

The Social Care Council Register for

Social Workers

Social Care Workers

Social Work Students

in Northern Ireland



Live Register Report at 31 Dec 2023 (Qtr 3)

Introduction to the Register

The Social Care Council maintains a Register of all Social Workers and Social Care Workers who have been assessed as suitable to practise in Northern Ireland. The Social Care Council also registers all students studying on the Degree in Social Work courses in Northern Ireland. All registrants must meet the Social Care Council Standards for their Conduct and Practice.

The Register is split into three Parts:

- Part 1 is for qualified Social Workers;
- Part 2 is for those in designated Social Care roles covered by compulsory registration;
- The third part of the Register is for Social Work Students.

This report gives a snapshot of the Social Care Council Register on **31 December 2023**, which shows a total of 46597 registrants (6628 Social Workers, 39188 Social Care Workers and 781 Social Work Students). It provides an overview of workforce demographics, where they are working and the areas of care in which they are providing services.

The Register experiences minor changes every day as people move in and out of the workforce, or as students join/leave Social Work Degree courses. Currently, the workforce is composed of **84.1% Social Care Workers, 14.2% Social Workers** and **1.7% Social Work Students**.

	Register at 31 Dec 2023
Social Workers	6628 (14.2%)
Social Care Workers	39188 (84.1%)
Students	781 (1.7%)

Maintaining the Register

All registrants and their employers have access to their registration records through the online **Registration Portal** and the corresponding **Employer Portal**; and all are encouraged to keep their employment details regularly updated and are reminded to do so at their annual fee payment point.. At the end of every registration renewal period (either 3 or 5 years, depending on the registration status), registrants are required to renew their registration. As part of the renewal process, they are asked to confirm that they have the minimum compliance of 90 hours continuous professional development; and review and update their registration record, which helps to provide an insight to the demographics of the registered workforce.

Not everyone on the Register will currently be working, or be practising in the work setting they are registered against. Some may have been redeployed to related roles in Social Care, or perhaps taken a career break for personal or study reasons. Social Care registrants must be employed in social care to remain on the register and social work students must be progressing through their social work degree at a recognised University. Social Work registrants not in employment are permitted to remain on the Register providing they maintain their registration, including continuing with the learning and development requirements for their professional development.

Real-Time Access to Register Information

Following a collaboration with the Department of Health and further Social Care Strategy investment, a new online registration dashboard has been built and progress is underway to make this available to all stakeholders in the coming months.

1. Size of the Register

On **31 December 2023** (end of Q3) the Register totalled 46,597 as outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

