on their behalf.'

Whilst the law does not state how many AMHPs will be required to meet the legal obligation in 1991 the Social Care Inspectorate recommended a ratio of 1 AMHP for every 11,800 people for rural areas. In Shropshire this would equate to 26 AMHPs.

We commission qualifying training for AMHPs with a number of universities, supporting on average 2 members of staff to complete their training every year. Candidates are selected from operational teams. Recruitment and retention of AMHPs is problematic and a separate AMHP recruitment and retention plan is in place.

Best Interests Assessors; We have a small team of Best Interests Assessors (BIAs) who undertake assessments under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. In addition, some agency BIAs provide assessments when required.

Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants: We have a Countywide team of Occupational Therapists (OTs) and Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs). In addition, the Independent Living Service provides advice and support for individuals with low-level needs. A Principal Occupational Therapist is in post and provides professional oversight and guidance for this service.

Sensory impairment: the Sensory Impairment team includes Rehabilitation Officers for Visual Impairments (ROVI) and Rehabilitation Officers for Hearing Impairment (ROHI). The team provide specialist support for individuals who are Deaf, deafened, have hearing loss, are blind or have sight loss.

Commissioning, finance and brokerage: Recent investment in our commissioning and contract functions has established a strengthened all age model, bringing together commissioning, quality assurance, business and contract management to create greater alignment between children's and adults' services. This will be further supported by increased capacity in corporate procurement during 2026. Forecasts of sustained growth in demand for adult social care, including social work and wider care and support services, will create additional pressure on commissioning, quality and procurement activity. Team capacity will be monitored to ensure the new structure remains sufficient to meet future system demand and deliver high quality, sustainable care markets.

Part 3: Understanding our Provider Workforce Needs

Current and future provider workforce position

The current financial position of the council, and the wider health and social care market, has never been so challenging. Shropshire Council ended the 2024-25 financial year £34 million over budget, largely due to escalating social care costs. The council is calling for reform in national social care funding, especially for rural areas like Shropshire, but we are also working closely with providers to strengthen and diversify the market and get the best outcomes for individuals.

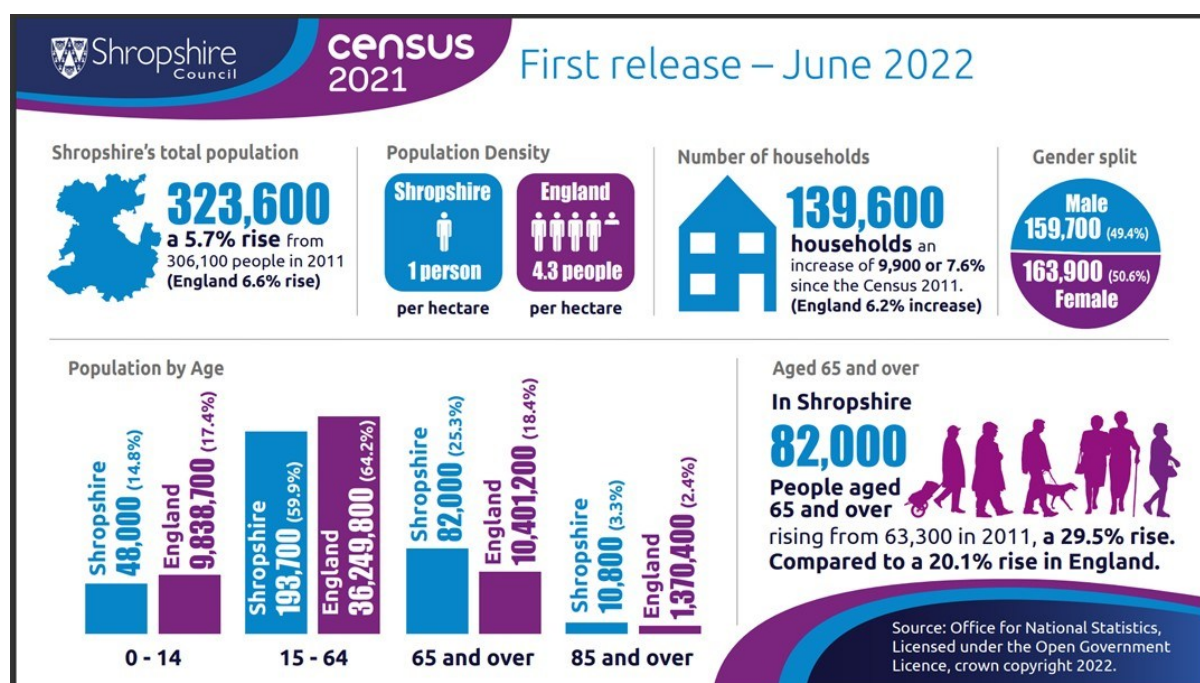
The majority of people with care and support needs receiving services from Shropshire Council will do so through our commissioning and contracting arrangements with providers in private, voluntary and not for profit sectors. We recognise the dedication and commitment of these care providers and are committed to creating a sustainable, skilled, and compassionate provider workforce that delivers high-quality adult social care services, ensuring the well-being and independence of Shropshire's residents.

