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for Education

Children's homes workforce census: Stage 1 findings

Research report

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Authors: Kantar Public



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Executive summary

Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Kantar Public and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) to conduct research with children's homes in England. The research builds upon previous research with children's homes conducted in 2014. The overall aim was to provide up to date and comprehensive evidence of the children's homes workforce. The study had a particular focus on recruitment and retention to better understand the issues and inform policies to support the sector. This report presents findings from Stage 1 of the research. Stage 1 was an attempted census of all children's homes in England sent to registered managers. In total, 837 homes took part in the census, the equivalent of 29% of all eligible homes in England.

Staff recruitment

Managers of children's homes reported a number of difficulties they faced when recruiting care and managerial staff, with the majority of managers reporting that it was difficult to find care staff (69%) and managerial or supervisory staff (61%) with the appropriate level of skills and experience. Furthermore, managers – across a range of metrics – often reported that staff recruitment was harder compared with a year ago. Managers commonly disagreed that they had to readvertise vacancies on fewer occasions (42%), that the quality of applications was better (40%) and that they received more applications (36%) compared with a year ago.

The most commonly cited recruitment challenge was finding staff with the right qualities for the job. This included managers reporting the main challenges as: finding staff with the right experience (70%), right skills (63%) or the right attitude, motivation or personality (57%). Some managers also reported the job entailing shift work or unsociable hours as a challenge to recruitment (42%).

Staff retention

This research found that 61% of homes had an open staff vacancy with an estimated 12% vacancy rate for care staff. Managers reported a number of challenges with staff retention, most commonly reporting that when staff left their home, they left the sector (39%). This was most commonly due to personal reasons (38%) or for a career change (37%). Managers reported that the most common ways to retain staff in the children's homes sector were increased pay (77%), more or better career progression (31%), more flexible working hours (31%) and more opportunities for training or continuous professional development (30%).

Profile of the children's homes workforce

The estimated workforce size nationally is 39,300, including managerial and care staff. In 2014, this was estimated to be just over 20,000.

In terms of staff members' demographics, the majority of staff in homes were reported to be female (66%). Additionally, the majority were aged under 44, with a third aged 25 to 34 (35%) and 24% aged 35 to 44. Finally, the majority of staff were reported to be white (76%), 10% were reported to be black, 4% Asian and 3% reported to be mixed ethnicity. Most members of staff were reported to be employed on a full-time contract (84%) and very few were employed on zero-hour contracts (2%). Managers reported that 53% of staff had not worked longer than their contracted hours, in the last week that they had worked.

Overall, registered managers were paid an average of £20.75 per hour, and care staff in a non-supervisory role were paid an average of £11.97 per hour. Average hourly pay tended to increase with years of experience.

Qualification level of staff

Regulations require that registered managers hold a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership (or equivalent) within 3 years of starting a registered manager position. Care staff in homes are required to hold a Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (or equivalent) within 2 years of starting work in the sector. The census found that most staff were compliant with these requirements, although a small proportion of managers (2%) and care staff (13%) were not at least working towards the required qualification.

Homes use of agency staff

Most managers reported that they had not used agency staff in the previous 4 weeks (68%). Where managers had used agency staff in their home, this was most commonly to cover roles for support staff working with children (90%) or sleeping or waking nights (49%).

Services that homes provide

The majority of homes reported that they provided long term care (86%), with 20% reporting they provided short term care. The needs managers most commonly reported that their home cares for were complex needs (69%) and abuse and neglect (64%).

Children's homes reported an average of 4.2 registered places. The average number of occupied places per home was 3.2, meaning that an average of 0.94 places per home were unoccupied. Managers most commonly reported that their home had 6 staff members per occupied bed.

Where homes reported that they had unoccupied beds, the most common reasons for this were waiting for a child referral (32%), intentional vacancy to enable child stability (29%) and insufficient staff due to recruitment or retention issues (28%).

Background and method

This section outlines the background and methodology for Stage 1 of the children's homes workforce census.

Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the children's homes workforce census was to provide up to date and comprehensive evidence of the children's homes workforce. The study had a particular focus on recruitment and retention to better understand the issues and inform policies to support the sector. The last children's homes workforce census was conducted in 2014, so there was a need to collect updated data from homes. Findings from the 2014 report can be found in the report [a census of the children's homes workforce](#).

Stage 1 of the research aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What are the challenges around the recruitment of staff?
- What are the challenges around the retention of staff?
- What is the profile of the children's homes workforce?
- What is the current qualification level of staff?
- To what extent do homes rely on agency staff?
- What services do homes provide?

Methodology

Kantar Public administered the census between March and May 2023. Registered managers of all 3000 registered children's homes in England were invited to participate in the census. Homes were invited to take part by letter and email, with 4 reminder letters and emails sent throughout fieldwork. A postal questionnaire was also sent to homes who had not completed the online survey, with a reminder letter to take part. Finally, telephone calls were used at the end of fieldwork to encourage any remaining homes to take part.

During 2023 and 2024, 2 further stages of research will be conducted with children's homes in England. Stage 2 will conduct qualitative case studies with 20 homes to explore issues in more depth. Stage 3 will comprise a further quantitative census of all homes.

Sample design and weighting

Ofsted provided Kantar Public with a list of all registered children’s homes in England following a request made by DfE, including information such as registered manager name, children’s home address, telephone number and email address (where held).

In total, 837 homes took part in the census, the equivalent of 29% of all eligible homes in England: 667 took part online and 170 using the paper questionnaire. Table 1 shows the profile of the achieved sample who participated in the research compared with the population of all children’s homes.

Data from the census was weighted, firstly at the home level using population level data Ofsted provided to correct for minor variations in tendency to respond to the survey between homes. The home level data was weighted by number of registered places; Ofsted inspection rating; region; sector/ownership of home; and years registered as a home. Staff level data was separately weighted to account for where homes had provided data for a selection of staff in the home and adjusted for any differences in types of staff reported on (for example, based on managerial/supervisory responsibilities).

Table 1 Profile of achieved children’s homes sample and population

Profile of children’s homes	Achieved sample (unweighted %)	Population (unweighted %)
Years registered as a children’s home: less than 3 years	36%	37%
Years registered as a children’s home: 3 years up to 5 years	11%	11%
Years registered as a children’s home: 5 years up to 8 years	13%	13%
Years registered as a children’s home: 8 years up to 10 years	8%	7%
Years registered as a children’s home: 10 years or more	32%	32%
Number of beds in home: 1 or 2 beds	21%	23%
Number of beds in home: 3 beds	25%	23%
Number of beds in home: 4 beds	20%	22%
Number of beds in home: 5 beds	12%	12%
Number of beds in home: 6 beds or more	21%	20%

Profile of children's homes	Achieved sample (unweighted %)	Population (unweighted %)
Ownership: Private	77%	80%
Ownership: Local Authority (LA)	16%	15%
Ownership: Voluntary	7%	5%
Ofsted inspection rating: outstanding	12%	11%
Ofsted inspection rating: good	68%	63%
Ofsted inspection rating: requires improvement to be good	11%	14%
Ofsted inspection rating: inadequate	2%	3%
Ofsted inspection rating: Unknown	8%	9%
Region: East Midlands	10%	11%
Region: East of England	9%	8%
Region: London	5%	5%
Region: North East	8%	6%
Region: North West	24%	25%
Region: South East	12%	11%
Region: South West	7%	7%
Region: West Midlands	14%	16%
Region: Yorkshire and the Humber	11%	10%

Questionnaire development

The census questionnaire was developed by Kantar Public, with input from the National Children's Bureau (NCB), the Department for Education and an Advisory Board convened for this research project. The final version of the questionnaire is provided in Annex 3 of this report. It was designed to take up to 15 minutes to complete, once the datasheet had been completed. The online and postal versions of the questionnaire were largely identical, except for minor presentational differences. Managers could only enter data for themselves and up to 5 members of staff in the postal questionnaire for practical purposes, whereas they had the option to enter data for all of their staff online.

Cognitive testing was conducted with 5 homes. Interviews lasted up to 45 minutes and were conducted via telephone or online software (for example, Microsoft Teams, Zoom).

During the development of the questionnaire it was agreed that detailed individual-level questions about staff at each home (for example, their qualification and experience levels) could be answered for either all members of staff in the home, or for up to 6 members of staff (always including the registered manager plus up to 5 other members of staff). This approach was used to limit the burden on homes and to encourage participation. Managers could choose whether to answer for all staff in the home or up to 5 members of staff. To ensure the census findings were representative of the workforce, managers were instructed to select staff at random by ranking all members of staff alphabetically by surname and then selecting the first 5 staff alphabetically. Half of homes were asked to list staff by surname from A-Z and half from Z-A.

Of the 837 homes who participated, 501 reported data for up to 5 members of staff and 336 reported for all staff in the home. Privately run homes were more likely to answer for all staff (43% compared with 34% of LA run homes). Homes with 4 places or fewer were more likely to report for all members of staff (46% compared with 27% of homes with 5 places or more). Note these are unweighted percentages. All staff level data were weighted to be representative of all staff in the sector. This is described in Annex 1.

Survey and datasheet administration

Initially, Kantar Public sent the registered manager of each home a pack that included:

- a letter introducing the survey, its aims and objectives, and an outline of how the survey would be carried out
- a datasheet that was designed to help managers collate more detailed pieces of information (for example, data about staff working in the home) before completing the survey, and also explained how staff should be selected to be included in the census

Registered managers were asked to complete the questionnaire themselves and to provide information about themselves and their staff members. The following rules applied to which staff should be included in the survey:

- include only staff with responsibility for caring for children (excluding support staff such as catering and cleaning staff)
- include both full- and part-time staff
- exclude agency workers (those that were not employed directly by their organisation)
- exclude any teaching or nursing staff

- exclude staff from outside the home who come in for a limited number of hours to provide specialist support/services (for example, speech therapists or psychologists)

An invitation letter was sent on 16 March 2023, with details for how managers could complete the census online. A reminder letter with accompanying postal questionnaire was sent on 18 April 2023 to homes who had not completed the census, with a pre-paid envelope to return the questionnaire by post. A series of reminder emails were sent to managers alongside this. Finally, all homes which had still not responded received telephone calls between 3 and 10 May 2023, inviting managers to complete the census, with the option for login details to be re-sent to the manager via email, if requested.

Data analysis and processing

Throughout this report, comparisons are significant at the 95% confidence level. Only findings that are significantly different at the 95% confidence level are presented in this report.

Findings have been analysed looking at type of home; the region the home is within; the latest Ofsted rating the home received as of November 2022; and size of home by number of registered places and/or reported number of beds in the home. It is likely that these factors will overlap, so findings should be interpreted accordingly. Findings focus on groups of homes with more than 50 responses in the unweighted data.

During data processing, an issue in the script was identified whereby managers who selected to answer for 5 members of staff, were only asked to provide details for 4 members of staff (and themselves). Kantar Public conducted a recontact exercise to address this. Once data from the recontact exercise was incorporated and the staff level data re-weighted, we found very little change in the staff level findings as a result.

Research with residential special schools not registered as a children's home

The Department and Kantar Public also invited all residential special schools not registered as a children's home¹ in England to participate in this attempted census. Of a population of 200 residential special schools which were not registered as a children's home, 75 participated (a 38% response rate). A profile of residential special schools not registered as a children's home who participated compared with the overall population can be found in Annex 2.

It was decided to analyse responses from these settings separately. However, due to the small number of participants the same level of detailed analysis is not possible. Overall,

¹ Residential special schools which offer boarding provision for over 38 weeks a year are required to be dual-registered both as a residential special school and as a children's home.

headline findings amongst residential special schools not registered as a children's home were similar to all children's homes and residential special schools registered as a children's home, for questions relating to views of recruitment; number of vacancies; use of agency staff and levels of turnover. However, significant differences were difficult to detect due to the small sample. There was a large margin of error (c.10%) on findings amongst residential special schools not registered as a children's home. All findings presented for residential special schools not registered as a children's home should be treated with caution.

Residential special schools not registered as a children's home were more likely to report they provide for learning difficulties (81% compared with 48% of children's homes); autism spectrum disorder (89% compared with 50%); mental health problems (49% compared with 33%) and physical disabilities (24% compared with 13%), based on their statement of purpose.

Residential special schools not registered as a children's home were more likely to report that staff who left the school, moved to schools outside the care sector (25% compared with 11% of children's homes). Residential special schools not registered as a children's home were more likely to report that staff left for better pay elsewhere (42% compared with 22%); and were more likely than children's homes to report that increased pay for staff (91% compared with 77%) and more/better career progression (48% compared with 31%) were ways to retain staff. Residential special schools not registered as a children's home were more likely to report that challenges to recruitment included too few applicants (for other reasons) (47% compared with 30% of children's homes) and that the job entails shift work or unsociable hours (59% compared with 42%).

Children’s home findings

This section of the report explores the services and support that children’s homes in England provide; including the range of needs homes provide for as described in their statement of purpose; the number of places or nights the home can provide for; and the age ranges of children the home can care for. Homes with available bed capacity at the time of the survey were also asked why they had unoccupied beds.

Types of children’s home

Table 2 shows a breakdown of how homes described themselves as outlined in their statement of purpose. A statement of purpose sets out the overall aims and objectives of the children’s home, more information can be found in the [Children’s Homes Regulations](#).² A large majority of the surveyed children’s homes reported that they were ‘a children’s home which provides long term care’ (86%). One in five (20%) reported that they were ‘a children’s home which provides short term care’. Around one in twenty reported they were ‘a short break children’s home’ (7%).

Table 2 Types of children’s homes that responded to the survey by type of home (Managers could select more than one answer)

Type of children’s home	All children’s homes	Local authority run homes	Privately run homes
A children’s home which provides long term care	86%	55%	93%
A children’s home which provides short term care	20%	24%	20%
A short break children’s home	7%	33%	1%
A residential special school registered as a children’s home	2%	1%	2%
A secure children’s home	1%	4%	<1%
Some other type of setting	1%	4%	1%
<i>Base (all surveyed children’s homes including staff in voluntary run homes)</i>	835	136	640

² More information about children’s homes regulations can be found at [Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations](#)

Privately run homes were more likely than local authority run homes to report they provide long term care (93% and 55% respectively). Local authority run homes were more likely to report they were short break homes (33% compared with 1% of privately run homes).

