

**A Healthier Wales – a workforce strategy for health and social care**

**Social Care Workforce Delivery Plan**

**Annual report 2024 to 2025**

**August 2025**

[Mae’r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.](https://gofalcymdeithasol.cymru/cms-assets/documents/cynllun-cyflawni-gweithlu-gofal-cymdeithasol-2024-i-2027.docx)

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## Foreword

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](https://socialcare.wales/cms-assets/documents/Workforce-strategy-ENG-March-2021.pdf) and includes the actions of the second phase, that will be focussed on from 2024 to 2027 to address the workforce challenges facing the social care sector in Wales.

This annual report celebrates the collective achievements made in the first year of the delivery plan’s implementation to support our skilled, dedicated, resilient and compassionate social care workforce in Wales.

The actions in the delivery plan were shaped by the voice of the workforce, stakeholders and people receiving care directly. The progress highlighted in this annual report showcases the collaborative work that’s taken place during the year to create a positive impact, despite continued challenges.

Our social care workforce is our biggest asset and remains committed to supporting what matters to people and their families. By continuing to work together, we can continue to develop positive change. The report 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.

To everyone working across the social care sector in Wales - thank you. Your dedication, compassion, and resilience continue to make a profound difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities across the country. Whether you’re providing direct care, supporting colleagues, leading teams, or shaping services behind the scenes—you are the backbone of care in Wales.

In a year marked by progress and challenge, your voices and experiences have shaped national plans and your commitment has inspired campaigns, workforce development and recognition. From promoting well-being and inclusion to championing the Welsh language, your work is helping to build a fairer, stronger, and more sustainable social care system for all.

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| **Sarah McCarty, Chief Executive, Social Care Wales** | **Sarah McCarty,**  **Chief Executive, Social Care Wales** | **Taryn Stephens,  Deputy Chief Social Care Officer for Wales, Welsh Government** | **Taryn Stephens,**  **Deputy Chief Social Care Officer for Wales, Welsh Government** |

**Co-chairs of the Social Care Workforce Delivery Plan Strategic Implementation Group**

## Introduction

We want the health and social care workforce to be motivated, engaged, and valued, with the capacity, competence, and confidence to meet the care and support needs of the people of Wales.

The [Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy](https://socialcare.wales/cms-assets/documents/Workforce-strategy-ENG-March-2021.pdf) published in 2020, set out for the first time, a 10-year plan of priorities for the workforce in Wales. In June 2024 we published the [Social care workforce delivery plan 2024 to 2027](https://socialcare.wales/about-us/workforce-strategy/social-care-delivery-plan-2024-to-2027#:~:text=Building%20on%20the%20Health%20and%20Social%20Care%20Strategy%2C,to%202027%20focusing%20on%20the%20social%20care%20workforce.), which builds on progress made so far and outlines further development areas over the next three years, based on engagement with the sector.

This annual report shows the progress achieved during 2024 to 2025. We have started by reporting the progress linked to the three main principles of the workforce strategy, which are well-being, the Welsh language and inclusion. We will also report on the progress under each of the seven themes:

1. An engaged, motivated, and healthy workforce
2. Attraction and recruitment
3. Seamless workforce models
4. Building a digitally ready workforce
5. Excellent education and learning
6. Leadership and succession
7. Workforce supply and shape.

For each theme we have summarised:

* our ambition
* the latest measures information focusing on impact
* the progress made so far on the actions
* the actions that will be taken forward in the future.

We have also highlighted progress where relevant to the specific workforce plans for:

* the social work profession
* the mental health workforce, developed in partnership with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), along with the associated implementation plan.

The delivery plan is a sector wide plan, so national partners lead on some of the actions. For these actions we have included information on progress we have received from our partners, as well as information about our contribution as an organisation.

### Fundamental principles

The main principles of workforce well-being, the Welsh language and inclusion are woven into all the actions of the workforce strategy and the social care workforce delivery plan.

#### Well-being

There are an estimated 82,875[[1]](#footnote-2) people in the social care workforce in Wales, who carry out vital work across our communities every day. In 2024, we carried out our second [‘Have your say’ survey](https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/2024-have-your-say-workforce-survey-findings)[[2]](#footnote-3) of the workforce, to find out how people felt about working in social care.

As in 2023, the survey revealed that most people who work in social care do it because they want to make a difference to people’s lives (69 per cent).

The survey results show that:

* 80 per cent felt valued by their colleagues
* 80 per cent felt valued by the people they
* 70 per cent felt valued by their managers
* 57 per cent felt valued by partner agencies
* 51 per cent felt valued by the public.

These numbers are all higher than in 2023. In 2023, 48 per cent felt valued by partner agencies and 44 per cent felt valued by the public.

Using a measure called the ‘ONS4’ to evaluate personal well-being, we compared the results from the ‘Have your say’ survey to results from across Wales and across the UK. We found that life satisfaction, feeling that life was worthwhile, happiness and anxiety were all scored with poorer outcomes by the social care workforce than the Wales and UK averages[[3]](#footnote-4) .

57 per cent said they struggled to switch off after leaving work and 59 per cent said they did not have enough support to deal with stress. The main causes of these stresses are:

* workload (39 per cent)
* paperwork or administration load (33 per cent)
* worrying about things outside work (25 per cent).

Many respondents also described unrealistic work expectations. They reported not having enough travel time between visits and that the journey was often unpaid.

Participants talked about having to take time off for sickness caused by work stress and the knock-on effect of absences on staffing levels. Another effect of chronic short staffing is that social care workers may not feel like they can take time off work or are not allowed to if needed [[4]](#footnote-5).

52 per cent suggested they had attended work at least twice in the past year despite being so ill they should have stayed home. Although dedication to the people they support is a factor, another factor is working terms and conditions, with only 38 per cent of the workforce having access to sick pay beyond statutory sick pay.

While 66 per cent of all respondents said they felt safe in their role, 14 per cent said they did not feel safe. When we asked what made people feel unsafe at work, the two most common answers were work pressures and physical safety at work[[5]](#footnote-6).

Reassuringly, more than 90 per cent of respondents said they had not experienced any kind of bullying, discrimination, or harassment from managers, colleagues, or the individuals or families they had supported in the past 12 months – but just under ten per cent said they had.

People’s feelings of safety are strongly impacted by the amount of support they receive from their organisations. Most people felt supported by their colleagues (79 per cent) and their manager (70 per cent).

Although levels of satisfaction with terms and conditions increased from 60 per cent in 2023 to 68 per cent in 2024, pay is still a concern. 46 per cent were dissatisfied with their pay in 2024, compared to 57 per cent in 2023, which plays a part in some wanting to leave the sector. For those looking to leave the sector (25 per cent), the average time they expected to stay was 13 months.

In terms of what could be done to improve well-being, the workforce said staffing and workload were the most pressing concerns, with a need for more support from managers. People also want better pay and benefits, more flexibility, or a better work-life balance. But, despite the challenges, 77 per cent of social care workers said their morale was good.

A third of respondents (36 per cent) told us they are unpaid carers. This is three times more than the suggested number of unpaid carers within the whole Welsh population (between nine and eleven per cent[[6]](#footnote-7)), which may reflect that the wider social care sector in Wales is more likely to be older and female[[7]](#footnote-8). This corresponds with census data that shows that unpaid carers across England and Wales are more likely to be older and to be women[[8]](#footnote-9).

