



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

Registration is changing: A summary of consultation responses

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Introduction

Background to the 'registration is changing' consultation

Our 'registration is changing' consultation set out new arrangements that cover:

- ways to register for adult care home workers
- practice guidance for adult care home workers
- ways to register for residential family centre support workers
- a new way for residential child care workers to qualify for registration
- a more flexible way of recognising a social care worker as a manager for the purposes of registration
- the payment of fees in years two and three of registration
- the streamlining of categories of worker on the Register.

We did all we could to make sure that those who might be affected by the proposed changes had a chance to comment. To do this, we:

- sent the consultation document to more than 12,000 people
- put the document in a prominent place on our website
- sent frequent reminders to encourage people to take part
- held workshops to help people understand the proposed changes
- put information about the consultation in our newsletters
- sent information about the consultation to registered persons and employers.

The document was available in English and Welsh, and other versions were available on request. We also accepted responses that weren't submitted via our online survey.

We received 136 responses to the consultation. This number was in-line with our expectations, as many of the proposals were familiar to the sector following extensive engagement before the consultation was launched. Of those who responded, 70 per cent said they were responding as an individual and 30 per cent said they were representing the views of an organisation.

From the information available, we know that:

- the largest number of responses from individuals came from social care workers, social care managers and social workers
- the largest number of responses from organisations came from employers and local authorities
- unions and representative groups, such as Care Forum Wales and the National Provider Forum, also submitted responses on behalf of their members.

We took other opportunities to gather opinions from the sector throughout the 12-week consultation period and didn't rely on consultation responses alone, meeting with more than 500 people at a range of events. As a result, we now have a good understanding of the things people want us to do to support them if we go ahead with the proposals.

Having analysed the responses, we will now refine our requirements to provide clarity and consistency for the workforce to become professionally registered.

We will set the requirements for adult care home workers, keeping them similar to domiciliary care workers, and we will publish practice guidance to support workers' understanding of what they're required to do as a professionally registered worker.

The registration requirements for residential family centre support workers will be similar to those of residential child care workers.

To provide consistent routes to register for all social care workers, we will allow workers to register via the induction process, either by completing the *All Wales induction framework* or the Principles and Values Award.

The consultation responses showed a healthy appetite for a more flexible approach to registering social care managers and we will give further thought to this, aiming to finalise requirements before the new managerial qualifications are launched in September 2020.

From April 2020, we plan to allow nurses and occupational therapists to apply for registration as a social care manager if they also hold a generic management qualification at a minimum of level 3 and were assessed for occupational competence in a health and care setting.

We will put our proposal to move to provisional registration for years two and three of an individual's registration into practice, as this administrative change will allow us to maintain an accurate and efficient register.

You can find more information about the consultation responses we received throughout this report. Each section lists the questions we asked, gives the percentages for those who agreed and disagreed with them, and provides a sample of the comments received. The final section sets out more detail about what will happen next.

Adult care home worker registration

We asked:

Do you agree with the proposal to allow adult care home workers to register using the qualifications listed in the existing qualification framework?	
Agree	90%
Disagree	10%

Do you agree with our proposal to allow adult care home workers who do not hold one of the recognised qualifications to register initially using the Principles and Values Award?	
Agree	80%
Disagree	20%

Do you agree with our proposal for a temporary confirmed competence route between 2020 and 2022, which will allow experienced adult care home workers to register without the need to complete a formal qualification?	
Agree	80%
Disagree	20%

We proposed registration requirements that were broadly the same as the two-year voluntary period of registration for domiciliary care workers, which respondents clearly supported.

Even where there was disagreement, the comments did not seem to disagree with the proposals, rather they questioned the need for registration. However, the Welsh Government is clear in its ambition to raise the status of the social care workforce, while protecting the public, and sees the registration of the workforce as one of the main ways to do this.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"This will allow workers with historic, relevant qualifications to register without having to complete a further qualification and will recognise their previous accredited qualifications."

"This is a sensible and pragmatic approach, that recognises the work that individual workers have undertaken to take qualifications to recognise their capability and competence."

