



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



Our strategic equality plan report 2024 to 2025



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Our equality objectives are:

1. Improve the use of equality data and information
2. Equality at work
3. Digital inclusion
4. The well-being of the social care and early years workforce
5. Equality, diversity and inclusion within Social Care Wales.

What we did in 2024 to 2025

We're proud to share *Our annual strategic equality report* – but we do so with mixed emotions.

It's deeply troubling that, even in 2025, people working in social care and early years continue to face discrimination. The stories of people unable to progress, feel safe or be respected in their roles are unjust and heartbreaking. These experiences stand in stark contrast to the values in our Code of Professional Practice to respect the rights of individuals.

Yet, we're also proud. Proud of the steps we've taken to understand these barriers, to listen to lived experiences and to act. We know we're on a journey – and there's much more to do, but we can demonstrate strong foundations for future progress.

We also see and value the many people and organisations across the sector – workers, managers, responsible individuals and strategic leaders – who share our commitment to equity and are driving change in their own services and communities. All efforts are vital, and together we are building momentum.

Our Board and leadership team remain firmly committed to leading the fight against discrimination. We will continue to speak up and share evidence, challenge injustice and work collaboratively to build a sector that's fair, inclusive and respectful for all.

This report shares the progress we've made – and as we shape our next strategic equality plan, we invite you to join us in continuing to break down systemic discrimination.

Sarah McCarty, Our Chief Executive

Achieving our equality objectives

This annual report sets out the steps we've taken to achieve our five equality objectives.

The plan has five outcomes. We will:

- improve the use of equality data and information
- work with employers and leaders within social care and early years to help advance equality at work
- work to make sure equality, accessibility and inclusion are central to our work of building a digitally ready social care and early years workforce
- support the workforce by promoting our well-being resources and offers, and improving access to them
- promote opportunities to work with us, to help us achieve a more diverse and inclusive Board, staff and regulatory panel, and to widen our networks.

We've embedded equality, diversity and inclusion to achieve the objectives of our strategic equality plan throughout our work, as well as in our work to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Accessibility statement

We've continued to meet the requirements to be an accessible organisation, making sure our products and websites meet the requirements of the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 \(AA\)](#).

Involving people with lived experience in our work

This report highlights how we've involved and worked with people with a range of protected characteristics and lived experience to achieve our equality objectives.

In 2024 to 2025, we took the decision to form an expert reference group to help support our equality, diversity and inclusion work. The group's first meeting will take place in 2025 to 2026.

What was our impact in 2024 to 2025?

Impact statement

Reflections on our progress from 2024 to 2025 have highlighted that we are beginning to see the impact of our *Strategic equality plan (2022 to 2027)*.

Through the development, continuation and refinement of robust data collection, targeted equality, diversity and inclusion programmes, and inclusive engagement, we're laying the foundations for long-term change across the social care sector in Wales, and continuing our organisation's journey to anti-discrimination.

Here's some of the measurable impact:

Building a strong evidence base

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and Have Your Say survey have provided us with baseline data to monitor experiences of discrimination, progression and inclusion in the social care sector. These tools will allow us to track trends over time and make sure our work is targeted and impactful. This data has given us a clear understanding of the experiences of different groups working in the social care sector in Wales. This year we've also launched an early years and childcare survey to better understand the experience of the workforce and we'll report our findings in 2025 to 2026.

Our internal data dashboards have improved our ability to understand the demographics and experiences of the registered workforce, enabling more informed decision-making within our organisation and improving access to data that can be used in equality impact assessments.

Ensuring representation and inclusion

We have taken steps to make sure our organisation is on the journey to being representative of the sectors we serve. Building on our Board recruitment in 2023 to 2024, we've seen increased diversity in our fitness to practise panel member appointments and staff recruitment, with more appointments from ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities.

Our leadership development programme for ethnic minority social care workers is piloting a programme to address the leadership disparity in social care. This will launch in 2025 to 2026. This has been developed in co-production with people with lived experience so that it's representative of the communities it's aiming to support.

Embedding anti-discriminatory practice

Our work with leaders and managers through anti-racism pledges, roadshows, and e-learning resources is helping shift workplace culture. It's enabling us to use our influencing role to start or continue other organisations' anti-racism journeys to build positive inclusive cultures in social care.

The revised Code of Professional Practice has been developed through consultation with the sector, as well as specific groups. This has led to a stronger focus on anti-discrimination, setting clearer expectations.

Informing future planning

The insights gained this year will directly help shape the development of our next strategic equality plan. The metrics and feedback mechanisms we've embedded will make the next plan even more responsive, evidence-led and impactful.

Objective 1: Improve the use of equality data and information

What do we want to achieve in our strategic equality plan by 2027?

We'll improve the data collected about the social care workforce and the way it is used to better understand what the sector can do to achieve a diverse workforce that better reflects the communities it serves.

What progress have we made?

We know that having high quality data is important for us to measure our progress in achieving our equality objectives.

You'll see throughout this report how data has been used to inform the priority actions we're taking with our equality, diversity and inclusion work. We've worked with Welsh Government to provide data to contribute to the first Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), and deepened our understanding of the social care workforce's experience through our Have Your Say survey. These two data collections have been pivotal in providing a strategic steer for the direction of our work, particularly with our focus on supporting an anti-racist social care sector in Wales.

We've also continued to develop internal data dashboards using the data we hold about the people who are registered with us. When looked at as a whole, these show the demographics of the people registered with us, as well as those going through our fitness to practise and hearing processes.

All the data in the dashboards is anonymous.

You can find our workforce data in Appendix 1 below.

Our annual workforce data collection

We carry out the workforce data collection every year to give a snapshot of the social care workforce in Wales.

We ask local authorities and independent service providers to send us data on their workforce numbers and characteristics.

We've run the collection since 2021, after Welsh Government's *Performance and improvement framework for social services in Wales* replaced previous collections with a single process managed by us.

The collection is different to information published about the registered workforce, as it collects data about everyone working in social care.

It also looks at things such as contracts and working hours, as well as people who join and leave the sector, and where they move to and from.

[You can find a summary of the social care workforce report in Appendix 2](#)

Development of a Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)

“The data in this report identifies areas Social Care Wales, Welsh Government, partners and employers need to take action on” – Sarah McCarty

The [Workforce Race Equality Standard](#) is a tool to help monitor the experience of people from ethnic minorities who work in health and social care in Wales.

Overseen by Welsh Government, it brings together data about the workforce and analyses it under four categories:

- leadership and progression
- continuing professional development (CPD) and training
- discipline and capability
- bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The tool highlights where there are differences between the experience of White, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic health and social care staff.

Together with Welsh Government and NHS Wales, we've published the first Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) social care report.

The report relies on data from the 56,475 social care staff who were registered in Wales in 2024, along with findings shared in our annual Have Your Say workforce survey.

The report found that:

- Black, Asian and mixed/other Minority Ethnic staff make up more than 1 in 5 of those staff, which is proportionately greater than represented in the local population
- despite an appetite to seek progression, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic social care staff are under-represented in managerial positions, and despite a high proportion seeking progression, minoritised social care staff are significantly underrepresented in managerial positions: 1 in 5 Minority Ethnic social care workers falls to 1 in 15 at managerial level
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff were more than twice as likely to report a lack of additional training to support career progression compared to their White counterparts
- men are 1.3 times more likely to be referred through fitness to practise processes, irrespective of ethnicity, but Black, Asian and mixed/other Minority Ethnic social care workers are even more likely to be referred to the fitness to practise process.

