



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

# The Domiciliary Care Worker

**Practice guidance for domiciliary care  
workers registered with Social Care Wales**

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Noddir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
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**Other formats:**

This document is available in large text or other formats, if required.

Copies also available in Welsh.

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# About this guidance

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**This guidance is for domiciliary care workers (workers) registered with Social Care Wales.**

It builds on the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care (the Code) and aims to:

- Describe what is expected of workers
- Support workers to deliver a good service

It is based around relevant National Occupational Standards, the views of people who use services and other stakeholders.

The guidance will be updated from time to time. It doesn't cover everything and workers are expected to use their professional judgement, applying the general principles and taking advice from managers, where necessary. Workers must keep to their employers' requirements.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) may take this guidance into account in their work.

Here, the term **individual** refers to the person the worker supports or cares for in their work. This could be a child, young person or adult.

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# 1. How this guidance applies to you

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This guidance is for domiciliary care workers in Wales. It is also relevant to employers – **the Code of Practice for Social Care Employers says that employers will support workers to meet the standards in the guidance.**

The guidance can be used to let individuals, families and the general public know what they can expect from you as a worker.

It is your responsibility to follow this guidance, seeking advice from managers or colleagues, if needed.

If you lead, co-ordinate or support other domiciliary care workers, you should promote this guidance and address any concerns.

The Code is a principal document used if there are concerns about a worker's fitness to practise. This guidance can be used to illustrate a failure to keep to the Code.

- The term 'you must' is something you are expected to do.
- 'You should' is used where there may be things outside your control that affect how you can follow the guidance.

## 2. Domiciliary care workers

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Domiciliary care workers provide care and support for individuals in their own homes. Workers provide a wide range of support from preventative services, reablement, support for independent living, support with social activities, education and employment, practical assistance with personal care and domestic tasks to end of life care. Workers may work in specialist services or with individuals with particular needs.

Domiciliary care workers have to register with Social Care Wales. They must be registered by April 2020 but can register from April 2018.

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# 3. Person centred care and support

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Person centred care and support means making sure people receive care and support that responds to their individual needs and choices. It includes a strong commitment to an individual's human rights and fully involving individuals in decisions that affect them. It involves working with the individual to achieve what matters most to them.

The social care values of respect, compassion and dignity alongside excellent communication skills are essential.

## 3.1 Code of Professional Practice for Social Care

The Code describes the standards expected of workers. These standards reinforce the importance of a person centred approach. Your employer has a responsibility to support you to meet the standards in the Code.

As a domiciliary care worker you must:

1. Respect the views and wishes, and promote the rights and interests, of individuals and carers.
2. Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of individuals and carers.
3. Promote the well-being, choice and control of individuals and carers while supporting them to stay safe.
4. Respect the rights of individuals whilst seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.
5. Act with integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the social care profession.
6. Be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and developing knowledge and skills.
7. In addition to Codes 1 – 6, if you are responsible for managing or leading staff, you must embed the Code in their work.

You must use the Code to reflect on your conduct and practice and identify areas you can continue to improve.

## 3.2 Good communication

Good communication with individuals is an essential part of your work. It involves verbal and non-verbal communication skills, the ability to establish trust and adapting communication to suit the individual and the situation. You have an important role making sure individuals have information about their care and support.

To communicate well you should:

- a. get to know and listen to individuals
- b. respect the individual's views, even if they don't reflect your own
- c. know how to use relevant communication aids
- d. know how to respond if an individual is angry, distressed or upset
- e. support individuals to give their views and wishes
- f. respond to questions and concerns

Good communication is also essential for working with carers, families, colleagues and managers.

You must not use offensive or bad language in your work.

## 3.3 Confidentiality

You must treat an individual's personal information with discretion. Personal information includes all kinds – spoken, written, photographs, etc.

You must follow your organisation's policies on confidentiality, data protection and information sharing. You should know when you need to share information and with whom, for example, if there are safeguarding concerns. If necessary, you should get advice from managers or senior colleagues.

### 3.4 Welsh language needs

Some individuals can only communicate their needs effectively using the Welsh language. You should try and use any Welsh language skills you have, however basic, if it helps you communicate with an individual.

Your employer may have a legal obligation to treat English and Welsh equally and to be proactive in offering services in Welsh.

### 3.5 Family members and carers

You must show respect to family members and others important to the individual.