"It is important that Social Care workers are registered this will provide them with support and also enable them to be formally recognised as professional workers"

"It's extremely important that as a care provider we have the opportunity to confirm competencies within our workforce and support the retention of experienced, quality care workers."

"This mirrors the approach taken with domiciliary care registration and so it is important, and only fair, to make the same provisions for care home workers. It seems right to have a defined time period for this, making clear the medium and longer term need for new starters to attain a recognised qualification."

"The sector have welcomed the direct support from Social Care Wales staff during the registration process in Domiciliary Care and ask that this continue for Residential workforce registration."

Some respondents argued that the confirmed competence route should always be available as a route to register for all social care workers. Others said it shouldn't be available because, in their view, every professionally registered social care worker should have, or be working towards, a recognised qualification. We feel that making the route available for the voluntary period is a fair compromise as it will help encourage experienced workers to stay in the sector.

We will set the requirements for adult care home workers by April 2020 and they will be similar to those for domiciliary care workers. We will also publish practice guidance to support workers' understanding of what they're required to do as a professionally registered worker.

Practice guidance for adult care home workers

We asked:

Do you think the standards and the expectations on workers set in the practice guidance are reasonable and achievable?	
Agree	85%
Disagree	15%

Do you think there are any gaps in the content of the practice guidance?	
Agree	15%
Disagree	85%

We received lots of positive feedback about the content of the practice guidance. Comments included:

"The practice guidance provides clarity about role, responsibilities and is written in a clear, easy to understand format."

"I believe this is a really positive document which will enable workers to see clearly their responsibilities and the support available to them."

We also received feedback about what the sector thought was missing, such as:

"Strengthen communication with families"

"Recognition of strong family dynamics and dealing with difficult family members"

"Important to be clear when communicating with families"

Where possible, we have made changes to it. However, the practice guidance is not supposed to cover everything. Workers are expected to use their professional judgement, applying its general principles and taking advice from managers where necessary.

Some respondents took the opportunity to point out the increasing burden the sector is under and saw the practice guidance as yet "another thing" they needed to do. We feel it is important to emphasise that this guidance has been developed to help the sector achieve the highest possible standards in social care. It builds on the *Code of Professional Practice for Social Care* and aims to help make sure workers do not fall below those standards, and that no action or omission on their part harms the well-being of individuals.

We received comments about making sure the language better reflects the language used in the Older People's Commissioner's report *A Place to Call Home*. These comments included making changes to reflect the role of adult care home workers in providing support:

"for daily living activities, and maintaining independence; support with social activities, developing and maintaining relationships as well as support for health and well-being."

We have taken this feedback on board and will make changes to the final version.

We will also make changes to reflect the statutory guidance for providers and responsible individuals. For example, we will remove the references to "carers", because family members are no longer legally defined as carers once individuals move into care homes.

The Welsh Government recently consulted on its *Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework*, so we will also include a new section about this.

We will publish the final version of the practice guidance by 1 April 2020 to support workers' understanding of what they're required to do as a professionally registered worker.

Residential family centre support worker registration

We asked:

Do you agree with the proposal to allow residential family centre support workers to register using the qualifications listed in the existing qualification framework?	
Agree	95%
Disagree	5%

Do you agree with our proposal to allow residential family centre support workers who do not hold one of the recognised qualifications to register initially using the Principles and Values Award?	
Agree	78%
Disagree	22%

The recommended qualifications for residential family centre support workers are similar to those required by residential child care workers.

Some respondents felt the qualification requirements should always be set at level 3, and that the *All Wales induction framework for health and social care* should also be available as a route to registration.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"We must encourage entry to the profession by having as few barriers as possible on initial registration, whilst ensuring recognition of basic principles and values"

"ButCare – should be seen as Profession that aims at the highest standard – it would be great to think that all carers in the future would be required to reach at least L3 QCF or equivalent in their roles."

"They have been used to completing the SCIF in the past so it feels like a backward step to only have to cover one aspect of the role although it is the most important aspect of getting the right people into the workforce."

We will set the registration requirements for residential family centre support workers and communicate them before the Register opens on 1 April 2020.