[Shropshire's Market Position Statement \(MPS\)](#) supports the delivery of The Corporate Plan 2026-30 ensuring our population and economy is healthy. The document highlights demographic changes and that current models of delivery within the care market are no longer sustainable with increasing demands on the system. The number of care providers in Shropshire is not currently growing at a significant rate, and in some areas, is struggling to meet with demand, particularly around support of people with complex needs. The MPS sets out the council's clear ambition to work with our existing

providers to develop a strong, sustainable and vibrant social care market focusing on community-based commissioning, prevention, early intervention and technology driven innovation.

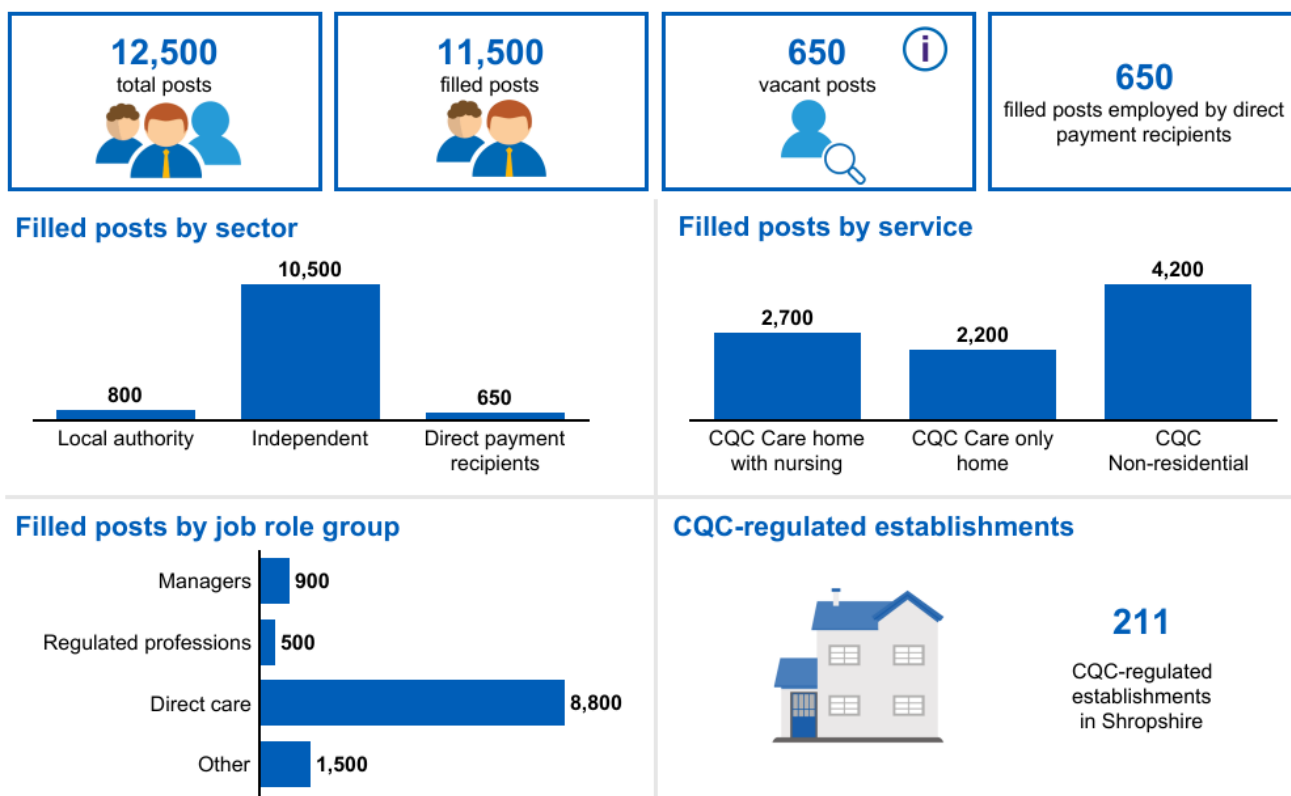
The Council's commissioning activity is informed by demand and predicted trends to inform activity levels. Shropshire's [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) is continually being developed to provide a vital set of information, delivered through themes and place-based assessments, that support all strategic planning including workforce development. The JSNA informs us that, in addition to a significantly aging population, inequalities and rural inequalities form a key consideration for delivering services in Shropshire.