You should be familiar with the individual's preferences about involving relatives, carers and others in their care and support and respect these.

If you have any difficulties working with relatives and carers, you must get advice from managers or senior colleagues.

### 3.6 Professional boundaries

The quality of your relationship with the individual is very important. It is essential to create a warm, kind and friendly environment. Sometimes, however, this 'closeness' can blur professional boundaries and create difficulties. Examples include things like sharing too much personal information or taking on tasks outside your role.

You should work with your manager to:

- a. make sure you understand your professional role and your limits
- b. understand and keep to your organisation's policy on professional boundaries
- c. address any potential crossing of professional boundaries

You must make sure all your actions with individuals and families are out in the open for discussion with your manager.

Some things clearly breach acceptable boundaries. Whilst not a complete list, unacceptable things include:

- a. having a sexual or other improper relationship with an individual
- b. using your personal beliefs, for example, political, religious or moral, in a way which exploits or causes distress
- c. borrowing from or lending money to an individual
- d. acting in any way which harms an individual.

The consent of the individual is never a defence for these things.

### **3.7 Rights and protections**

Your employer will have legal obligations to protect individuals' rights and ensure people are not discriminated against. The relevant legislation includes the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and associated United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Principles for Older Persons.

You must know about and keep to your organisation's policies on rights and protections. In particular, you must work with your employer to uphold the rights of people in your care. You must not unfairly discriminate against any person using the service.

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## 4. Good domiciliary care practice

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Good domiciliary care practice is based on putting the individual at the centre of their care and support, working with the person to achieve their outcomes. As well as assisting with care and support, the quality of your relationship with the individual is critical, contributing to quality of life and well-being.

Your professional relationship with an individual may continue over time. You may support them through difficult situations and illnesses. You will know intimate details about their circumstances.

Individuals expect you to be:

- honest
- trustworthy
- polite
- kind
- discreet
- knowledgeable
- caring
- understanding
- friendly
- reliable
- flexible
- hard working.

Individuals expect you to respect their life choices, culture and beliefs. They expect you to try and understand their world from their point of view. You need to have a good understanding of the individual's background and which approaches will work. This is particularly important where the individual is living with a condition such as dementia.

### 4.2 Knowing your limits

You must be willing to recognise and work within the limits of your competence, taking advice from managers and colleagues, as appropriate. You must seek help if you cannot carry out an aspect of your work, or if not sure how to go ahead. You should be willing to learn and do the full range of tasks for your role.

If you make a mistake, you must be open and honest about it, including giving your manager a full and prompt explanation about what happened. You should be willing to learn from mistakes.

## 4.3 Personal plans

Most individuals want their care and support to help them live as independently as possible. As appropriate, you should take part in developing a personal plan that:

- is led by and fully involves the individual
- supports the individual to retain or regain skills
- is based on their strengths and
- the outcomes they want to achieve.

You should:

- a. understand the plan and your role in it
- b. make every effort to work well with others in the plan (such as colleagues, social workers, other professionals)
- c. contribute to reviewing the plan, for example, highlighting progress and any difficulties.

## 4.4 Delivering care and support

You should carry out your role in the personal plan.

This may involve a range of care and support activities from helping with personal care, preparing food, eating and drinking, personal hygiene and appearance, living with a chronic condition or disability, learning or re-learning daily living skills to enabling individuals to meet their own needs, support with social activities, employment and independent living.

When delivering care and support, you must:

- a. work with the individual to understand the level and type of support they need
- b. maintain safety, comfort, respect and dignity
- c. support the individual to understand the reasons for safety and hygiene precautions
- d. know how to use relevant aids and assistive technology
- e. follow risk assessments
- f. seek feedback from the individual on how well their needs are being met
- g. use agreed ways to monitor, record and report progress
- h. observe changes or difficulties and report these.

## **4.5 Tasks delegated by another professional**

Depending on the service, some domiciliary care workers may help with or undertake tasks delegated by another professional such as a nurse or occupational therapist. If it is agreed for you to undertake a task on behalf of another professional, you must complete the required training, assessment of your competence and on-going supervision. If you don't feel able to do the task, you must tell your manager.