Residential child care worker registration

We asked:

Do you agree with our proposal to allow residential child care workers who do not have a recognised qualification to register initially using the Principles and Values Award?	
Agree	80%
Disagree	20%

Currently, residential child care workers can register by completing the *All Wales induction framework for health and social care* or by obtaining one of the recognised level 3 qualifications.

We proposed to also allow residential child care workers to initially register using the Principles and Values Award to create consistency among all the registered groups of social care workers.

During our consultation engagement events, many residential child care managers explained how they use the *All Wales induction framework*. They said the approach was working well in practice and they wouldn't want to move away from it for their full-time staff, as it was aligned to their staff's probationary period.

Managers recognised that the Principles and Values Award could provide more flexibility for those who are newer to care or who work part-time and cannot complete a full qualification before they register that tests their knowledge of the principles and values associated with quality care.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"practical experience of the current induction framework has shown that the sixth month timescale for completion is unrealistic, also needs to 'marry up' to the new qualifications better"

"To support equity and especially casual workers this would be a positive move, however there needs to be a strong message that the all Wales induction framework will need to be completed and not just the Principles and Values Award"

"When you have staff who are either part time or relief who struggle to complete the full induction framework within the required time scale that has put undue pressure on these staff and the service. I do feel this would be a benefit, however I do feel staff will then need to complete the full induction as this give good underpinning knowledge and skills ready for them to complete the relevant qualification."

We wanted to standardise the routes to register for all social care workers, including residential child care workers, by introducing the Principles and Values Award as a universal route to registration. We will still do this, but it became clear from the consultation that many still want the completion of the *All Wales induction framework* as a route to registration. So, we will provide both routes as a way for workers to register in their first six months of employment. This will give applicants and employers the flexibility to choose a route that best fits their working pattern and stage of development.

Changes to social care manager registration

We asked:

Do you agree with our proposal to register a social care worker or other registered professional as a manager if they are enrolled on the level 4 qualification when another manager is unavailable to a service?

Agree	80%
Disagree	20%

We proposed a more flexible approach to recognising who may be registered as a social care manager. This was well supported by those responding to the consultation.

During this time, we met and discussed our proposals with our partner, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). CIW indicated it was likely to agree with the principle of a more flexible approach, but it wanted to make sure standards were maintained and that workers were not placed in unfair situations they hadn't been adequately prepared for.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"A pragmatic approach that recognises the training intent indicated by enrolment, and allows for practical support that benefits both the social care worker, preparing for/aspiring to a manager role, and acknowledges 'on the ground' management arrangements"

"This would be a helpful approach that recognises the current difficulties in recruiting managers and will provide a more attractive career path for those care workers wanting to step into management. It would be helpful to have a clear understanding of how long it will be acceptable for someone to remain on the register before they are expected to complete level 5."

"We feel this is a really good idea, as we have had this exact issue in the past. To give deputy managers the opportunity to register as a manager while studying towards the relevant qualification is a positive step forward. However we would add some kind of evidence requirement asking the service provider to explain what support they have in place to support the non-fully qualified manager to meet the needs of the service users."

"Broadly yes, as this is a pragmatic approach that allows for recognising operational realities. However there would be concern if there very significant levels of such registrations as it may be indicative of underlying problems – whether failure to attract and recruit managers; a desire to cut costs by using 'interim' arrangements on longer term basis; or a failure of those studying to get required qualifications. As such, this should be reviewed within the first three years of registration to monitor numbers and reasons – and to see if still allowable or not."

We also asked:

Do you agree with our proposal to register those who hold a recognised qualification for registration with the relevant regulator as a social worker, nurse or occupational therapist, along with a generic management qualification with the conditions set out below?

Agree	90%
Disagree	10%

To allow us to recognise other associated qualifications, we propose that those who hold a recognised qualification for registration with the relevant regulator as a social worker, nurse, or occupational therapist be allowed to apply for registration as a social care manager if they also hold a generic management qualification on condition that:

- it is set at a **minimum** of level 3
- it has a **minimum** of 37 credits
- it was assessed in the workplace for occupational competence, and the registered person was in a relevant role in a health or social care setting when the qualification was undertaken.