The range of needs met by children's homes

Children's homes were asked which needs they were classified as being able to meet in their statement of purpose. A list of needs was presented for managers to select from, with the option to select "something else". Managers could select as many needs as applied to their home.

On average, children's homes reported that they were able to meet 3.1 of the types of needs in Table 3. Local authority run homes reported they were able to meet a higher number of types of needs than privately run homes (3.5 and 2.9 respectively).

Table 3 shows a breakdown of responses. Two thirds of children's homes (69%) reported that they were able to meet complex needs including drug or alcohol dependence, sexually harmful behaviour, attachment disorders, emotional and behavioural difficulties, offending behaviour, going missing, self-harm, history of harming themselves and/or others, attention and conduct disorders/ADHD, communication difficulties, and unspecified complex needs.

A similar proportion (64%) said they were able to meet needs associated with abuse and neglect including trauma, child sexual exploitation, neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and unspecified abuse.

Half (50%) were able to meet autism spectrum disorder needs and a third (33%) were able to meet needs associated with mental health problems. Fewer children's homes were able to meet sensory impairment needs (18%), complex health needs (17%) and needs associated with physical disabilities (13%).

Table 3 Needs included in the children’s homes’ statement of purpose by type of home (Managers could select more than one answer)

Type of need	All children’s homes	LA run homes	Privately run homes
Complex needs	69%	66%	71%
Abuse and neglect	64%	54%	67%
Autism spectrum disorder	50%	52%	48%
Learning difficulties	48%	59%	44%
Mental health problems	33%	29%	34%
Sensory impairment	18%	27%	15%
Complex health needs	17%	34%	13%
Physical disabilities	13%	33%	8%
Something else	4%	3%	5%
<i>Base (all surveyed children’s homes)</i>	<i>832</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>638</i>

Homes with 6 or more places were more likely to cater for learning difficulties (65% compared with 40% of those with fewer than 6 places), autism spectrum disorders (63% compared with 42%) and physical disabilities (32% compared with 3%).

Local authority run homes were more likely to cater for learning difficulties (59% against 44% of privately run homes), sensory impairment (27% against 15%), complex health needs (34% against 13%) and physical disabilities (33% against 8%). Privately run homes were more likely to report that they catered for abuse and neglect (67% against 54% of LA homes).

The number of registered places and the number currently occupied

Overall, children’s homes had an average of 4.2 registered places available for children and young people, based on data provided by registered managers. The average number of registered places was higher in local authority run homes (5.7) than in privately run homes (3.8).

The average number of occupied places per home was 3.2, meaning that an average of 0.94 places per home were unoccupied.

Occupancy rates were similar between local authority run and privately run homes.

Length of time that children and young people are cared for

Children's homes which were not classified as short break homes on their statement of purpose, were asked how long, on average, children and young people were cared for within their home. Table 4 shows a breakdown of responses. More than a quarter (28%) of these homes reported that, on average, they cared for children or young people for more than 3 years. Around one in five (21%) said that they cared for children or young people for between 2 and 3 years and the same proportion (21%) reported average stays of between 1 and 2 years. A similar proportion of homes said it varied too much to say (21%).

Stays of less than one year were less common - 6% of these settings reported an average stay of between 6 months and a year, 2% reported an average stay of between 3 and 6 months, and fewer than 1% reported average stays of 3 months or less.

Table 4 Average length of time that children and young people are cared for (excluding short break homes) by number of places

Average time cared for	All children's homes (excluding short breaks)	1-2 places	3 places	4 places	5 places	6 or more places
3 months or less	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	0%
Between 3 months and 6 months	2%	3%	1%	1%	4%	1%
Between 6 months and 1 year	6%	10%	6%	5%	8%	3%
Between 1 year and 2 years	21%	26%	21%	25%	11%	17%
Between 2 years and 3 years	20%	13%	24%	23%	24%	21%
More than 3 years	28%	17%	25%	28%	38%	39%
Varies too much to say	21%	29%	24%	14%	16%	17%
Don't know	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%
Prefer not to say	<1%	1%	0%	<1%	0%	0%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes, excluding short breaks)</i>	<i>770</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>139</i>

Longer-term stays of more than 3 years were more common in homes with 5 places (38%)³ and 6 or more places (39%) compared with smaller homes that had 1 or 2 places (17%).

³ The sample size for settings with 5 places was relatively low (n=88).

Short break

Maximum number of nights per month and current nights available in short break homes

The base size for short break homes is small (65 short break homes took part in the census), so the following findings should be treated with caution.

Short break homes were asked the maximum number of nights per month that children and young people could stay in their home, as reported by the home. On average they reported a maximum of 41 nights (based on responses from 40 short break homes).

Short break homes were also asked how many nights were currently available for children and young people to stay in their home. On average they reported 34 nights were currently available per month (based on responses from 40 short break homes).

The range for both maximum and available number of nights available amongst short break homes was 300 nights.

Amount of nights usually available for stays in short break homes

As stated above, the base size for short break homes is small (65 short break homes took part in the census), so the following findings should be treated with caution.

Short break homes were also asked the approximate number of nights that were usually available in their home. Of the 65 short break homes which responded to this question, 25% said that they generally offered stays of 1 to 3 nights, 16% offered stays of 4 to 7 nights, 4% offered stays of 8 to 20 nights and 22% usually offered stays of over 20 nights.

Around three in ten short break homes (28%) reported that the number of available nights varied too much to say, 1% said they did not know the typical number of nights available and 3% preferred not to answer the question.

Time beds are unoccupied for

Children's homes which were not classified as short break homes on their statement of purpose were asked how long beds were typically unoccupied for. Homes which gave a 'not applicable' response (2%) were excluded from the reported data.

As shown in Table 5, around one in six (15%) reported that beds were typically unoccupied for a week or less (7% for about 1 to 3 days and 8% for about a week). A similar proportion said that beds were typically unoccupied for about 2 to 3 weeks (14%), about a month (16%) or over 5 weeks (14%). Around a third of these homes (34%) said that the amount of time that beds were unoccupied varied too much to say.

Table 5 Average length of time that beds are unoccupied for (excluding short break homes) by region

Average time for unoccupied beds	All children's homes excluding short break homes	South and Central (London, South East and South West)	East (East Midlands and East of England)	West (West Midlands)	North (North East, North West and Yorkshire and The Humber)
About 1 to 3 days	7%	6%	7%	2%	8%
About a week	8%	5%	7%	6%	11%
About 2 to 3 weeks	14%	15%	15%	11%	14%
About a month	16%	22%	13%	16%	15%
Usually over 5 weeks	14%	16%	12%	16%	13%
Varies too much to say	34%	28%	37%	40%	33%
Don't know	5%	7%	6%	6%	4%
Prefer not to say	3%	1%	4%	3%	3%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes, excluding short break homes)</i>	722	161	141	111	309

Homes in the South and Central region were also the least likely to say that the amount of time that beds were unoccupied varied too much to say (28%) compared with homes in the West (40%) and homes in the East (37%). Homes in the South and Central region were more likely to say that unoccupied beds were typically unoccupied for about a month (22% compared with 13% in the East and 15% in the North).

Reason for unoccupied beds

If a children's home had fewer residents than registered places, they were asked why they had unoccupied beds. Table 6 shows responses. Similar proportions of homes reported that unoccupied beds were due to waiting for a child referral (32%), an intentional vacancy to enable child stability (29%) or insufficient staff due to recruitment/retention issues (28%). Around three in ten (29%) said there were other

reasons for unoccupied beds, and responses given were for a variety of reasons including:

- the home being refurbished, redecorated or closing down
- the home being used for solo placements only.

Base sizes for this question were too small to detect significant differences amongst different types of home.

Table 6 Reasons for having unoccupied beds (managers could select more than one answer)

Reason for unoccupied beds	All children's homes with unoccupied beds
Waiting for child referral	32%
Intentional vacancy to enable child stability	29%
Insufficient staff due to recruitment/retention issues	28%
Lack of demand for beds currently	1%
Other (please specify)	29%
Prefer not to say	4%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes with unoccupied beds)</i>	386

Youngest child able to care for

Children's homes were asked the youngest and oldest age of children they could care for. When asked the youngest age of child or young person that they could care for, fewer than one in ten children's homes (7%) said they were able to care for children aged 0 to 5 years old. Around a third (34%) said the youngest age they could care for was between 6 and 8 years, while around a quarter reported that the youngest age was 9 to 11 (24%) or 12 to 14 (24%). Table 7 shows a breakdown of responses.

Table 7 Youngest age that homes could care for

Youngest age home could care for	Proportion of homes
0 to 5 years	7%
6 to 8 years	34%
9 to 11 years	24%
12 to 14 years	24%
15 and older	9%
Don't know/ Prefer not to say	2%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes)</i>	<i>748</i>

Short break homes were more likely to report the youngest age they could care for is 0 to 5 years. Of the 68 short break homes who participated, 22 reported a youngest age of 0 to 5 years.

Oldest child able to care for

Children's homes were also asked about the oldest age of child or young person that they were able to care for. Around one in twenty (6%) said that they were able to care for children and young people up to the age of 13. Around a third said they were able to care for young people up to the age of 17 (34%) and a third could provide care for those aged 18 or older (34%). Table 8 shows a breakdown of responses.

Table 8 Oldest age that homes could care for

Oldest age home could care for	Proportion of homes
Up to 13	6%
14	4%
15	7%
16	13%
17	34%
18 and older	34%
Don't know/ Prefer not to say	2%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes)</i>	<i>748</i>

Staff findings

This section of the report begins with estimated total staff in the children's home sector by demographic attributes. The section then presents the total number of staff and managers/supervisors who worked in the home at the time of the census. It then explores the profile of staff who work in children's homes. The profile presented the proportion of staff by sex, ethnicity, and age. Managers were asked how many hours staff were contracted to work for, whether staff had worked over their contracted hours in the last working week and staff's hourly rate of pay. All figures presented in this section are based on headcount.

Population estimates

Table 9 presents estimated total staff in the children's homes sector by different demographic traits. These estimates are based on the findings from the homes that responded to the survey. The table presents the confidence intervals around these figures. Within the table, not given refers to don't know, prefer not to say, or blank responses.

The estimated workforce size nationally is 39,300, including managerial and care staff. In 2014, this was estimated to be just over 20,000.

Table 9 Estimated total staff in the children's homes sector

Estimated total staff in the children's homes sector	Numbers (to the nearest 10)	+ or – confidence interval (at the 95% level)
Total staff	39,300	1,424
Gender: male	12,730	948
Gender: female	25,490	1,231
Gender: not given*	1,080	266
Age: 16-24	3,700	658
Age: 25-34	13,640	1,003
Age: 35-44	9,340	835
Age: 45-54	7,290	617
Age: 55+	3,730	445
Age: not given*	1,610	239
Ethnicity: white	29,590	1,076
Ethnicity: Asian/ Asian British	1,660	333
Ethnicity: black/ African/ Caribbean/ black British	3,930	523
Ethnicity: mixed/multiple ethnic groups	1,020	241
Ethnicity: other ethnic group	410	147
Ethnicity: not given*	2,690	898
Contract type: full-time	32,860	1,371
Contract type: part-time	4,580	566
Contract type: zero-hours	840	169
Contract type: other	90	44
Contract type: not given*	930	272

Number of staff and supervisors/managers working in the home

Homes were asked in the 2023 census and in the 2014 census, how many staff work in the home with a caring role. In 2023 around a fifth of children's homes had 6 or 7 staff with a caring role (18%), or 8 or 9 staff with a caring role (20%). Almost four in ten (37%) had between 10 and 15 staff with a caring role, while one in ten had between 16 and 20 (11%) or more than 20 (10%).

Looking at change over time, the number of staff with responsibility for the care of children and young people per setting changed relatively little between 2014 and 2023, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Number of staff with a caring role over time

Total number of staff with a caring role	2014	2023
Up to 5	6%	4%
6 or 7	17%	18%
8 or 9	20%	20%
10 to 15	40%	37%
16 to 20	10%	11%
More than 20	7%	10%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes)</i>	783	748

Looking at average staff to bed ratios, Table 11 shows the breakdown of how many staff homes reported they have per occupied bed. Homes were most likely to report 6 staff or more per reported occupied bed (32%). A small minority reported 2 or fewer per reported occupied bed (3%).

Table 11 Staff to bed ratios based on occupied beds

Average number of staff per reported bed	2023
2 or fewer members of caring staff per reported bed	3%
2 to 3 members of caring staff per reported bed	21%
3 to 4 members of caring staff per reported bed	27%
4 to 5 members of caring staff per reported bed	18%
6 or more members of caring staff per reported bed	32%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes)</i>	<i>748</i>

Children's homes were also asked how many staff were responsible for supervising or managing other members of staff. In 2023, 29% of children's homes had 1 or 2 staff members with a supervisory or management role. A fifth had 3 staff members with supervisory or management roles (20%) and 24% had 4 staff in those roles. Around one in six (17%) had 5 or 6 staff in supervisory or management roles and 10% had 7 or more such staff. The mean number of managerial or supervisory staff was 4.

Staff census details

Homes were asked to provide details of staff in their home to create a profile of staff working in the children's homes sector. As described in the methodology section, managers were asked detailed questions about the workforce at each home, and managers could choose to answer for all members of staff in the home, or for up to 6 members of staff (always including the registered manager plus up to 5 other members of staff). This approach was used to limit the burden on homes and to encourage response. To ensure the census findings were representative of the workforce, managers were instructed to select staff at random by ranking all members of staff alphabetically by surname and then select the first 5 staff alphabetically. Half of homes were asked to list staff by surname from A-Z and half from Z-A. Data was then weighted to ensure they were representative of all staff and homes in the children's homes sector in England.

