Around 6.3 million people work in the long-term care sector in the EU – up by one third in just one decade – while 44 million people provide frequent informal long-term care to relatives or friends.

The proportion of workers aged 50 years or older is higher than in other sectors, and is increasing at a faster pace: from 28% in 2009 to 38% in 2019.

Working conditions in the sector are characterised by physical challenges such as lifting people and working with potentially infectious materials – the risks being high in the sector as the workforce is older.

Exposure to adverse social behaviour at work means there is a high risk of developing mental health problems, thereby accentuating gender differences as the workforce is predominantly female.

Better staffing levels and more training, with public funding leveraged to set standards for care work, can all contribute to improving working conditions, addressing staff shortages, and ensuring access to high quality long-term care.

Report (PDF format)