Our consultation didn't refer to professionals registered as a teacher with the Education Workforce Council. However, this was raised in the consultation responses.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"I am responding to this as a manager of children's homes but the issue is the same. I think that the qualifications are too narrow and do not take into account peoples experience and other qualifications they may have which are relevant. An example I have is of a casual worker who is a qualified teacher. We run a school for special needs with residential provision. The member of staff is a teacher at the school and knows all the children. he has all the qualifications we need for him to work in a therapeutic way in both the school and the residential unit. For him to have to do this qualification on top is asking too much especially as he is only a casual for the residential provision."

"We need to adopt a degree of flexibility and allow for professional judgement rather than firm compliance to a qualification list. E.G. we recently appointed a member of staff with a Masters degree and masters level management qualification that could not be registered as a manager as the qualification isn't on the list. They are now doing their level 4 which is at a much lower level academically just to comply. Health services also use the masters programme as their preferred managerial competence level so registration needs to allow for transferable skills between health and social care."

"If workers have a recognised qualification and professional registration, as set out, then it seems sensible to support and recognise a generic management qualification. It does mean that both professional skills and competence are recognised, as well as the specific skills and training needs for those undertaking a management role."

"We would like to see greater recognition of the status of the Health and Social Care Degree, which is currently not recognised for registration purposes, although people with the degree are being denied funding for the level 5 qualifications because colleges say it is too similar to the degree."

The consultation showed there is a healthy appetite for a more flexible approach to registering social care managers. We will give this further thought to make sure we maintain standards, while providing a pragmatic way for services to meet their responsibility of having a registered manager in place. This route is likely to be informed by the launch of the new level 4 management qualifications in September 2020 and we will update the sector on our plans in due course.

To promote integration between health and social care professionals, in-line with the aspirations of *A Healthier Wales*, we plan to allow nurses and occupational therapists to apply for registration as a social care manager if they also hold a generic management qualification at a minimum of level 3 and were assessed for occupational competence in a health and care setting.

We will consider the management requirements for professionals registered with other regulators, including teachers. We will also explore ways in which the health and social care degree could be considered alongside our existing qualification requirements.

The payment of fees

We asked:

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce provisional registration for years two and three of an individual's three-year registration? This would mean their registration in these years would only become active once we have received the appropriate fee.

Agree	76%
Disagree	24%

We previously consulted on the level of these fees and have set out our current and future fee structure¹. These fees provide a vital contribution to the resources needed to maintain the Register and to carry out activities associated with public protection, such as fitness to practise proceedings.

The proposal to move to provisional registration for years two and three of an individual's three-year registration cycle, that depends on the payment of fees, is an administrative change. This change will allow us to maintain an accurate register, as those who do not pay and have left the sector will no longer appear on the Register.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"This is a pragmatic approach to a recognised issue, and by making it clear upfront it should be helpful for the sector. However, the question remains as to what might happen should an organisation or establishment have a significant number of 'removed from register' staff due to no-fee payment."

"I completely agree with this, you must have some control over finances – however, as an employer we must be kept notified of this, I don't want to be in a position where I have employed people that it then transpires that they are not registered"

"I am concerned that some people may miss their payment for understandable reasons so unless there was a robust appeals process I wouldn't support this."

We will put our proposal to move to provisional registration for years two and three of an individual's three-year registration cycle into practice, as this will allow us to maintain an accurate and efficient register.

1. socialcare.wales/registration/registration-fees

The future of registration

We asked:

We welcome your views on our ideas for a more streamlined Register.

Are broader categories relating to those working in adults' or children's social care more appropriate than the current separate sub-categories?

Or do you support the idea of creating four categories within our Register – social worker, social care manager, social care worker and social work student?

We would particularly welcome your views on the benefits and risks this might present.

The extension of the Register raises questions of professional status across the social care sector. Does a domiciliary care worker need to have different competencies to an adult care home worker? Could we replace the categories of adult care home worker and domiciliary care worker with one for "adult social care worker"? Could we reduce the complexity around the roles of registered workers in children's social care settings?