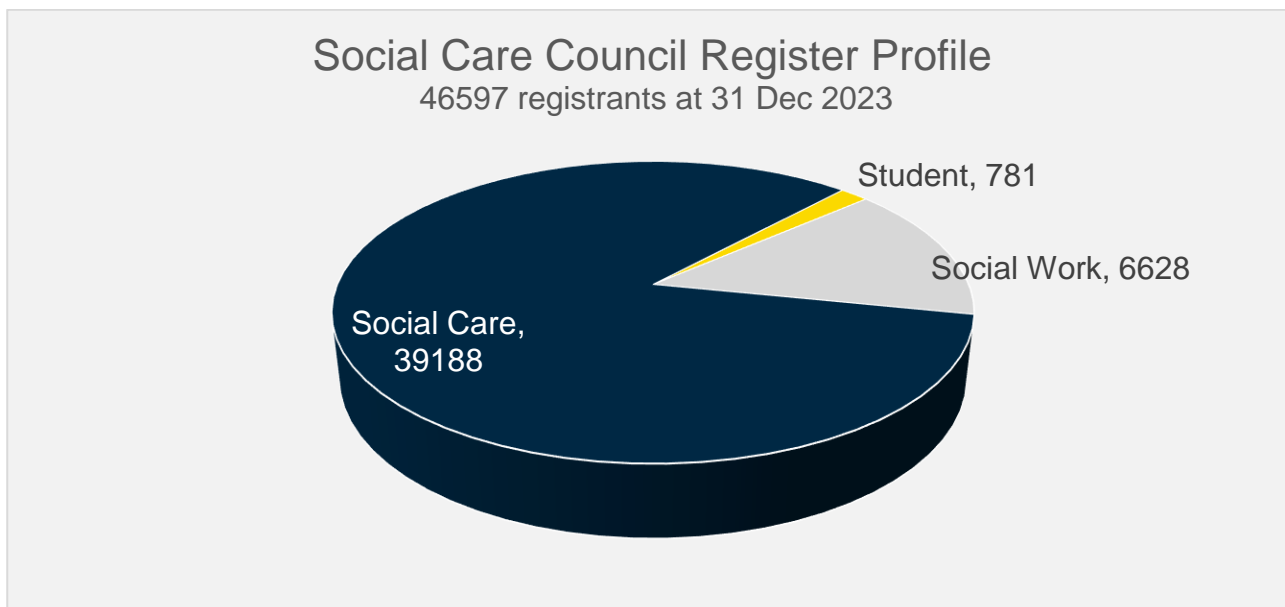
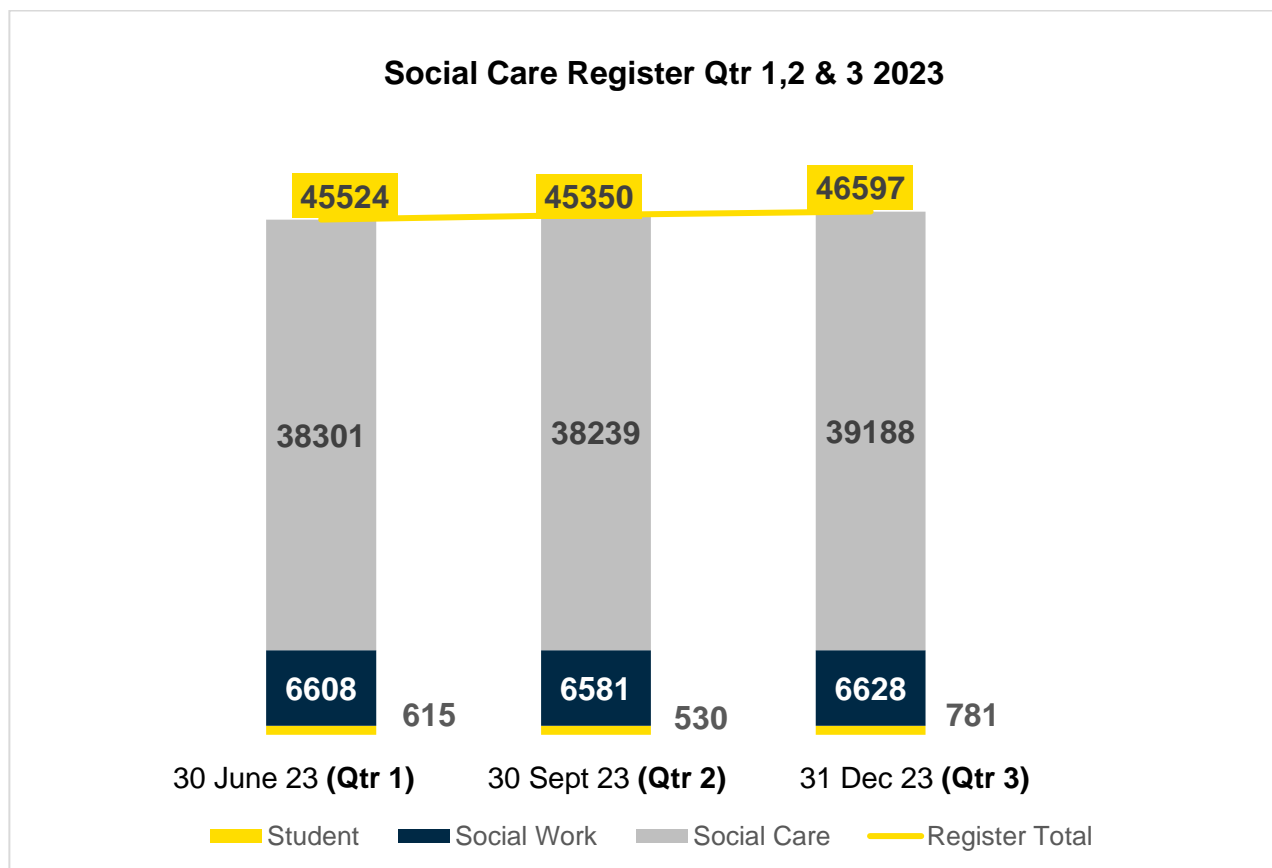