## **4.6 Working in people's homes**

You must show respect and care for the individual's home and belongings. This includes:

- keeping to agreed ways of entering, leaving and securing the property
- knowing what to do if you can't enter an individual's home as planned
- reporting difficulties and helping to agree ways to improve arrangements
- carrying and showing identification for your role
- having respect for the individual's privacy and personal space.

## **4.7 Working at a distance from your manager**

You must use the systems set up to support being managed at a distance. This includes:

- a. knowing who is on call when you are on duty
- b. knowing the procedures to follow in an emergency
- c. knowing the procedures to follow if you have concerns about an individual
- d. keeping to your organisations policies on lone working and personal safety
- e. contributing to and following risk assessments.

If you are in doubt about any aspect of your work, contact your manager or other senior colleague.

## 4.8 Working in teams

Good team work depends on all team members, not just senior staff. When working in a team, you must make every effort to:

- a. understand roles and responsibilities
- b. communicate well
- c. respect colleagues' skills and contributions
- d. prepare for and contribute positively to meetings
- e. manage disagreements constructively

You should be willing to raise concerns about practice.

You should use agreed communication methods such as staff meetings, e-mail and recording systems to support a co-ordinated and safe service.

You must comply with handover procedures to your colleagues.

## 4.9 Records and reports

Individuals have a right to expect that information about them is recorded accurately and used appropriately. You must keep to agreed procedures for completing records and reports. You should make sure records and reports:

- a. are factual, clear, complete and up-to-date
- b. reflect the individual's views and wishes
- c. are stored and shared in a way which meets your organisation's requirements, including data protection requirements

If you are unsure about recording information, you must seek advice from your manager.

You must not falsify, manipulate or backdate records or reports.

## 4.10 Comments and complaints about services

It is important that individuals know how to comment or complain about their service. Receiving and discussing feedback is an opportunity for everyone to learn and develop together.

If there is a complaint about you, you should act professionally and co-operate with the investigation.

If you are responsible for investigating complaints, you must follow your organisation's procedures.

# 5.

## Safeguarding individuals

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Safeguarding is about protecting individuals from abuse. One of the most important principles of safeguarding is that it is everyone's responsibility. Each professional and organisation must do everything they can to make sure individuals are protected.

Domiciliary care workers have an important role to play and need to know how to respond to a range of potential risks: neglect, abuse, domestic violence, financial exploitation, bullying.

### 5.1 Understanding safeguarding

You should be familiar with:

- a. the factors that may lead to harm or abuse
- b. the signs of potential harm or abuse
- c. your organisation's procedures
- d. your professional responsibility

You must keep to your organisation's policies and procedures on safeguarding. You must report any concerns you have about the safety of a child, young person or adult.

### 5.2 Supporting individuals to keep themselves safe

You should do your job in a way that helps people to stay safe. This includes:

- a. promoting person centred care and support
- b. following risk management plans
- c. supporting individuals to express concerns or make complaints
- d. supporting individuals to recognise when behaviour towards them is inappropriate

### **5.3 Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. All Social Care Workers, including domiciliary care workers, are under a duty to notify the police if, in the course of their work, they discover that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

### **5.4 Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism**

Your organisation may have a legal duty to have regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The UK Government has published guidance on this. You should support your employer to implement the guidance, for example, by attending training.

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# 6. Health and safety

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Your employer has a range of responsibilities to support health, safety and well-being and to minimise unacceptable risk to you and others. You have a responsibility to cooperate with your employer on health and safety.

## 6.1 Meeting health, safety and security requirements

You must keep to statutory and organisational health, safety and security requirements including, amongst others, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

You must:

- a. keep to your organisation's policies and procedures on infection control, cleaning and waste management and moving and positioning individuals
- b. undertake mandatory training on health and safety topics
- c. keep to the individual's personal plan, including any health and safety measures.

## 6.2 Medication

You must keep to your organisation's policies and procedures on medication including:

- a. safe administration
- b. recording
- c. handling
- d. safekeeping
- e. disposal

This includes prescription and non-prescription 'household' medication. You must never give any of your own medication to an individual, even if it is non-prescription. You must not give advice on medication.

## 6.3 Safety and well-being

Your employer has a responsibility to put arrangements in place to promote your health and well-being. You also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of other people as you carry out your work. You therefore need to work with your employer as they carry out their duty of care to you.

Your work may be emotionally demanding and stressful at times. You should find ways to support your own well-being such as accessing support offered by your manager or employer. Colleagues can also be an important source of support for each other.