In the longer term, we think it would be worthwhile exploring a model of four categories of registered persons – social worker, social care manager, social care worker and social work student. This would remove the distinction between children's social care and adults' social care from the Register.

Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"We support the idea of the four categories within the register, as we believe the requirements for registration and updates would be more role specific and streamlined."

"I agree with the 4 sub categories you have. I believe the more streamlined the better. I do not feel the need to create a register for Adults & Children. Workers can switch between the two, so information needs to be available to safeguard everyone involved."

"I feel that this would benefit the vulnerable individuals who are supported by care workers in many diverse settings to ensure that the people whom they work are safeguarded from harm. I also feel that this would ensure that this will hold the social care profession to a higher standard with better recognition for the workers who work hard and are very good at their jobs."

"Keeping things simple is always helpful. A small number of broad categories would be sensible, and both recognise and support individuals moving between different parts of the care sector, using transferable skills. We are also mindful of the additional learning and qualification that must take place if for example a worker transfers from adults to children's or visa versa"

"The data that forms part of the registration would need to be able to be reported on to inform workforce planning e.g. we would still need to be able to compare children's and adults"

We also asked:

Do you agree with our suggestion of grouping managers of regulated services in a single category on the Register, called 'social care manager'?

Agree	80%
Disagree	20%

For managers, the new qualification framework for health and social care that begins this year will remove the specific qualifications that relate to types of settings, such as adult care home managers. This will make the distinction on the Register between managers working in different settings less relevant, as those who complete the qualification will be able to use it in various service settings.

A single category could make it easier for employers and for managers, particularly as we see new types of service emerge that combine, say, adult care home and domiciliary support services. Here is a selection of comments from those who responded:

"This will be appropriate providing the manager has appropriate additional training. e.g. if an adult care home manager is moving to care home for children, then he or she must have appropriate training in children services before embarking on the role – this is not only the employer's responsibility but also the individual's professional duty as well as that of the regulator of the service."

"Whilst there may be some similarities between some roles across the sector, child care requires different skills to adult care and to remove the categories may mean an over-simplification of the specialism and complexity of the roles... There is no weakness in a system and process that recognises and values different skills set which are appropriate to a specific field of practice. It is beneficial for children, for example, to receive care from a team with the relevant skills and training to care for children."

Summary of next steps

We are grateful to everyone who has taken part in this consultation, either by attending our events or sending us a written response. Having analysed the responses, we will now refine our requirements to provide clarity and consistency for the workforce to become professionally registered.

We will set the registration requirements for adult care home workers and residential family centre support workers, and communicate them, before the Register opens on 1 April 2020.

We will also publish a final version of the practice guidance for adult care home workers before 1 April 2020 to help the sector understand the standards expected of workers when they become professionally registered.

We wanted to standardise routes to register for all social care workers, including residential child care workers, by introducing the Principles and Values Award as a universal route to registration. We will still do this, but it became clear through the consultation that many still want the completion of the All Wales induction framework as a route to registration.

So, we will provide both routes as a way for workers to register in their first six months of employment. This will give applicants and employers the flexibility to choose a route that best fits their working pattern and stage of development.

The consultation showed there is a healthy appetite for a more flexible approach to registering social care managers. We will give this further thought to make sure we maintain standards, while providing a pragmatic way for services to meet their responsibility of having a registered manager in place. This route is likely to be informed by the launch of the new level 4 management qualifications in September 2020 and we will update the sector of our plans in due course.

We will consider the management requirements for professionals registered with other regulators, including teachers. We will also explore ways in which the health and social care degree could be considered alongside our existing qualification requirements.

We will put our proposal to move to provisional registration for years two and three of an individual's three-year registration cycle into practice, as this administrative change will allow us to maintain an accurate and efficient register.

While there is support for a more streamlined register in future, we will prioritise the registration of the new groups of workers before we make any further changes to the categories. The new management qualifications being launched this September will give those who complete them more flexibility around where they work, and we may update the category of manager to align with this change.

Ultimately, we want to develop a registration system that is fit for the future and the responses to this consultation have been extremely informative in shaping a new approach.