Figure 2 below shows the Register profile trend from **Qtr 1 - Qtr 3 2023**.

The Social Care Council quarter periods run from April to June (Q1), July to September (Q2), October to December (Q3) and January to March (Q4) each financial year. Whilst an increase in the number of registrants is observed, the workforce proportions remain consistent. The variation in the figures for registration across months is also influenced by removals for non-payment of fees and the time it takes to re-new and process new applications for registration.

It should also be noted that student numbers will equate to the academic points of graduation and new intakes across the programmes which explains why the numbers vary across periods.

Figure 2



2. Structure of the Register

Registrants identified themselves across 22 Job Roles (Sub-Parts of the Register) as shown below.

- Sub-Parts of Part 1 of the Register are Qualified Social Workers and Internationally Qualified Social Workers (Social Workers qualified outside of the UK)
- Sub-Parts of Part 2 of the Register are those in designated Social Care Worker roles covered by compulsory registration and also a number of non-mandatory roles agreed with the Council where employers have required their staff to register.
- The third part of the Register is for Social Work Students currently engaged in the Social Work Degree Programme.

In Table 1 below **Social Care** represents 84.09% of the Register, the most significant groups of Social Care staff identified as Adult Residential Care Workers (34.55%) and Domiciliary Care Workers (31.65%). The next largest groups within Social Care are Supported Living Workers (6.64%) and Day Care Workers (5.21%). These are the mandatory registration groups for social care. These proportions remain in keeping to that observed in Qtr 2 2023 and November 2023.

Table 1

	Job Role	Live Count at 31 Dec 2023	% of the Register
PART 1	Social Worker		
	Qualified Social Worker	6603	14.17%
	Internationally Qualified Social Worker	25	0.05%
	Social Work Student	781	1.68%
	Social Care Worker	39188	84.09%
PART 2	Adult Residential Care Worker	16100	34.55%
	Domiciliary Care Worker	14750	31.65%
	Supported Living Worker	3092	6.64%
	Day Care Worker	2426	5.21%
	Residential Child Care Worker	685	1.47%
	Youth and Family Support Worker	466	1%
	Social Work Assistant	452	0.97%
	Domiciliary Care Manager	462	0.99%
	Outreach Worker	261	0.56%
	Residential Home Manager	138	0.30%
	Day Care Centre Manager	109	0.23%
	Advocacy Worker	55	0.12%
	Residential Family Centre Worker	43	0.09%
	Personal Advisor	45	0.10%
	Driver	35	0.08%
	Rehabilitation Officer for the Blind	29	0.06%
	Education Welfare Officer w/o SW Qual	26	0.06%
Environmental Technical Officer	10	0.02%	
Education Welfare Officer Manager	4	0.01%	

3. Employment

3.1 Employment by Sector

- The Register is split into four key employment sectors, Employment Agency, Private, Voluntary and Statutory (including Health and Social Care Trusts, Education, Justice and NDPBs).
- The Register currently lists 488 employing Organisations across all the sectors.

In table 2 below at 31 December 2023, employment sectors for Social Workers and Social Care Workers continue to show significant differences, as previously reported.

