



Social care in Wales

A short guide to what social care is,
who it's for and how it's provided



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**



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Social care in Wales

What is social care?

Social care provides support to people of all ages living in communities across Wales, **24 hours a day, 365 days a year**



Social care is vital to many people in Wales, but it's often misunderstood. It's a broad term that describes care and support that enables people of all ages to manage their day-to-day lives, often when they're facing difficult and complex challenges. It's a statutory service, which means by law councils have to provide social care services where people are assessed as needing it.



More than 75,000 adults, children and carers had a care and support plan in place on 31 March 2023

What does social care do?

People access care and support for different reasons. It could be to get support to establish safe and stable environments to manage their physical and mental health or to live independently.

Social care covers a range of activities and can include:

- working with people to understand what matters to them, and developing plans to support them when they need it
- providing personal care, such as helping people wash, dress or take their medicine
- providing practical and emotional support to help children, adults and families manage their well-being
- connecting people with local communities
- providing advice, information and equipment
- keeping children, adults and families safe.

Why is social care important?

Social care is vital to our society because it:

- plays an important role in supporting people's well-being and independence
- supports the NHS
- contributes significantly to the economy
- makes sure that everyone, regardless of background or ability, has access to the support they need.



Where does social care take place?

Social care can take place in a range of settings, including:

- people's homes
- care homes
- day centres
- hospitals
- other community locations.



Who provides social care?

More than **1,200 organisations** provide social care services in Wales

They include:

- councils
- private companies
- not-for-profit organisations, including charities.

Social care organisations work with other professions, such as health, education and the police, to provide services with integrity, empathy and expertise.

A significant amount of care is also provided by unpaid carers. These are people who are caring for family members and friends. Unpaid carers can also access social care.

More than **300,000 people** provide unpaid care in Wales. **8,200 unpaid carers** are aged between **five and 17 years old**



Who works in social care?

More than 80,000 people work in social care in Wales

The people who work in social care are highly skilled professionals. They work in a variety of roles, which include:

- social workers
- home care workers, who provide care in people's own homes
- residential care workers, who work in settings, such as children's homes or adult care homes.

These workers support people to:

- express what's important to them and set goals by building meaningful relationships that value their experiences, language and culture
- identify and make the most of their personal strengths, skills and support networks, including family, friends and resources in their local community.

They also work with people in short-term crisis situations, and work with people over the longer term depending on their needs.



How do people access social care?



There are **22 councils** in Wales

Councils play an essential role in organising and connecting people with the right care and support.

Councils use an assessment process to understand people's strengths and care and support needs. If appropriate, they'll use this information to draw up a care and support plan.

More than 1 in 50 people in Wales have a care and support plan

The care and support plan sets out what matters to the person and how they'll be supported to achieve their personal well-being outcomes.



How is social care funded?

Councils assess if people's needs are eligible for support and funding. Some adults will have to pay towards their social care services, as some adult social care is a means-tested service.

People with high levels of disposable income or who have savings and investments of more than £24,000 may have to pay up to £100 each week for non-residential care. Those with capital of more than £50,000 may have to pay the full cost of any residential care.

Councils can also provide people with payments towards the cost of their care and support. These are called direct payments. Many people use them to employ their own social care workers, who are known as personal assistants.

Councils also work with a range of voluntary organisations to put preventative services in place to keep people healthy, well and independent.

How are high standards maintained in social care services?

Social care services in Wales are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales. It registers, inspects and takes action to improve the quality and safety of services. Most social care services in Wales are rated 'good' or 'excellent'.

Most social care workers are regulated by Social Care Wales. This means workers must:

- register
- achieve specific qualifications
- follow a Code of Professional Practice.

This Code of Practice sets standards of behaviour to support people's safety and well-being.

Is there specific legislation for social care in Wales?

Social care services are bound to national legislation, such as the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The act makes sure services work with people who use care and support to identify what matters to them. It also makes sure they remain at the heart of the care and support they receive.

The act is built on 5 principles:

- 1 Voice and control:** putting people at the centre of their care and support
- 2 Prevention and early intervention:** being able to access timely advice and support to prevent things reaching a crisis point
- 3 Well-being:** making sure people who use care and support and unpaid carers can enjoy well-being in every area of their lives
- 4 Co-production:** involving and working with people who use care and support, their family, friends and carers in designing the care and support they use
- 5 Multi-agency:** building strong relationships between partner agencies, including social care, health, education, probation services, housing, community services and the voluntary sector