**Health and well-being framework**

Working in social care can be rewarding, but it can also be demanding, so a quarter of the actions in the social care workforce delivery plan fall under the first theme of an engaged, motivated, and healthy workforce. Well-being is still embedded across all themes of the delivery plan and is supported by our health and well-being framework, ‘['Your well-being matters: workforce health and well-being framework'](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/health-and-well-being-resources).

The well-being framework helps social care organisations create workplaces that support well-being for the people who work for them. Positive workplaces lead to positive care. The aim of the framework is to improve the health and well-being of the workforce, with an emphasis on [positive culture](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/positive-cultures), inclusion and [compassionate leadership](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/improving-care-and-support/compassionate-leadership).

It is important to support workforce well-being, not only because of the value of well-being for its own sake, but because of the clear link[[9]](#footnote-10) between well-being and employee retention. Improving workplace well-being means people are more likely to stay in their jobs, which makes it easier for social care teams to provide high-quality, sustainable services.

This part of the report presents the overarching progress made during 2024 to 2025 on the fundamental principle of well-being.

**Progress during 2024 to 2025: well-being**

**Together with HEIW, we:**

* continued to share good practice and resources between health and social care to drive improvement, and between us represented the sector on health and well-being networks
* continued to promote the mental health support service ‘[Canop](https://canopi.nhs.wales/)i.’

**We:**

* continued to promote the [Your well-being matters: workforce health and well-being framework](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/health-and-well-being-resources/your-wellbeing-matters-workforce-health-and-wellbeing-framework) and [well-being webpages](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/health-and-well-being-resources)
* asked the workforce for feedback about their awareness of the framework and its usefulness. Responses suggest an increase in awareness of the framework and people have given examples of how it has been used in workplaces
* provided online well-being information and training sessions for the sector, on the well-being topics that mattered most to them
* ran a week of online well-being events as part of Well-being Week 2025, to support people who work in social care, early years, and childcare in Wales. It was a positive space where people came together to learn about well-being and share best practice. We were joined by special guests who shared information about the things you can do to support your own well-being and the well-being of people around you. Examples of sessions include:
  + How to create policies that support well-being at work
  + Supporting people who are new to living and working in Wales
  + What is in your mental health toolkit
  + Speaking up safely at work
  + Supporting teams after a critical incident.
* had the “Looking after and improving workforce well-being” category at the 2024 Accolades, which was won by Caernarfon-based social enterprise [Antur Waunfawr](https://socialcare.wales/resources/antur-waunfawr-the-accolades-2024). Highly commended finalists included [Action for Children, Vale Short Breaks – Tŷ Robin Goch](https://socialcare.wales/resources/action-for-children-vale-short-breaks-the-accolades-2024) and [Powys Children’s Services](https://socialcare.wales/resources/powys-childrens-services-the-accolades-2024)
* continued to contribute to the Welsh Government-led [Social Care Fair Work Forum](https://www.gov.wales/social-care-fair-work-forum) that aims to improve working conditions in social care
* continued to run a social care well-being network and well-being community of practice for partners and stakeholders.

**For the social work workforce plan, we:**

* continued to promote the availability of the British Association of Social Work (BASW) social work professional support service
* continued to support communities of practice for practice educators and people supporting newly qualified social workers.

**For the strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

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

#### Welsh language

Cymraeg belongs to us all and we know how important it is for individuals and their carers to access services in the language of their choice. When people access and receive care and support it is usually when they are at their most vulnerable, and this is why language is important. Communication is a key part of delivering social care. It helps people to understand what is happening to them, what is going on around them and makes them feel safe and content[[10]](#footnote-11).

The 82,875[[11]](#footnote-12) people who work in social care interact with people they support many times a day, and most of these interactions will involve communication. Data collected from the annual population survey for the year ending 31 March 2024 states that 28 per cent of Wales’s population aged three or over can speak Welsh[[12]](#footnote-13).

In the 2024 annual workforce data collection:

* ten per cent of workers said they could speak Welsh fluently (intermediate and advanced level Welsh language skills)
* four in ten (41 per cent) of all workers could speak Welsh to a basic or foundation level (this means they can hold a basic conversation or exchange straightforward information)
* the proportion of the workforce with no Welsh language ability had dropped quite drastically from 70 per cent in 2023 to 50 per cent in 2024.

In the 2024 ‘Have your say’ survey:

* 25 per cent said they were able to use Welsh either all the time or most of the time while at work.

Feedback from the workforce is clear - we need to change people’s perceptions that their Welsh should be perfect, and we must help people gain confidence to speak Welsh, without them fearing they will be judged for it not being of a high enough standard. The sector wants learning Welsh to be seen as a positive and fun opportunity that can make an important contribution to work and to the people accessing care and support.

The workforce delivery plan builds on and reflects the foundations of the [Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)](https://www.gov.wales/guide-well-being-future-generations-act-easy-read), and [Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy.pdf) to create an engaged, healthy, flexible, responsive, and sustainable workforce for the future that reflects Wales’s diverse population, cultural identity, and the Welsh language.

Together with HEIW we were heavily involved in developing the workforce actions of the [Mwy na geiriau five-year plan](https://www.gov.wales/more-just-words-welsh-language-plan-health-and-social-care) and we are committed to the workforce using the Welsh language as much as possible day-to-day.

As with the other important principles of inclusion and well-being, the Welsh language will be central to how most actions are delivered. This part of the report presents the overarching progress made during 2024 to 2025 on the fundamental principle of the Welsh language.

**Progress during 2024 to 2025: the Welsh language**

**We:**

* continued to support the sector to work bilingually as part of our commitment to ‘[More than just words](https://www.gov.wales/more-just-words-welsh-language-plan-health-and-social-care)’
* celebrated workers who provide care through the medium of Welsh through the [2024 Caring in Welsh award](https://socialcare.wales/the-accolades/previous-awards/2024/caring-in-welsh-award-2024) that 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. Five workers from across the social care and childcare, play and early years sectors were chosen as finalists. More than 5,200 people voted for the winner Elain Fflur Morris, Senior Care Worker at Cartref Bryn yr Eglwys in Conwy. This is double the number that voted in 2023

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| Caring in Welsh award winner and finalists 2024 holding certificates |
| Caring in Welsh award winner and finalists 2024 |

* sponsored the National Eisteddfod with our WeCare Wales *Care Day*. In partnership with the Eisteddfod, Care Day celebrated our Welsh speakers, with the aim of attracting more Welsh speakers of all levels to consider a career in care
* held a joint event with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, as part of the *Care Day* at the National Eisteddfod, discussing the importance of the Welsh language in the health and care sector
* developed resources and ran a national campaign during the week of the Eisteddfod 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 job’s portal
* completed a pilot scheme to help 20 social care employers with their Welsh language workforce planning and to develop their employees’ Welsh language skills  
    
  Five employers took part in the second phase of the pilot, during which they had support from a tutor to help them move forward with their Welsh language workforce planning actions. This meant providing training and support for their workforce to help them meet the Welsh language needs of people they support  
    
  Following the success of the pilot and what we have learned from it; the scheme is now available to all social care providers in the sector. There’s information about how to access the support on our [Using Welsh at work - information for employers webpages](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/using-welsh-at-work/information-for-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 Haulfryn to have care delivered in the language of their choice which has made such a difference. Diolch gymaint am bopeth.
Feedback from pilot participant - Individual


A speech bubble with text: Through this pilot, our staff have developed a deeper appreciation for the Welsh language and its significance in providing personalised care. By using their Welsh skills, they have created stronger connections with our residents, many of those feel a sense of belonging and comfort through the language they grew up with. We’re proud to say that our staff have not only embraced but achieved the goal of incorporating Welsh into their everyday interactions. 
Feedback from pilot participant - Organisation




A white speech bubble with black text:

Having the tutor here every week has been a game changer! The staff say the sessions are really good and they’re enjoying them and learning so much, and I am seeing their confidence grow. Thank you for connecting us.
Feedback from pilot participant - Organisation


A white speech bubble with black text: Being part of the pilot has led to a service achieving the ‘Active Offer’ status as part of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection – “The service provides an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It anticipates, identifies and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use, the service”.
Feedback from pilot participant


* continued to support 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](https://learnwelsh.cymru/work-welsh/social-care-camau-scheme/). 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

A white speech bubble with text: You can complete the course in your own time as quick or slow as you would like. Just for reference, I completed the course within a few hours. I was able to add the  bitesize learning into my normal day without it being a challenge. 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 learner.