- The majority of Social Workers are employed within the Statutory Sector i.e. Health and Social Care Trusts (71.06%)
- The majority of Social Care Workers are employed within the Non-Statutory Sector with the largest number employed within the Private Sector (41.54%). At the 31 December 2023 21.58% are employed by Health and Social Care Trusts.

These proportions remain in keeping with reporting at Qtr 2 2023 and November 2023.

A small percentage of registrants have 'not given' recorded against their employer sector. Employing organisations are encouraged to update the records for those registrants.

Table 2

Employment Sector	% of Social Workers	% of Social Care Workers
HSC Trust	71.06%	21.58%
Private Sector	0.85%	41.54%
Voluntary Sector	6.78%	16.68%
Recruitment Agency/ Employment Agency	1.58%	11.69%
FE/HE Education	3.77%	0.08%
Government	1.65%	<0.01%
Health	0.31%	0.11%
Justice	4.26%	0.1%
Not Given	5.02%	7.7%
Other	1.14%	0.25%
Regulation/Inspection	0.57%	<0.01%
Self Employed	1.07%	0.01%
Unemployed	1.87%	0.2%

3.2 Second Employments

The Register includes information regarding Social Workers and Social Care Workers who have declared that they work in more than one Social Care job role. 50 Social Work Students also indicated they were registered to work in Social Care whilst studying for the Degree in Social Work. These figures remain similar to that reported in Qtr 2 2023 and November 2023.

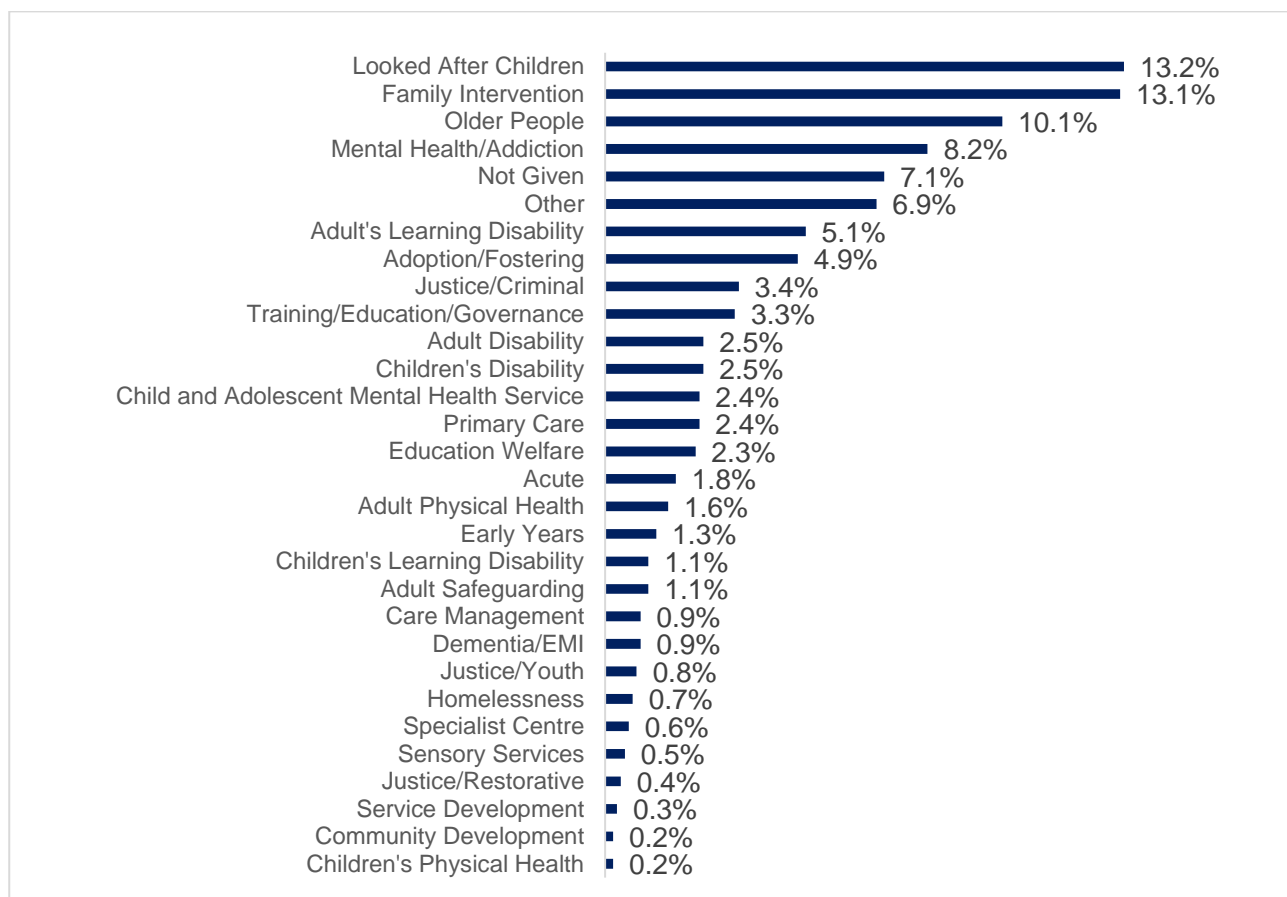
- Social Care Workers 4528 (12%),
- Social Workers 505 (8%)
- Social Work Students 50 (6%)

