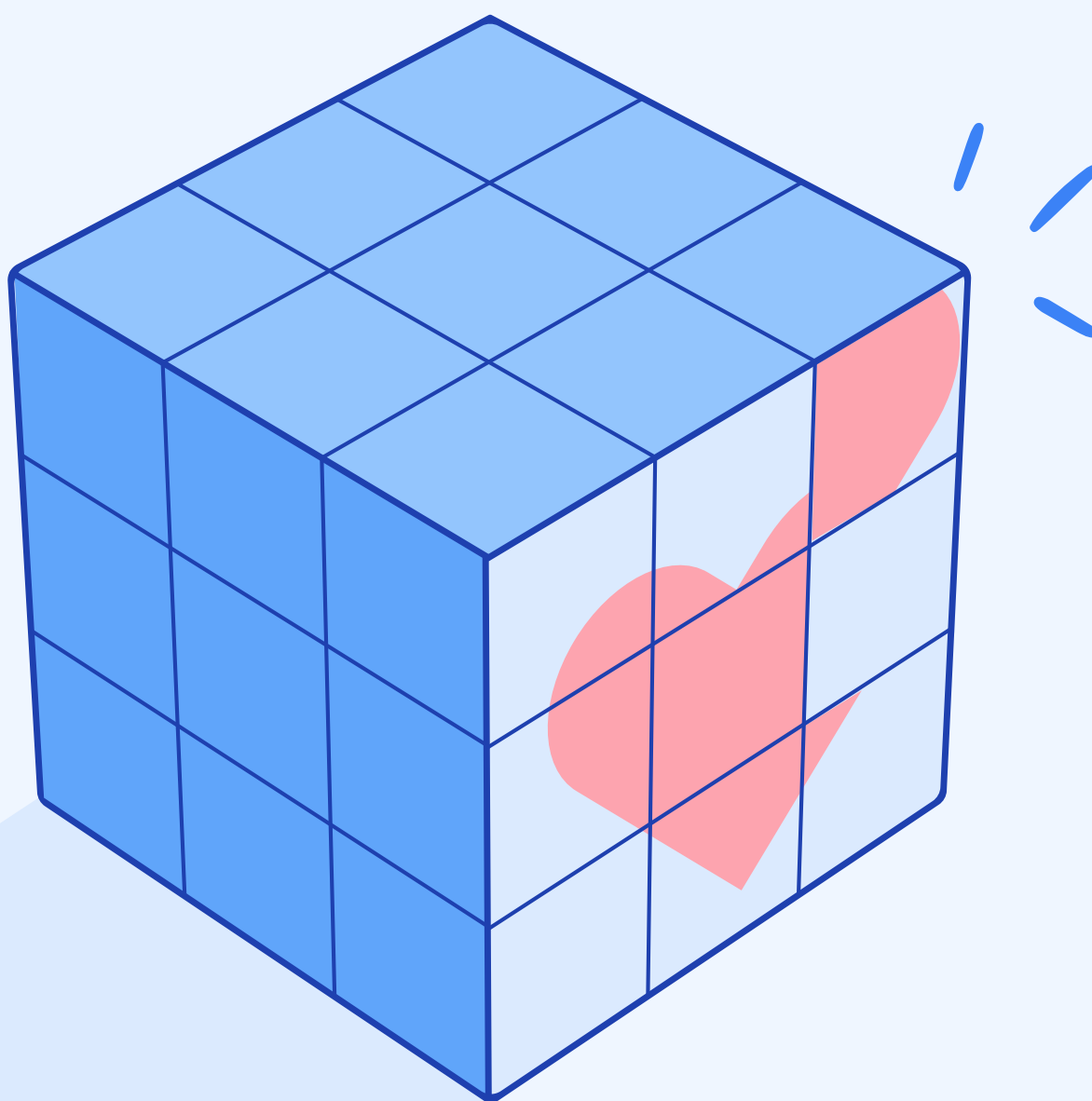


Sona.

The Big Reshuffle *part 2*

What 1000 Health and Social Care employees are saying about joining the sector... and how to retain them!