* set up the Camau peer support group for support Camau learners. The group is a space to practice learning and share news and resources. We are also collecting information directly from members in the discussions section which will feed into the evaluation of the Camau courses
* continued to promote the [Welsh language awareness digital learning module](https://socialcare.wales/learning-modules/welsh-language-awareness). More than 400 people have completed the module directly from our website. The module has also been shared with local authority workforce development teams to embed into their own learning platforms so that staff across the sector can access it
* 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, hear about the resources, and support available for services to provide excellent social care through the medium of Welsh

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| I absolutely loved it all! I really hope they continue to do these conferences to raise awareness of the importance of the Welsh language. Feedback from Welsh language in social care conference participant |
| I really liked the variety of perspectives, which combined the world of social work with the Welsh language. This helped create a very relaxed and open atmosphere, as everyone wanted to share elements from their sector. On a personal note, it completely helped me to see as a new member of staff at the University, how much everyone is still developing and adapting to improving themselves in the workplace, to embrace the Welsh language. Feedback from Welsh language in social care conference participant |

**For the Social work workforce plan, we:**

* had a session called “Do you get me?” about the Welsh language in social care, delivered together 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 are talking to. It also examined how bilingualism and language choice can add another dimension to communication.

#### Inclusion

We want a social care workforce that is more representative of the communities it serves, particularly where there is evidence of underrepresentation[[13]](#footnote-14). We need to work together to identify and address the barriers that may prevent people who share one or more of the nine protected characteristics from joining the social care workforce. The nine protected characteristics are:

* age
* disability
* gender reassignment
* marriage and civil partnership
* pregnancy and maternity
* race
* religion or belief
* sex
* sexual orientation.

An estimated 82,875[[14]](#footnote-15) people are employed in the social care workforce in Wales. The gender split of the workforce is still unchanged, with 81.1 per cent of the workforce recorded as female and 18.9 per cent male

91.1 per cent are recorded as White however the ethnicity of the social care workforce has become more diverse over the past three years with 8.9 per cent of the workforce now reported as being from a black, Asian or minority ethnic group. The corresponding value in 2023 was 7.6 per cent and 5.5 per cent in 2022. The biggest change has been witnessed in the number of people identifying as Black, rising from 2.3 per cent in 2022, to 3.7 per cent in 2023 and 5.2 per cent in 2024. This proportion is almost six times more than we’d see in the general Welsh population[[15]](#footnote-16).

The latest workforce survey[[16]](#footnote-17) had many positive findings. Males, Black and Asian respondents to the survey had the most aspiration to become leaders of the future and had found a progression opportunity in the past year

When broken down by ethnic background, 97 per cent of Black and 96 per cent of Asian workers agreed that they had enough training to do their job, compared to 85 per cent of White workers. In terms of the training needs for promotion, 85 per cent of Black and 78 per cent of Asian workers said they had enough training compared to 37 per cent of White respondents. Finally, 26 per cent of White workers said they experienced barriers to accessing work-related training, compared to six per cent of Black and eight per cent of Asian workers

We also found that 70 per cent felt their employer acted fairly in decisions about career progression and promotion, in relation to protected characteristics

Although the vast majority of the workforce said they had not experienced bullying, discrimination or harassment from a manager, colleague, or person they support in the past year, just under ten per cent had

Below is the percentage of social care workers who said that they had experienced bullying, harassment, and discrimination from different sources in the past 12 months:

* **From managers**:
  + bullying (eight per cent)
  + discrimination (eight per cent)
  + harassment (four per cent).

Of those who said they had experienced any of these from a manager, 46 per cent reported it, five per cent said a colleague reported it, and 24 per cent of those who said it was reported felt it was dealt with properly

* **From colleagues**:
  + bullying (eight per cent)
  + discrimination (five per cent)
  + harassment (four per cent).

Of those who said they had 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 properly

* **From people they support or their families**:
  + bullying (five per cent)
  + discrimination (five per cent)
  + harassment (seven per cent).

Of those who said they had 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 properly.

Those with disabilities were more likely to say they had experienced bullying, harassment, or discrimination, with the picture more mixed when looking at gender and ethnicity.

As part of our engagement work to shape the social care workforce delivery plan, the workforce told us there is more to be done to make the social care sector fully inclusive. We need to do more to reach the less heard voices in our workforce, and we need to train and educate people at all levels about what true inclusion means.

We have contributed to and responded to several plans that will help us become a more inclusive, anti-discriminatory and compassionate sector.

These include:

* [Mwy na geiriau](https://www.gov.wales/more-just-words-welsh-language-plan-health-and-social-care)
* [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](https://www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan)
* [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-07/lgbtq+-action-plan.pdf#:~:text=This%20ambitious%2C%20cross-government%20LGBTQ%2B%20Action%20Plan%20for%20Wales,and%20outcomes%20for%20LGBTQ%2B%20people%2C%20into%20the%20future.)
* [Learning Disability Action Plan for Wales](https://www.gov.wales/learning-disability-strategic-action-plan-2022-2026-html)
* [HIV Action Plan for Wales](https://www.gov.wales/hiv-action-plan-wales-2023-2026)
* [Strategy for Unpaid Carers](https://www.gov.wales/strategy-unpaid-carers-html).

Every person and every organisation in Wales benefits from having a just, inclusive, and accountable workforce in health and social care. Overseen by Welsh Government, we have been supporting the [Workforce Race Equality Standard](https://socialcare.wales/research-and-data/workforce-race-equality-standard) (WRES). The WRES is a tool that will bring together data about the workforce to help monitor the experience of the global majority workers. We already collect information about the social care workforce through our annual data collections, and the ‘Have your say’ surveys capture the experiences of workers. Anonymous data from both will be used as part of the WRES, with a national report due to be published by Welsh Government in 2025.

The workforce delivery plan supports the goals of the plans listed above. Each action aims to contribute to creating an anti-discriminatory culture across our workforce. This part of the report presents the overarching progress made during 2024 to 2025 to the fundamental principle of inclusion.