3.3 Social Workers – Employment by Work Focus

Social Worker ‘work focus’ provides an indication of the area of care and groups of people they provide services for as part of their job role. There are currently 30 different types of work focus recorded for Social Workers.

In Figure 3 below analysis of Social Worker data for work focus¹ shows that the greatest number of Social Workers (26.3%) work in services for Family & Child care, this includes Family Intervention and Looked After Children teams. The next largest work focus group (10.1%) are working in services for Older People.

Figure 3



¹ 7.1% of Social Workers have not specified their work focus as this level of detail was not required when Social Worker registration was first introduced. This information is being requested as Social Workers complete their 3-year renewal of registration or when they enrol in the Professional in Practice Framework (PiP) for their CPD.

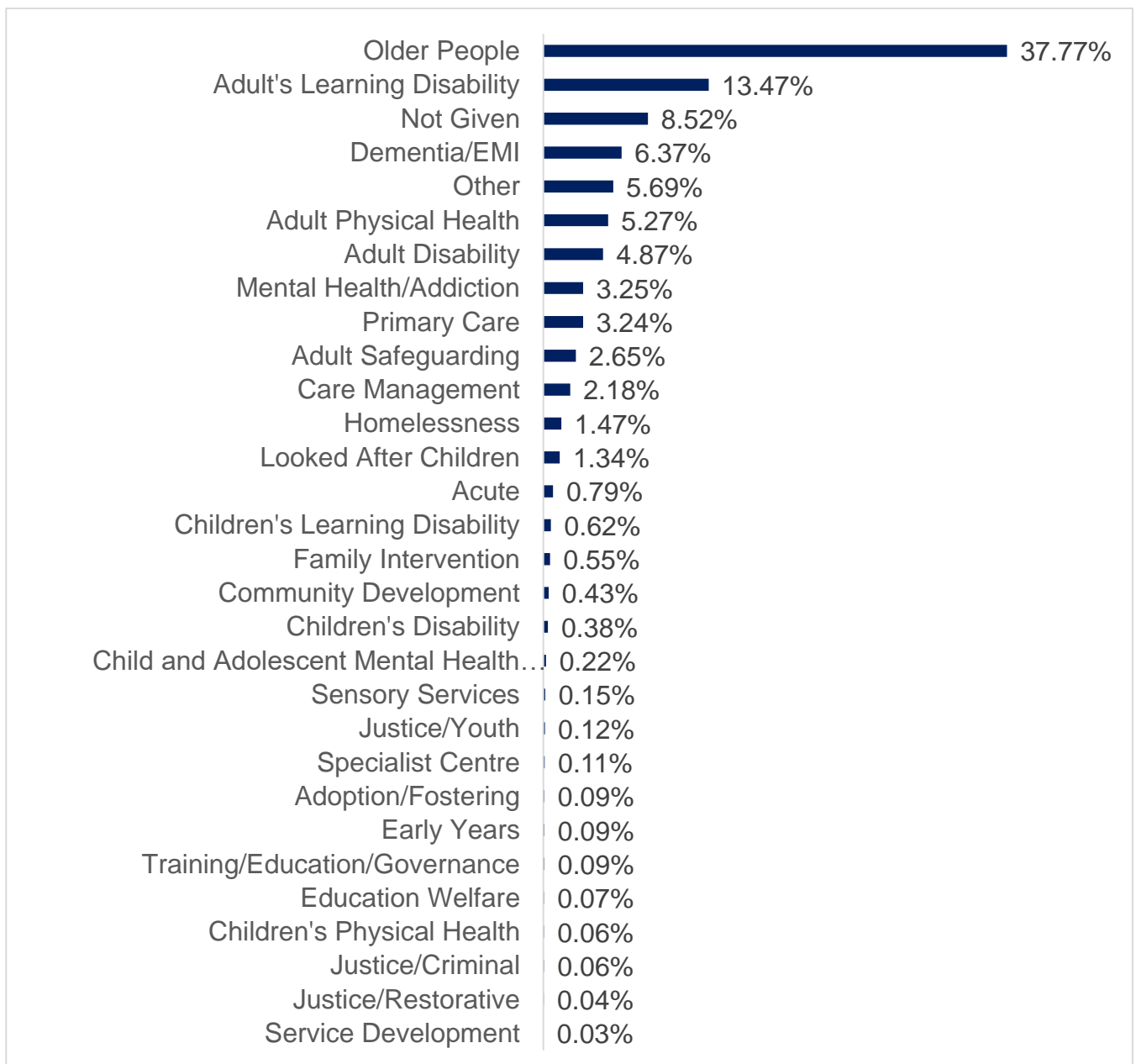
3.4 Social Care Workers – Employment by Work Focus