As this is the first report, this dataset will be used as a baseline.

We've responded to the Workforce Race Equality Standard:

Sarah McCarty, our Chief Executive, said: "Racism is, and will always be, unacceptable. Social care staff join the profession to help, support and make a positive difference to people's lives. Working in every community in Wales, people working in social care provide a critical role to support individuals and families to do what is important to them."

"The workforce are committed to helping people and have a fundamental right to be treated with respect, but many tell us that they're not being treated fairly. The data in this report identifies areas Social Care Wales, Welsh Government, partners and employers need to take action."

"Inequality in leadership development was one of the areas identified in this report. We've taken steps to address this by working with people with lived experience to develop a new 'supporting progression for ethnic minority workers programme', which will start in the autumn."

What's the impact of the progress we've made?

In 2024 to 2025, we significantly strengthened our evidence base to inform our equality work.

The continued development of internal data dashboards enabled a clearer understanding of the demographics and experiences of the people who are

registered with us, supporting more informed decision-making and targeted equality impact assessments.

The publication of the first Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) report provided baseline data on racial disparities in leadership, training access and disciplinary processes.

This data-driven approach is laying the foundation for long-term change and will directly inform the next strategic equality plan, ensuring future actions are responsive and evidence-led.

Objective 2: Equality at work

What do we want to achieve in our strategic equality plan by 2027?

We'll work with employers and leaders in social care and early years to help them advance equality of opportunity for the social care and early years workforce.

What progress have we made?

Our 'Workforce strategy for health and social care'

The *Social Care Workforce Delivery Plan* published in June 2024 builds on the work already begun as part of [A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce](#). It includes the actions of the second phase that we'll be focusing on from 2024 to 2027 to address the workforce challenges facing the social care sector in Wales.

Our social care workforce is our biggest asset and remains committed to supporting what matters to people and their families. By working together, we can continue to develop positive change. The annual report on progress against the workforce plan reflects the collective achievements that contribute to the ambition of building and sustaining a motivated, engaged and valued social care workforce, with the capacity, competence and confidence to meet the care and support needs of the people of Wales.

We're proud of the progress made, but we know there is still much more to do. We remain focused and committed to working collaboratively to continue supporting and developing a sustainable social care sector that has the workforce it needs, now and into the future, to effectively support and care for the people of Wales.

You can find out more about the progress against the workforce strategy in this [annual report](#).

Supporting Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

In 2024 and 2025, we continued our work to meet the actions set out in Welsh Government's [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#). This included:

- **Ethnic minority leadership development**

“Progressing into a leadership role is something that feels like a fantasy, when the basics of feeling valued and respected for the work I do is something I’ve never experienced” – respondent to our research

In 2024 to 2025, we carried out research to understand what the barriers are stopping ethnic minority social care workers from progressing into leadership roles. We’re turning this learning into an evidence summary that we will publish in 2025 to 2026. But we know there’s a discrepancy between perceived inclusivity and lived experiences when it comes to workplace culture.

Along with our Workforce Race Equality Standard, we also found a lack of representation of ethnic minority staff in leadership roles was a barrier to others progressing.

We’ve developed a leadership development programme, which has been designed in coproduction with ethnic minority social care workers to address the barriers identified in our report. We also took the decision that any organisation supporting staff through the programme would need to support the learning by embedding cultural competency in their organisation. We’ll run the pilot programme in 2025 to 2026.

- **Developing introductory learning about anti-racism**

“Business as usual only delivers the usual business” – Professor Charlotte Williams OBE

We’ve worked with a partner and those with lived experience of racism in Wales to develop an introductory e-learning resource for social care workers that looks at developing anti-racist practice in the social care sector in Wales. This free resource will be published in 2025 to 2026.

- **Working with leaders and managers in social care**

“Very interesting talk and has shown me how we as a company can and should do more to support embedding the right culture” – quote from a roadshow attendee

In 2024 to 2025, our employer support team facilitated learning around developing anti-racism in social care settings as part of our employer roadshows. We ran three sessions across Wales. As part of the sessions, leaders and managers were asked to take a pledge to develop anti-racism in their workplace.

Some of the pledges included:

- “revise our anti-discrimination and equality diversity policies and enforce to the teams”
- “include an anti-racism discussion in supervision and team meetings”
- “we’ll undertake an evaluation our organisation to understand where we are actually anti-racist”
- “produce a poster for staff areas which demonstrates the difference between Equality and Equity”.

We will continue to develop these sessions in 2025 to 2026.

Developing our fitness to practise presentation with managers

Last year, we updated our fitness to practise presentation for use with managers and employers in social care. This includes a case study of how racism can call into question a registered person’s fitness to practise.

To further support the sector, we launched a [managing concerns](#) webpage and video in February 2025.

These feature several principles around fair and equitable investigations for employers to consider as they work through an investigation in their setting:

- it’s important to carry out an unbiased investigation. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly, equitably and proportionately. There’s no place for discriminatory behaviour in social care.
- people are protected in law from discrimination if they have protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Understanding your responsibilities in law will help you carry out an investigation free from discrimination.
- consider whether bias (unconscious or conscious) or discrimination could have been a factor in an incident, concern, investigation or disciplinary process and take action to address this.

Throughout our anti-racism work we have shown our commitment to working in co-production with people with lived experience. We’ve learned about systemic barriers, such as in leadership progression, and identified the lived experience of the sector and the discrimination they have and are facing.

We’ve also clarified the link between racism and fitness to practise, and provided consistent messages to social care leaders.

Supporting the Welsh Government’s HIV Action plan for Wales

“This HIV resource is important for everyone working in social care, as social care should be provided in an anti-discriminatory way. We want to make sure that people living with HIV don’t face stigma, whether they’re receiving care and support or working in social care” – Gemma Halliday, Assistant Director, Social Care Wales

As part of the work to support the ambitions of the Welsh Government's *HIV Action Plan*, we've worked closely with colleagues in Public Health Wales who have produced two animations to educate the public about HIV in Wales:

- the public can view the animation [here](#)
- healthcare professionals and practitioners can view the animation [here](#).

We've sponsored the Terrance Higgins Trust to develop a bespoke e-learning resource for social care workers in Wales to help them think about how to provide non-stigmatised care for people living with HIV who access social care services. This free resource will be hosted on the Terrance Higgins Trust Cymru website.

Developing positive cultures

“Culture affects the outcomes of people who use care and support and the well-being of staff within the organisation” – Sarah McCarty

In 2024 to 2025, we worked with Care Inspectorate Wales to create a guide to help build and grow positive cultures in social care organisations.

Our [Supporting positive cultures](#) guide will help settings provide better services and improve outcomes for people who provide and use care and support.

The guide brings together the key principles of positive cultures and has links to resources to help organisations start using the principles.

It also features videos from inspirational leaders in social care, sharing their advice and personal experiences of creating positive cultures.

Sarah McCarty, our Chief Executive, said:

“An organisation’s culture is crucial to the care and support it provides.