**Progress during 2024 to 2025: inclusion**

**We:**

* continued to monitor our achievements against our strategic equality plan
* continued to contribute to the implementation of the Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales
* continued to develop a bespoke anti-racist e-learning resource for the social care sector in Wales. This resource has been written by experts in anti-racism with lived experience and will be available for the sector early in 2025 to 2026
* commissioned evidence-based research to support the development of a pilot ‘supporting diversity in leadership’ programme. We have commissioned a learning provider to develop the programme, and we are setting up a working group and expert panel with lived experience to shape the programme and supporting resources. The first group on the pilot programme will start in autumn 2025. Diverse Cymru will also be offering extra expert advice, to make sure it aligns with the [cultural competency scheme](https://diversecymru.org.uk/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-cultural-competence-certification-scheme/)
* completed the first year of data collection for the [Workforce Race Equality Standard](https://socialcare.wales/research-and-data/workforce-race-equality-standard) (WRES), sharing anonymous data from our register of social care workers, including data about roles, gender, and ethnicity. We also used data from our ‘Have your say’ surveys that captures the experiences of workers. Welsh Government did the analysis and reporting. We will work with the WRES steering group and Welsh Government to consider the lessons learned from the first year and how we improve the data we are able to collect in the following years as well to make sure that all findings from the data can be used to make real changes for the better
* continued to improve the workforce data we collect to ensure the collection and quality of equality, diversity, and inclusion data. We have started a programme of work with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to create a joint data collection that will start in 2026. We hope the changes will improve the quality of data we receive and lead to higher quality analysis in 2025, and from 2026 we will have a new, unified way of collecting data
* began to review the health and social care qualifications guidance documents, from Level 2 Core and Practice through to Level 5, to make sure it aligns with equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and is reflective of anti-discriminatory practices. We set-up a lived experience group to support us with this work and give feedback on the guidance documents
* started discussions with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to support two employers, identified from the Welsh language workforce planning employers’ pilot, who employ a number of workers through a sponsorship route
* made sure we could receive equality, diversity, and inclusion feedback through specialist groups, as part of our consultation on the Codes of Professional Practice. We also engaged with children and young people, and people with disabilities. We developed easy read and a children and young people versions of the consultation and held sessions with a specialist facilitator
* although the language used in the revised codes was clearer, there were further recommendations of changes to the employer’s code, as it was felt that the language around equality, diversity and inclusion was less clear. During 2025 to 2026 we will consider how we make sure anti-racism and equality, diversity and inclusion is reflected in the revised practice guidance
* continued to develop, together with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), a new positive culture guide, which includes resources, videos, and tools. It will be published in the summer of 2025. This will support the revised Anti-racist Wales Action Plan to develop a joint Social Care Wales and CIW positive cultures toolkit for social care employers, with a clear message about the importance of an anti-discriminatory setting to contribute to a positive culture. This has been checked by an anti-racist expert with lived experience
* developed investigation principles to support employers with their local investigations and updated our fitness to practise awareness presentations for employers, to reflect how racist behaviour can call into question the fitness to practise of a registered social care worker
* worked with our partners in Public Health Wales to develop appropriate HIV training for the social care workforce in Wales, reflecting our responsibilities in the HIV action plan. This will be available to the workforce in 2025
* highlighted the need for an anti-racist social care sector here in Wales, as part of our employer roadshows

*A white speech bubble on a green and blue background: 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 employer roadshows attendee
*

* developed an [online resource](https://socialcare.wales/resource-for-employers-with-staff-who-are-new-to-working-in-social-care-in-wales) that brings together resources into one place to support employers of workers who are new to Wales. We will continue to add sector best practice to this
* published an evidence summary that highlights relevant and up-to-date research on how people working in social care can [support neurodivergent people and their families](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/evidence-summaries/supporting-neurodivergent-people-and-their-families). The evidence summary explores how social care workers can use a strengths-based approach, provide support with diagnosis, and make sure environments are accessible to neurodivergent people.

**For the social work workforce plan, we:**

* published a recorded conversation called ‘getting comfortable with discomfort: anti-racism in social care’ with Jade Forbes, a social work team manager, and Hanan Issa, the National Poet of Wales, as part of Social Work Week. 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.’
* 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:
  + 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.



## 1. An engaged, motivated, and healthy workforce

### Our ambition by 2030

**The health and social care workforce will feel valued and supported wherever they work.**

### Impact measures

Workforce well-being is affected by a range of factors, so positive progress for this theme, would mean:

* **an increase in how many of the workforce feel morale is good**

77 per cent of the workforce said their morale was good in 2024 compared to 65 per cent in 2023.

* **the workforce knows where to find out about health and well-being support at work**

The most frequent place to get information about health and well-being is either the employer’s website (43 per cent) or from their manager (46 per cent).

26 per cent of the workforce found information through Social Care Wales (33 per cent in 2023) and eight per cent found information through Canopi (seven per cent in 2023)

* **a reduction in the percentage of the workforce looking to leave the sector in the next twelve months**

25 per cent of the workforce are aiming to leave the sector. This is a slight decrease compared to 2023 (26 per cent) but is still a quarter of respondents.

Around one in four are aiming to leave their role in an average of 13 months. When asked why, reasons included low pay, a lack of recognition and support, poor working conditions, and a lack of career development opportunities.

* **a reduction in percentage of the workforce who said they have experienced bullying, discrimination, or harassment**

Most of our workforce suggested they had not experienced any bullying, harassment, or discrimination from any source in 2024, with fewer than 10 percent of respondents in all categories suggesting they had.

We cannot fully compare these figures to the 2023 survey results, because we did not specify a timeframe when asking about experiences of bullying, discrimination, and harassment in the 2023 survey. However, in 2023, 37 per cent of the workforce said they had experienced bullying, discrimination, or harassment.

Of those who had experienced and reported bullying, harassment, or discrimination, just over one third (37 per cent) felt as though their report was either ignored completely or not dealt with appropriately. In our sample this was meaningful, because respondents were often worried that, should they complain about the experience of bullying, harassment or discrimination, their complaint would not be acted on – or even worse, that complaining could harm their own chances of progression or even lead to them losing their jobs.

* **standardised methodology scores that can be compared nationally, for life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile, happiness and anxiety**

The well-being of Wales’ social care workforce is lower than the UK average**.** As part of the 2024 ‘Have your say’ survey we assessed the well-being of the workforce using the [ONS4](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/personalwellbeingsurveyuserguide) – four measures used by the Office for National Statistics that use a scale from nought to 10.

We asked the workforce to rate their life satisfaction, their feeling that life is worthwhile, their happiness the day before completing the survey and their anxiety level. The average response was then compared with the UK average for each measure. For satisfaction, feeling worthwhile and happiness, a higher score is better. For anxiety, a lower score is better.

Each of the findings below is worse than the [UK average](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2022tomarch2023):

* satisfaction with life: 6.54 (UK average: 7.45)
* life is worthwhile: 7.11 (UK average: 7.73)
* happiness yesterday: 6.58 (UK average: 7.39)
* anxiety: 4.35 (UK average:3.23)

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Support employers to embed workforce well-being in their organisations by promoting and refreshing** [**the Health and well-being framework**](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/health-and-well-being-resources)

**We:**

* continued to provide up to date, evidence-based tools and resources by promoting our well-being offer to the sector. There were regular visits to our well-being webpages and framework, which totalled 4,764 during the year.
* asked attendees at our well-being week events if they were aware of the framework. Of those who responded, 63 per cent said yes. Some gave examples of how they used it, including with their human resource department to influence well-being support, in training and when supporting staff as a manager.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **a) Establish a framework that makes sure there’s parity, fair reward, and recognition:**    * + **for social care workers, through the** [**Social Care Fair Work Forum**](https://www.gov.wales/social-care-fair-work-forum) **pay and progression framework** |

**The Social Care Fair Work Forum:**

* began scoping the plans for the next phase of this work in autumn 2024, which led to an information gathering phase to develop a detailed timeline of work. There have been meetings to help with the design of the pay and progression framework, including agreement to use the [draft framework](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-05/proposals-for-a-pay-and-progression-framework.pdf) moving forward, with further work and refinement needed in 2025 to 2026. The aim is to have a framework ready for voluntary sign up by 2026.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **b) Establish a framework that makes sure there’s parity, fair reward, and recognition:**    * + **for social workers, through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) led consideration of consistent social work terms and conditions options appraisal.** |

**The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA):**

* commissioned research to look into the feasibility and potential delivery models available that would support the development of a national approach to qualified social workers’ terms and conditions. As part of this research, there was significant engagement with the main stakeholders and the report findings and recommendations were shared with the project steering group for consideration. The report recommended a number of next steps to take this work forward, including:
  + legal review – An assessment of the legal implications, especially in relation to local government autonomy and equal pay considerations
  + broader workforce strategy – Exploring improvements to other terms and conditions, such as workload management and career progression.
* is in the process of seeking political views for taking this work forward, including identifying options for getting further legal advice on the potential ways identified by the scoping report. Importantly, consideration is also being given to the potential implications on this work on the establishment of an Adult Social Care Negotiating Body in England and the ongoing discussions between the Welsh and UK Governments.