Shropshire has seen an increase of 17,500 people since the last Census in 2011, the county has a lower than average number of children, whereas there is a larger and faster-growing older population compared to the national average. Although people in Shropshire are living for longer, they are not necessarily living healthier lives and the gap between healthy life expectancy and overall life expectancy is growing, particularly for men. In addition, Shropshire has significant rural inequalities, and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that most places in Shropshire are more deprived in terms of barriers to housing and services. These factors add to the pressures, challenges and opportunities in the health and social care sector.



Data provided by Skills for Care, the national strategic workforce development body for adult social care in England, estimated that in 2024/25 the adult social care sector in England included around 19,000 organisations operating approximately 42,000 care locations, employing a workforce equivalent to 1.71 million posts nationally. Within Shropshire, the sector was made up of roughly 12,500 posts in the same period. Around 11,500 of these posts were filled, the majority (88%) within the independent sector, and approximately 650 posts were vacant. Just over half of Shropshire's adult social care workforce work fulltime (52%), with the remainder employed on parttime hours; additionally, around 15% of staff are engaged on zero hours contracts.

The following shows key data relating to workforce across local authorities, independent sector and posts working for direct payment recipients in 2024/25:



Source: [My local area](#)

Compared with the previous year, Shropshire saw an increase of about 800 posts (6.7%), while vacancy levels remained broadly unchanged. This position contrasts with national patterns, where England experienced a reduction in vacancy rates and a rise in filled posts, despite a significant decline in international recruitment, which fell from around 105,000 recruits in 2023/24 to 50,000 in 2024/25.

Skills for Care report that adult social care providers in Shropshire recorded a staff vacancy rate of 25.2%, a slight improvement compared with the previous year and broadly consistent with both the regional average of 23.4% and the national rate of 23.7%. In 2024/25, half of all new starters (51%) were recruited from within the sector, helping to retain existing expertise and experience within the local care workforce.

Shropshire continues to face demographic pressures, as its working age population is proportionally smaller than the national profile, which contributes to challenges in sustaining the local health and social care workforce. Women make up 81% of the sector's workforce, and the average age is 43.7, a pattern that has remained stable over recent years. Younger workers aged under 25 account for 9% of the workforce, while 26% are aged 55 or over. This age distribution suggests that approximately 2,900 posts could reach retirement age within the next decade, signalling future pressures on recruitment and workforce planning.

Skills for Care data suggests that around four in five adult social care workers in Shropshire identified as British, representing a minimal decrease compared with the previous year. The local workforce draws more heavily on non EU nationals than EU nationals, with 4% of staff reporting an EU nationality, and a rising proportion, increasing from 13% in 2023/24 to 16% in 2024/25 identifying as non EU nationals.

(Source: [skillsforcare.org.uk](#))

While Shropshire is working to grow and diversify its care provider market, the actual number of providers is not currently increasing significantly. The focus is on stabilising and strengthening the existing market, addressing workforce challenges, and encouraging targeted growth in areas of unmet need.

Recruitment and retention

We know that workforce challenges within the provider market include recruitment, retention and training. Due to our rurality and dispersed geography, attracting staff can be a challenge in some areas. Availability of affordable accommodation in the county and attracting staff who can drive is vital where providers support residents in their own home and other rural settings.