Throughout this section, the figures only include those members of staff who have responsibility for the care of children and young people.

Managerial status

Around a third of staff, including registered managers, were classified as having a managerial or supervisory role of some description (32%). Excluding registered managers, 27% of staff were reported to have managerial or supervisory responsibility.

Two thirds of staff (66%) worked in roles that did not involve the management or supervision of other staff⁴.

Throughout this section, findings are presented for registered managers; those with managerial or supervisory responsibilities; and those without managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Sex

Managers were asked to report the sex of each member of staff reported on. As shown in Table 12, 66% of all staff members were female and a third (33%) were male. Details were not provided for 2% of staff members. The gender profile was consistent for different types of staff.

Compared with 2014, there was a decrease in the proportion of male staff overall (42% in 2014 compared with 33% in 2023). At the registered manager level, the proportion of male (37% in 2014 vs 30% in 2023) and female (63% in 2014 vs 68% in 2023) managers also changed.

Table 12 Profile of care staff – Sex

Sex	Registered managers	Staff with a managerial or supervisory role	Staff who do not manage or supervise other staff	All staff
Male	30%	33%	32%	33%
Female	68%	65%	67%	66%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Prefer not to say	2%	1%	1%	2%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes)</i>	837	2,674	3,288	6,108

Age

Managers were also asked to report the age of staff, using a series of age bands. As shown in Table 13, 9% of staff were aged 16 to 24, 35% were aged 25 to 34 and 24%

⁴ Please note details were refused for 1% of staff and were not known for 1% of staff.

were aged 35 to 44. Those aged 45 to 54 accounted for 19% of the workforce, while 10% of staff were aged 55 or older.

Staff who did not manage or supervise other staff were more likely to be younger than those with managerial responsibilities. One in ten (12%) of those who did not manage or supervise other staff were aged 16 to 24, compared with 3% of those with a managerial or supervisory role and less than 1% of registered managers.

Registered managers were more likely to have an older age profile than those with a managerial or supervisory role: 16% of registered managers were aged 55 or older, compared with 10% of those with a managerial or supervisory role and 10% of those who did not manage or supervise other staff.

Table 13 Profile of care staff – Age

Age	Registered managers	All staff	Staff with a managerial or supervisory role	Staff who do not manage or supervise other staff
16 to 24	<1%	9%	3%	12%
25 to 34	24%	35%	35%	36%
35 to 44	33%	24%	27%	22%
45 to 54	25%	19%	23%	17%
55 or older	16%	10%	10%	10%
Don't know	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%	2%	1%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes)</i>	837	6,121	2,679	3,291

Ethnicity

Managers were asked to report the ethnicity of staff reported on, using a standardised Office for National Statistics (ONS) format to collect ethnicity.⁵ Table 14 shows a breakdown of roles by ethnicity. Three quarters of staff were from white backgrounds (76%) and one in ten were from black African, black Caribbean or black British backgrounds (10%). Asian or Asian British staff made up 4% of the workforce, while 3%

⁵ [Ethnicity harmonised standard – Government Analysis Function \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](https://civilservice.gov.uk)

were from Mixed or Multiple Ethnic backgrounds and 1% were from other ethnic backgrounds. Details were not provided for 5% of staff.

Those from white backgrounds accounted for a higher proportion of registered managers (86%) and managerial or supervisory roles (85%), and a lower proportion of roles which did not involve the management or supervision of other staff (74%).

Staff from black African, black Caribbean or black British backgrounds accounted for a higher proportion of roles that did not involve the management or supervision of other staff (12%) and a lower proportion of supervisory or managerial roles (6%). They were also less likely to be registered managers (5%).

Table 14 Profile of care staff – Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Registered managers	Staff with a managerial or supervisory role	Staff who do not manage or supervise other staff	All staff
White	86%	85%	74%	76%
Black African / black Caribbean / black British	5%	6%	12%	10%
Asian / Asian British	2%	3%	5%	4%
Mixed / multiple ethnic	4%	3%	3%	3%
Other ethnic groups	<1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%	5%	5%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes)</i>	836	2,676	3,291	6,117

Contract type

Managers were asked a series of questions related to contract and working arrangements with staff.

Managers reported what type of employment contract their staff were on. Table 15 shows a breakdown by types of contract. More than eight in ten staff (84%) were employed on full-time contracts. Around one in ten had part-time contracts (12%). Few staff were employed on zero-hours contracts (2%) and fewer than 1% were employed on some other basis. Details were not provided for 1% of staff.

Those who did not have management or supervisory responsibilities were more likely to have part-time contracts (15% compared with 6% of those in managerial or supervisory roles and less than 1% of registered managers).

Table 15 Profile of care staff– Type of contract

Type of contract	Registered managers	All staff	Staff with a managerial or supervisory role	Staff who do not manage or supervise other staff
Full-time	98%	84%	93%	81%
Part-time	<1%	12%	6%	15%
Zero-hours	0%	2%	<1%	3%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes)</i>	837	6,135	2,674	3,290

Part-time contracts were more widespread for the following types of home:

- Children's homes with an outstanding Ofsted rating (15% of staff compared with 12% of staff in those rated good and 11% in those rated requires improvement to be good or inadequate)
- Local authority run children's homes (22% of staff compared with 8% in privately run homes)
- Children's homes with 6 or more places (15% of staff compared with 9% in homes with 1 or 2 places)

Female staff were more likely to be employed on a part-time contract (13%) compared with male staff (9%). Staff aged 55 or older were also more likely to be employed on a part time contract (25%) compared with younger staff (10%).

Number of hours worked in week

Managers were asked how many hours they and the staff reported on worked each week, excluding overtime. There was a relatively high level of non-response to the

question, with 9% of staff members not being allocated a specific response. The following figures are based only on those staff members for whom data was available.

Overall, around one in five care staff (18%) worked for 35 hours or less per week, excluding overtime. Similar proportions of staff typically worked for 36 to 39 hours per week (34%) or for 40 hours per week (31%). One in six typically worked for 41 hours or more per week (17%). Table 16 shows a breakdown of responses. The mean number of hours worked was 37.6, which was similar to the mean number of hours reported in 2014 (37.3).

Table 16 Profile of care staff– Typical hours per week (excluding overtime) by type of home

Hours per week	All staff	LA run homes	Privately run homes
1 to 35 hours	18%	26%	15%
36 to 39 hours	34%	67%	22%
40 hours	31%	3%	42%
41 hours or more	17%	4%	22%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children’s homes including staff in voluntary run homes)</i>	5,652	999	4,261

Typical weekly hours excluding overtime were higher in privately run homes than in local authority run homes. More than six in ten staff in privately run homes worked 40 hours per week or more in a normal week excluding overtime (42% worked 40 hours and 22% worked 41 hours or more). Excluding overtime, fewer than one in ten staff in local authority run homes worked for 40 hours per week or more (3% worked 40 hours and 4% worked 41 hours or more).

On average, staff without managerial or supervisory responsibilities were reported to work fewer contracted hours per week (36.9 hours) compared with staff with managerial or supervisory responsibilities, including registered managers (38.9 hours).

Whether staff worked more than contracted hours

Managers were also asked whether staff reported on had worked more than their contracted working hours in the last week. Table 17 shows a breakdown of responses. A third of staff (34%) were reported to have worked more than their contracted hours in the last working week. Around half (53%) had not worked more than their contracted hours and 7% of staff were reported to vary too much to say. A small minority reported that they

were unsure whether a staff member had worked more than their contracted hours (4%) or preferred not to say (3%).

Staff with managerial or supervisory responsibilities were more likely to be reported to have worked more than their contracted hours in the last working week (42%) compared with care staff without managerial or supervisory responsibilities (29%).

Table 17 Profile of care staff– Whether worked more than contracted hours in the last working week

Whether staff worked more than contracted hours	All staff	LA run homes	Privately run homes
Yes	34%	33%	35%
No	53%	55%	55%
Varies too much to say	7%	6%	7%
Don't know	4%	2%	1%
Prefer not to say	3%	3%	3%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes including staff in voluntary run homes)</i>	6,110	1,170	4,512

Note, voluntary home staff are included in the all staff base size but are not presented in a column in the table due to small base sizes.

Table 18 shows a breakdown of staff's normal working hours in a week, and whether they worked more than their contracted hours as reported by the home manager. Staff whose normal working hours were 40 hours (38%) or 41 hours or more (38%) per week were more likely to be reported to work more than these normal hours than those whose normal hours were 1 to 35 hours (30%) or 36 to 39 hours (35%).

Table 18 Whether worked more than contracted hours in the last working week

Whether staff worked more than contracted hours	1-35 hours normally worked in a week	36-39 hours normally worked in a week	40 hours normally worked in a week	41 or more hours normally worked in a week
Yes	30%	35%	38%	38%
No	63%	59%	51%	54%
Varies too much to say	5%	4%	10%	6%
Don't know	2%	1%	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	0%	1%	1%	1%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes including staff in voluntary run homes)</i>	1,145	1,876	1,979	1,166

Number of years in the sector

Managers were asked to record the number of years' experience the staff reported on had in the children's home sector. There was a higher level of non-response, with 14% of staff members not being allocated a specific response (including don't know). The following figures are based only on those staff members for whom data was available.

Table 19 shows a breakdown of number of years' experience. Overall, more than a quarter of staff had at least 10 years of experience in the children's home sector (27%). Around one in seven (14%) had 6 to 9 years' experience or 4 to 5 years' experience (15%). A quarter of staff had worked in the sector for 2 to 3 years (23%) and a fifth had worked in the sector for a year or less (21%).

Registered managers tended to have more years' experience than other staff members. Two thirds (64%) had 10 or more years of experience in the sector and 21% had 6 to 9 years of experience. Those in managerial or supervisory roles also tended to have at least 10 years of experience (42%) and a further one in five having 6 to 9 years of experience (20%).

Staff in roles with no managerial or supervisory responsibilities were more likely to have fewer years' experience, 31% had 1 year of experience or less and 26% had 2 or 3 years of experience.

Overall, staff had an average of 7 years of experience in 2023, a slight decrease from 8 years in 2014.

Table 19 Profile of care staff – Years of experience in the children’s home sector by role

Year of experience	All staff	Registered managers	Staff with a managerial or supervisory role	Staff without a managerial or supervisory role
1 year or less	21%	1%	5%	31%
2 or 3 years	23%	6%	17%	26%
4 or 5 years	15%	8%	16%	14%
6 to 9 years	14%	21%	20%	10%
10 years or more	27%	64%	42%	19%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children’s homes)</i>	<i>5,361</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>2,488</i>	<i>2,822</i>

Note, voluntary home staff are included in the all staff base size but are not presented in a column in the table due to small base sizes.

Table 20 shows a breakdown of years of experience by local authority and privately run home staff. Staff in local authority run homes tended to have more years’ experience than those in privately run homes. Those in local authority run homes had an average of 12 years of experience (the same as the average reported for LA homes in 2014) while those in privately run homes had an average of 6 years of experience (a slight decrease from 7 years reported for privately run homes in 2014).

More than half of staff in local authority run homes had at least 10 years’ experience (52%) compared with 20% of staff in privately run homes. Conversely, staff in privately run homes were more likely to have 1 years’ experience or less (26% compared with 6% of those in LA homes).

On average, staff with no managerial responsibilities were reported to have the lowest number of years’ experience in the sector (5.6 years), followed by those with managerial responsibilities (10.0 years) and registered managers were reported to have the highest number of years’ experience in the sector (13.8 years).

Table 20 Profile of care staff– Years of experience in the children’s home sector by type of home

Years of experience	All staff	LA homes	Privately run homes
1 year or less	21%	6%	26%
2 or 3 years	23%	14%	26%
4 or 5 years	15%	14%	14%
6 to 9 years	14%	15%	14%
10 years or more	27%	52%	20%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children’s homes including voluntary homes)</i>	5,361	892	4,100

Hourly rate of pay

Finally, managers were asked to record the hourly rate of pay for each staff member reported on. There was a high level of non-response to the question, with 20% of staff being allocated a ‘don’t know’ response and 37% being allocated a ‘prefer not to say’ response. The following figures are based on those staff members for whom data was available, a total of 2,566 staff.

Overall, registered managers were paid an average of £20.75 per hour. On average, registered managers in local authority run homes were paid more than those in privately run homes (£24.02 and £19.92 respectively).

Care staff in a non-supervisory role were paid an average of £11.97 per hour. On average, those in local authority run homes were paid more than those in privately run homes (£14.44 and £11.25 respectively).

As shown in Figure 1, average hourly pay tended to increase with years of experience, although rates were modestly higher with each year of experience. For example, a staff member with a year or less of experience earned an average of £11.11 while a staff member with 5 years of experience earned an average of £12.63.

Figure 1 Average hourly pay by years of experience in the children's homes sector



Base: All staff for whom an hourly rate of pay was specified (1 year and under = 561; 2 years = 318; 3 years = 270; 4 years = 184; 5 years = 161; 6 to 10 years = 446; 11 to 20 years = 368; 21+ years = 134)

A range of factors influence pay. Focusing on those with 5 or fewer years experience in the sector and who did not have supervisory or managerial responsibilities, hourly rate of pay was higher amongst those who worked in local authority run homes compared with privately run homes. Table 21 shows a breakdown of findings.

Table 21 Comparison of local authority run and privately run homes staff pay based on years of experience in the children’s homes sector (excluding registered managers and those with supervisory or managerial responsibilities)

Years of experience in children’s care sector	Local authority run	Privately run
1 year	£12.84	£10.98
2 years	£14.06	£11.17
3 years	£14.43	£11.37
4 years	£13.98	£11.31
5 years	£13.38	£11.45
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed LA and privately run homes)</i>	231	1,146

Qualifications at staff level

Managers were asked whether they and their staff either held or were working towards the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Care (or an equivalent qualification) or the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (or an equivalent qualification). In England, regulations require registered managers to hold the Level 5 qualification or to gain it within 3 years of taking a registered manager position; and care staff to hold the Level 3 qualification or to gain it within 2 years of taking a caring position within a children’s home.

Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Care (or equivalent)

More than eight in ten (85%) registered managers reported that they held a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Care or an equivalent qualification. One in ten (13%) reported that they were working towards the Level 5 Diploma (or equivalent) with 3% reporting they neither held nor were working towards the Level 5 Diploma (or equivalent).

Level 3 Diploma for Residential Care (or equivalent)

Across all non-managerial staff, 63% reported holding the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare or equivalent and 24% were reported to be working towards it. One in seven (13%) care staff said they were not working towards and did not hold a Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare. Findings are shown in Table 22.

Table 22 Total number of staff who hold or are working towards their Level 3 Diploma for Residential Care (or equivalent)

Total number of staff who hold or are working towards their Level 3 Diploma for Residential Care	All children's homes
Working towards Level 3 Diploma	24%
Holding Level 3 Diploma	63%
Not holding or working towards Level 3 Diploma	13%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes excluding registered manager)</i>	5,579

Almost three quarters (72%) of non-registered managers with managerial or supervisory responsibilities held a Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare or some other equivalent qualification. Around half (52%) of those who did not have managerial or supervisory responsibilities held a Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare or some other equivalent qualification. Non-managerial or supervisory care staff were more likely to be working towards their Level 3 Diploma than staff who manage or supervise other staff (30% compared with 6% of managerial or supervisory staff).

Privately run homes were more likely to report care staff were working towards their Level 3 Diploma (26% compared with 10% of LA homes). Local authority run homes were more likely to report staff held the Level 3 Diploma (77%) compared with privately run homes (57%).

Staff with fewer years' experience were less likely to hold the Level 3 Diploma (or equivalent) but be more likely to be working towards it compared with those with more experience, as shown in Table 23.

Table 23 Staff who hold or are working towards their Level 3 Diploma for Residential Care (or equivalent) by years of experience

Staff who hold or are working towards their Level 3 Diploma for Residential Care	1 year or less	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Working towards Level 3 Diploma	67%	56%	31%	23%	19%
Holding Level 3 Diploma	19%	46%	72%	75%	79%
<i>Base (all staff in surveyed children's homes excluding registered manager)</i>	<i>1,057</i>	<i>643</i>	<i>556</i>	<i>391</i>	<i>372</i>

Retention issues

Recruitment and retention of staff has been reported to be challenging in the children's homes sector. This section explores the number of staff which managers reported had left their home since March 2022 (one year prior to the 2023 census); which roles staff have moved to when they have left the home; reasons why staff left the home; and which factors could help to retain staff within the children's homes sector.

Managers were also asked how many open vacancies their home had at the time of the census, and how long it takes on average to fill a vacancy.

Number of staff left since March 2022

Surveyed children's homes were asked how many members of staff with responsibilities for care of children or young people had left their home since March 2022. One in ten (12%) reported that no staff had left their home since March 2022. The majority of homes (64%) reported that between 1 and 5 members of staff had left their home since March 2022 and 16% said that more than 5 members had left their home.

Homes with 1 or 2 places were more likely to report no staff leavers since March 2022 (22% compared with 11% of homes with 3 or 4 places and 7% with 5 or more places).

Roles moved to since leaving home

Children's homes were asked about the types of roles that staff went on to do after leaving their home. Table 24 shows a breakdown of responses selected by managers, and managers could select as many that applied. The most common selected destinations were something else (unspecified) (39%) and another children's home (31%). Around one in seven (17%) said they moved to another role within the children's social care sector.

Table 24 Roles that staff move on to when they leave a children’s home (Managers could select more than one answer)

Roles staff leavers go on to do	All children’s homes
Something else	39%
Another children’s home	31%
Another role within the children’s social care	17%
Outside the sector – schools	11%
Adult social care	9%
Family support work	7%
Retirement	6%
Social work	5%
An agency, offering staff to children’s homes	4%
Outside the sector – retail	4%
Outside the sector – hospitality	3%
Outside the sector – youth work	3%
Outside the sector – Further education	3%
Outside the sector – Early years childcare	3%
Foster care	1%
Total: Roles within the children’s social care sector	47%
Total: Roles outside the children’s social care sector	54%
Base (all surveyed children’s homes)	829

Source: And when care staff leave your home, which of the following types of job have they moved to?

Privately run homes were more likely to report staff left to do something else (40% compared with 30% of LA homes). Local authority run homes (34%) were more likely to report that their staff moved to another role within the children’s social care sector compared with privately run homes (14%).

Reason for leaving role

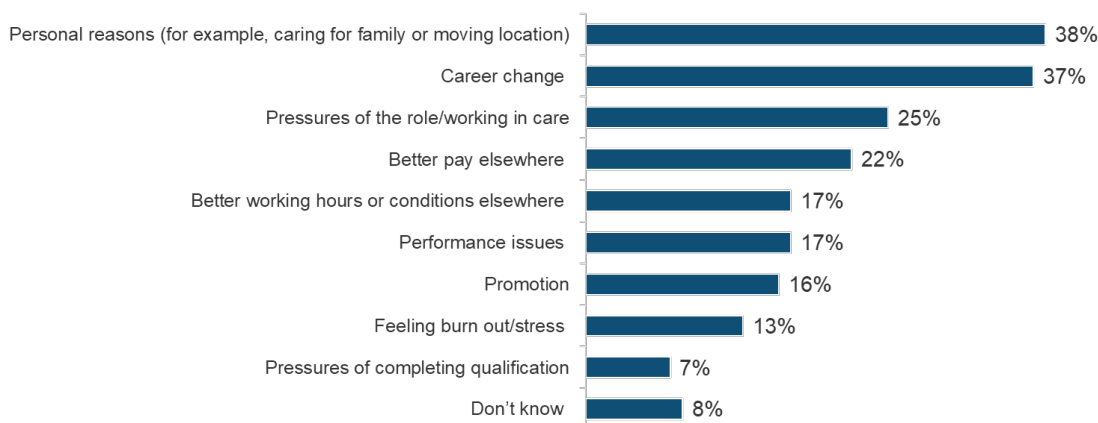
Managers were also asked to select from a list of reasons why staff left their role. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of responses. The most commonly reported reasons why staff left

their role was for personal reasons (for example, caring for family or moving location) (38%) or for a career change (37%).

Pressures of the role or working in care were reported as a reason by 25% and 22% reported better pay elsewhere was a reason. The same proportion of homes (17%) reported that staff left for better working hours or conditions or because of performance issues. A similar proportion (16%) reported staff left because of a promotion whilst 13% said it was due to feeling burnt out or stressed. Around one in twenty (7%) reported that their staff had left because of pressures completing qualifications.

Two in five (42%) managers who reported that staff left for personal reasons also reported staff left due to a career change or due to pressures of the role (32%). One in three (28%) managers who reported staff left for a career change also reported that staff left due to pressures of the role and for better pay (26%).

Figure 2 Reasons why care staff left their role at a children’s home (Managers could select more than one answer)



Base: All children’s homes (826). Source: What are the main reasons care staff have left your home?

Homes in the East (33%) and South of England (31%) were more likely to report that staff left their role because of the pressures of working in care compared with homes in the North (21%) and West of England (20%).

Privately run homes (38%) were more likely to report that staff left their role because of personal reasons compared with local authority run homes (26%).

Local authority run homes were more likely than privately run homes to report care staff left their role because of:

- pressures of working in care (31% compared with 24% of privately run homes)

- better working hours or conditions elsewhere (27% compared with 14% of privately run homes)
- feeling burn out/stress (20% compared with 11% of privately run homes)
- promotion (23% compared with 15% of privately run homes)
- retirement (24% compared with 2% of privately run homes)

Factors which could help with staff retention

Managers were asked which factors, from a list, would help to retain care staff in the children’s homes sector the most. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of responses. A large majority of managers (77%) reported that increased pay would help to retain care staff in the sector. Nearly a third (31%) reported that better career progression and more flexible working hours would help with retention issues in the sector whilst a similar proportion (30%) said that more opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD)/training would help retain care staff.

Around two in five (37%) managers who reported that increased pay could help with staff retention also reported more/better career progression could help with retention and 36% reported more flexible working hours could help.

Figure 3 Factors which would help to retain care staff in the sector (Managers could select more than one answer)



Base: All children’s homes (829) Source: What do you think would help most with retaining care staff in the children’s homes sector?

Local authority run homes were more likely to report that more/better career progression would help with staff retention (47% compared with 27% of privately run homes). Local authority run homes were also more likely to report that more opportunities for CPD/training (33% compared with 28% of privately run homes) and better advertising of roles/expectations would help with staff retention in the sector (28%) compared with privately run homes (18%).

Homes in the South of England (30%) were more likely to report that more flexibility in the qualification requirements would help with retaining care staff compared with homes in the North of England (20%).

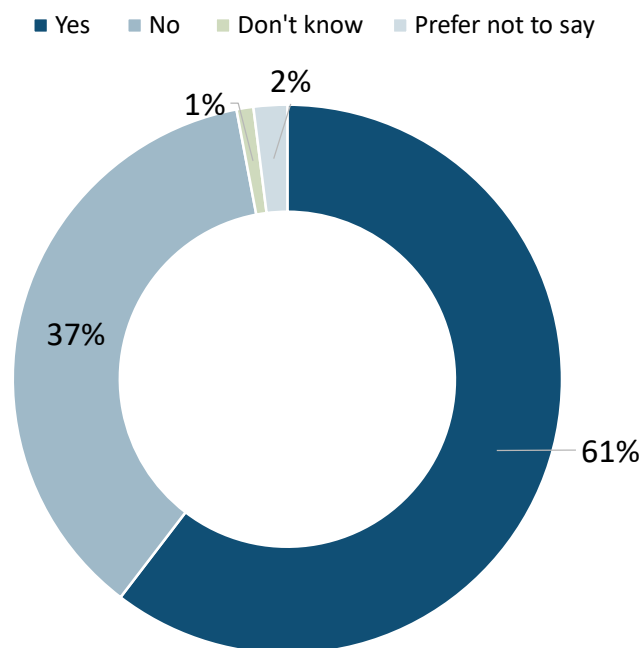
Number of open staff vacancies in children's homes

Children's homes were asked if they currently have any open staff vacancies for roles which have responsibility for the care of children and young people. Figure 4 shows a breakdown of responses. Around six in ten (61%) of surveyed homes reported they had an open staff vacancy whilst 37% reported that they did not currently have any open staff vacancies.

Overall, the number of vacancies reported translates to a vacancy rate of 12% for care staff.⁶ There were no significant differences by different types of home.

⁶ Vacancy rate was calculated using the number of reported vacancies divided by the number of reported staff in the home

Figure 4 Proportion of children’s homes with reported vacancies at time of survey



Base: All children’s homes (833) Source: Does your children’s home currently have open staff vacancies for roles which have responsibility for the care of children and young people?

The following types of children’s homes were more likely to report an open vacancy at the time of the survey:

- Local authority run homes (71%) compared with privately run homes (58%)
- Homes with 5 or more places (73%) compared with homes with 3 or 4 places (59%) and homes with 1 or 2 places for children (47%)
- Homes who reported they had unoccupied beds due to insufficient staff as a result of recruitment/retention issues (93% compared with 63% of homes who had unoccupied beds for other reasons)

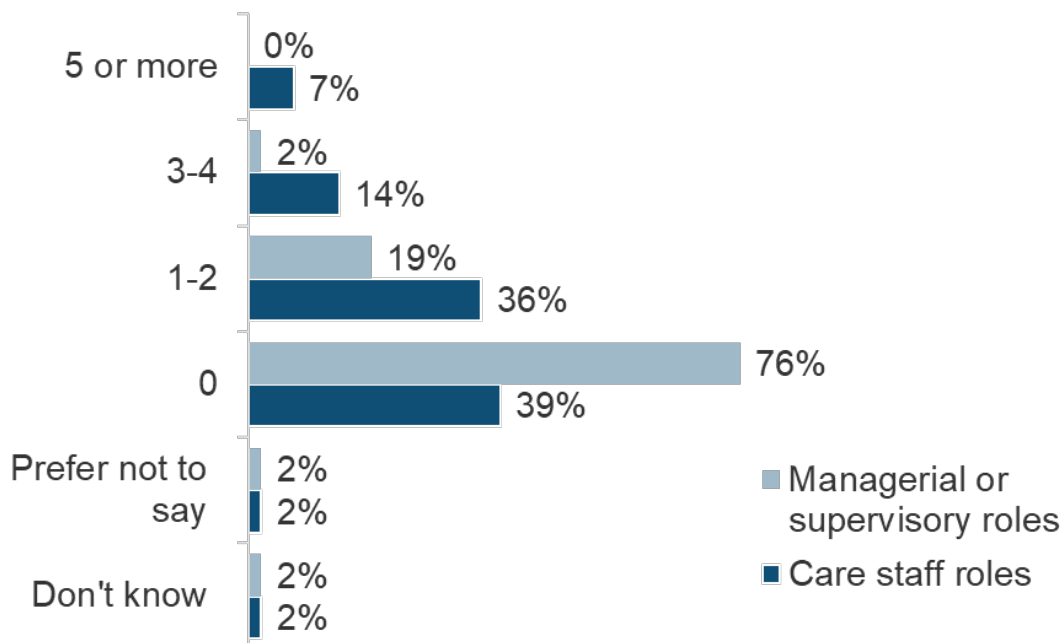
Number of care staff and managerial and supervisory staff vacancies

Children’s homes who reported having an open staff vacancy in their home were asked how many of these vacancies they have for care staff and managerial or supervisory roles. The following data includes responses from these homes combined with those who reported that they had no vacancies (included as 0 vacancies).