1. **Continue research and engagement work, including an annual independent survey of workers, and use what we learn to improve how we support workforce well-being**

**We:**

* published [Ymlaen](https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/ymlaen-a-new-research-innovation-and-improvement-strategy-for-social-care), the new research, innovation, and improvement strategy for social care
* launched the [Insight Collective](https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/the-insight-collective-a-new-research-data-innovation-and-improvement-service-for-social-care), a new research, data, innovation, and improvement service for social care to provide access to the latest research and data, guidance on training, opportunities to work together, and advice about the available support
* launched a dedicated webpage on the Insight Collective to promote the [researcher support offer](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/get-support-for-your-research/our-researcher-support-offer) and began publishing projects we support on the [project finder](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/project-finder)
* launched our 2025 ‘Have your say’ survey and published the ‘[Have your say’ 2024 survey results](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/reports/have-your-say-workforce-survey-2024-full-report-and-summary-of-findings). The 2025 survey asked social care workers about things like their health and well-being, pay and conditions, and what they like about working in the sector. In total, 5,707 social care workers responded to the 2025 survey, from a wide range of roles. This was an increase of more than 600 on the number who responded last year. The 2025 results will be available later in 2025 to 2026
* created five new [evidence summaries](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/evidence-summaries) that present research findings in ways that are easy to understand, on the themes of:
  + supporting neurodivergent people and their families
  + supporting positive outcomes in children’s residential care
  + communicating with families in difficult situations
  + building trust with marginalised families
  + supporting people to make decisions about their care
* created our second annual set of [workforce insights](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/workforce-insight-series) briefings which summarise and highlight key information about the social care workforce in Wales. These focused on:
  + [improving terms and conditions for the social care workforce in Wales 2024](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/workforce-insight-series/terms-and-conditions-2024)
  + [supporting the well-being of the social care workforce in Wales 2024](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/workforce-insight-series/well-being-2024)
* completed two research priorities setting exercises asking people with lived experience and social care practitioners what they want to know about and understand. People wanted to know more about:
  + [transitions from children to adults’ social care support](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/what-do-we-mean-by-research-priority-setting/transitions-from-childrens-to-adults-social-care-support)
  + [linked data research in adult social care](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/what-do-we-mean-by-research-priority-setting/linked-data-research-in-adult-social-care)
* ran four information sessions to support recruitment agencies who provide social care workers. The sessions aimed to help agencies understand the regulatory and registration processes, qualifications, and fitness to practise.

**For the social work workforce plan, we:**

* shared [findings](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/whats-on/news-and-blogs/understanding-the-motivations-and-barriers-for-social-work-students-in-wales) of a student survey about why they chose a career in social work, which included:
  + motivations to study social work
  + understanding the role of a social worker
  + barriers to studying social work
  + the impact of post-graduate bursary increase
  + the effectiveness of the WeCare Wales campaign.

**For the strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* + carried out research with local authorities to understand the number of Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) in Wales. We are currently analysing the information and will be producing a national report that highlights the actions needed to sustain the AMHP workforce for the future
* participated in an academic study, which was first written in 2014, to review the role of social workers in adult mental health services. The updated academic study is now subject to four nations’ review. It is likely to be embedded into mental health social work practice and inform best practice and social work role and identity in mental health services.

1. **Support workforce well-being through the ongoing promotion of existing and new well-being resources and services, including** [**Canopi**](https://canopi.nhs.wales/) **and** [**the care worker card**](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/care-worker-card-faqs)

**Together with HEIW we:**

* continued to promote the mental health support service ‘Canopi.’ During the year, the total number of referrals to this service from the social care workforce was 403.

**We:**

* delivered 18 well-being information and learning sessions, and another nine sessions as part of well-being week. A total of 573 people attended our sessions across the year
* held our first ever Well-being Week, which was a positive space where people in the sector came together to learn about well-being and share best practice. Our sessions included:
  + a mini-series on workplace policies
  + compassionate boundaries
  + effective communication
  + looking after yourself at work
  + mental health
  + speaking up safely.

A total of 313 people attended our Well-being Week sessions. Everyone who gave us feedback said they had learned something new and had learned something they could use in the workplace.

Two speech bubbles: Enjoyed today’s session, found it very informative and definitely of benefit to me on both a personal and professional level. Thank you.
Feedback from a Well-being Week participant.
The programme this week has been excellent and included topics that I wouldn't have thought of. Well done team for putting this together.
Feedback from a Well-being Week participant



A white bubble on a green and blue background



Thank you for your time, it’s great to have an opportunity to make the time to discuss such a valuable topic, this will bring the focus back to putting a policy in place
Feedback from a Well-being Week participant


* continued to promote our well-being e-learning modules. During the year, 185 people accessed the personal well-being e-learning module and 260 accessed the workplace well-being e-learning module
* developed an [online resource](https://socialcare.wales/resource-for-employers-with-staff-who-are-new-to-working-in-social-care-in-wales) that brings together appropriate resources into one place to support employers of workers who are new to Wales. We will continue to add sector best practice to this resource
* ran three employer support roadshows during the year in Merthyr Tydfil, Wrexham, and Aberystwyth, with 39 organisations represented. These events showcase elements of the [Employer Offer](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/employer-support) including specific sessions on the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and compassionate leadership.

**A chat bubbles with text: Interesting day with lots of varied information.
Feedback from employer support roadshow participant
 and I found the compassionate leadership section very beneficial for part of my role monitoring staff well-being. 
Feedback from employer support roadshow participant
**

* developed and launched [investigation principles](https://socialcare.wales/dealing-with-concerns/investigating-concerns-in-your-workplace) to support employers with their local investigations. The principles have been drawn from best practice from other agencies and from what the fitness to practise team has learned. We have also created a [animation](https://youtu.be/bJRi27leQAw) to support sharing the principles
* ran a [recruitment process](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZMpHOWba64) to recruit new fitness to practise panel members, to help us keep people who use care and support services in Wales safe
* continued to promote and share information about the Care Worker Card. This card recognises health and social care workers as key workers and allows people to access a range of benefits. During the year we issued 8,075 digital cards, bringing the total to 53,336 cards issued.

**For the social work workforce plan, we:**

* put together a variety of sessions for Social Work Week which included topics that would support well-being at work. We had a specific session on “moral injury in social work: the what, the how, and why it matters,” which focused on:
  + defining moral injury and relating this to a social work context
  + exploring how our identity and values relate to our beliefs and behaviours
  + discussing the importance of professional kindness and compassion in the workplace.