Due to our aging working population and other challenges, we do have some concerns with ongoing staffing levels and recruitment and retention issues in Shropshire and the potential impact this could have on continuity and quality of care across all ages. Through the recruitment work we have undertaken we have supported the local provider market through events, paid work experience initiatives and the development of a local care sector brochure.

It is vital to work with system partners, safeguarding and operational teams, providers and CQC to ensure quality and safety of people is paramount. Improving and enhancing training and support to the market to upskill staff and having one Quality Assurance Framework across both Children and Adults services will be a key focus to drive a consistent approach for all contracted services. Monitoring the quality of care in our provider services is a key focus for the Council, we have enhanced our resources in this area to enable us to move away from a reactive service to working proactively to oversee and support the care market and ensure our residents receive the very best care and support.

Social Value principles are applied in all our commissioning and procurement activity in an aim to drive improvements to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Shropshire through our contracting arrangements. This includes a focus on increasing employment opportunities in the care sector for local people, improving quality of care and developing people and skills through apprenticeships, work placements and work-based training. Over the next 12–18 months, our planned updates to care provider contracts (Pre Placement- Agreements) will place greater emphasis on fair pay, guaranteed or contracted hours, and workforce development. This reflects growing evidence that these factors are key drivers of retention which can reduce the likelihood of care staff leaving their roles.

International Recruitment

In Shropshire, international recruitment has played a vital role in ensuring there are enough skilled professionals to meet local demand in the Care Industry. By increasing cultural diversity within our workforce, we aim to introduce new skills, experiences, and perspectives that enhance the quality of care.

However, international recruitment can present challenges for providers, including complex regulatory requirements and integration needs. To address these, we have worked closely with the West Midlands Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (WMADASS) and Citizen's Advice Shropshire on initiatives that support ethical recruitment and workforce sustainability.

Our approach includes:

- **Ethical Recruitment Network:** A group of employers committed to offering displaced international workers properly funded roles with fair pay and robust support. This includes pastoral care, safeguarding measures, and clear escalation routes for unethical practices.

- **Funding and Incentives:** Leveraging the International Recruitment Fund to cover costs such as Certificates of Sponsorship, visa fees, DBS checks, and initial accommodation support for recruits.
- **Integration and Wellbeing:** Providing training, wellbeing initiatives, and community engagement to ensure recruits are fully supported and integrated into the workforce.
- **Collaboration and Guidance:** Working with regional and national partners to share best practice, access legal and HR webinars, and utilise resources such as the 'skilled worker toolkit' which can be found along with further guidance and home office updates on our web pages: [International workers in social care | Shropshire Council](#).

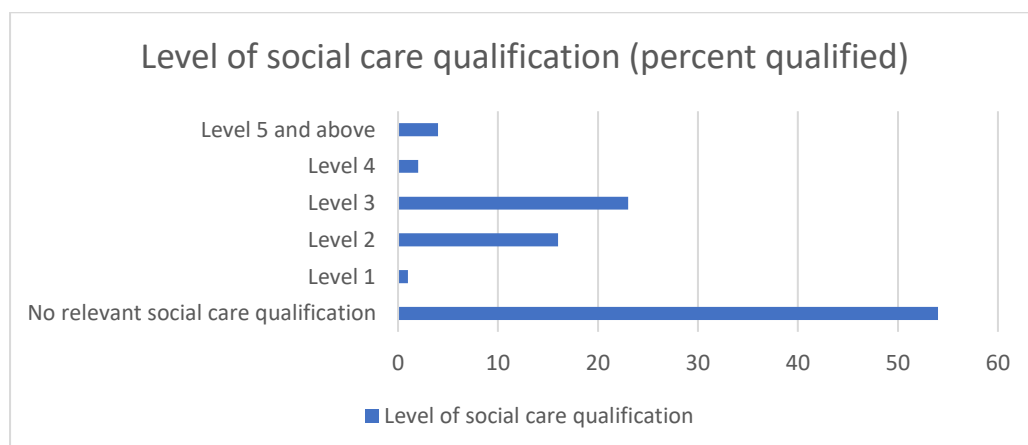
In May 2025, the UK government announced plans to end new international recruitment for care workers as part of immigration reforms. While no new overseas recruitment will be permitted, existing workers can extend their stay, change sponsors, or apply to settle. In response, Shropshire will:

- Continue supporting and retaining existing international workers.
- Invest in local workforce development through fair pay agreements, professional development pathways, and regional initiatives.
- Monitor legislative changes, including the forthcoming Employment Rights Bill, to ensure compliance and workforce resilience.