“We know that positive cultures lead to positive care and better outcomes for everyone.

“This is a resource for everyone working in social care. From care managers and commissioners to policy-makers – it provides a shared framework to develop and discuss culture and how to build on good practice.”

Gillian Baranski, Chief Inspector of Care Inspectorate Wales, said:

"This will be an invaluable resource to support organisations in creating environments where people receiving care and the staff who support can thrive.

“Ensuring social care services have positive cultures requires purposeful leadership and ongoing commitment.

“We're proud to have collaborated with Social Care Wales to provide practical guidance about building cultures that enhance care quality and improve outcomes for everyone.”

People told us a positive culture is one where:

- everyone feels listened to, valued and heard
- organisations acknowledge, accept and respect difference and diversity
- leaders and managers focus on recruiting, nurturing, challenging and supporting the behaviours and values they want to see
- national and local organisations work together and support each other to understand what matters to people and their communities
- leaders and managers, at all levels, understand why it's important for their organisation to have a positive culture
- national and local organisations work together to promote people's rights
- the organisation, its systems and processes all support staff to do what matters for people
- organisations that design and deliver services involve the people they care for and support in those processes
- organisations look outwards, are inclusive, and build working partnerships with their communities to support people's well-being outcomes.

In 2024 to 2025, we took specialist lived expertise feedback on how the guide can incorporate anti-discriminatory practice. In 2025 to 2026, we will build on this by exploring and exemplifying how anti-racism practice can be a tool to deliver a positive culture.

We've made developing an anti-discriminatory setting a thread in our work. We've used a professional expert in anti-racism to make sure we're clear about anti-discrimination and its impact on developing a positive culture. We're hoping that when it's launched, it will improve the inclusivity of social care workers from a range of protected characteristics.

Compassionate leadership

Our ambition is that leaders in social care will show collective and compassionate leadership. Compassionate leadership is an important feature of an anti-discriminatory workplace. It's helping us achieve our commitment of equality of opportunity for the social care and early years workforce through inclusive compassionate leadership.

The benefits of compassionate leadership are:

- improved staff well-being
- supportive environments where staff feel listened to, valued and respected. This leads to better mental health, reduced stress and greater job satisfaction
- better retention and engagement.

Staff are more likely to stay in roles and remain committed to their work when they feel supported by compassionate leadership. This helps reduce turnover and builds a more stable workforce.

Higher quality of care and support

When staff feel cared for and supported, they're more likely to provide high-quality, person-centred care. The emotional tone set by the leadership directly influences the experience of people who use care and support services.

Stronger team relationships

Compassionate leadership builds trust, collaboration and open communication within teams, which improves teamwork and services.

Positive organisational culture

Embedding compassion into leadership helps create a culture of kindness, inclusion and psychological safety, which benefits everyone in the organisation.

In 2024 to 2025, compassionate leadership was being actively embedded across the social care sector in Wales, driving meaningful organisational change. This includes the development of shared team values, the adoption of radical candour, and the creation of psychologically safe workplaces where people feel supported, empowered and included.

Our online and face-to-face 'Introduction to compassionate leadership' sessions have been an important part of this transformation. These have reached more than 300 people across Wales, giving them the tools and understanding to lead with empathy, understanding and clarity. Of those who attended the sessions:

- 99 per cent said they met their expectations
- 99.5 per cent said they learned something they could use in practice.

The feedback highlights increased confidence in applying compassionate leadership principles and a stronger commitment to fostering inclusive, respectful environments.

“I loved the compassionate behaviours compass and will be passing that out to my staff and organisation! This session was great for self-reflection and personal and professional development” – attendee at a compassionate leadership session

Workshops and information sessions

All year, we held workshops about resolving team conflict, as well as a specialist session for learning providers about compassionate leadership. Forty-five people came to the sessions.

We worked with HEIW to develop a joint leadership workshop for the health and social care workforce, as part of HEIW’s Expert Leadership Spring Series 2025. One hundred and sixty four people attended our joint session about radical candour.

By developing and communicating compassionate leadership in the sector, we’re supporting equitable access to leadership development across roles, regions and backgrounds. Personal commitments reflect a shift toward inclusive behaviours that respect individual differences and promote belonging.

Developing confidence in the sector on strengths-based outcomes practice

“We need to ask ‘why’ in a more curious way, not a judgmental one” – feedback after engagement with strengths-based practice.

We’ve been supporting local authorities through a strengths-based practice programme, which includes training, mentoring and a community of practice. We published a commissioning guide and promoted the e-learning modules. We held regional workshops with responsible individuals and the feedback was positive. The programme also supported the implementation of the Collaborative Communication Skills model in several authorities.

Strengths-based practice is a key tool for delivering an anti-discriminatory sector in Wales.

Updating our Codes of Practice

“Challenge’ is a great word because it’s what ‘anti racism is all about” – response to our Codes of Professional Practice consultation

The Codes of Professional Practice (the Codes) is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional conduct and practice required of people who work in social care in Wales. It’s a tool to support social care workers to understand what good conduct and practice looks like. The Codes also form part of the wider package of legislation, practice standards, and employers’ policies and procedures that social care workers must meet.

In 2024 to 2025, we ran a consultation on our proposals to revise the Codes.

We had 400 responses to the consultation about the revised Code of Practice for social care workers. The review of the Codes was thorough and inclusive with strong sector engagement. It allowed social care workers to directly shape the standards that apply to their work, and means we'll have a clearer, more meaningful set of standards when in place. We'll continue to measure the impact of these changes as we roll out the revised Codes in 2025 to 2026.

We made sure we received equality, diversity and inclusion feedback through specialist groups. We engaged with children and young people, and people with disabilities. We developed an easy read and a children and young persons' version of the consultation and held sessions with a specialist facilitator.

The main changes to the Codes relating to equality, diversity and inclusion have been to be clearer about our anti-discriminatory expectations for those registered with us, as well as people using services. Once published, the Codes will be a key tool in developing anti-discriminatory practice and an accountability measure when discrimination occurs in practice.

WeCare Wales: Introduction to social care

“I enjoyed the training, the trainer was very informative and helpful, there was a good mix of text video and discussions, and they did great at being very clear with their communication and clearly explaining any complicated words that I needed because of my learning style....” – attendee at our introduction to social care course

We continued to run our introduction to social care programmes, which give people interested in a career in care a glimpse into what it's really like to work in the sector.

Here are some of our findings from 2024 to 2025:

- 1,439 people signed up for the programme (up from 1,079 in 2023 to 2024)
- nearly 60 per cent of those completed the programme (up from 53 per cent in 2023 to 2024)
- 272 people were looking for social care employment after the programme.

We're capturing EDI data about those taking part in the programme so we can monitor our engagement with people with protected characteristics.

In 2024 to 2025, around 37.6 per cent of those taking part in the programme were from an ethnic minority community, around 62 per cent told us they were female and around 25 per cent told us they were male. We also had people from a range of ages attending. When we compare it to the census data, it shows a cohort that's much more diverse than the population of Wales.

In addition, 3,054 young people attended college programmes.