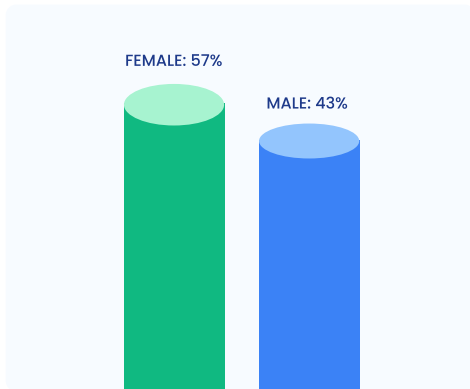


Methodology

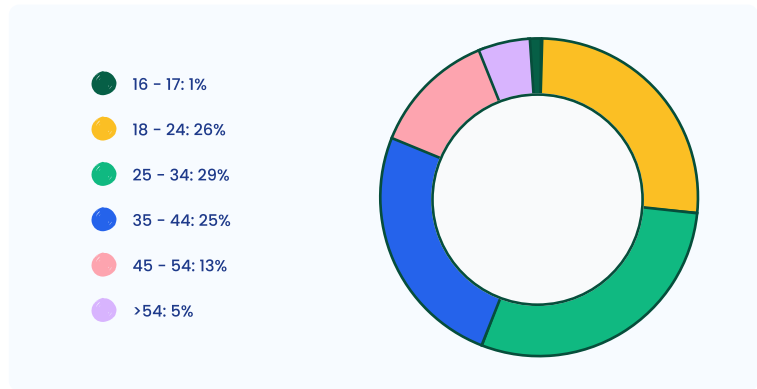
We surveyed 1000 people in the UK over the course of July, 2023.



The polling audience was 57% female and 43% male.

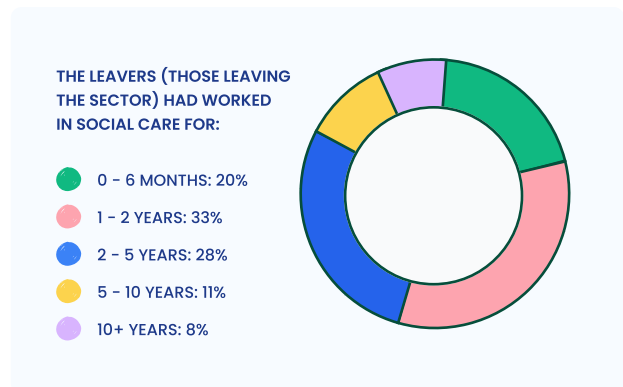
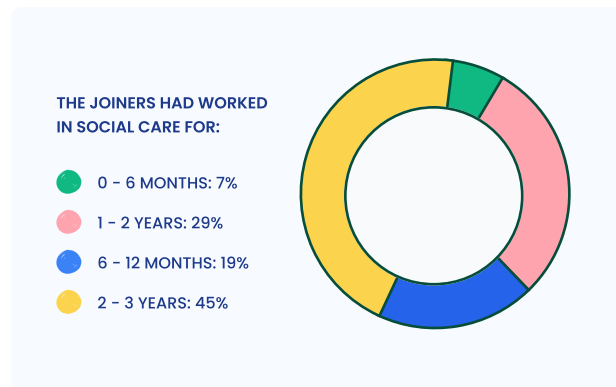


The age ranges were as follows:

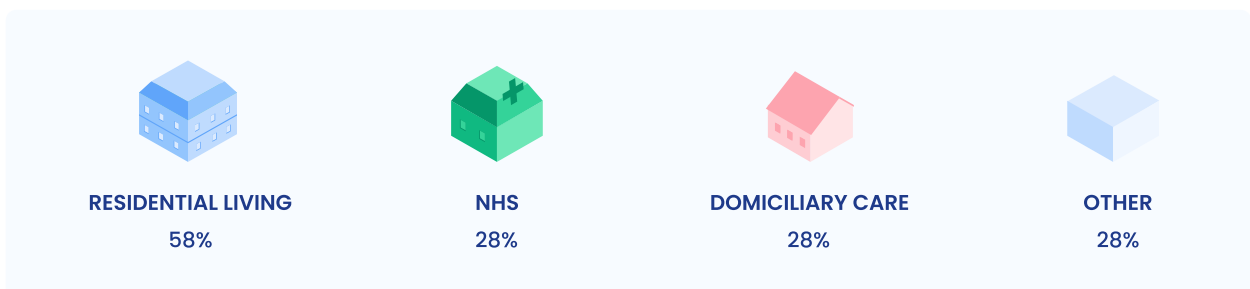


Additionally, to gather accurate insights into the Social Care sector we included joiners' and leavers' data.

Those with more than one year of experience had previously worked in Social Care and after a period outside of Social and Health Care decided to come back.



And lastly, here's the type of Social Care setting those polled worked at:



Why Part 2?

The trends influencing the Health and Social Care sector are complex and they impact most aspects of the recruitment and retention process. In surveying 1000 Health and Social Care professionals, we uncovered a wealth of data that could significantly help organisations tailor their efforts. We started by delving into leavers' responses and focusing on what might have motivated them to stay in [Part 1](#).