**For the strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* engaged with stakeholders on an initial plan for the delivery of a national support function called “Ffordd,” to offer support to the mental health workforce in health and social care along the whole of their working journey, rather than only as a reactive offer.

1. **Maintain networks and communities to share** **different ways of improving workforce well-being**

**Together with HEIW, we:**

* continued to share good practice and resources between health and social care to drive improvement, and between us we reciprocated places on health and well-being networks.

**We:**

* continued to support our established communities, including:

[Your well-being matters community](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/your-well-being-matters) and well-being network. The ‘Your well-being matters’ community has grown to 68 members, and the well-being network has grown to 212 members. We held a face-to-face well-being network event, with the focus on creating a positive workplace culture. We shared examples of good practice and people had the opportunity to connect. Feedback from the event highlighted that people had become more aware of how to support their teams’ and their own well-being at work. We also linked with the members of the evidence community and the Responsible Individuals community to consider themes of well-being at work.

[New models of children’s residential care](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/new-models-of-residential-children-s) - the community of action, open to local authorities, engaged with 20 local authorities and a total of nine meet up events were held through the year, with representation from 19 local authorities. Sessions have included:

* + analysing the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill and what this could mean in practice for members
  + a workshop with an academic on trauma informed approaches and vicarious trauma
  + Models of Care conference reflecting on evidence, including written and lived experience
  + summary from the international ACORES 24 conference with the title: Children and youth with special vulnerability in child welfare: cross national review of innovative therapeutic programs.
  + a bespoke workshop with an expert on values-based recruitment.

Others have knowledge and experience I don’t. It’s giving me food for thought on how we can develop.
Feedback from new models of children’s residential care community of action member


One thing for me is the connections and networking. Being able to reach out to others across Wales is invaluable.
Feedback from new models of children’s residential care community of action member


Myself and another member met up a few weeks back, he visited our newest provision which was great as we seem to have similar issues so good to talk it through.
Feedback from new models of children’s residential care community of action member


[Place-based care community](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/place-based-care-community) membership has grown to 97 people and there were a total of 19 events, workshops, and drop-ins through the year. Sessions have included:

* + cluster working and connections in place-based settings
  + implementing evidence and place-based opportunities to improve adult social care
  + exploring the foundations for the future model of health and care in Wales
  + most significant change workshop
  + looking at the evidence together on supporting people to make decisions about their care
  + a panel discussion about human learning systems in place-based settings

[Responsible Individuals’ community](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/community-of-practice-for-responsible-individuals) membership has grown to 188 members, and there were 32 events throughout the year. Sessions have included:

* + innovation coaching
  + improving your ratings
  + trauma informed approaches and vicarious trauma
  + strength-based practice
  + Joint Responsible Individuals / Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspector sessions facilitated by Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP)
  + codes of practice consultation, fitness to practise and the wider employer support offer
  + the new commissioning standards framework.

Having inspectors and Responsible Individuals in the same room in such a collaborative way was a first from what I’ve seen and was a really positive thing.
Feedback from Responsible Individuals community member


Really valuable session meeting other Responsible Individuals for developing into the Responsible Individual role
Feedback from Responsible Individuals community member


It was a valuable experience to connect with fellow Responsible Individuals from various sectors within social care
Feedback from Responsible Individuals community member


[Evidence community](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/evidence-community)membership has grown to 251 members and there were 26 events during the year. Sessions have included:

* + research conversations about the carer identity model toolkit
  + preventing loneliness and reducing inequalities in social well-being
  + co-production
  + working together in safeguarding
  + social work with older people study
  + child criminal exploitation
  + reflecting on evidence on whether telling "lies" to people with dementia is ethical
  + research skills: accessing and understanding research the basics
  + fabricated or induced illness
  + a community of enquiry on making family courts more trauma-informed
  + exploring the enablers and barriers to engagement with care leavers across Wales
  + Health Care Research Wales (HCRW) presenting information on research career pathways and funding
* established a new [Camau learners](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/camau-learners)’ community to support Welsh language learners to practice learning, share news and resources
* asked those we engaged with and who attended the introduction to compassionate leadership sessions if they would be interested in becoming part of a wider compassionate leadership network or community. We have more than 100 people interested and plan to establish this during 2025 to 2026.
* continued to support the Resourcefulness Communities Partnership (RCP) to help it further develop and raise its profile as a national, multi-sector forum for organisations that develop and promote local activities and actions to help improve well-being in communities all over Wales
* launched the [communities of practice support and development service](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/communities-of-practice-support-and-development) to support people to run their own communities for social care in Wales. We will support people who are tackling social care challenges and might benefit from using a community approach, whether they already have a community or are thinking about setting one up.

**For the social work workforce plan, we**

* continued to run the practice educator hub, which has 95 members. 157 people have joined a range of events offered throughout the year. Feedback from members is positive and we collectively agreed priorities for the year. Sessions have included:
  + sharing information about the Insight Collective website and the regulation of social work degree courses
  + peer support
  + collecting information and feedback from the group about how they think the practice educator role can be valued and promoted, which has led to more work to develop a practice education to understand the national picture
  + an external speaker delivering a session on social work assessment and analysis
  + supporting neurodivergent social work learners (joint session with the newly qualified social work group)
* continued to run a group to support people who support newly qualified social workers, which has 33 members and is open to any social work employer. Sessions have included:
  + compassionate leadership
  + peer support
  + discussion on the standards of training for newly qualified social workers
  + a session to produce national guidance for mentor roles
  + learning how to lead a reflecting on evidence sessions
  + updates from the director of BASW Cymru
  + supporting neurodivergent social work learners (joint session with practice educator hub).

**For the strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* continued to promote AMHPs within Wales and supported AMHPs locally and nationally. AMHPs often have niche hidden roles and have extensive legal responsibilities under the Mental Health Act. Our Community AMHP Manager will be working directly with lead AMHPs and practitioners during 2025 to 2026 to better understand and support the AMHP role within Wales
* began planning for the development of a digital AMHP community of practice for all AMHPs across Wales to support well-being and provide a platform for networking and sharing best practice
* continued to run the AWALN network, which is well supported by lead AMHPs and local authorities across Wales. It is a vibrant, motivated professional group with a focus on sharing mental health related issues and supporting best practice
* represented Wales on the National AMHP lead network forum (a UK body), contributing to feedback around issues raised in Wales, and the anticipated reform of the Mental Health Act via the Mental Health Bill currently making its way through UK Parliament
* attended a number of AMHP forums and presented information from a social care perspective. This has been productive in achieving high visibility and positive relationships within mental health services and identifying key areas that need support
* began early planning of two AMHP conferences that will take place in 2025, to promote the AMHP role across Wales and enable a national spotlight of the role.
* arranged, funded, promoted and attended various regional AMHP meetings.