“The tutor contacted me before training to discuss my needs and was helpful giving the extra support I needed before and during the training.” – attendee at our introduction to social care course

Pathways to childcare

“Thank you so much for the session on an Introduction to childcare, it was really informative, and my students were engaged and making notes all the way through. It has certainly opened their eyes into working within Childcare.” – attendee at our pathway to childcare session

We continued to run our Pathways to childcare course in 2024 to 2025. As part of the course, people could voluntarily share their equality data with us. Around 52 per cent of those who shared their data told us there were from an ethnic minority background.

We’ve introduced a new programme aimed at young people. Forty-three schools took part, 2,932 young people completed the course. Among the young people who completed the course, there was a 250 per cent increase in those who said they were more interested in a career in childcare.

17.5 per cent of the courses have been delivered in Welsh.

It’s clear our introduction to social care and pathways to childcare programmes have good reach across communities, and the sectors are seen as having good career prospects, particularly for people from ethnic minority communities.

Making sure our qualification routes are equitable

In 2024 to 2025, we launched our [Qualification Equivalency Process](#) to assess qualifications gained outside Wales.

We have a comprehensive list of the current qualifications recognised in Wales for all the job roles in health, social care, early years and childcare, known as the qualifications framework.

The framework isn’t an exhaustive list. There are so many qualifications available worldwide that it wouldn’t be possible to include them all, and we don’t want to create barriers for anyone outside Wales who’d like to work here.

So we’ve developed the qualification equivalence assessment process for people who want to work in Wales, but hold qualifications that aren’t listed in our [qualification framework](#) as one of those that’s recommended or required for practice and/or registration.

We’ve designed a robust, consistent, transparent and fair process so we can review each application.

We check each application by looking at:

- competency: to work out if competency has been assessed

- content: to make sure the relevant Welsh qualification requirements have been met
- level and credit value: to make sure the qualification aligns with the level and size of current accepted Welsh qualifications.

In 2024 to 2025, our education quality assurance team also worked on a revised criteria and process for internationally qualified social workers. As part of this, we reviewed the criteria and processes to make them more transparent and make sure we're more effectively identifying relevant protected characteristics and making reasonable adaptations.

National Occupational Standards review

National Occupational Standards (NOS) set out the knowledge, skills, and understanding workers need to do their job well. We've been working with our UK colleagues to review the 212 NOS across both Health and Social Care, and Child Care Learning and Development.

As part of the review, we've actively considered how the NOS reflect the ambition to be anti-discriminatory. In 2025 to 2026, we'll consult on the proposed changes.

The experience and voice of learners on regulated social work programmes

“We were told early on (during our enrolment) about the student staff panel meetings – these were good opportunities to chat, but we didn't really know the outcome of our views and how these views made any changes for future students.” – respondent to our research on the voice of learners on regulated social work programme

We published a [report](#) on the experience and voice of learners on regulated social work courses, showing us how we can better quality assure social work courses in Wales.

We commissioned the Institute of Public Care (IPC), Oxford Brookes to research what learners think about regulated courses and suggest what steps we can take next to improve their experience.

Fifty-seven students and representatives from nine universities and nine postgraduate students took part in the research.

Recommendations for us included:

- asking students to attend face-to-face or virtually at the learning institutions' student rep forums, tutorial support groups, or as part of the student support days for post-qualifying programmes
- improve quality monitoring as part of the review cycle to meet with students, either face-to-face or virtually, to get their feedback

- develop a ‘learner voice accessibility champions’ forum to help students with protected characteristics access information about learner voice, with support and guidance available in alternative formats.

Social Work Week 2025

We held a number of online events for Social Work Week 2025 between 17 to 21 March 2025.

The programme was focused around three main themes:

- strengthening our professional relationships
- maintaining our social work identity
- supporting our well-being at work.

During Social Work Week, we:

- held seven online events
- shared five videos and one pre-recorded session
- welcomed 800 attendances across all our events
- had 14,391 page impressions (this is how many times our social media pages appeared to users throughout the week)
- had 13,108 post impressions (this is how many times our social work week social media posts appeared to users)
- had 4,806 video views
- had an average engagement rate of 13.6 per cent (this is how engaged users were with our social media content and it’s much higher than [benchmarks for government related content](#)).

We held an online session on anti-racism ‘[Getting comfortable with discomfort: anti-racism in social care](#)’.

We talked about anti-racism in social care, in a discussion chaired by David Pritchard our Director of Regulation. It has had 139 views to date.

The session reflected on:

- the presenters’ personal experiences of racism
- microaggressions and their impact
- how professional curiosity can help support anti-racism in practice
- anti-racism as an ongoing learning process and the concept of anti-racist ‘fitness.’

“As a social worker I found that the session, helped others to understand me better as a practitioner and accept that its ok to be me. I found it really empowering that we are being more accepted and understood by people. I also found it emotional because I felt so understood despite not sharing much of myself. I am so grateful for that training” – feedback on the session

We also ran a session, again as part of Social Work Week, titled 'Neurodivergent identity in social work'. Using their own lived experience as neurodivergent social workers, our guest speakers, a social worker and practice educator and an independent workplace well-being consultant and practice educator, explored neurodivergent identity and the neurodivergent movement. The session, which was attended by 65 people:

- explored different neurotypes, and importantly, how they may overlap
- considered some of the strengths and challenges that might be encountered and what this means for social workers' identity inside and outside of social work
- shared information about neurodivergence, intersectionality and double discrimination
- looked at how executive functioning can have an impact on social work practice
- considered why people 'mask' and how this affects well-being, support and self-advocacy
- shared how a supervision model co-produced with neurodivergent social work students, can help facilitate conversations around needs and support.

Supporting the international workforce

We developed an [online resource](#) that brings together resources into one place to support employers of workers who are new to Wales. We'll continue to add sector best practice to this. There's one resource for employers and one for social care workers.

Using evidence in our work with the sector

In 2024 to 2025, we brought together relevant and up-to-date research and created two evidence summaries, to support practitioners with their practice.

These were published on our [Insight Collective website](#).

Building trust with marginalised families

In August 2024, we published an evidence summary that highlighted relevant and up-to-date research about how people working in social care can improve relationships with families.

Marginalised families can include people from ethnic minority backgrounds or who are struggling financially. They can often face specific challenges. These challenges can be caused by material conditions and attitudes in society.

This work 303 page views on our website and 202 unique users.

Supporting neurodivergent people and their families

In November 2024, we published an evidence summary, in which we highlighted relevant and up-to-date research about how people working in social care can support neurodivergent people and their families. Ideas around neurodivergence have moved away from a model based on deficits, which aims to fix or cure people.

New approaches embrace neurodiversity and aim to increase the well-being of neurodivergent people according to what that means to them. In this summary, we explored how social care workers can use a strengths-based approach, provide support with diagnosis and make sure environments are accessible to neurodivergent people.

This work had 472 page views on our website and 319 unique users.

Impact of this work

We have worked to bring together research around two equality, diversity and inclusion topics to enable practitioners to have access to high quality research to inform practice. This also demonstrates our delivery of our [Ymlaen](#) strategy, a research, innovation and improvement strategy for social care, which aims to:

- **set direction:** identify shared priorities for research, innovation and improvement so we can direct attention, resource and action to where it's needed most
- **connect:** join the dots between different types of support for research, innovation and improvement in social care
- **enable:** create conditions that enable positive and lasting change in social care
- **support:** provide direct support to people working in social care to encourage research, innovation and improvement
- **disrupt:** inspire new ways of working.