The Big Reshuffle (Part 2) continues this conversation, and offers practical insights and solutions that help leadership take action and implement relevant changes by focusing on why people join the Health and Social Care sector.

Here are the top three things that stood out to me:

1. Personal passion is the number one driver for new joiners.
2. Attention from managers and appreciation go a long way towards increasing retention.
3. Young people are interested in a Care career because it speaks to their values – loved Saghir's story on page 7 highlighting his positive experience and personal impact.

These point towards the many opportunities providers have to make small changes that have a big impact on new joiners and existing employees alike. Showing appreciation to staff and sharing how satisfying Care work can be when recruiting will contribute to making the sector more attractive to the next generation.

Sona believes in collaborating closely with our Care customers. We want to know as much as possible about every influencing factor, so that we can give them the best solution we can for their needs. Over the last year, we have consistently built new features and functionalities in direct response to feedback and collected insights such as the ones you are about to read.

Moving forward, in 2024, tech which supports Social Care providers to increase employee satisfaction is tech that will contribute to them becoming more attractive employers and successfully managing the continuous challenge that is recruitment and retention.

Improving the lives of those who care for the most vulnerable is essential because, ultimately, **it is people who are at the heart of Social Care.**



Oli Johnson,
Sona Co-Founder

Joiners' data:

Why are new people joining the sector?

The reasons new entrants give for joining the sector:

1. Personal passion	25%
2. Inspired by someone already in the sector	22%
3. Flexibility to choose when to work	14%
4. Financial benefit	14%
5. Location	11%
6. Career development opportunities	11%
7. Company culture and reputation	3%

Recruiting Social Care professionals is an essential activity for organisations looking to grow and offer the best experience for their residents. At the same time, [Skills for Care](#) reports 152,000 Care vacancies in 2023, so attracting new joiners to the sector and expanding the candidate pool is the only guaranteed way of filling these positions.

Those who excel at Care work are usually those who are naturally empathetic people, therefore it makes sense that almost half of the poll respondents chose personal passion or being inspired by someone else as their top reason for joining.

Intrinsic motivations such as these act as a strong incentive to deliver a high standard of work, but they need a supportive environment in order to thrive. At the same time, flexibility and financial incentives also rank high, so they can act as added benefits.

When employees don't feel like their values align with those of their employer, they might be at risk of leaving even if they're generally satisfied on the financial side. You can explore more of the reasons why Care staff leave and how to win the back in Part 1 of The Big Reshuffle.

Learn more: [The Big Reshuffle \(Part 1\)](#)

One practical tip to achieve this is to have a section on your website or use a social media platform to show how you support those passionate about caring for others, promote flexibility and other benefits, as well as show off any activities your staff get to enjoy regularly.

Recognising that the two top reasons for joining the sector are personal passion and being inspired by others can help you decide how to build your employer brand.

For example, new initiatives like that of [The Care UK's Thirty Under 30](#) awards help not only to celebrate young talent in the sector, but also to show outsiders that those working in Social Care get recognized and are appreciated.

[The Caring View](#) and [Social Care Club's](#) founder, Mark Topps, has also taken to social media to post and highlight the importance of Social Care, reaching more than 5,000 followers. This is an accessible way to get people excited about getting involved in the sector.









Another strategy that organisations can adopt is a refer-a-friend programme. For example, The Good Care Home Group offers a [refer-a-friend scheme](#) where employees can get up to £500 if their friend is successfully hired. In turn, their friends can get £250 if they complete their Care Certification in 16 weeks. A win-win situation for employees and their network.

There are also apps, like [Care Friends](#), that are built specifically to make referrals easier for employees and more rewarding for organisations. By using Care Friends, organisations can access hidden talent in their local community, and employees get rewards for each step of the process—not just for successful hires.

Besides spreading the voice of Social Care work and what you can offer candidates, one key aspect for attracting new talent—and keeping it—comes down to your employee experience and overall company culture.

Learn more: [Rethinking Recruitment: 5 Takeaways from The Residential and Home Care Show](#)

Where are new employees joining from?

	● UNDER 25	● 25 AND OVER
 HEALTHCARE	32%	45%
 HOSPITALITY	28%	12%
 RETAIL	23%	18%
 ADMINISTRATION	7%	12%
 TRANSPORT	1%	3%
 OTHER	9%	10%

When it comes to switching industries, Healthcare, Hospitality, and Retail are the most common ones, most likely due to transferable skills.