Most homes reported having more vacancies for care staff roles than managerial or supervisory positions. Around three quarters (76%) of homes reported having 0 vacancies for managerial and supervisory positions whilst only four in ten (39%) said the same for care staff roles. One in five (19%) of homes said they had 1 to 2 vacancies for

managerial and supervisory positions whilst 36% of homes said they had 1 to 2 vacancies for care staff roles. Figure 5 shows a breakdown of responses.

Figure 5 Number of vacancies by type of vacancy



Base: All children's homes (833) Source: How many vacancies do you currently have open?

The following types of homes were more likely to report having no vacancies for managerial and supervisory positions:

- Local authority run homes (49%) compared with privately run homes (37%)
- Homes with 5 or more places (44%) compared with homes with 1 or 2 places (32%)

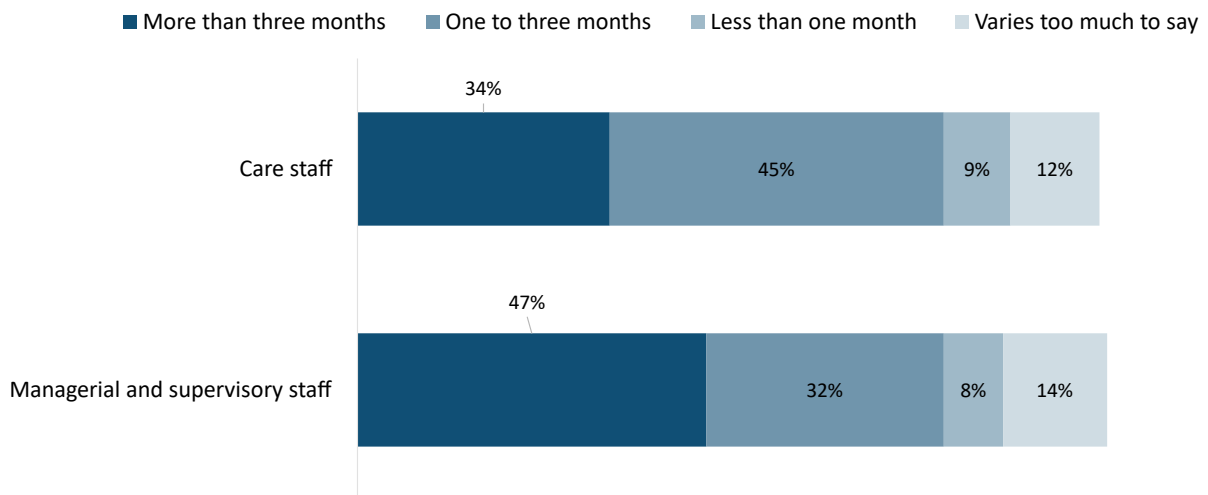
Length of time to fill vacancy

Surveyed children's homes were asked about the average length of time it typically takes to fill a vacancy for care staff and managerial or supervisory roles. Figure 6 shows a breakdown of responses. Responses exclude don't know and prefer not to say responses for both types of staff. For care staff vacancies, 3% of managers reported they did not know how long a vacancy takes to fill and 1% said they prefer not to say. For managerial or supervisory staff, 14% of managers reported they did not know how long a vacancy takes to fill and 2% said they prefer not to say.

For care staff, a third of homes (34%) reported it takes more than three months to fill a vacancy and 45% reported it takes one to three months to fill a vacancy.

Around half (47%) reported it takes more than three months to fill a managerial or supervisory role.

Figure 6 Length of time reported to fill a vacancy at the children’s home



Base: All children’s homes: Care staff working with children (800), Managerial or supervisory staff (674) Source: On average, how long does it take to fill a vacancy for... Care Staff working with Children/ Managerial or supervisory staff

Recruitment

Having explored managers' perceptions of retention challenges, the census asked managers how easy it is to recruit care and managerial staff. This section of the report also explores managers' perceptions of recruitment compared with 1 year prior to the census and the main challenges managers reported in filling vacancies.

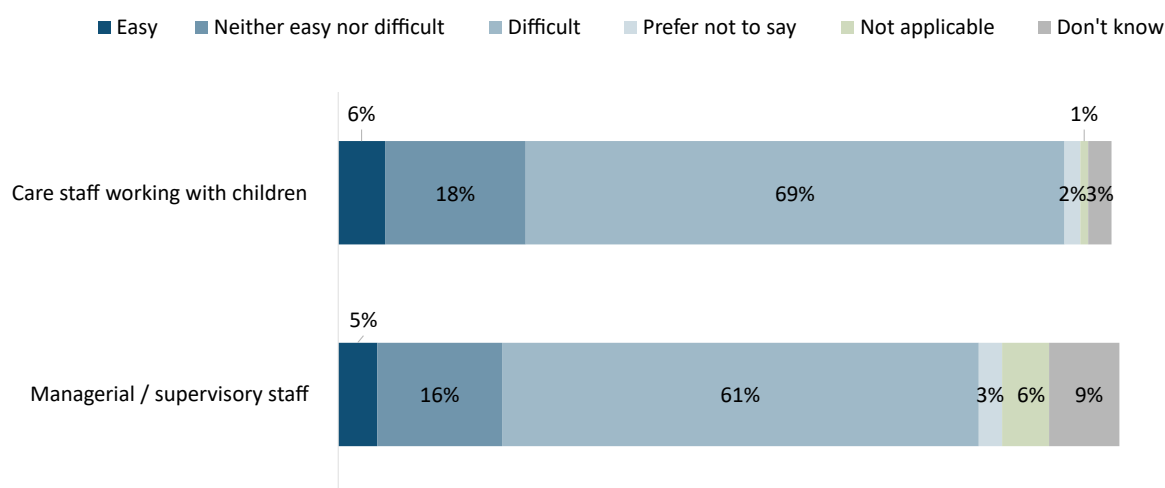
Ease of finding care and managerial staff

Children's homes were asked how easy it is to find care and managerial staff with the appropriate level of skills and experience. Figure 7 shows a breakdown of responses.

Around seven in ten (69%) reported that they found it difficult to find care staff with the appropriate level of skills and experience. Almost one in five (18%) said they found it neither easy nor difficult, whilst a small proportion of homes (6%) said they found it easy to find care staff.

Three in five homes (61%) reported that they found it difficult to find managerial or supervisory staff with the right experience or skills. Around one in seven (16%) said they found it neither difficult or easy and 5% said they found it easy to find managerial or supervisory staff with the appropriate skills or experience. One in ten (9%) reported they did not know how easy or difficult it was to find managerial or supervisory staff.

Figure 7 How easy or difficult it is for children's homes to find care staff and managerial or supervisory staff with the appropriate level of skills and experience



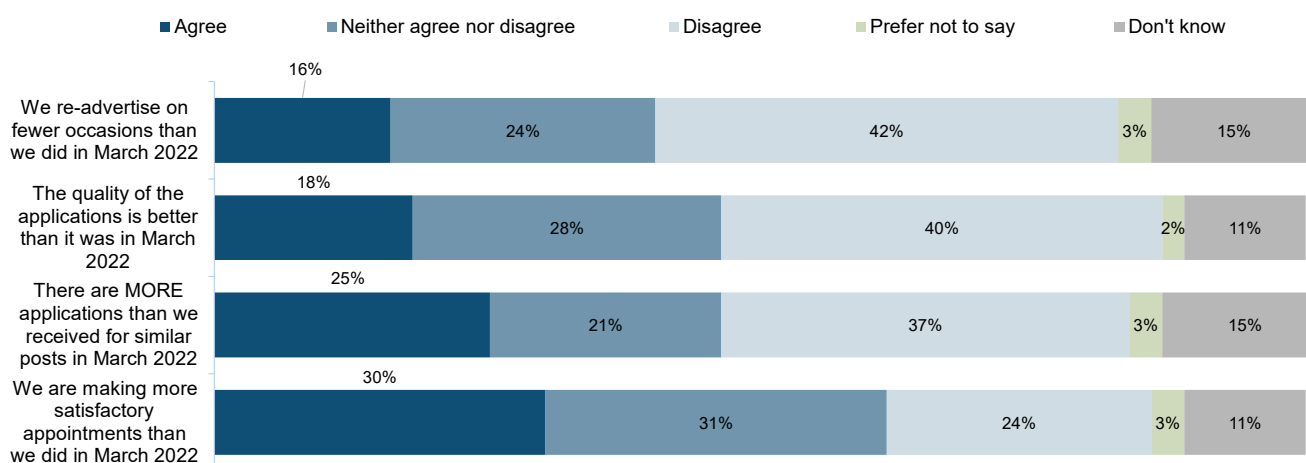
Base: All children's homes (830) Source: When recruiting, how easy or difficult is it to find staff with the appropriate level of skills and experience?

Managers' perceptions of recruitment

Registered managers were asked whether they agree or disagree with 4 statements related to the experience of recruiting new care staff recently, compared with in March 2022 (one year before the census). Figure 8 shows their responses. Overall, managers were more likely to disagree that they receive more applications for similar posts than in March 2022 (37% disagreed); that the quality of the applications is better than in March 2022 (40% disagreed) and that they re-advertise on fewer occasions than in March 2022 (42% disagreed). Managers were more likely to agree (30%) or respond they neither agree nor disagree (31%) that they are making more satisfactory appointments than in March 2022. The following sections present findings for each statement in more detail.

Figure 8 Managers' perceptions of recruitment of care staff

Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new care staff... (%)

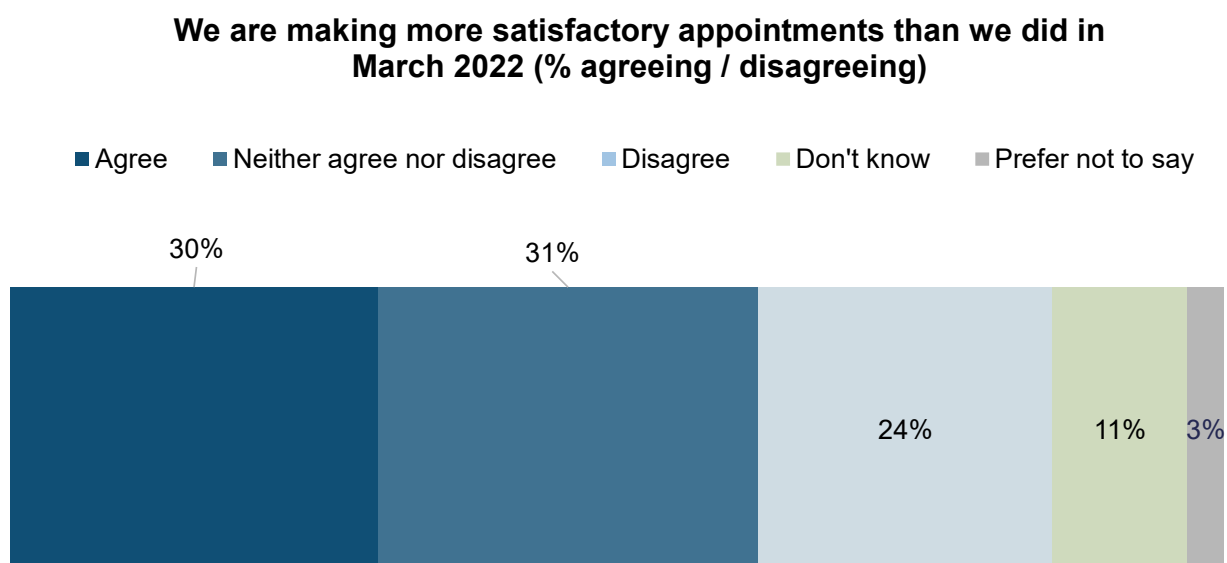


Base: All children's homes (830) Source: Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new care staff.... There are MORE applications than we received for similar posts in March 2022, The quality of the applications is better than it was in March 2022, We re-advertise on fewer occasions than we did in March 2022, We are making more satisfactory appointments than we did in March 2022

Whether homes are making more satisfactory appointments than in March 2022

The first statement managers were asked was whether their home was making more satisfactory appointments than in March 2022. Three in ten (30%) agreed with this statement and a similar proportion (31%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed. Around a quarter (24%) said they disagreed that they were making more satisfactory appointments than in March 2022, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Whether children’s homes are making more satisfactory appointments for care staff than in March 2022



Base: All children’s homes (830) Source: Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new care staff...We are making more satisfactory appointments than we did in March 2022

Privately run children’s homes were more likely to agree they are making more satisfactory care staff appointments than in March 2022 than local authority run homes (32% compared with 22% of LA homes). Homes with 5 or more places were also more likely to agree with this statement (35% compared with 25% of homes with 4 places).

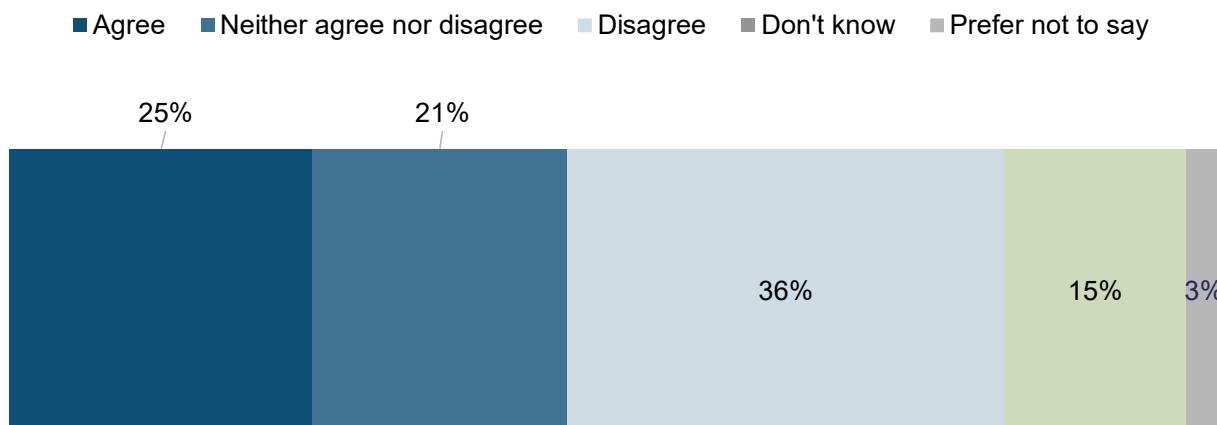
Homes with an outstanding Ofsted rating were more likely to disagree that they were making more satisfactory appointments for care staff than in March 2022 (38% compared with 24% of homes rated good). Children’s homes in the East of England (35%) were also more likely to disagree with this statement compared with homes in other regions in England (17% in the West, 24% in the North and 20% in the South).

