

# Intersectionality, Migration, and Training: Racialized Structuring of England's Social Care Workforce

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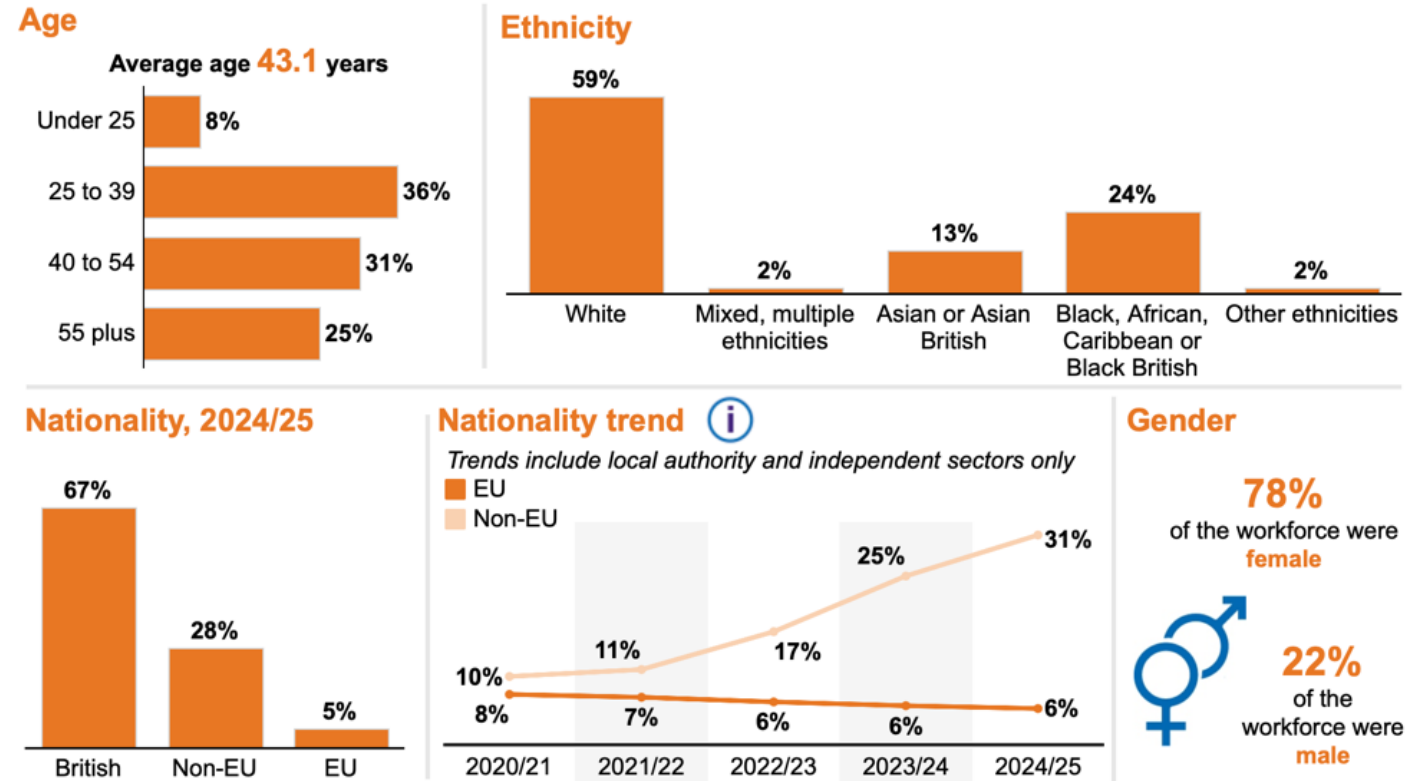
# Global Care Labour Context

- Aging populations
- Care deficits
- Labour shortages
- Feminization of migration
- Outsourcing reproductive labour



# England as a Case Study

- Heavy reliance on migrant care workers
- Post-Brexit workforce crisis
- Expansion of Health & Care Worker visa
- Chronic undervaluation of care labour



Source: Skills for Care, 2025

# 2023 Training Reform Agenda

- Professionalization narrative
- Standardization of competencies
- Career pathway
- Retention goals



**CARE**

## **Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care**

**A plan for adult social care system reform 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025**

Published 4 April 2023

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*Our plan will help care workers pursue their careers and get the professional recognition they deserve*