Social Care Worker ‘work focus’ provides an indication of the area of care and groups of people they provide services for as part of their job role. There are currently 28 different types of work focus recorded for Social Care Workers.

In Figure 4 below analysis of Social Care Worker data for work focus shows that the greatest number of Social Care Workers (37.77%) work in services for Older People. The next largest work focus group (13.47%) are working in services for Adults with a Learning Disability.

These proportions of Social Care Workers’ work focus groups remain in keeping with reporting in Qtr 2 2023 and November 2023.

Figure 4



3.5 Social Workers – Engagement in the Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework for Social Worker CPD

Social Workers are required to complete 90 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) during every three-year registration period. The PiP Framework provides certificated recognition of competence across the professional spectrum, providing a range of pathways to support Social Workers' in meeting the requirements for their on-going learning and development to meet these requirements. Currently, engagement in PiP activity is compulsory for newly qualified Social Workers who are required to complete PiP requirements within the professional Consolidation Award following completion of their Assessed Year in Employment. 63% of Social Workers on the live Register have achieved or are working towards awards within the PiP Framework to fulfil their CPD requirements.

Table 3

PiP Engagement

Award Status	Social Workers on the Live Register
1 Achieved Award	39%
2 Waiting Award	<1%
3 In Progress	24%
4 Withdrawn from Award	15%
5 No PIP Engagement	21%

Of those Social Workers on the Register who have completed Awards, 21% hold the NI Consolidation Award, 26% hold the NI Specialist Award and 4% hold the NI Leadership & Strategic Award. 6 Social Workers hold the PiP Advanced Scholarship Award.

The employment sectors for Social Workers holding awards are closely matched to the proportion of registered Social Workers employed in each of these sectors. 74% are employed in Health and Social Care Trusts, 6% are employed in the Voluntary Sector, 3% in Justice and 5% in Education.

4. Workforce Age and Gender

As reported in Figure 5a & 5b below for December 2023, Social Work and Social Care show similar patterns in gender split, with 84% of the workforce identifying as female. Representation across the age bands remains steady, with 35% of Social Workers and 49% of Social Care Workers in the under 40 age bands.