Training

Skills for Care data for 2024/25 estimates that 46% of Shropshire's direct care workforce currently hold a relevant adult social care qualification, representing a modest decline from 50% in 2023/24. When compared with the West Midlands average of 48% and the national figure of 45%, Shropshire remains broadly in line with regional and national benchmarks. This suggests that, despite the recent dip, the county continues to maintain a strong foundation of formally qualified staff, providing a solid platform for further workforce development and upskilling across the market.

The following shows key data relating to qualifications and training in 2024/25 for all types of job role (excluding regulated professionals) in local authorities and the independent sector, which equates to 10,500 filled posts:



Among direct care staff who do not hold a formal adult social care qualification, an estimated 52% have five or more years of experience. This pattern aligns with what we know about the maturity of the local provider workforce and indicates that many staff possess substantial practical skills and capability, even where they have not achieved a recognised qualification.

Engagement with foundational training is also strong: around 75% of unqualified staff have undertaken Care Certificate learning, representing a 5% increase since 2023/24. This upward trend suggests that providers are committed to ensuring staff have a core level of foundation training and the principles of good practice and standards.

In addition, 75% of staff without formal qualifications have completed non statutory training, highlighting that employers continue to invest in developing the competence and confidence of their direct care workforce. However, the data also shows a clear gap between participation in training and progression to formal qualification achievement, indicating an opportunity to strengthen pathways that support staff to translate learning into accredited qualifications.

Shropshire Council's in-house Joint Training Team delivers high-quality learning and training solutions to providers through an extensive range of scheduled programs. These include training sessions on safeguarding for adults and children, neglect, sexual abuse, trauma-informed approaches, suicide prevention, mental health first aid, the Care Act, the Mental Capacity Act, acquired brain injury, substance misuse, domestic abuse, and various leadership courses for managers.

The team offers bespoke learning and training programs tailored to providers' needs. These custom programs can be delivered on-site or online, providing flexibility to meet individual requirements within different settings.

Moreover, the Joint Training team leads significant initiatives, such as the roll-out of the Oliver McGowan mandatory training in collaboration with system partners, including the Integrated Care Board (ICS).

Additionally, through working groups across the Integrated Care Board and Partners in Care, we have developed a Health and Social Care offer for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin allowing providers to access training at a dedicated training academy for the Health and Social Care workforce, particularly supporting new recruits.

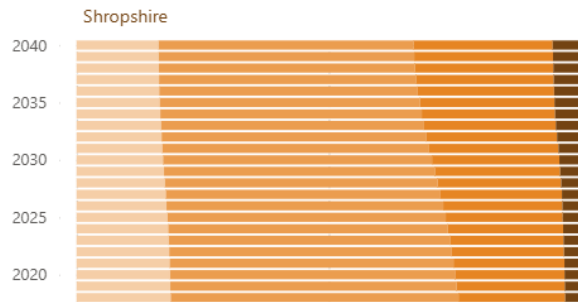
Part 4: Future demand

Shropshire has seen an increase in the complexity of care required to support across all ages which locally has seen pressure particularly coming through the hospitals. With an expanding older population, complexity of care will also increase, and we need to support our providers to be prepare for future. We are working with our existing providers to upskill them to be able to meet more complex needs that will allow us to support people to maintain their independence for longer, remain within their own homes where possible and reduce the number of people having to be supported in out of county care placements.

The population of Shropshire is predicted to grow from 320,274 in 2018 to 375,861 in 2040. The highest proportional increase in population is projected to be in the 65 or over age band, a change from 77,788 individuals in 2018 to 124,615 individuals in 2040- a 62% increase between 2018 and 2040.

Population Projections

● Under 18 ● 18-64 ● 65-84 ● 85 or over



The population of Shropshire is predicted to change from 341,646 in 2025 to 354,515 in 2030. The highest proportional increase in population is projected to be in the 65 or over age band, a change from 91,630 individuals in 2025 to 104,772 individuals in 2030 - a 14.3 % increase between 2025 and 2030.

(ONS projections based on 2018 population)

Between 2020 and 2040 it is projected that Shropshire will see a net increase of 1,086 adults with a learning disability in all age bands.