# Why Focus on Training?

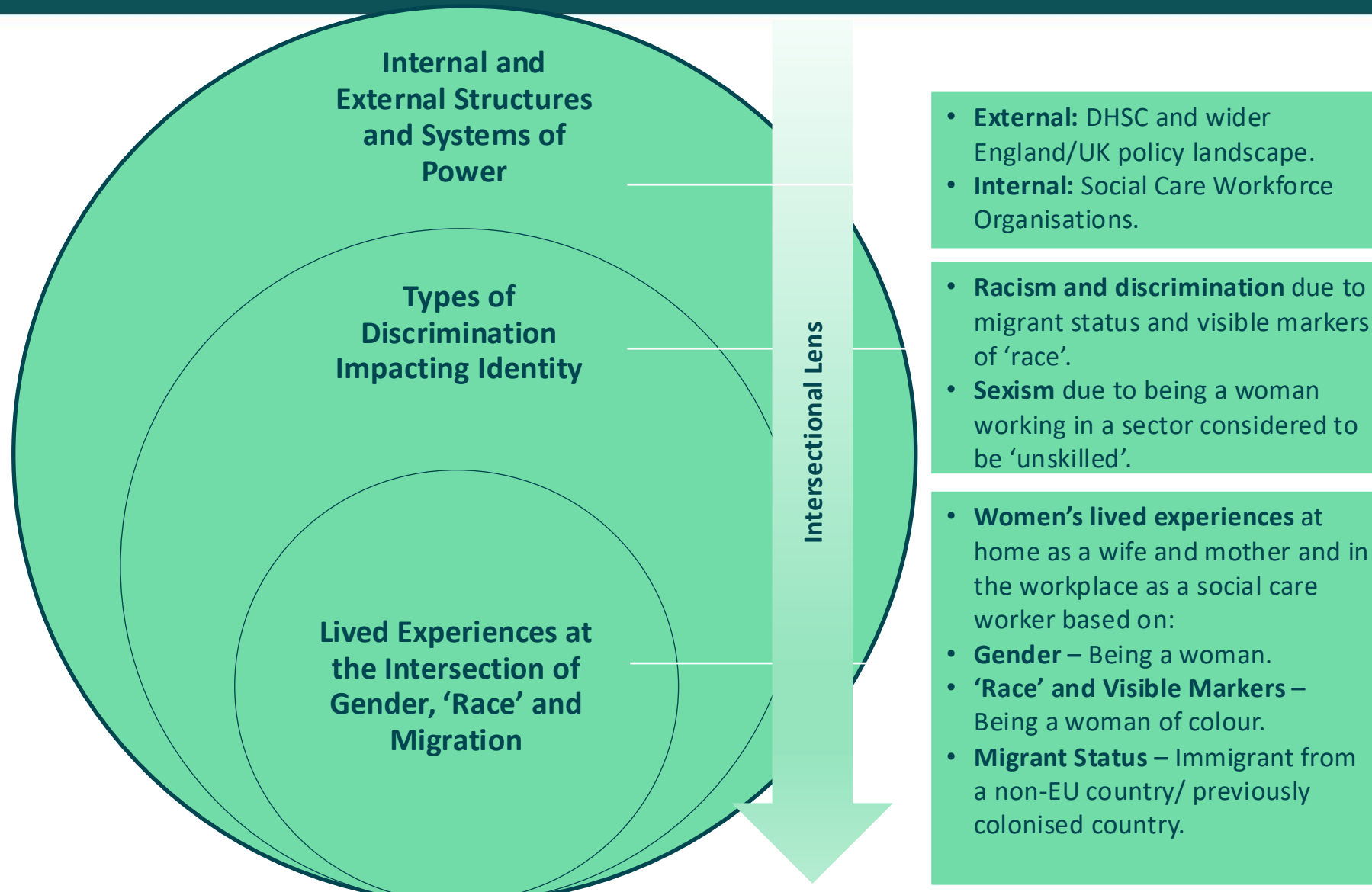
Training is often framed as:

- Professionalization
- Workforce development
- Quality improvement

But I argue it also functions as:

- Mechanism for sorting labour
- Regulating mobility of labourer
- Gatekeeper of skills and credentials

# Theoretical Framework



# Key Study Objectives

- To explore insights of **women in the social care workforce, on their different needs from training** such as the 2023 Policy Reforms.
- To explore insights from **policy decision makers on how the diversity of women in the social care workforce and their different needs**, particularly at the intersection of gender and 'race', **were considered in the design** of the intervention packages included in the **2023 Policy Reforms**.

# Methods

- Qualitative interviews
- 30 semi-structured interviews with:
  - Policymakers (12)
  - Home care workers (18 = 13 migrant women of colour + 5 non-migrant White British women)
  - All living in England
- Policy document analysis and 2023 training reform review
- Analytical approach: Intersectional lens



# Findings: Policy Blind Spots

- Equality assumed, not operationalized
- “One workforce” framing
- Lack of disaggregated data use
- Migration status ignored

## Key message:

**A ‘one-size fits all’ policy design obscure the diversity of workforce realities.**



# Findings: Differential Training Access for Migrant Workers

## **Structural barriers:**

- Visa insecurity
- Employer sponsorship dependence
- Zero-hours contracts
- Funding gatekeeping

## **Key message:**

**Training access stratified along race and migration lines.**



# Findings: Deskilling of Migrant Workers

## Especially salient for migrant workers:

- Overseas qualifications unrecognized
- Nurses working as care assistants
- Training focused on basic competencies
- Limited advanced pathways

## Key message:

**Institutionalized deskilling or institutional racism.**




# Findings: Does training enable progression?

## Findings suggest:

- Horizontal skill accumulation
- Limited upward mobility
- Visa ties restrict exit

## Key message:

**Training may give skills to work in the sector but does not provide worker mobility.**



*"They (trainings) don't stop every time. Every after one month you have a course"*

*"I'll only stay back in this care job if there is something like a ladder"*

# Discussion: Reframing Training Reform

- Professionalization strategy
- Labour market stabilizer
- Migration management tool
- Racialized stratification mechanism



# Discussion: Global Care Chain Implications

- Receiving countries rely on migrant labour
- Sending countries lose skilled workers
- Deskillng produces “brain waste”
- Care deficits redistributed globally



# Policy Implications

- Recognition of overseas credentials
- Portable training certifications
- Decoupling visas from employers
- Equity-targeted workforce funding
- Anti-racist workforce planning



# Conclusion

- Care systems depend on migrant women's labour
- Training reforms are not structurally neutral
- Gender- and race-blind design reproduces inequality
- Equity requires integrating migration and workforce policy
- Sustainable care systems require not only more workers, but more just workforce infrastructures

# References

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- Direct quotes are from the social care workers interviewed.

# Acknowledgments

- My research participants.
- My supervisors at LSHTM, Dr. Neil Spicer and Prof. Shereen Hussein.
- The LSHTM Travelling Scholarship 2023-2024.
- Images – freepik.com
  
- Thank you to the Migration, Mobility and Care Workers' interest group for giving me the opportunity to present my work.