Supporting the transformation of children's services with partners

We've been working with Welsh Government, ADSS Cymru and children's services providers to make sure the programme of activities is in-line with broader sector priorities.

Our work has included leading National Models of Care conferences, a briefing to the Senedd Health and Social Care Committee, the publishing of an evidence summary encapsulating the latest evidence from research and the development of a data dashboard to assess workforce changes related to the removal of profit.

“The session is really insightful linking the children’s behaviours to past trauma” – the initial therapeutic consultation feedback

We've delivered PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy) training to support therapeutic approaches in children's residential care. We're seeing more interest in therapeutic approaches, with several local authorities requesting further support.

We've received positive feedback on the impact of this work from multiple stakeholders including directors of social services, responsible individuals and Welsh Government.

The impact of this work includes providing an evidence base, which has influenced service design for new residential services, and targeted support for new teams and registered managers in developing their workforce's skills.

Working in partnership with Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) Young commissioners, we were recognised for providing a platform for the latest evidence and the voice of young people living in residential care during the national 'Models of Care' events.

Supporting the Welsh language

“Speaking in someone's first language fosters a deeper emotional connection, which is especially important in care settings where empathy and understanding are key” – Eisteddfod visitor

We want to help give people working in social care the confidence to meet the Welsh language needs of the people they support. A bilingual workforce means people can express themselves in their language of choice, which lets us get to the heart of the matter more effectively and comfortably, and fosters equitable access.

Caring in Welsh award

We celebrated workers who provide care through the medium of Welsh with the [2024 Caring in Welsh award](#), which was held at the Rhondda Cynon Taf National Eisteddfod in August 2024. The Caring in Welsh award is an annual award that recognises, celebrates, and shares the work of those who have made a real difference to people's lives by providing care and support through the medium of Welsh.

Attending the National Eisteddfod

We sponsored the National Eisteddfod with a WeCare Wales Care Day. In partnership with the Eisteddfod, Care Day celebrated our Welsh speakers and aimed to attract more Welsh speakers at all levels to think about a career in care

During the Eisteddfod, we developed resources and ran a national campaign to support the recruitment of more Welsh speakers into the sector. The campaign

reached 158,301 people through social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram) and led to 3,438 website views and 608 views to the jobs' portal.

Supporting employers

“I honestly can't thank you enough for all your support and mentoring with the Welsh Language, not only have you given me the confidence to bring this to the workplace but your mentoring has also allowed those who live [at my home] to have care delivered in the language of their choice which has made such a difference. Diolch gymaint am bopeth” – feedback from pilot participant

We completed a pilot scheme in 2023 to 2024 to help 20 social care employers with their Welsh language workforce planning and to develop their employees' Welsh language skills. It also helps support employers with international workers or workers who are new to Wales.

Five employers took part in the second phase of the pilot and they had support from a tutor to help them move forward with their Welsh language workforce planning actions. This provided training and support for their workforce to help them meet the Welsh language needs of the people they support

Following the success of the pilot and what we've learned from it, the scheme is now available to all social care providers. There's information about how to access the support on our [Using Welsh at work - information for employers webpages](#).

Camau

“By completing the course we're actively offering Welsh Language services that will make sure we're able to meet people's needs and that those who rely on our care can be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve! The Welsh Language is at the heart of our modern Welsh identity” – feedback from Camau Level 1

We also supported the social care sector to improve their Welsh language skills. In collaboration with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David we developed the second module of the [Camau Welsh language course](#).

The Foundation module builds on the Entry (Mynediad) level module and teaches the basic patterns of the Welsh language. Both modules are available in north and south Walian dialects. More than 800 people have enrolled on the Camau Welsh language course this year.

Language, dignity and care

“Overall positivity, comfort, and a safe space for learners, feels accepting of whatever skill/learner there is.” – feedback on the conference

We held our first ever Welsh language in social care conference, on the theme of 'Language, dignity and care.' It was an opportunity to celebrate inspirational work, share good practice, and hear about the resources and support available for services to provide excellent social care through the medium of Welsh.

Social Work Week

“The session was very valuable in sharing opinions, personal experiences and thoughts.” – feedback on the session

We ran a session called 'Do you get me?' about the Welsh language in social care with Bangor University as part of Social Work Week 2025. The session covered how complicated language can be and how we use language differently, depending on our situation, the setting and who we're talking to. It also examined how bilingualism and language choice can add another dimension to communication.

All the evaluations said that their understanding of the subject improved as a result of attending the session.

And 90 per cent of the evaluations said they'll think or do things differently as a result of attending the session.

Early years and childcare conference

“We thought the event was really well organised, with each of the speeches, and discussion points after the speeches providing all of us with a great chance to make our voices heard” – participant feedback

As part of our festival of lifelong learning, we held an early years and childcare conference with a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and 154 people attended.

Sessions included:

- supporting children with Additional Learning Needs
- supporting anti-racism practice across the early years
- supporting bilingualism and embedding Welsh language and culture.

The conference impacted practitioners, with many telling us they'll use the learning in their workplace setting.

What's the impact of the progress we've made?

We've contributed to workplace equality by embedding anti-discriminatory practice and supporting leadership development for ethnic minority workers. The co-produced ethnic minority leadership programme and the anti-racism e-learning resource are tangible steps toward addressing systemic barriers next year. We have also exemplified the need for integration of the Welsh language to ensure people receive dignified care.

Employer roadshows and pledges have begun shifting workplace culture, while updates to the fitness to practise presentation and the launch of the 'managing concerns' webpage have clarified the link between racism and professional standards. These initiatives demonstrate a sector-wide commitment to equity and inclusion, with measurable improvements in representation and awareness.

The work that we've done to support the Welsh language provision in care, has started social care employers on their journey to make sure Welsh speakers, especially older adults and vulnerable people, can receive services in their preferred language. This fosters an equity of care in the sector.

Objective 3: Digital inclusion

What do we want to achieve in our strategic equality plan?

We'll work to make sure equality, accessibility and inclusion are central to our work of building a digitally ready social care and early years workforce in Wales.

What progress have we made?

In 2024 to 2025, we:

- continued improving digital literacy and infrastructure in the workforce through the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) grant
- completed the development and implementation of the digital maturity and literacy assessment, now known as the Digital Potential Tool, with the social care sector in Wales. A report has been published in the 2025 to 2026 year
- set up a social care group that sits under the AI Commission for health and social care to share a social care perspective
- developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) guide for social care in Wales, which was published in 2025 to 2026

What are we doing next?

Following the recommendations of the Digital Potential Tool report, we're now working on two new projects to be delivered in 2025 to 2026, which will inform future plans. Our leadership support project aims to support leaders in local authorities, and private and third sector organisations to improve their skills and confidence around digital transformation. This will take place in 2025 to 2026 and will give us recommendations about how to continue the support in the future.

We're also scoping how to develop a 'what good looks like' framework and a 'digital competencies for leadership' framework. These will be completed in 2025 to 2026 and will provide recommendations to inform future decisions.

What's the impact of the progress we've made?

Our progress on digital inclusion was marked by the development and rollout of the Digital Potential Tool, which assesses digital maturity and literacy across the sector.