For those aged 65 and over, Shropshire will see a net increase of 15,026 people living alone and a net increase of 10,702 adults whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot, as well as a net increase of 2,380 people in a care or nursing home.

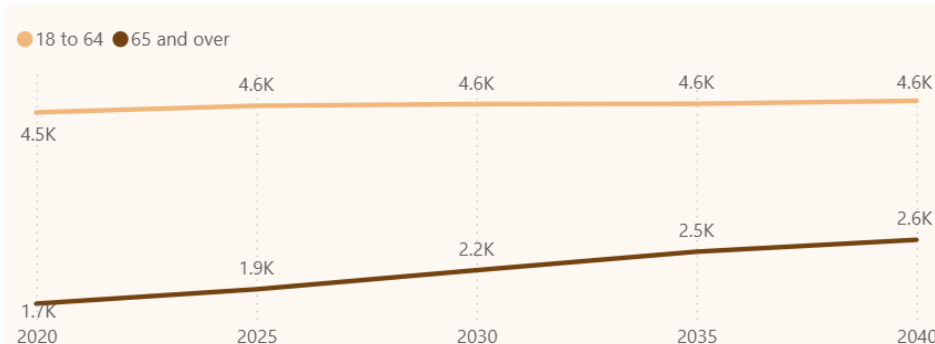
Between 2020 and 2040 it is projected that Shropshire will see a net increase of 1,086 adults with a learning disability in all age bands.

Projected Adult Population with Additional Needs

Display as...

Learning Disability

Individuals



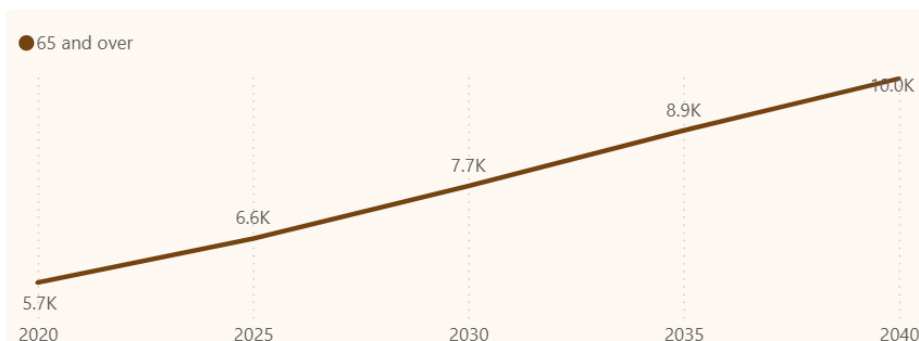
For those aged 65 and over, Shropshire will see a net increase of 15,026 people living alone and a net increase of 10,702 adults whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot, as well as a net increase of 2,380 people in a care or nursing home. The number of adults with dementia over the age of 65 is projected to increase from 5,700 to 10,100.

Projected Adult Population with Additional Needs

Display as...

Dementia

Individuals



Performance data indicates that adults over the age of 65 equate for approximately 65% of individuals who draw on services (for both short term and long-term support).

We recognise that the increase in demand will have an impact on the workforce. Measures are in place to measure demand and capacity and will inform future decisions about workforce. This strategy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Care and Wellbeing Strategy.

Part 5: Recommendations

Internal operational teams

On the basis of the data presented above the following recommendations are made:

1. Shropshire Council continues to embed and monitor the effectiveness of the Memorandum of Commitment for agency workers. This should support recruitment, retention and resilience and the shift from agency roles to substantive employment.
2. HR undertakes staff engagement activities to encourage staff to record on their records their ethnicity and other protected characteristics. This will allow us to develop our insight into the diverse mix of our staff group and how this compares to diversity within the population we serve.
3. We work with HR to create an improved landing page for individuals who are interested in applying for a job in Adult Social Care. This should include the option of rolling adverts for operational posts.
4. The process for apprentices automatically moving into Social Work posts is agreed and implemented.
5. There is clear guidance developed for Social Work Team managers about how to gain permission to pay to advertise golden hellos for hard to recruit teams.
6. Professional Development to rebrand into a Professional Development Academy which will include an outward facing website to promote our offer and to support recruitment.
7. Exit interview data is to be regularly analysed by the Senior Management Team.
8. All staff in Senior Social Worker roles are encouraged to complete the practice educator training, and Occupational Therapists are encouraged to complete the equivalent APPLE training.
9. Professional development to develop a business case for delivering Practice Education training in house.
10. Shropshire Council provides clear expectations to AMHPs and their managers about how they will be supported to remain on the rota, irrespective of their current role.
11. Develop our CPD offer to ensure that staff have the skills to work with individuals with complex needs and crises
12. Develop Occupational Therapy apprenticeships
13. Develop our approach to identifying and employing social care staff, especially for younger people considering a career in Adult Social Care.