You must keep to relevant policies and procedures such as incident reporting, first aid, lone working, managing behaviour and violence against staff.

## 6.4 Supporting health and safety

You should work with your employer to monitor, review and improve health, safety and security practices.

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# 7.

## Learning and development

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Learning and development is essential to providing a good service for individuals. Your employer has a responsibility to provide you with opportunities to develop your knowledge, skills and understanding. You are responsible for achieving the required qualification for your role, engaging in mandatory training and undertaking on-going learning.

### 7.1 Keeping up-to-date

You should keep your knowledge and skills up-to-date, working with your employer to find ways to meet your learning and development needs.

You should:

- a. keep updating your knowledge of domiciliary care practice
- b. listen and learn from others, including professionals, individuals and families
- c. seek help with gaps in your learning
- d. keep a record of your learning.
- e. make sure you meet the training requirements for your professional registration.

You should use a variety of ways of keeping up-to-date such as reading, attending training, taking part in team meetings, groups and forums.

## 7.2 Supervision and appraisal

You should use supervision and appraisal available from your employer to:

- a. identify your work and personal development objectives
- b. get feedback on, advice and support for your work
- c. agree actions
- d. reflect on and improve your practice.

You should take part in supervision and appraisal in-line with your organisation's policy and with a positive attitude.

You must raise any urgent issues with your manager, not wait for a supervision meeting.

## 7.3 Supporting the learning of colleagues

Supporting the learning, training, assessing and mentoring of colleagues is crucial for the service now and in the future. This includes those undertaking induction and qualifications. You should be willing to contribute to these activities and, if involved, to develop the necessary competence.

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## 8. Contributing to service improvement

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Domiciliary care workers may contribute to a range of activities to ensure a good service for individuals. These may include developing policies, contributing to service planning, review and evaluation.

If you are involved, make sure your contribution is focused on quality and improvement. You should use feedback from individuals to inform the activity.

### 8.1 Resources

You should contribute to identifying the resources needed to deliver a good service. You should minimise waste and remember your responsibility to make good use of limited resources.

### 8.2 Raising concerns

You must inform your manager or employer if you have any concerns about:

- a. ineffective policies or procedure or gaps in these
- b. available resources
- c. work overload
- d. safety of self or others
- e. equipment
- f. team skills
- g. poor practice
- h. breaches of the law
- i. breaches of the Code of Professional Practice

You should be familiar with policies and procedures for reporting concerns, for example, bullying and harassment, whistleblowing.

If your manager or employer doesn't take adequate action, you should get independent advice from an appropriate organisation such as the CIW, Social Care Wales, Trade Union or Public Concern at Work. Record your concerns and the steps taken to try and resolve them.

# 9. Good conduct

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Good conduct includes being honest and trustworthy and acting with integrity. It requires you, at all times, to behave in a way that justifies the trust individuals, families and the public place in you.

## 9.1 Professional registration

You must keep your professional registration with us up-to-date. You must tell us without delay about anything which may call into question your suitability to work in domiciliary care. This includes:

- a. criminal proceedings
- b. cautions, fixed penalties or convictions
- c. disciplinary proceedings
- d. any change in your mental or physical condition that may affect your ability to work in social care

Note: telling us about these things will not necessarily affect your registration.

To keep your registration, we must be able to contact you. You must tell us about any changes to your contact details including name, title, home address, work address, email and employment details.

## 9.2 Gifts and donations

You must keep to your organisation's policies about gifts, donations and bequests.

You mustn't encourage individuals or their families to lend or give property, money or gifts that will directly or indirectly benefit you personally.

You must not put pressure on individuals or families to make donations to other people or organisations.

## 9.3 Social media

It is recognised that you may use social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) including to receive general information from your employer. If you do, you must not discuss or post inappropriate comments on-line about any persons connected with your work. This is to protect confidentiality, personal and professional integrity.

Think carefully how you present yourself on social media and how your on-line presence may be seen by others including individuals and their families, members of the public and other professionals. How you behave on social media should be at the same high standard as your day-to-day behaviour and you must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

You must keep to your organisations' policy on use of social media.

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**For more information about this guidance, the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and learning materials visit [socialcare.wales](https://socialcare.wales) and [socialcare.wales/hub/home](https://socialcare.wales/hub/home)**

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