We also contributed to the AI Commission for Health and Social Care, making sure the social care perspective is represented in digital transformation. The publication of an AI guide for social care and the initiation of leadership support projects reflects a strategic approach to building digital confidence and accessibility. These efforts make sure digital transformation is inclusive and equitable, supporting a workforce that's digitally ready and resilient, and can use technology to support equality, diversity and inclusion.

Objective 4: The well-being of the social care and early years workforce

What do we want to achieve in our strategic equality plan?

We will promote our well-being resources and offers, and improve access to them, to support the well-being of the social care and early years workforce.

What progress have we made?

Monitoring the health and well-being of the social care workforce

“The results of this survey once again demonstrate the commitment of the social care workforce in Wales to making a difference to people's lives. The changes made to this year's survey mean we now have a deeper understanding of a range of topics, including experiences of bullying, discrimination and harassment. We'll use the findings to guide the support and services we offer, as well as the work of partner organisations” – Sarah McCarty

We carried out this survey between January and February 2024. In total, 5,024 social care workers responded, from a wide range of roles. This was an increase of almost 2,000 on the number who responded in the previous year.

['Have Your Say' workforce survey 2024: Full report and summary of findings - Social Care Wales - Research, Data and Innovation](#)

The survey asked questions about things such as health and well-being, pay and conditions, and what people like about working in the sector. The 2024 survey also asked more questions about things such as bullying, harassment and discrimination, to get a deeper understanding of workers' experiences.

Demographics:

We found that:

- the most common age group was 55 to 59 years old
- 78 per cent were female, and 21 per cent male
- 88 per cent were heterosexual, three per cent gay or lesbian, and three per cent bisexual. Others preferred not to say
- 75 per cent were White, 13 per cent Black and seven per cent Asian
- 26 per cent said they had a long-term condition, which lasted 12 months or more. Of those who had a long-term condition, 66 per cent said it affected their day-to-day functioning
- 36 per cent said they were a carer outside work
- six per cent said they were neurodivergent
- 39 per cent said they could speak at least some Welsh
- 25 per cent said they were able to use Welsh at work, either all or most of the time
- 86 per cent were employed by an organisation that provides social care, such as a local authority, third-sector body or private company, and seven per cent were employed by an agency
- 35 per cent said they were members of trade unions.

Bullying, discrimination and harassment

Between 92 and 96 per cent of respondents said they hadn't experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment from a manager, colleague, people or families in the past 12 months. The figures below are percentages of the total sample.

- From managers: bullying (eight per cent), discrimination (eight per cent), harassment (four per cent). Of those who said they'd experienced any of these from a manager, 46 per cent reported it and five per cent said a colleague reported it. Twenty four per cent of those who said it was reported felt it was dealt with adequately.

- From colleagues: bullying (eight per cent), discrimination (five per cent), harassment (four per cent). Of those who said they'd experienced any of these from a colleague, 57 per cent reported it, 10 per cent said a colleague reported it, and 33 per cent of those who said it was reported felt it was dealt with adequately.
- From people they support or their families: bullying (five per cent), discrimination (five per cent), harassment (seven per cent). Of those who said they'd experienced any of these from someone they support or their family, 73 per cent reported it, eight per cent said a colleague reported it, and 44 per cent of those who said it was reported felt it was dealt with adequately.
- We also found that 70 per cent felt their employer acted fairly in decisions about career progression and promotion, in relation to protected characteristics.

Developing our well-being offer

“The well-being framework implements continuous learning and professional development and creating a workplace where everyone is involved and participating and supporting ourselves and colleagues.” – feedback on the wellbeing framework

The link between anti-discriminatory practice and good work well-being is strong.

Our findings from the workforce survey highlights that discrimination, harassment and bullying is still too common in the social care sector in Wales.

One module in the e-learning for anti-racism we've created focuses on the impact of racism on the well-being of social care workers. Discrimination impacts mental well-being, physical well-being and career aspirations due to not feeling a sense of belonging or experiencing exclusion.

We've begun a review of our well-being framework to make sure the resource remains a strong tool for the development of an anti-discriminatory social care, early years and childcare sector in Wales.

What progress have we made on well-being?

Your well-being matters framework

In October 2022, we launched an all-Wales framework for the sector.

At our events, we asked for feedback about attendees' awareness of the framework and how useful they found it. Of those who provided feedback, six out of 10 people were already aware of the framework. We also heard examples of how it's been used in the workplace.

“(The framework) has influenced HR policies to support well-being of employees.”

“This has helped me in supporting a team of staff with this role being my first in line management.”

The number of visits to the framework landing page and well-being web pages remained consistent throughout the year, with a monthly average of 50 and 214 visits. This has highlighted an opportunity to explore new ways of increasing visibility and engagement.

Learning events and conferences

Over the last year, we held learning sessions for the sector, which were attended by 260 people. These events provided valuable opportunities for social care professionals to share best practice, build knowledge, and strengthen their well-being and resilience.

Highlights:

We held 27 learning events, with themes including:

- well-being policies
- psychological safety
- the mental health toolkit
- practice sharing.

All the participants said they learned something and 98.8 per cent said they were able to use what they learned in the workplace.

Well-being Week 2025

This year, we held our first Well-being Week. This was a virtual conference that took place from 20 to 25 January to coincide with Blue Monday, which is often considered the most challenging day of the year for mental health.

We held nine online sessions, which were attended by 313 people. The topics we explored included:

- how to create well-being policies
- speaking up safely
- supporting teams after a critical incident
- the mental health toolkit
- psychological safety.

The sector directly shaped these themes and topics. We drew on insights from a range of sources, such as feedback from previous events, ongoing conversations with the workforce, and what we learned from our annual workforce survey. We also made sure our themes were aligned to the commitments set out in our framework.

Well-being Week highlighted the sector's commitment to creating mentally healthy work environments and showed the value of bringing people together to learn, reflect and build on what works. This is really important for a work environment that's anti-discriminatory and fully inclusive for all.

Strategic mental health workforce plan

We continued to support the well-being of the mental health workforce through the principles of compassionate working

We also continued to support the All Wales approved mental health professionals' lead network (AWALN) and develop a community of practice for all approved mental health professionals (AMHPs) in Wales.

Putting support services in place

We continue to offer support for registered people and witnesses who take part in our fitness to practise processes through our well-being support service.

Our service in 2024 to 2025 supported:

- six cases
- 15 counselling sessions
- three advice cases
- three advice sessions.

We promoted the support available by sharing information in leaflets and on our website, and included links to the service in all our correspondence to registered people. We also remind people about the service when we meet them at hearings and encourage them to use it.

We also promoted the availability of the British Association of Social Work (BASW) social work professional support service

What's the impact of the progress we have made?

The Have Your Say survey provided critical insights into experiences of bullying, discrimination and harassment, informing future support strategies for well-being.

Workforce well-being was prioritised through a range of initiatives, including the first Well-being Week, targeted training and the promotion of the Health and Well-being Framework.

The introduction of a well-being category in the 2024 Accolades and continued promotion of services, such as Canopi and BASW's support service, demonstrate an equitable holistic approach to mental health and resilience.

These actions have begun to foster psychologically safe workplaces and empowered staff to prioritise their well-being and strive for an inclusive environment.

Objective 5: Equality, diversity and inclusion within Social Care Wales

What do we want to achieve in our strategic equality plan?