Figure 5a

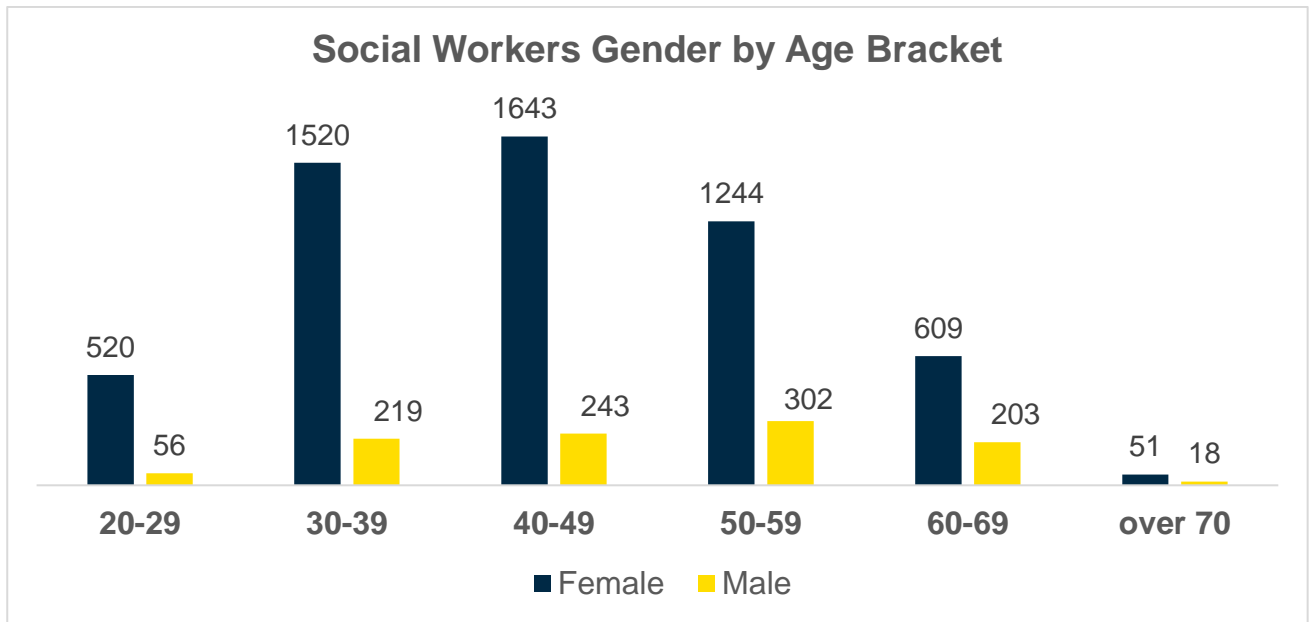
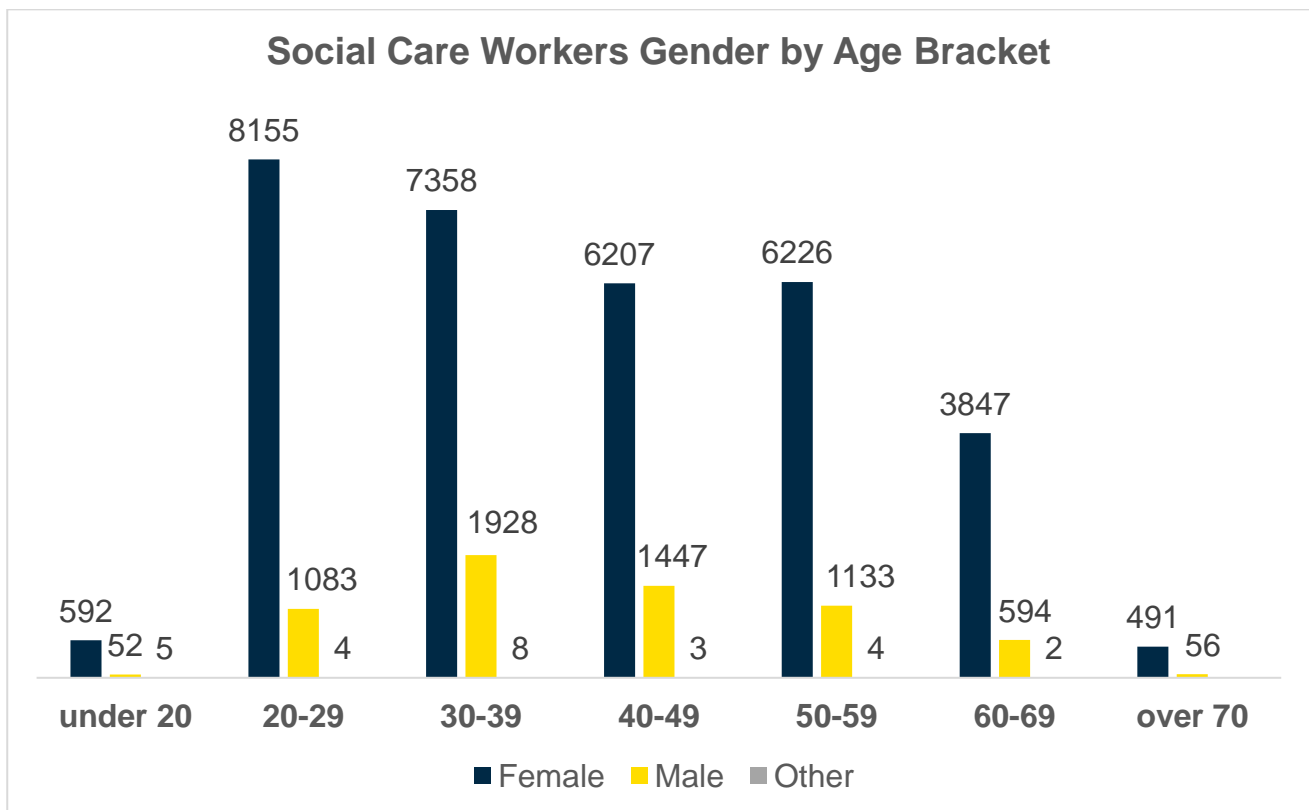