Whether children’s home received more applications for similar posts in March 2022

The second statement asked whether homes had received more applications for similar posts than in March 2022. Figure 10 shows a breakdown of responses. A quarter of homes (25%) agreed with this statement and one in five (21%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed. Around a third (36%) of homes disagreed that they had received more applications for similar posts than in March 2022.

Figure 10 Whether children’s home received more applications for similar posts in March 2022

There are MORE applications than we received for similar posts in March 2022 (% agreeing / disagreeing)



Base: All children’s homes (830) Source: Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new care staff...There are MORE applications than we received for similar posts in March 2022.

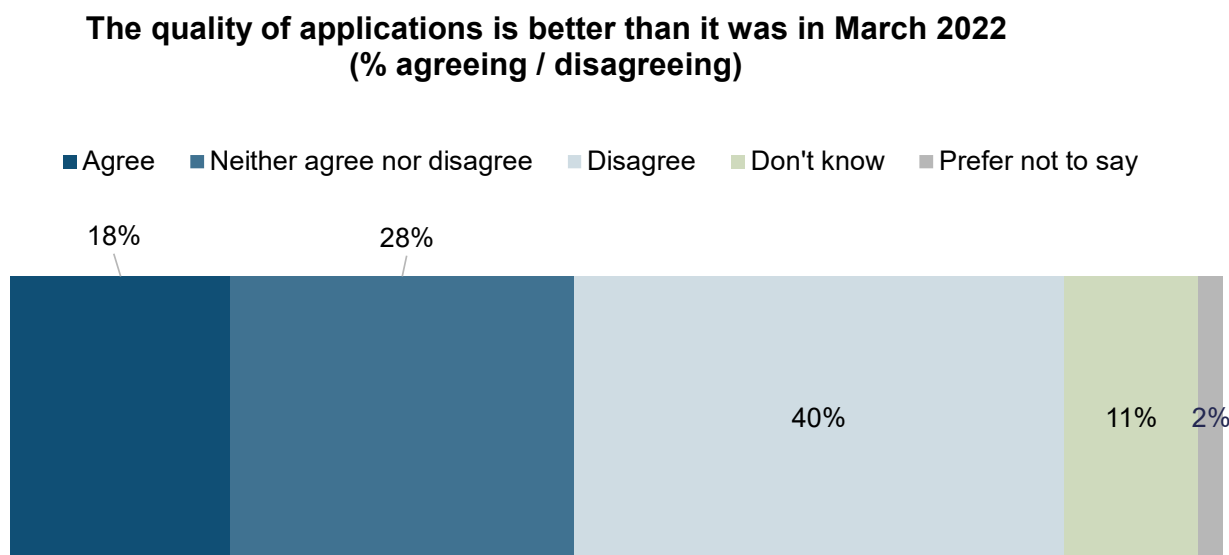
The following types of homes were more likely to disagree that they had received more applications for similar posts than in March 2022:

- Homes in the East of England (54%) compared with homes in the South (28%), West (31%) and the North of England (36%)
- Homes with 5 or more places (43% compared with 32% of homes with 3 places).

Whether the quality of applications for care staff roles was better than it was in March 2022

The third statement asked whether the quality of applications has been better than it was in March 2022. Figure 11 shows responses. Two in five (40%) of homes disagreed that the quality of applications had improved for care staff roles since March 2022. Under one in five (18%) agreed with this statement and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 11 Whether the quality of applications for care staff roles was better than it was in March 2022



Base: All children's homes (830) Source: Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new care staff...The quality of applications is better than it was in March 2022

Children's homes in the South of England were more likely to agree that the quality of applications for care staff had been better than in March 2022 compared with other regions in England (26% compared with 15% in the East, 10% in the West and 18% in the North).

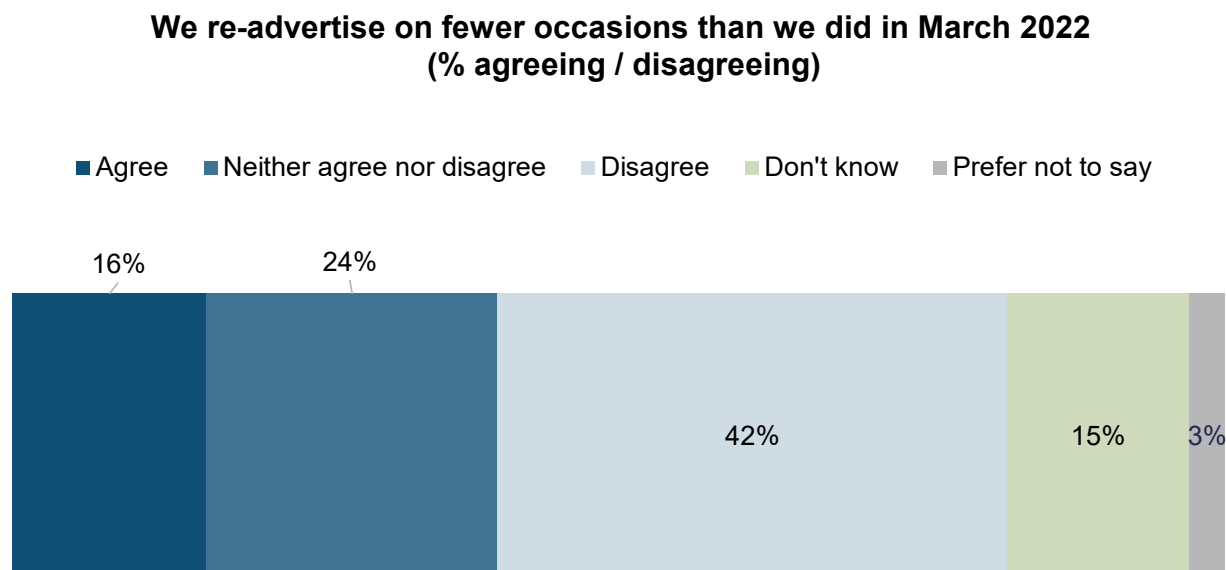
The following types of homes were more likely to disagree with this statement:

- Homes in the East of England (54% compared with 31% of homes in the South and 38% of homes in the West of England)
- Homes with 5 or more places (49% compared with 34% of homes with 1 or 2 places and 37% of homes with 3 places).

Whether homes readvertise on fewer occasions for care staff roles than in March 2022

The final statement asked whether homes had re-advertised for care staff roles on fewer occasions than in March 2022. Figure 12 shows a breakdown of responses. Two in five (42%) disagreed that they had re-advertised for care staff roles on fewer occasions than March 2022. A quarter (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement and 16% agreed they had re-advertised for care staff roles less than in March 2022.

Figure 12 Whether homes re-advertised on fewer occasions for care staff roles than in March 2022



Base: All children's homes (830) Source: Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new care staff... We re-advertise on fewer occasions than we did in March 2022

A higher proportion of the following types of homes disagreed that they had re-advertised on fewer occasions than in March 2022:

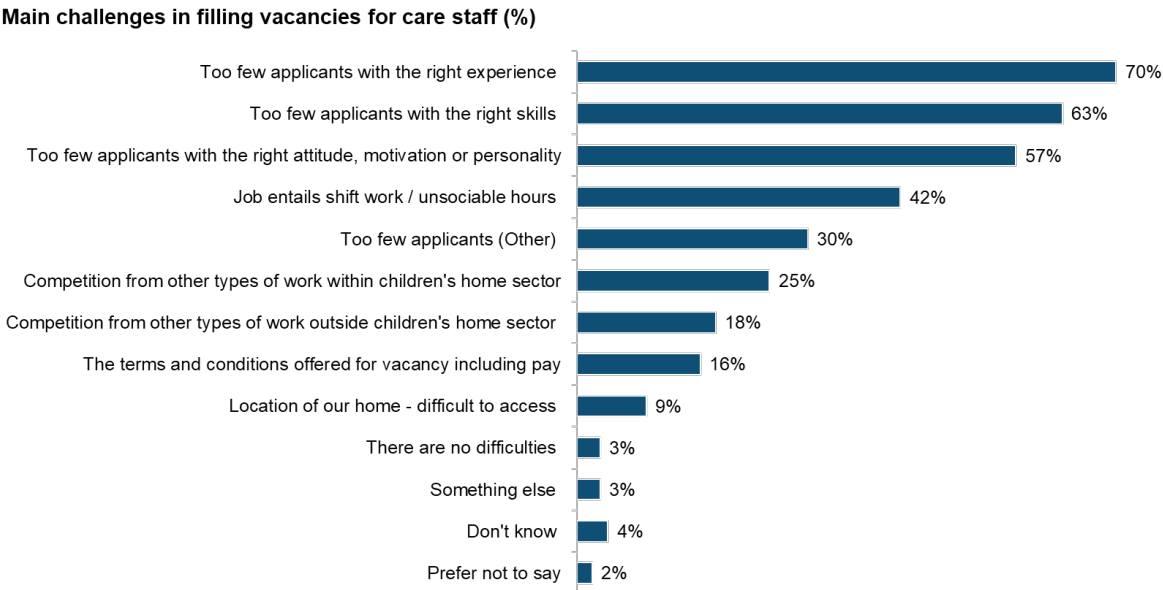
- Local authority run homes (63% compared with 38% of privately run homes)
- Homes in the East of England (53% compared with 38% in the South and 39% in the North).

Main challenges filling vacancies

Children's homes were asked to select from a list the main challenges in filling vacancies for care staff. Homes reported the main challenges in filling vacancies were related to having too few applicants with: the right experience (70%); the right skills (63%); or the right attitude, motivation or personality (57%). Figure 13 shows a breakdown of responses overall and Table 25 shows a breakdown of responses including by local authority and privately run homes.

There was a high degree of commonality in managers who reported finding staff with the right skills and staff with the right attitude, motivation or personality (71%) and staff with the right experience (87%).

Figure 13 Main challenges for filling vacancies for care staff (Managers could select more than one answer)



Base: All children's homes (833) Source: What are the main challenges in filling vacancies for care staff

Table 25 Main challenges reported in filling vacancies for care staff (Managers could select more than one answer)

Main challenges in filling vacancies for care staff	All children's homes	LA run homes	Privately run homes
Too few applicants with the right experience	70%	83%	67%
Too few applicants with the right skills	63%	73%	60%
Too few applicants with the right attitude, motivation or personality	57%	58%	56%
Job entails shift work / unsociable hours	42%	46%	41%
Too few applicants (other)	30%	44%	26%
Competition from other types of work within children's home sector	25%	20%	26%
Competition from other types of work outside children's home sector	18%	19%	17%
The terms and conditions offered for the vacancy including pay	16%	10%	17%
Location of our home – difficult to access	9%	4%	9%
There are no difficulties	3%	5%	3%
Something else	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	4%	1%	4%
Prefer not to say	2%	0%	2%
<i>Base (all surveyed children's homes)</i>	833	135	639

Local authority run homes were more likely to report that too few applicants with the right experience were one of the main challenges in filling vacancies for care staff (83% compared with 67% of privately run homes). Local authority run homes were also more likely to say they had too few applicants with the right skills (73% compared with 60% of privately run homes).

Over a third (36%) of children's homes in the West of England reported that competition from other types of work within the sector was a main challenge in filling vacancies for

care staff. This was higher than other regions of England (22% in the South and 22% in the North).

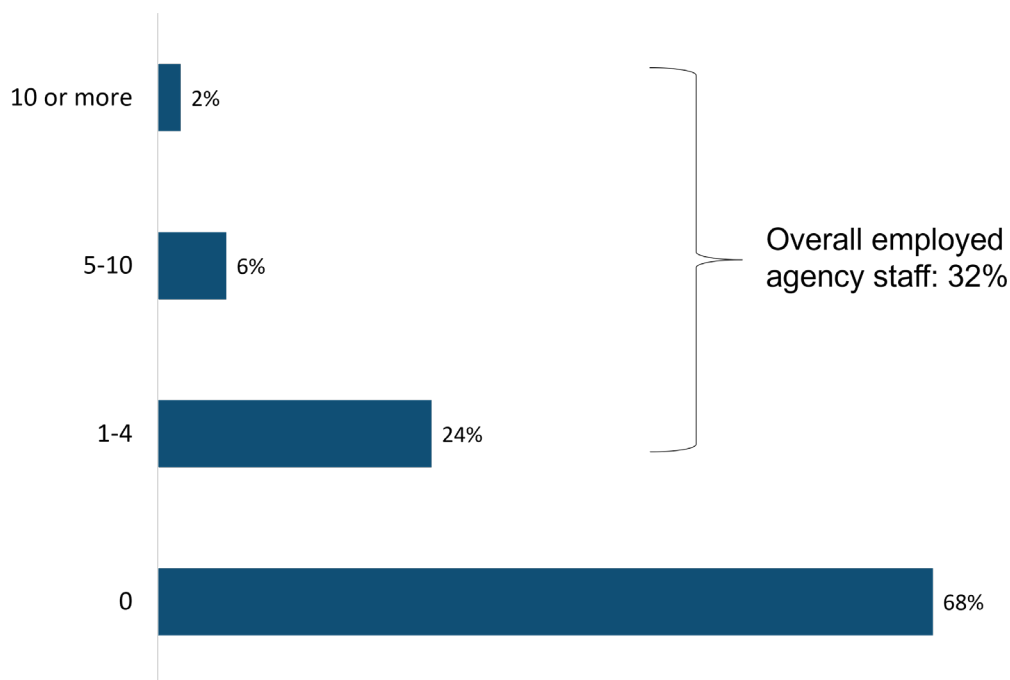
Agency staff

The final section of this report explores the number of agency staff that managers reported their home employed in the last four weeks (at the time of the census). Managers were asked whether they are using agency staff more or less frequently than a year prior to the census and what roles agency staff were used to fill.