We will promote opportunities to work with us, to help us achieve a more diverse and inclusive Board, staff and regulatory panel, and to widen our networks.

What progress have we made?

EDI staff group

In 2024 to 2025, we continued our bimonthly equality, diversity and inclusion staff group, which provides critical friend and staff voice to our EDI work. Assistant directors attended the group periodically to give an update around equality, diversity and inclusion in their area of responsibility.

In 2024 to 2025, the group became a formal part of our organisation's accountability structure, highlighting the important part this group plays in our internal approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Accountability

In 2023 to 2024, we had two project boards for accountability in the organisation: one for the delivery of our EDI work and one for the delivery of our actions in the *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan*. We also routinely reported to Welsh Government on our progress.

Staff training and development

In 2024 to 2025, these online equality and diversity training modules were available to all staff:

- equality, diversity and inclusion, which 89 per cent of staff completed
- unconscious bias, which 86.5 per cent of staff completed.

This data is from our end of year human resources report, which looked at April 2024 to March 2025.

Staff learning and development

In 2024 to 2025, we introduced 'in-conversation' style staff development sessions.

Black History Month

“I took away the strong connection between Cynefin and anti-racism, as well as some practical tools to start conversation about anti-racism from the session” – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

We held an 'in-conversation' session with Professor Charlotte Williams to mark Black History Month in October 2024.

International Women's Day

We held a session with the journalist Maxine Hughes and hospital consultant Dr Bnar Talabani MBE to celebrate International Women's Day. We also heard from our internal staff menopause group on the work they're doing to support staff with the menopause. Sixty-four staff attended and 86 per cent of those completing the evaluation agreed or strongly agreed they'd recommend the session to a colleague.

Neurodiversity Week

“Looking back at Neurodiversity Week last year, I can confidently say it was a life – changing experience. It was during a session about dyslexia that my personal journey began” – one of our staff members

During Neurodiversity Week in 2025, we ran a well-attended session about neurodiversity with Dr Lisa Moran and 50 staff attended the session.

Some comments from the day were:

“Thank you so much Lisa, particularly, raising the points about how adjustments help prevent adverse outcomes’ – feedback on the session

Personal stories

‘Thank you for sharing your story with us, I agree Social Care Wales does truly values neurodiversity’ – staff comment on the blogs

Many staff shared personal experiences and stories during these events, which had a powerful impact on staff working in Social Care Wales. The comments in response to these personal blogs have been supportive, showing the culture we've built.

Our Board

Building on the extensive recruitment exercise completed in 2023 to 2024, six new Board members joined us in April 2024. The new members bring a rich mix of skills, experiences, perspectives and lived experience, and have made a meaningful impact contributing to inclusive discussions and strengthening scrutiny of our work around equality, diversity and inclusion. You can find more information about our Board Members at: [Our Board members | Social Care Wales](#)

Fitness to practise panel member recruitment

“As the Register grew, the volume of hearings being held also grew which meant we needed a larger group of members, our focus was to not only increase the number available but also improve the diversity of the pool to better reflect the Register” – Head of Hearings

In 2024 to 2025, we advertised and recruited more fitness to practise panel members to sit on our hearings, and we actively encouraged applications from underrepresented groups.

Our recruitment data shows we now have greater diversity in the age of panel members, we've increased the number of members from ethnic minority communities and we have more panel members with a disability.

In 2025 to 2026, we'll carry out voluntary monitoring of the protected characteristic data of our fitness to practise panel members.

Expert reference group

At the end of 2024 to 2025, we advertised for a pilot Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expert Reference Group. We held interviews and appointed the group members in summer 2025. The strategic group aims to bring lived experience or expertise to our equality, diversity and inclusion work, using the motto 'nothing about us without us'.

Reasonable adjustments policy and procedures

In 2024 to 2025, we developed a new policy to be clearer about how to make reasonable adjustments for our staff. The policy was scrutinised by our Equality Diversity and Inclusion staff group and published in June 2025.

Digital accessibility

“An accessible virtual gathering is one where all attendees have access to the audio content of the gathering in their preferred language or format” – RNID report to Social Care Wales

In 2024 to 2025, our digital team did a deep dive into the accessibility of online platforms. The purpose of this review was to gain an understanding of the most accessible platform for our staff and customers.

We also took independent advice about different video conferencing platforms, so we could make an informed decision about an equitable platform for all our staff.

We've now made a final decision, and in 2025 to 2026, we'll transition to the chosen platform.

We've also developed a digital champions approach across our organisation.

Disability confident scheme

We've kept stage one of the 'Disability confident' scheme this year and we now share all interview questions with perspective job candidates.

Recruitment

- In terms of applications received, 64 per cent identified as female, 30.4 per cent as male, 2.4 per cent as non-binary and the remainder preferred not to answer. The number of female candidates subsequently appointed has continued the upward trend from previous years, accounting for 91 per cent of appointments made (up from 87.5 per cent the year before and 70 per cent before that).
- We've seen a continued increase in applications from candidates with a disability at 14.7 per cent (10.29 in the year before) and a marked increase in candidates subsequently appointed at 33.3 per cent (up from 12 per cent).
- All ages are represented at application stage, which broadly carries through to shortlist and appointment.
- In terms of ethnicity, the most commonly represented groups are White Welsh, White British, White English and White Scottish combined (66.8 per cent). But it's pleasing to see quite a broad range of other ethnicities represented, be they smaller in number. This is reflective of the wider UK profile, with the most recent Office for National Statistics data noting the most common ethnic group in Wales and England was White (84.8 per cent).

Equality impact assessments

“Thank you for this training – it has really helped me to understand the reasons of why this really needs to be done right at the beginning because this will tailor/steer the way you manage the project” – course feedback

In 2024 to 2025, we carried out a cultural change programme for reasonable adjustments. Staff were invited to attend two sessions to understand the theory behind completing equality impact assessments, as well as the practical considerations when completing them impactfully.

Session 1: An introduction to equality impact assessments:

- five sessions were offered to all staff
- two additional sessions were held
- two bespoke sessions were held for business support and registration managers
- 113 staff attended.

Session 2: Theory into practice:

- six sessions were offered to all staff
- 72 staff attended.

We also launched our revised equality impact assessment and began working on developing a digitised product, to help the staff with completing them.

What else we're doing to support equality, diversity and inclusion

We're committed to supporting and putting Welsh Government's equality plans in place, including the:

- [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) (published 2022)
- [LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#) (published 2023)
- [HIV Action Plan](#) (published 2023).

Working in partnership

We recognise the importance of working with the sector, those with lived experiences and other partners to achieve our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.

In 2024 to 2025, we continued to work with organisations, such as Care Inspectorate Wales, ADSS Cymru, other professional regulators and Welsh Government, to help us work towards achieving these objectives.

Allyship

We want our work to support Wales to be an anti-discriminatory nation.

We have an active equality, diversity and inclusion staff group, which meets regularly and informs our equality work and reports directly into our leadership team.

We attended Pride Cymru for the first time in June 2024. This was a symbol of allyship with the LGBTQ+ community here in Wales.

Equal pay

We carry out an equal pay review each year. We do this to see if there are any potential pay inequalities and to address any actions we need to take.

