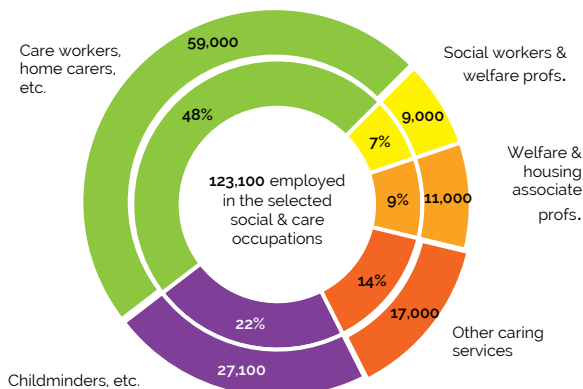


9.6 Social & Care Occupations

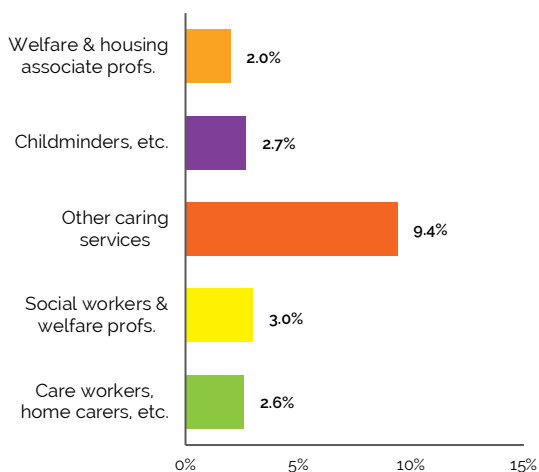
Overall employment: Approximately 123,000 persons (79% female) were employed in the selected social & care occupations, representing 5.4% of the national workforce.

- **Sector:** 82% of overall employment was concentrated in the health sector
- **Employment growth (5-year):** Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment increased by almost 19,000 (3.4% on average annually compared to 3.2% nationally). The strongest rate of employment growth was observed for other caring services (9.4%) during the period
- **Age:** The 25-54-year age group accounted for the majority of persons employed, at 65%. The share of employees aged 55 years and over, at 25%, was above the national average of 19%
- **Education:** The share of persons employed in the selected social & care occupations who had attained higher secondary/FET qualifications was 50%, above the national average share of 38%. Those who had attained third level qualifications (39%) was below the national average share (48%)
- **Full-time/part-time:** Over 65% of social & care workers were in full-time employment
- **Nationality:** The share of non-Irish workers was below the national average of 16%, while 86% of workers were Irish nationals.

Numbers employed, 2019 (annual average)



Average growth rates (%) 2014-2019



Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment increased by 18,900 (3.4% on average annually compared to 3.2% nationally).

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

The changing demographics in Ireland, both the fall in the number of 0-4-year-olds and the increasing number of those aged 65 years and older in the population, will be the primary driver of employment for these occupations in the coming years. Government initiatives, including commitments to increase the quality of childcare provision and incentives to increase female labour force participation, may offset the decline in demand for childcare workers, while the demand for older care workers is likely to rise.

Overall employment in this occupational group is forecast to decline by 4.5%, or approximately 5,600 persons, for the year 2020 (annual average), when compared to 2019 as a result of COVID-19. Increases in employment in occupations such as care workers and other caring services (relating primarily to nursing assistants) will be offset by a decline for those employed in childminding roles. With the exception of nursing assistants, the exposure to diseases, while higher than average, is not as high as those in healthcare occupations. However, they are very likely to work in close proximity to others.

Occupation	Economic summary
Welfare & housing associate profs.	Employment growth over the last five years has been below the national average.
Childminders, etc.	Employment growth over the last five years has been below the national average. A high number of recent job hires without significant employment growth indicates that job churn is a factor for this occupation. The number of children born in Ireland has been declining over the last 10 years which may affect the future demand for childcare providers. The impact of COVID-19 has been significant with the closures of childcare facilities during the lockdown and many reopening with reduced capacity.
Social workers & welfare profs.	Employment growth for this occupation was in line with the five-year national average. COVID-19 is unlikely to have affected overall employment numbers, although it may have significantly impacted the nature of the work in this occupation.
Care workers, home carers, etc.	Although employment growth has been below the five-year national average, the demand for care workers is likely to be sustained given Ireland's ageing demographic. At 27%, the share of those working in this occupation aged 55 years and older is higher than the national average which may affect replacement demand. A high number of recent job hires without significant employment growth indicates that job churn is a factor for this occupation. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to have been significant, particularly as those in this occupation work in close proximity to others and have a high exposure to infection.
Other caring services	The high employment growth seen by this occupational group relates primarily to healthcare assistants, mainly in hospital settings. The impact of COVID-19 has meant that the demand for this occupation is likely to have been significant.

**For detailed table see Appendix A*