Care Market

In order to meet future demand, we will work closely with health and other partners to promote training opportunities and inform training needs to upskill staff, improve the quality and outcomes for individuals with more training and support across the workforce to:

1. Support staff to develop a set of core competencies to support complex care, including:
 - managing identifying multiple health conditions, administering medications, and performing clinical procedures as appropriate
 - Skills to address and manage complex situations and crises

- effective communication skills to interact with service users, their families, and other healthcare professionals
 - understanding and implementing person centred care plans that identify an individual's preferences, needs, strengths and values
 - ability to provide care that respects diverse backgrounds and cultures
2. Identify dementia early, upskilling care home staff to provide simple screening and early referral
 3. Develop key skills that enable a person centred and strengths-based approach to ensure that people living with dementia are supported with dignity and empathy to live the life they choose
 4. Support younger individuals transitioning into adulthood with complex care and support needs at an earlier stage
 5. Identify and support people who are living with older carers to support them to transition into supported living
 6. Support individuals with very complex care and support needs who currently live out of area
 7. Have a mental health skillset, specifically those with experience of dual diagnosis, e.g. autism and personality disorder
 8. Demonstrate strengths-based practice and pathways to independence for our residents
 9. Support the introduction and promotion of assistive technology as part of an individual's care plan in a positive and progressive way
 10. Support the care market with recruitment and retention of their staff
 11. We aim to work with providers to support the raising of standards by influencing pay levels in our contracted providers; for example, by stipulating that they pay above the minimum wage.
 12. We should encourage and support as much as possible access to live online training or in person training as quality standards will not improve without that.
 13. Work with the council's planning department to increase the number and spread of one-bedroom properties suitable for use by key workers and health and social care professions.

Linking with our wider quality focus, to increase monitoring of providers and build on their good practice, we will encourage the market to embrace opportunities that can enhance their general training offer and bridge the gap between training and attainment of qualifications, this may include initiatives to standardise continued professional development or incentivise staff to complete qualifications.

We recognise and value the benefits of an experienced, mature workforce and retention of this skilled staff base is an important focus for us. A key area of development will be to support the market to develop their staff to be better able to support individuals with more complex care needs, by embracing opportunities for mentorship and coaching, as well as on the job and more formal training. We will share our learning from in house services and best practice examples to encourage more initiatives that can provide further career pathways, such as lead practitioner and 'champion' models.

We will continue to work with our in-house Joint Training team, the care market and their representatives to target the upskilling of these workers to support experience but unqualified staff to gain formal recognition. This may be through increasing uptake of NVQ's and apprenticeships with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) being of particular relevance to this staff cohort, by enabling individuals to demonstrate their learning outside of formal education, through work or life experiences, and potentially reduce the time and commitment required for additional study.

Future demand

1. Regularly review of staffing capacity and pay with a view to increase staff across operational and commissioning teams in order to increase capacity to meet current and future demand.

2. Review working practices to reduce time spent on paperwork and maximise efficiencies through, for example, the use of artificial intelligence.
3. Senior Management Team, as part of their ongoing strategy, continue to take steps to develop and improve the operational model, including the prevention offer with the view of reducing demand coming into social care.
4. Develop our working relationships with partners and communities so that we are able to take a joined-up approach to meet increasing demand
5. Continue to develop our Direct Payment and Individual Service Fund offer including the further development of the personal assistant notice board.

Link to other plans and strategies

- [The Corporate Plan 2026-2030](#)
- [Shropshire Council Workforce Strategy 2022-2025](#)
- [The People Plan 2025-2030.](#)
- [Improvement Plan November 2025](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2029/30](#)
- Care and wellbeing strategy (in draft)