We check we're not directly or indirectly discriminating against any employee or group of employees through our pay systems.

The audit covers the nine protected characteristics as identified by the Equalities Act 2010:

- sex
- age
- disability
- race

- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership.

In June 2025, our gender pay gap was **10.97 per cent**, remaining unchanged from the previous year.

We remain confident that our gender pay gap does not stem from paying women and men differently for equivalent work. Our pay gap can likely be explained by an overrepresentation of women across the organisation as a whole and in the lower paid grades, with 79 per cent of women represented in the lower quartile, and a four per cent decrease in men represented in the lower quartile this year.

Our current staff profile now shows a 76 percent female to 24 per cent male split.

Our staff equality information

We carry out an equality and diversity survey about our staff each year. We ask staff to update their diversity information each June before our annual equality pay audit.

See Appendix 3 for staff equality information.

Procurement

We want to make sure equality is central to our procurement processes. We make sure all suppliers know they must respect our commitment to stop unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and be transparent. We do this by:

- asking suppliers to demonstrate their commitment to this legislation by providing a current statement of their organisation policy
- including an Equality Act clause in our contracts.

We show our commitment to sustainable development in our procurement processes and activities. We do this by:

- developing a criterion that considers short- and long-term economic, environmental and social impact
- specifying the information we want from possible suppliers so we can apply those criteria fairly
- working with suppliers to identify more sustainable ways of meeting needs
- welcoming innovative solutions from suppliers, including small and medium enterprises.

What is the impact of the progress we have made?

We've continued to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into our organisational culture. We formalised our equality, diversity and inclusion staff group, embedded inclusive recruitment practices, and introduced the reasonable adjustments policy to reflect a commitment to structural change.

Staff development sessions during Black History Month, Neurodiversity Week, and International Women's Day have amplified diverse voices and fostered allyship. By recruiting a more diverse Board and fitness to practise panel, and creating an equality, diversity and inclusion expert reference group, we're building a more representative leadership and inclusive organisation that reflects the communities we serve.

Get in touch with us

If you have any feedback about this annual report or want to inform our work to achieve our equality objectives, get in touch with us: edi@socialcare.wales

Appendix 1: People who are registered with us

Our registered person data in April 2025 showed we had 65,301 people registered:

- 6,838 social workers
- 4 adoption service managers
- 1,324 adult care home managers
- 26,986 adult care home workers
- 14 adult placement managers
- 3 children and young people advocacy managers
- 1,057 domiciliary care managers
- 22,818 domiciliary care workers
- 18 fostering service managers
- 437 residential child care managers
- 4,906 residential child care workers
- 4 residential family centre managers
- 81 residential family centre workers
- 807 social work students
- 4 special school residential managers.

Our data shows us that of those who are registered with us:

- 76.7 per cent are White
- 12 per cent are Black

- 7.7 per cent are Asian
- 1.7 per cent are mixed ethnicity
- 0.8 per cent are of any other ethnicity
- 78.1 per cent are female
- 21.8 per cent are male
- 2.6 per cent have a disability
- 95.4 per cent don't have a disability
- 88.4 per cent are heterosexual
- 2.2 per cent are bisexual
- 1.5 per cent are lesbian or gay women
- 1 per cent are homosexual or gay men.

The vast majority of people who are registered with us (96.7 per cent) gave us some information about their equal opportunities and this includes people who told us they didn't want to give us this information. That's why the figures don't add up to 100 per cent.

The percentage of those who answered each question varies:

- disability: 95.4 per cent
- sexual orientation: 95.5 per cent
- ethnicity: 95.8 per cent
- gender: 99.9 per cent.

We won't share any transgender data as the numbers are too small and risk identifying those people.

How representative is the registered social care workforce in comparison to the 2021 Welsh Census data?

Ethnicity:

Our data about the registered workforce shows us that:

- 76.7 per cent are White
- 12 per cent are Black
- 7.7 per cent are Asian
- 1.7 per cent are mixed ethnicity
- 0.8 per cent are of any other ethnicity.

Compared with the 2021 Welsh Census data:

- White: 93.8 per cent

- Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African: 0.7 per cent
- Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British: 2.9 per cent
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: 1.6 per cent
- Other ethnic group: 0.7 per cent.

Gender*:

Our data about the registered workforce shows us that:

- 78.1 per cent are female
- 21.8 per cent are male.

*In 2024 to 2025, on registration and renewal we asked applicants and registered people for a gender. Options on this question, were female, male, non-binary, gender fluid, other and prefer not to say. This will change in 2025 to 2026 to biological sex. We'll be adding a separate specific question about gender identity.

Compared with the 2021 Welsh Census data:

- female: 51.1 per cent
- male: 48.9 per cent.

Disability:

Our data about the registered workforce shows us that:

- 2.6 per cent have a disability
- 95.4 per cent don't have a disability.

Compared with the 2021 Welsh Census data:

- does not have a disability: 78.9 per cent
- have a disability: 21.1 per cent.

Sexual orientation:

Our data about the registered workforce shows us that:

- 88.4 per cent are heterosexual
- 2.2 per cent are bisexual
- 1.5 per cent are lesbian or gay women
- 1 per cent are homosexual or gay men.

Compared with the 2021 Welsh Census data:

- Heterosexual: 89.4 per cent
- Bisexual: 1.2 per cent
- Lesbian/gay men/women: 1.5 per cent
- Other: 0.3 per cent.

Appendix 2: Summary of the social care workforce in Wales

- **82,265 people** are estimated to work in social care in Wales – a 1.6 percentage point increase on 2022*
- **81.6 per cent** of the workforce is female and **18.4 per cent** male – this is comparable to 2022
- The **highest number of men (34 per cent)** work in children’s residential care
- **54.3 per cent** are aged 45 or under – an increase of two percentage points since 2022
- **92.4 per cent** are White – a slight decrease since 2022 when 94.5 per cent were recorded as White
- The number of workers from all ethnic minority groups have increased and are in-line with or above the levels of the Welsh population. The biggest change is a 1.4 percentage point increase in the number of people identifying as Black (2.3 per cent in 2022 and 3.7 per cent in 2023)
- **79.4 per cent** are on permanent contracts, in-line with 2022
- **1.8 per cent** are agency workers – there’s been an increase among commissioned providers (3.2 per cent in 2023, up from 1.7 per cent in 2022), but it’s stable in local authorities (0.4 per cent in 2023, 0.5 per cent in 2022)
- Vacancy rates are stable – an estimated 5,299 vacancies are open or being held (5,323 in 2022).

Appendix 3: Our staff diversity

Here's a summary of our staff diversity as of June 2025:

Sex

- **Male:** 24 per cent
- **Female:** 76 per cent

Age

- **18 to 21:** 0 per cent
- **22 to 29:** 12.55 per cent
- **30 to 39:** 29.87 per cent
- **40 to 49:** 32.46 per cent
- **50 to 59:** 20.34 per cent
- **60 years and over:** 4.76 per cent

Disability

- **Yes:** 7.35 per cent
- **No:** 32.03 per cent
- **Prefer not to answer or not declared:** 60.62 per cent

Race

- **Any White background:** 30.75 per cent
- **Any Black and ethnic minority background:** 1.29 per cent
- **Prefer not to answer or not declared:** 67.98 per cent