1. **Embed the principles of fair work in the Welsh Government National Framework for the Commissioning of Care and Support in Wales**

**Welsh Government:**

* have embedded the principles of fair work in the [National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support: code of practice](https://www.gov.wales/national-framework-commissioning-care-and-support-code-practice), which came into force in September 2024. The National Office for Care and Support continues to support statutory partners to implement and deliver the National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support, including through the on-going development and updating of the digital toolkit of resources for commissioners. The National Framework contains specific principles and standards on fair work, for example ‘Principle 5 - Sustainable care and support is built on fair work and fair pricing’, and ‘Standard 6: Supporting ethical and fair work practices’
* delivered, as the National Office for Care and Support, in partnership with the National Commissioning Board, nine online awareness raising sessions about the codes of practice. Five of these sessions were detailed sessions for commissioners, planners, and professionals with the responsibility for implementing the code. The other four sessions were shorter overviews for wider stakeholders, including care providers, board and elected members, and allied professionals (including finance, legal and audit)
* launched, as the National Office for Care and Support, the digital national framework (commissioning) toolkit. These resources are designed to support commissioners to implement and deliver the national framework’s principles and standards for commissioning care and support. This open, publicly accessible toolkit is hosted on the Social Care Wales communities platform, which notifies members when new resources are added. As of March 2025, the toolkit includes 75 resources that relate to or reference Fair Work. There is also the commissioning care and support (national framework), which is a closed community, restricted to local authority and NHS Wales commissioners. This provides an effective mechanism for the National Office for Care and Support to directly engage and work co-productively with commissioners of care and support as well as the wider sector.
* worked in partnership with the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Unison to develop a specific tool for the toolkit “Fair work in the social care sector: a toolkit for commissioners.” This guide helps commissioners identify what ‘fair work’ looks like in the sector. Employers will also find it helpful to understand what is meant by ‘fair work’ for the social care workforce, in accordance with Welsh Government policy and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including examples of how they can show they are offering fair work
* developed a [comprehensive tool to support commissioners on fair work](https://communities.socialcare.wales/group/national-framework-commissioning-toolkit/toolkit/-/document_library/tOOcFGSzOfFF/view/1017825692?_com_liferay_document_library_web_portlet_DLPortlet_INSTANCE_tOOcFGSzOfFF_redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fcommunities.socialcare.wales%3A443%2Fgroup%2Fnational-framework-commissioning-toolkit%2Ftoolkit%3Fp_p_id%3Dcom_liferay_document_library_web_portlet_DLPortlet_INSTANCE_tOOcFGSzOfFF%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview) and what they should be looking for within the commissioning process. This tool is available in [the digital national framework (commissioning) toolkit of resources](https://communities.socialcare.wales/web/national-framework-commissioning-toolkit/community-home)
* delivered three commissioning events across Wales focusing on fair work. TUC and Unison representatives led on these discussions. These events and the digital tool of resources can help commissioners consider fair work matters within their commissioning processes
* created a national commissioning and market oversight team within the National Office for Care and Support to support the implementation of the National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support. One of the key objectives of the team’s 2025 to 2026 work programme is to develop the support learning and development activities for the commissioning and planning workforce. This will include developing learning and training activities that will support the implementation of the National Framework and promoting these within the commissioning community. This area of work will also be exploring career pathways and workforce or succession planning
* will formally review and update the National Framework on a two-year cycle with the first review due in September 2026. The current requirements and guidance within the National Framework, including the principles and standards relating to fair work, will be reviewed and updated in line with wider policy developments for the Code to remain aligned to current commissioning practices and overall Welsh Government policy objectives. This will help to make sure that the principles of fair work are embedded in the National Framework are working to maximum effect.

**We:**

* attended each of the three commissioning events across Wales and talked about how supporting positive cultures is at the heart of social care practice, recognising that commissioning outcomes-focused services plays a key role in embedding positive cultures
* shared details of our work around positive cultures and how the values and principles of compassionate leadership, well-being and strengths-based practice all enable a positive culture, links to the legislative context and the development of our Ymlaen strategy. We also shared information about our wider directorate work and offer around research, innovation, and data.

### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **Provide guidance about the purpose, function and benefits of organisational safety committees that address all aspects of workplace safety, including well-being.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2025 to 2026, but work has already started, with early discussions taking place between us and the unions. The work will be led by the [Social Care Workforce Partnership](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-social-care-workforce-partnership#:~:text=The%20Social%20Care%20Workforce%20Partnership%20is%20the%20first,social%20care%20sector%2C%20for%20employers%20to%20voluntarily%20adopt.). The Social Care Workforce Partnership is the first of its kind in the UK. It brings together government, employers, and unions to work in social partnership to agree models of best practice for staff working in the independent social care sector, for employers to voluntarily adopt.

1. **Look into and report on the best way to embed and monitor progress on well-being approaches through existing regulatory processes.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027

1. **Welsh Government will explore options for mental health support to volunteers and unpaid carers.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2025 to 2026

1. **Develop and put in place recommended training about equality and diversity.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2025 to 2026



## 2. Attraction and recruitment

### Our ambition by 2030

**Health and social care will be well established as a strong and recognisable brand and the sector of choice for our future workforce.**

### Impact measures

Attraction and recruitment are affected by a range of factors, so positive progress for this theme, would mean:

* **maintaining the percentage of people who join the sector as they want to make a difference**

69 per cent of people started working in social care because they wanted a job that would make a difference to people’s lives which is higher than last year (63 per cent in 2023)

* **reducing the percentage of vacancies as a proportion of the sector**

There was a total of 5,346 vacancies in 2024,[[17]](#footnote-18) which represents six per cent of the workforce. In 2023, there was an estimated 5,299 vacancies – 47 fewer than 2024.

* **reducing the percentage of employers reporting challenges in staff availability**

For the first time, as part of the 2024 workforce survey, we asked an open-ended question of all respondents about recruitment and retention challenges. This means that we do not have comparable data to the 71 per cent who reported challenges in staff availability in 2023. In 2024 the issues that came up most frequently with regards to recruitment and retention were:

* low pay
* recruitment and retention issues
* recruitment challenges and lack of good applicants
* long or unsociable hours
* **improving length of service, using data from the Register of social care workers to measure retention (we will establish the baseline in 2025 to 2026)**

During 2025 to 2026 we will establish the baseline data for retention and length of service using data from the register of social care workers.

Using intelligence from the 2024 workforce survey we know that nearly one in four of the workforce (23 per cent) are aiming to leave the sector in an average of 13 months. When asked why they were aiming to leave, reasons provided included:

* low pay
* a lack of recognition and support
* poor working conditions
* a lack of career development opportunities.

We asked why they felt the sector was struggling to recruit, and how working in social care could be made more attractive. Their responses included a feeling that social care roles should be higher paid and that working conditions should be improved. The workforce also felt that increased support from managers, career progression opportunities, recognition and respect, and resources and governmental support would make social care a more attractive sector to work in.

* **improving how valued the workforce feels**

These are the percentages of workers who feel valued:

* by their colleagues (80 per cent)
* the people they support (80 per cent)
* managers (70 per cent)
* partner agencies (57 per cent)
* the public (51 per cent)

These are all higher this year than in 2023. In 2023, the figures for partner agencies were 48 per cent and the public was 44 per cent.

* **improving how the public perceives the workforce**

In January 2025, we commissioned Beaufort Research to ask 1,000 members of the public in Wales a series of questions to find out what they think about the social care sector.

* 73 per cent said they have confidence in people who work in care (up from 72 per cent in 2023)
* 65 per cent told us they think residential care workers are always skilled and professional in what they do (down from 67 per cent in 2023)
* 62 per cent think home care workers are always skilled and professional in what they do (down from 65 per cent in 2023).

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Continue to promote social care as a career of choice to the public, with an emphasis on schools, colleges, and underrepresented groups**

**Together with HEIW, we:**

* continued to support a joint health and social care careers network to share good practice and resources to improve recruitment and retention across the sectors
* continued to support further developments of the [Careersville](https://careersville.heiw.wales/) resource.