Number of agency staff employed in the last four weeks

Children's homes were asked about their use of agency staff with responsibility for care of children and young people in the last 4 weeks. The majority of homes (68%) said they had not used any agency staff in the last 4 weeks. A third (32%) said they had employed agency staff in the last 4 weeks, most commonly between 1 to 4 agency staff. Figure 14 shows a breakdown of responses.

Figure 14 Number of agency staff employed in the last 4 weeks with responsibility for care of children and young people



Base: All children's homes (795) Source: How many agency staff have you employed in the last four weeks who have responsibility for the care of children and young people in your children's home?

The following types of homes were more likely to have not used agency staff in the last 4 weeks:

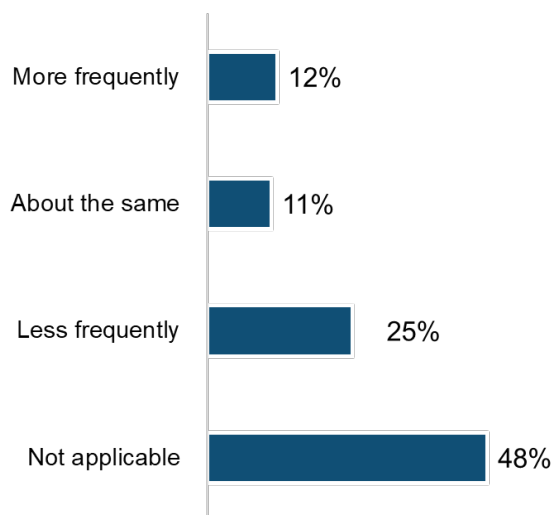
- Homes in the North of England (72%) compared with homes in the West (65%), East (58%) and South of England (58%)
- Homes with an outstanding Ofsted rating (75%) compared with homes with a good (64%) or requires improvement to be good/inadequate rating (62%)
- Privately run homes (67%) compared with local authority run homes (59%).

Use of agency staff compared with March 2022

Children’s homes were asked how frequently they had used agency staff who have responsibility for the care of children and young people compared with March 2022. Nearly half of homes (48%) said this question was not applicable to them.

Around a quarter (25%) of all homes said they had used agency staff less frequently than in March 2022 whilst 11% said they had used them about the same amount. Over one in ten (12%) said they had used agency staff more frequently since March 2022. Figure 15 shows a breakdown of responses.

Figure 15 Frequency that homes have used agency staff since March 2022



Base: All children’s homes (821) Source: Compared to March 2022 how frequently are you using agency staff who have responsibility for the care of children and young people in your home?

Children’s homes in the East of England were the most likely region to report using agency staff more frequently than March 2022 (24% compared with 9% of homes in the North, 10% of homes in the West and 12% of homes in South of England). Local authority run homes were also more likely to have used agency staff more frequently than March 2022 (18% compared with 10% of privately run homes).

Of homes who reported that they had used agency staff in the last four weeks, 43% reported they were using agency staff less frequently; 32% reported they were using agency staff more frequently and 19% said the same amount.

Roles agency staff are used for

All children's homes were asked the type of roles they employed agency staff to cover in their home. Looking at responses from homes who had used any agency staff in the previous four weeks prior to the survey, 90% said they had used agency staff to cover support staff working with children. Half (49%) said they used them to cover sleeping / waking nights roles.

Annex 1 - Weighting

The children's homes survey was an attempted census of all registered children's homes in England. Whilst all homes were invited to participate, children's homes with different characteristics could respond to the survey with differential rates. Children's homes who did complete the survey could also choose the number of staff members to report on, so staff members in smaller homes would have a higher chance of being represented in the data compared with staff members in larger homes. To account for the impact of differential survey response probabilities and within-home selection probabilities, weighting was required. Weighting consisted of 2 stages: (1) home-level weighting and (2) staff-level weighting.

Stage 1 - home-level weighting

Firstly, data was weighted at the home level. There were 837 children's homes who participated in the research. Their data were weighted to match the profile of the population, of which there were 3,000 children's home in the sampling frame provided by Ofsted. Design weighting was not required as all children's homes in the population were able to participate in the research.

Raking was used to ensure the sample margins matched the population margins exactly for 5 variables extracted from the sampling frame. The design effect due to the weighting was estimated to be 1.05⁷.

The following variables were used for weighting at the home level:

- Number of places registered
- Home ownership
- Years since registration
- Ofsted inspection rating
- Government Office Region (GOR)

Stage 2 - staff-level weighting

Managers were asked to provide data about their staff, including demographic data, pay and contract type, and the qualifications they held or were working towards. The methodology section of this report presents the instructions given to managers to provide this data.

⁷ Design effects were calculated based on the variance of the weights, using the following formula: $1 + (\text{coefficient of variation})$.

Design weighting was used in the second stage of weighting and only applied to staff level data. Weighting was conducted separately for 3 types of staff members in home: (1) registered managers, (2) supervisory staff (staff with management responsibility but not the registered manager), and (3) non-supervisory staff. This was because they had different selection probabilities, as explained further below.

Homes could choose to provide data for all staff in their home or a subset of them (up to 5 staff members). Data was always provided for the registered manager, so all managers received a design weight of 1.

If all staff members in the home were answered for, every person in those homes also received a survey weight of 1. If managers decided to answer for a subset of staff members, the supervisory and non-supervisory staff answered for were weighted up to their respective total numbers based on the totals provided in the questionnaire.

After the design weighting, data cleaning and re-scaling were required to address any inconsistencies in the self-reported data. The design effect due to the weighting was estimated to be 3.10.

Annex 2 – Profile of residential special schools not registered as a children’s home

Table 26 presents a profile of the residential special schools not registered as a children's home who participated in the research compared with the overall population.

Table 26 Profile of Residential Special Schools (not registered as a children’s home)

Profile of residential special schools (not registered as a children’s home)	All residential special schools who participated (unweighted %)	All residential special schools (unweighted %)
Number of residential places (beds): under 50	16%	19%
Number of residential places (beds): 50 to 100	35%	41%
Number of residential places (beds): 100 to 200	32%	24%
Number of residential places (beds): 200 or more	11%	8%
Number of residential places (beds): Not available	7%	10%
Ofsted inspection grade: outstanding	28%	21%
Ofsted inspection grade: good	55%	58%
Ofsted inspection rating: requires improvement to be good or inadequate	5%	12%
Ofsted inspection rating: unknown	12%	9%
<i>Base (all residential special schools that responded to the survey)</i>	75	201

Annex 3 – Questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

The Department for Education have commissioned Kantar Public and the National Children's Bureau (independent organisations) to conduct a national census of all children's homes and residential special schools in England.

This short survey is to collect information on the number and type of staff who work at your [Children's homes: children's home] / [RSS: residential special school] and the services you offer to children and young people. The survey will also collect information about any issues you face with the recruitment and retention of staff.

Whilst this project focuses on children's homes, we have decided to include residential special schools not registered as a children's home in the sample because of the similarities in the workforces.

Your support on this project will enable the Department for Education and wider [CH: children's homes] / [RSS: residential special schools] sector to have up-to-date evidence regarding the workforce and challenges the sector faces.

The survey may require you to look up certain pieces of information, as outlined in the data sheet you received with the advance letter informing your [children's homes: home] [residential special school: school] about this research. If you have completed the datasheet, the survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. You have the option to pause and return to the survey at any point.

Please note that all data will be reported in aggregate form and your answers will not be reported in any way that would allow you or your [CH: children's home] / [RSS: residential special school] to be identified to DfE. If you would like further information on how Kantar Public handles and processes personal data, as well as information on your rights under data protection regulations to access your personal data, withdraw consent, or object to the processing of your personal data, please visit: [privacy policy link](#).

Please contact the research team at Kantar Public on REDACTED or REDACTED or the Department for Education at REDACTED if you have any questions about the research.

About the children and young people in your [CH: children's home] / [RSS: residential provision]

Firstly, we would like to collect some information about the services you provide and the number of children and young people you care for .

[All residential special schools: please answer throughout thinking of your residential provision. Please exclude school based provision.]

ASK ALL

Q1

Which of the following best describes your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision] (as described by [CH: your home's] / [RSS: your] statement of purpose)?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. A children's home which provides short term care – to provide support to children to enable their return to family or foster care or move to independent living
2. A children's home which provides long term care - caring for children until they are prepared and ready for "leaving care" support, including moving to another placement.
3. A secure children's home.
4. A short break children's home
5. A residential special school registered as a children's home (accommodate or arrange accommodation for any child for MORE than 295 days a year)
6. A residential special school NOT registered as a children's home (accommodate or arrange accommodation for any child for 295 days a year or LESS)
7. Something else (please specify)
8. None of these
9. Don't know
10. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q2

Please describe the range of needs your statement of purpose says that you can meet...

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST

1. Complex needs (including drug or alcohol dependence, sexually harmful behaviour, attachment disorders, emotional and behavioural difficulties, offending behaviour, going missing, self-harm, history of harming themselves and/or others, attention and conduct disorders/ADHD, communication difficulties, and unspecified complex needs)
2. Abuse and neglect (including trauma, child sexual exploitation, neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and unspecified abuse)
3. Learning difficulties
4. Autism spectrum disorder
5. Mental health problems
6. Physical disabilities
7. Complex health needs
8. Sensory impairment
9. Something else (please specify)
10. None of these
11. Don't know
12. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL EXCEPT SHORT BREAK HOMES (Q1 CODE D NOT YES)

Q3a.

What is the maximum number of registered places for children and young people in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision]?

Please record the total number of beds that your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision] is registered for. Please include any beds which cannot be filled due to issues with staffing, specialist needs of your residents or any other factors.

- Enter Number
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

ASK SHORT BREAK CARE HOMES (Q1 CODE D = YES)

Q3b.

What is the maximum number of nights per month that children and young people can stay in your home?

Please record the total number of nights your home reports as available per month.

- Enter Number
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

ASK ALL EXCEPT SHORT BREAK HOMES (Q1 CODE D = NOT YES)

Q4a.

Currently how many children and young people are resident in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision]?

NOTE: That is how many beds are currently occupied.

- Enter Number
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

ASK SHORT BREAK CARE HOMES (Q1 CODE D = YES)

Q4b.

Currently how many nights are available for children and young people to reside in your home per month?

- Enter Number
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

**ASK IF: Q3A ANSWER > Q4a ANSWER
Q4c.**

What is the reason that you have unoccupied beds?
Please select all that apply.

1. Waiting for child referral
2. Lack of demand for beds currently
3. Insufficient staff due to recruitment/retention issues
4. Intentional vacancy to enable child stability
5. Other (please specify)
6. Don't know
7. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL EXCLUDING (RSS – TO BE TAKEN FROM SAMPLE) AND SHORT BREAK
HOMES (Q1 CODE D NOT YES)
Q5a.**

Which of the following is closest to the amount of time that the beds are unoccupied for?

NOTE: We know this varies - we are interested in the approximate length of time beds are unoccupied for.

Single coded

1. About 1 to 3 days
2. About a week
3. About 2 to 3 weeks
4. About a month
5. Usually over 5 weeks
6. Varies too much to say
7. Don't know
8. Prefer not to say

**ASK ALL EXCEPT SHORT BREAK HOMES (Q1 CODE D NOT YES)
Q6.**

And, on average, how long are children and young people cared for within your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision]?

NOTE: We know this varies - we are interested in the approximate average stay of most children and young people.

Single coded

1. 3 months or less
2. More than 3 months and up to 6 months
3. More than 6 months and up to 1 year
4. More than 1 year and up to 2 years
5. More than 2 years and up to 3 years
6. More than 3 years
7. Varies too much to say
8. Don't know
9. Prefer not to say

ASK SHORT BREAK HOMES

Q6b

Which of the following is closest to the amount of nights that are usually available?

NOTE: We know this varies - we are interested in the approximate number of nights that are available in your home.

Single coded

1. About 1 to 3
2. About 4 to 7
3. About 8 to 20
4. Usually over 20
5. Varies too much to say
6. Don't know
7. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q7

What age, in years, is the youngest child / young person you can care for within your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision]?

Single coded

- Youngest
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q8.

What age, in years, is the oldest child / young person you can care for within your [CH:

home] / [RSS: residential provision]?

Single coded

- Oldest [MAXIMUM 30]
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

About the staff in your [CH: children's home] / [RSS: residential provision]

Next, we would like to collect some information about the staff [CH: in your home] / [RSS: who work in the residential provision].

ASK ALL

Q9

Overall, how many staff including yourself do you currently have working in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision] who have responsibility for the care of children and young people?

ALL RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOLS: Please only include residential staff.

NOTE: Please include both full and part time staff employed directly by the [CH: home] / [RSS: school] but exclude staff from outside [CH: the home] who come in for a limited number of hours to provide specialist support / services (e.g. speech therapists or psychologists) and any agency staff. Please exclude any teaching or nursing staff employed by your [CH: home] [RSS: school].

NOTE: Please exclude any support staff you may have such as cleaners and catering staff.

Enter Number

Don't know

Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q10.

Overall, how many staff, including yourself, do you currently have working in [CH: your home] / [RSS: your residential provision] who are responsible *for supervising or managing* other members of staff?

ALL RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOLS: Please only include residential staff.