It is also worth noting that **over a quarter of under 25s come from Hospitality**. [Studies](#) have shown that younger generations are more driven by a sense of purpose and believe individuals can and should make an impact. Together these statistics point towards an opportunity for Care providers to advertise their vacancies to young people interested in switching by appealing to their strong sense of social consciousness.

+ From Retail to Care – a personal story

Saghir had worked in multiple roles, both in Hospitality and Retail, as well as Logistics before his first Care job. A friend's referral got him started: "What led me to my current role in the Care sector was being made redundant from my previous job. Just then, a friend of mine who was already working in Care, mentioned that there were vacancies, and I took the leap. I didn't have any plans or aspirations of working in the Care sector.

Compared to my roles in Retail and as a Warehouse Operative, the benefits that my current role in Care provides are very good.

The motivation is also there as it wasn't previously. Now I get to be a part of the lives of the people I care for. I'm not just another Sales Assistant or another Warehouse Operative. I am an important part of their lives and I'd like to think that I'm making a positive impact."



Saghir Iqbal,
Residential Care Worker, Strive to Care

Do new joiners feel appreciated?

Are those recently starting work in Health and Social Care feeling appreciated and valued?

16% do not.

In our [Appreciation Matters](#) report, we also found that more than 2 in 5 Health and Social Care employees have left a job because they didn't feel valued, costing thousands of pounds each to replace.

Recognising and acting on early signs of worker dissatisfaction can determine whether you are successful in retaining your new employees.

A digital solution with features like Sona's Well-being Check-ins, can help managers better understand how their employees are feeling, enabling them to give recognition and praise in a fast and easy way.

[Learn how Sona can help Social Care providers](#)

+ Methods to show appreciation

How does your new employer show appreciation in your role?

1. Words of affirmation (e.g. awards or thank you cards)	46%
2. Quality time (e.g. holiday allowance or flexible hours)	44%
3. Tangible gifts (e.g. gift cards or bonuses)	26%
4. Acts of service (e.g. clear career progression)	25%
5. None of these things	15%
6. Other	2%

Most would expect financial incentives to be a top appreciation method, but almost half of our respondents selected "words of affirmation" as the most common show of thanks.

A practical way to do this is by celebrating staff milestones, such as work anniversaries, promotions, personal achievements, or any meaningful event that can inspire others. Company newsletters, social media, or a [Newsfeed-style employee app](#) can be great places to show appreciation.

+ The impact of the on-boarding process on new joiners

Which aspects, if any, of your organisation's new starter on-boarding experience do you think needs improvement?

1. Attention from their manager	17%
2. Communication prior to their first day	17%
3. Buddying or peer support	15%
4. The welcome on arrival	13%
5. Company culture and values training	11%
6. Technical orientation (software training, access, etc.)	11%
7. Opportunity to give feedback	9%
8. Clarity on their responsibilities	7%

Source: [The Big Reshuffle](#) webinar

First impressions matter for employers and employees alike. Therefore, a thorough on-boarding process can go a long way towards improving retention rates and overcoming the 3-6 months period when new joiners are at the highest risk of churn. It might take effort, but the recruitment costs saved and the ability to deliver a better experience to residents can alleviate that long-term.

In the "[Delivering better outcomes](#)" webinar, Geraint Jenkins, Director of ICT & Operations at Wales's largest co-operative provider of supported living services for people with learning disabilities, commented that the first few months are essential to retaining staff:

"If people stay with us for six months, the odds of them staying increase. After a year, it increases dramatically. So, if they've been with us a year, people tend to have long, long careers with us."



Geraint Jenkins,
Director for Operations & ICT, Cartrefi

Lessons from the Big Reshuffle 2023 report

Now that we've looked at why Health and Social Care staff leave and join the sector, here are some practical tips for retaining and attracting more staff:

+ Make timely feedback accessible and personal



Managers and employees need to know what's going on at all times to remain on top of things. Prioritising and facilitating timely feedback—and acting on it—helps workers feel valued, seen, and listened to.

Thanks to today's technology, giving and receiving feedback in real time has never been easier. Software such as Sona is built to help managers, employers, and workers better communicate, and to automate processes, so their time can be better spent on what they do best: providing the best possible care.

+ Create a culture of recognition and integral wellbeing



The Health and Social Care sector has been put to the test over recent years. But technology can aid in creating a culture of recognition throughout the workplace.

Implementing timely feedback, combined with providing recognition programmes and rewards will help staff feel that their hard work is consistently appreciated.

Don't forget that not everything is about financial incentives: people also value simply receiving praise when praise is due, and knowing that employers care about their work-life balance.

Sona's [Engagement Cloud](#) features can help you monitor team morale, engage and delight staff, and recognise valuable employees.