Figure 6b



5 Conclusion

In summary, the Register of Social Workers and Social Care Workers as of 31 December 2023, shows an increase of 1247 in the total number of registrants compared to the previous quarter. Delays in the registration processing times was reported during this quarter associated with a registration system upgrade. The automatic registrant removals were also paused temporarily so registrants were not disadvantaged, in respect of support to make renewal payments, during the December holiday office closure. These factors will have contributed to this increase in the register number. However, it is noted that there has been an increase of approximately 1000 registrants from Q1 to end of Q3 and this is unusual. It will be interesting to monitor this trend at the end of Q4.

Social Care represents the largest segment of the Register, with Adult Residential Care Workers and Domiciliary Care Workers being the most prominent groups. Employment sectors also remain consistent, with the majority of Social Workers employed in the Statutory Sector (such as Health and Social Care Trusts), while Social Care Workers are employed across various sectors, primarily the Private Sector.

The primary focus of Social Workers continues to be on Family & Child Care services indicating their crucial role in supporting vulnerable families and children. Services for Older People also remain a significant focus for Social Workers. Similarly, for Social Care Workers the main emphasis continues to be on services for Older People, followed by a notable proportion dedicated to working with Adults with Learning Disabilities. The engagement with the PiP Framework for Continuous Professional Development shows a significant proportion of Social Workers participating in learning that is assessed against professional, and in many cases, academic quality benchmarks.

Overall, the number of registrants, employment sectors, work focus areas, and gender distribution show no significant deviations from the previous month's report indicating a stable landscape within the profession. These findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the profession and its dynamics, providing stakeholders with valuable information for decision making and resource allocation.

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