NOTE: Please include both full and part time staff employed directly by the [CH: home] / [RSS: school] but exclude staff from outside [CH: the home] who come in for a limited number of hours to provide specialist support / services (e.g. speech therapists or psychologists) and any agency staff. Please exclude any teaching or nursing staff employed by your [CH: home] [RSS: school].

NOTE: Please exclude any support staff you may have such as cleaners and catering staff.

Enter Number
Don't know
Prefer not to say

INTRO TO STAFF QUESTIONS

We would like to know a bit more about the staff who work at your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision]. For now, we are interested in the number of people employed directly [CH: by your home] [RSS: in your residential provision] (full-time, part-time and zero-hour contracts).

We only need to know about those who have responsibility for the care of children and young people. There will be a question about agency staff later.

If you have completed the datasheet we sent to you – you can take the information from this.

[ALL Residential special schools: Please only include residential staff.]

Please exclude:

- Agency staff
- any teaching or nursing staff [CH: in your home]
- Staff from outside [CH: the home] who come in for a limited number of hours to provide specialist support / services (e.g. speech therapists or psychologists)
- Support staff you may have such as cleaners and catering staff.

You will be able to choose whether to answer about up to 5 members of staff, or all members of staff, depending on your preference.

There will be rows for the number of members of staff you are answering about, plus an additional first row [CH: for you to answer as the manager of your home] / [RSS: for you to answer as residential manager]. Please use one row for one member of staff.

If you choose to answer for 5 members of staff, and your home has more than 5 staff (excluding yourself) please list all staff in alphabetical order by surname [FIRST HALF: from A-Z] / [SECOND HALF: from Z-A] and provide details for the first 5.

All of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence in line with GDPR and no individual members of staff will be identified in the reported survey data. The information is being collected to get a better understanding of the profile of the workforce in [CH: children's homes] / [RSS: residential provision].

ASK ALL
Q11

[IF 5 staff selected: Please fill out the grid below for up to 5 staff. If you have more than 5 staff - please list all staff in alphabetical order by surname [FIRST HALF: from A-Z] / [SECOND HALF: from Z-A] and provide details for the first 5.]

[IF all staff selected: Please fill out the grid below for your staff. Please list all staff in alphabetical order by surname.]

For each staff member:

Sex

Select from list

- Male
- Female
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Age

Select from list

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Ethnicity

Select from list

- White,
- Asian/ Asian British,
- Black/ African/ Caribbean/black British
- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups,

- Other ethnic group,
- Don't know,
- Prefer not to say

Contract type

Select from list

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Zero-hours
- Other
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Does this person manage or supervise other staff

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Total number of years working in the [CH: children's homes] / [RSS: residential special schools] sector

Enter total number of years, to the nearest whole number

- 0-100
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Number of hours work in a normal week, excluding overtime

If hours vary too much to say – please enter number of hours worked in last working week)0-100

- 0-100
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Did this staff member work more than their contracted hours in the last working week?

If the staff member could not work for any reason, please think back to their last typical working week

- Yes

- No
- Varies too much to say
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Hourly rate of pay

Enter figure in £s (e.g.£10.50)

- 0-100
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Qualification questions for staff

We'd like to know more about what type of training and qualifications staff who work in [CH: children's homes] / [RSS: residential provision] have.

Over the next few screens please select the type and level of qualification each of the members of staff you are answering for have.

If you have completed the datasheet we sent to you – you can take the information from this.

Please answer for the same members of staff you answered for on the previous screen.

ASK ALL Q12

Which of the following qualifications (if any) do the staff currently have?

- ONLY INCLUDE QUALIFICATIONS THEY HOLD, NOT ONES THEY ARE WORKING TOWARDS
- PLEASE CLICK THE QUALIFICATIONS THAT APPLY IN EACH COLUMN – AS MANY AS APPLY FOR EACH MEMBER OF STAFF
- IF YOU COMPLETED THE DATASHEET THIS IS ITEM X

For each staff member:

- The Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (or equivalent)
- The Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Care (or equivalent)
- Don't know
- None of these
- Prefer not to say

ASK ALL Q13.

Are any of the staff currently working towards any of the following:

- ONLY INCLUDE QUALIFICATIONS THEY ARE WORKING TOWARDS, NOT ONES THEY HOLD
- PLEASE CLICK THE QUALIFICATIONS THAT APPLY IN EACH COLUMN – AS MANY AS APPLY FOR EACH MEMBER OF STAFF

- IF YOU COMPLETED THE DATASHEET THIS IS ITEM X

For each staff member:

The Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (or equivalent)

The Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Care (or equivalent)

Don't know

None of these

Prefer not to say

Agency staff

Next we'd like to ask you about any agency staff in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision].

ASK ALL Q14.

How many agency staff have you employed in the last four weeks who have responsibility for the care of children and young people in your [CH: children's home] / [RSS: residential provision]? Please exclude any roles related to teaching or nursing.

- Enter Number
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

ASK ALL Q15.

Which, if any, of the following roles have you employed agency staff to cover in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision] in the last four weeks?

Please answer for staff who have responsibility for the care of children and young people and exclude any roles related to teaching or nursing.

Please select all that apply

1. Support staff working with children
2. Managerial or supervisory roles
3. Sleeping / waking nights
4. Other (please specify)
5. None of the above
6. Don't know
7. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q16.

Compared to March 2022 how frequently are you using agency staff who have responsibility for the care of children and young people in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision]?

1. More frequently
2. About the same
3. Less frequently
4. Don't know
5. Not applicable
6. Prefer not to say

Recruitment

Next we would like to ask about recruitment and retention in your [CH: home] / [RSS: residential provision].

ASK ALL

Q18.

Since March 2022, how many staff members who have responsibility for the care of [RSS: resident] children or young people have left [CH: your children's home]?

All RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOLS: Please only include residential staff.

Please exclude: agency staff, any roles related to teaching or nursing [CH: in your home], staff from outside [CH: the home] who come in for a limited number of hours to provide specialist support / services and support staff you may have such as cleaners and catering staff.

- Enter Number
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q19.

And when [all RSS: residential] care staff leave [CH: your home], which of the following types of job have they moved to?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Another [CH: children's home] / [RSS: residential special school]
2. An agency, offering staff to [CH: children's homes] / [RSS: residential special schools]
3. Family support work
4. Foster carer
5. Social work
6. Another role in children's social care
7. Adult social care
8. Outside care sector - Early Years childcare
9. Outside care sector – Schools
10. Outside care sector - Further education
11. Outside care sector - Youth work
12. Outside care sector – retail
13. Outside care sector – hospitality
14. Outside care sector – other
15. Something else
16. N/A – they retired
17. Don't know
18. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q20.

What are the main reasons [all RSS: residential] care staff have left [CH: your home] / [RSS: your school]?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Better pay elsewhere
2. Better working hours or conditions elsewhere
3. Pressures of the role/working in care
4. Feeling burn out/stress
5. Pressures of completing qualification
6. Lack of qualifications
7. Performance issues
8. Career change
9. Promotion
10. Personal reasons (for example, caring for family or moving location)
11. They retire
12. Other (please specify)
13. Don't know
14. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q21.

What do you think would help most with retaining [all RSS: residential] care staff in the [CH: children's homes] sector?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Increased pay for staff
2. More opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD)/training
3. More/better career progression
4. More flexible working hours
5. More flexibility in qualification requirements
6. Better advertising of the roles and expectations
7. Other (please specify)
8. Don't know
9. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q22.

Does your [CH: children's home] / [RSS: residential provision] currently have any open staff vacancies for roles which have responsibility for the [all RSS: residential] care of children and young people?

NOTE: Please include vacancies for both full and part time staff employed directly [CH: by the home] as long as they provide residential provision. Please exclude any vacancies for teaching, nursing or support staff you may have such as cleaners and catering staff.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Prefer not to say

IF Q22 = 1 (yes)

Q23.

How many vacancies do you currently have open?

1. Care staff roles working with children
2. Managerial or supervisory roles

Enter number
Don't know
Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q24.

On average, how long does it take to fill a vacancy for:

- [all RSS: residential] care staff working with children
- managerial or supervisory staff

Please consider the length of time between a vacancy becoming available and a new person starting in role.

1. Less than one month
2. One month but less than two months
3. Two months but less than three months
4. Three months but less than six months
5. Six months up to one year
6. More than one year
7. Varies too much to say
8. Don't know
9. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q25.

Thinking about when you have most recently recruited for new [all RSS: residential] care staff...

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following:

There are MORE applications than we received for similar posts in March 2022

The quality of the applications is better than it was in March 2022

We re-advertise on fewer occasions than we did in March 2022

We are making more satisfactory appointments than we did in March 2022

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree slightly
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree slightly
5. Disagree strongly
6. Don't know
7. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q26.

When recruiting, how easy or difficult is it to find [all RSS: residential care] staff with the appropriate level of skills and experience?

NOTE: Please think just about staff who have responsibility for the [RSS: residential] care of children and young people

Care staff working with children

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Not applicable/have not tried to recruit
- Don't Know
- Prefer not to say

Managerial / Supervisory staff

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Not applicable/have not tried to recruit
- Don't Know
- Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Q27.

What are the main challenges in filling vacancies for [all RSS: residential] care staff?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

1. Too few applicants with the right experience
2. Too few applicants with the right skills
3. Too few applicants with the right attitude, motivation or personality
4. Too few applicants (other)
5. Limitations on career progression / prospects
6. The terms and conditions offered for the vacancy (including pay)
7. Job entails shift work / unsociable hours
8. Visa issues

9. Covid-19 related issues
10. Hard for us to find temporary cover / seasonal work
11. Location of our home – difficult to access
12. Location of our home – housing issues in local area
13. Competition from other types of work within children's home sector
14. Competition from other types of work outside children's home sector
15. Something else (please specify)
16. There are no difficulties
17. Don't Know
18. Prefer not to say

Re-contact survey questions

ASK ALL

QREC1.

It is possible that the DfE may undertake some further research to follow up on particular issues arising from this survey. Would you be willing to be contacted by someone from Kantar Public, the National Children's Bureau, or a representative on their behalf for this purpose in the next 18 months?

We will use your personal data for RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY

1. Yes – happy to be contacted
2. No – please do not contact me

IF QREC1 = 1

QREC2.

Please confirm your full name

ENTER

Prefer not to say

IF QREC1 = 1

QREC3

Please confirm the best telephone number to contact you on

ENTER

Prefer not to say

IF QREC1 = 1

QREC4

Please confirm the best email address to contact you on

ENTER

Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

Finally, we ask that the person who completes this questionnaire enters their name, job title, phone number, email address and name of children's home below. This is so the research team at Kantar Public can contact you if we need to clarify any information. These details will not be shared with the Department for Education.

What is your name:

What is your job title?:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Name of [CH: children's home] / [RSS: school]:

**ASK ALL
QFUTURE.**

As part of this important research we are planning to conduct another survey in the next 18 months. This will help the Department for Education and wider [CH: children's homes] / [RSS: residential special schools] sector to have up-to-date evidence regarding the workforce and challenges the sector faces. You may receive more correspondence regarding this research at that time. Your participation is sincerely appreciated.

Annex 4 - Advance invitation letters

Kantar Public
4 Millbank
Westminster
London SW1P 3JA
United Kingdom

Freephone: REDACTED
Website: REDACTED

Reference: xxx

<Title Name Surname >
<Address 1>
<Address 2>
<Address 3>
<Address 4>

XX February 2023

Dear {Title} {Surname},

We are writing to ask your [CH: home] [RSS not a CH: school] to take part in the 2023 children's homes and residential special schools workforce census. [RSS not registered as a children's home: We are writing to you as the headteacher of your school, but we would like the residential manager in charge of the residential provision to complete the survey. Please share any necessary materials, including this letter and accompanying data sheet, with your residential manager to complete.]

The Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned Kantar Public, an independent research agency, to undertake the second census of children's homes in England. The last census was conducted in 2014. We are asking [CH: managers] / [RSS not registered as a children's home: residential managers] to take part to collect the most recent data on homes and residential special schools, including data on residential care staff.

The information which [CH: home managers] [RSS not registered as a children's home: residential managers] provide will help the Department for Education and the wider sector to better understand challenges that homes and residential special schools face particularly regarding the recruitment and retention of staff.

Why take part?

- ✓ Taking part is quick and easy. Once the initial datasheet is complete, the survey should only take about 15 minutes.
- ✓ DfE and the sector will have up to date information to help support children's homes

How can I take part?

We would like the [CH: registered manager of the home] [RSS not registered as a children's home: residential manager] to complete the survey on behalf of the [CH: home] [RSS not registered as a children's home: school]. The survey will close on **31 March 2023**.

How to take part

1. **Go to REDACTED or scan the QR code on a smartphone:**
2. **Enter your ID: [username]**
3. **Enter your passcode [passcode]**

The survey does not need to be completed in one sitting – you will be able to save your answers to finish at a later date.

We have enclosed a datasheet which outlines some of the information the survey will cover. The datasheet contains information which you may need to look up in advance of completing the census or ask other members of staff for. The survey will cover some sensitive and personal topics, such as challenges with recruitment and retention and information about your staff such as their ethnicity, but all questions are optional.

We hope you will be able to take part in this important research. We recognise the considerable pressures on your time and that of your staff and would be grateful for your participation.

Whilst this project focuses on children's homes, we have decided to include residential special schools not registered as a children's home in the sample because of the similarities in the workforces.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the research at any point. We would like to assure you that all answers will be treated in the strictest of confidence treated confidentially in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. All findings will be made anonymous in the reporting of results, and to DfE, so that responses cannot be traced back to individuals, homes or schools. More details about the research and about your privacy can be found at www.childrenshomessurvey.co.uk.

If you have any queries about the research please call the research team at Kantar Public on REDACTED or email them at REDACTED. If you have any queries for the Department for Education regarding this census, please email REDACTED.

With thanks and best wishes,

SIGNATURES

REDACTED and REDACTED

Department for Education



Department
for Education

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For any enquiries regarding this publication, contact us at:
CSC.RESEARCH@education.gov.uk or www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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