+ Find ways to make work more flexible



Flexibility is increasingly sought after in all industries—with 76% of people saying they would stay with their employers if they were given more flexibility. Naturally, Health and Social Care professionals are seeking more flexibility, too.

Although the nature of the job might mean that working from home is not as feasible as in other industries, that doesn't mean flexibility is impossible.

Allowing Care staff to better plan their work-week, have more visibility over their shifts, and be able to pick up extra work is no longer a nice-to-have, but a must-have.

What's more, flexibility and a good work-life balance looks differently to every person. Some prefer having a day routine, while others appreciate night-shifts or being off during the week and working at week-ends. Accommodating childcare – with 6h shifts, for example – and other family responsibilities will also go a long way towards making employees feel cared for and valued.

According to the [2023 National Care Association Survey](#), **almost 25% of Care professionals reported that they receive their schedule less than a week in advance.** This means they have a much harder time planning their personal lives and balancing them with their careers. Being able to know your schedule a month or more in advance is the first step towards having better flexibility.

Holiday requests are a part of that, too. Time off contributes to a healthier work-life balance, and there have been [numerous studies](#) suggesting that there is a positive relationship between this and job performance together with employee satisfaction.

Overall, feedback from your teams is the best way to understand what their needs really are. The Big Reshuffle study has shown that sometimes, the most obvious answers are not the most accurate ones, and that **feeling listened to and appreciated is what often makes the biggest difference in the lives of Care staff.**

+ Lower your dependency on agency staff



Resources and funding is limited, we know that. But with tech that focuses on both efficiency and employee well-being, you can increase the number of shifts your own staff take, while decreasing agency costs and improving the overall shift-booking experience.

With Sona, you can reduce staffing agency usage by up to 40%, free up your managers' time by hours per week, and enable your staff to be better cared for. The Shift Filler feature enables employees to book themselves in for a shift there and notify in real-time the relevant supervisor that cover has been found.

Often, employees need to reach out to someone in order to request or accept overtime. The 2023 National Care Awareness Survey revealed that emails were the most popular method of booking overtime (30%), with phone calls and texts being the next (23%).

This creates extra friction for those looking to claim a shift – which might discourage them – and more admin for those organising the rota. When this is done manually, there is also a risk of only contacting employees who have done overtime in the past, and bypassing those who haven't but might be interested.

By digitising, you can offer up-to-date open shifts to employees easily, and prioritise your own staff equitably to fill gaps in the roster. Once open shifts are picked up by an employee, Sona can automatically email and cancel the agency booking within the allowed cancellation period.

Overall, reducing agency costs can be an achievable goal with the right solution in place.

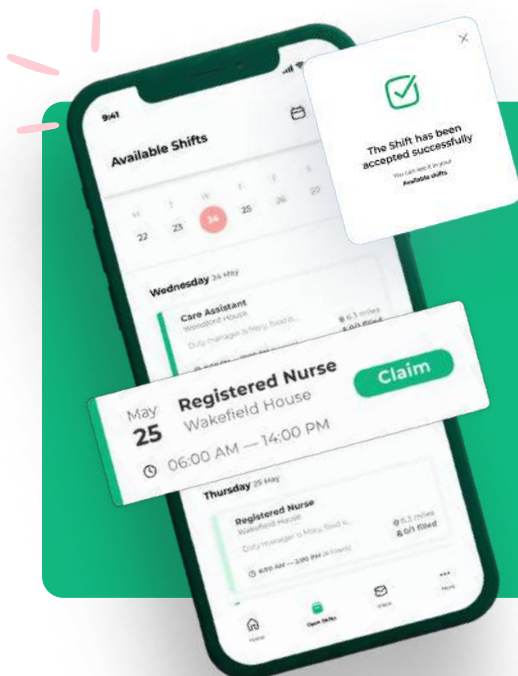
Built to boost retention

Backed by Google's Gradient Ventures, Sona is the next-generation workforce management solution committed to helping Social Care leaders address many of the staffing and operational challenges this report covers.

Frontline staff have been underserved by technology for decades. Much of what they currently use wasn't designed with them in mind and this often results in operational inefficiency, higher costs, and frustration for staff and managers. Our mission is to change all of this with our digital solution, purpose-built for today's frontline employees.

Sona combines the functionality you expect from any workforce management software – including scheduling, time & attendance, HR and payroll – with dedicated features to empower staff and solve the unique challenges of Social Care, all on one easy to use platform.

Digitalisation is no longer just a buzzword, it's the future of the Health and Social Care sector.



**Ready to see the
next-generation solution
for Social Care?**

[LET'S CHAT](#)

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