**We:**

* continued to provide funding to support seven regional connectors so that WeCare Wales’s support for attraction and recruitment can be embedded locally and regionally
* developed resources and ran the national campaign to support recruitment into [children’s residential care](https://wecare.wales/news/could-it-be-you). This work was supported by local authorities and the 4Cs Young Commissioners. The 4Cs Young Commissioners is a group of around 60 members aged between 6 and 19 years old, who live with a foster family or in a children’s home in Wales   
    
  The campaign ran in two parts, in June 2024 and then again in March 2025. During the first phase in June 2024 the campaign reached 317,169 people through social media (Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram) and led to 13,841 website views and 1,983 views to the job’s portal. The second phase ran during March 2025 and due to the level of campaigning, we saw significant numbers through the social channels, including over four million Facebook impressions, 288,088 LinkedIn impressions and 25,900 YouTube views. This led to 25,071 website views, including 13,018 jobs portal views. The resources developed included [children’s home video stories](https://wecare.wales/employers/toolkit/residential-childrens-home-toolkit/residential-childrens-home-video-stories), [social media quote cards](https://wecare.wales/employers/toolkit/residential-childrens-home-toolkit/residential-childrens-home-quote-cards), [images](https://wecare.wales/employers/toolkit/residential-childrens-home-toolkit/residential-childrens-home-images) and [local authority assets](https://wecare.wales/employers/toolkit/residential-childrens-home-toolkit/residential-childrens-home-local-authority-assets).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A person smiling for a picture | A group of people sitting in chairs |

* ran the home care and reablement campaign which shared stories and learning about the variety of roles available and looked at the importance of these services. The campaign featured [Karima](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbpzuby4alc) – a dedicated home care worker for more than 15 years. Originally from Libya, with a degree in Geology, she found the perfect fit in care work as a single mother.   
    
  We also shared [Bill’s reablement story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFOtyYPtSzQ) – an inspiring story of how the reablement service supported him to regain his independence following a fractured femur. The campaign reached 1,189,850 people through social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram) and led to 13,474 website views and 2,712 views to the job’s portal

An person smiling for a picture
 A person holding a box of medical masks



* celebrated the invaluable contributions apprenticeships make to the social care and childcare sector in Wales, as part of National Apprenticeship Week. We linked [our national campaign](https://wecare.wales/news/national-apprenticeship-week-naw2025) with Welsh Government’s [Making a Genius Decision apprenticeship campaign](https://www.gov.wales/apprenticeships-genius-decision). The campaign, along with animations, was a reminder of the benefits apprenticeships bring to both [individuals](https://youtu.be/zfyETAvuL6c) and [employers](https://youtu.be/aCU22fEdqJg), fostering growth, development, and excellence within the sector. The campaign saw engagement of 11,452 people through social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram) and led to 15,287 website views and 6,793 views to the job’s portal
* published a range of news articles promoting the WeCare Wales Ambassador scheme, which features blogs from [Cheryl](https://wecare.wales/news/wecare-wales-ambassador-blogs-cheryl-doster), [Junior](https://wecare.wales/news/wecare-wales-ambassador-blogs-junior-omoba), [Jamie](https://wecare.wales/news/wecare-wales-ambassador-blogs-jamie-haddock), [Darylanne](https://wecare.wales/news/wecare-wales-ambassador-blogs-darylanne-green), [Emmaline](https://wecare.wales/news/wecare-wales-ambassador-blogs-emmaline-platek), [Kat](https://wecare.wales/news/wecare-wales-ambassador-blogs-kat-jones) and [Susan](https://wecare.wales/news/susan-james), some of our WeCare Wales Ambassadors, about their role and how they got into care
* launched the first WeCare Wales [social care useful links and resource document](https://wecare.wales/assets/content/Social-care-Useful-links-and-resources.pdf) for teachers, developed to support existing and new social care teachers, and ultimately support our next generation workforce
* continued to support and coordinate the WeCare Wales Stakeholder Advisory Group, which includes stakeholders including the early years and childcare partners, local authorities, ADSS Cymru, Department of Work and Pensions, Careers Wales, and awarding organisations such as City & Guilds and the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC), to strengthen the links between job seekers and careers in social care.

**For the social work workforce plan, we**

* ran the national campaign for social work where we shared stories on our social media channels, learning about the variety of roles available and looking at what values and qualities you need to work in social work. The campaign featured [Oliver](https://wecare.wales/stories/olivers-story), an amazing independent young man who loves football and we also shone a light on [Ruby](https://wecare.wales/stories/ruby-social-service-practitioner-apprentice), a Leaving Care Personal Advisor, who recently completed the Social Services Practitioner apprenticeship and hopes to become a social worker herself one day. The campaign reached 829,623 people through social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram) and led to 15,333 website views and 2,686 views to the job’s portal.

A child in a jacket and a group of kids playing football



* continued to promote the Social Work Bursary Scheme (SWBS) so that social work students in Wales know about the funding available to help them with the cost of study

A green and white poster with people in circles



**For the strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* continued to use the mental health careers building in [Careersville](https://heiw.nhs.wales/careers/nhs-wales-careers/careersville/) to promote mental health careers, offering resources, information, and live events
* supported a market hall event aimed at raising recruitment and retention issues
* attended an accelerated service redesign project for crisis care services. This spotlights crisis care provision from a social care perspective and focuses on co-production, peer mentorship and lived experience.

1. **Continue to deliver programmes and plan schemes to widen access to careers in social care**

**We:**

* continued to deliver the Introduction to Social Care programme, with 852 people completing the programme during the year
* completed a range of new developments to the Introduction to Social Care programme, including:
  + reviewing and updating the content of the programme to align with the latest legislation
  + making new connections with college and university links, through continued engagement and events
  + changing the age of the three-day programme to be 16+ rather than 18+, in line with apprenticeships
  + updating the college programme content and setting that programme to two days
  + developed a [communication animation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrGxtT-rl4w) for use on our Introduction to Social Care programmes
  + published a teacher's resource and are continuing to work with WJEC. We delivered five events reaching a total of 100 teachers.
* developed a new series of webinars that explain how to get intovarious roles and areas of work in the social care sector. The ‘Get into’ sessions are all one hour long or less, are free for anyone living in Wales interested in learning more about a specific topic in care and run alongside the WeCare Wales campaigns. A total of 132 people joined the webinars across three sessions during the year
* launched the new [Introduction to dementia](https://wecare.wales/training/programmes/introduction-to-dementia) learning sessions, with 161 people completing the session this year and another 18 signed up for March 2025
* continued our engagement work and delivered introduction to social care training for under-represented groups and for the future workforce including:
  + the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) and Displaced People in Action (DPIA)
  + the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), and we ran an Introduction to volunteering pilot
  + two bespoke programmes of the Introduction to Social Care with the wrap around service for The King’s Trust
  + sessions for Cardiff Met University’s Health and social care level 4 students
  + The Muslim Council of Wales
  + supporting Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council with regional pilots. More regions will be supported in 2025 to 2026.
* ran two training sessions with work coaches and mentors to promote the WeCare Wales offer. We gave advice and support around social care roles and CVs, interviews, and application forms. 30 people completed the sessions, and we received great feedback
* offered webinars through the WeCare programme to encourage employers and work coaches to use the job portal and guaranteed interview scheme. We have also made improvements to the [guaranteed interview scheme](https://wecare.wales/employers/guaranteedinterviewscheme) making it more accessible and user friendly for job seekers and employers. So far, 52 employers have signed up to the new scheme
* launched the [WeCare Wales community badge](https://wecare.wales/news/community-badge-with-girlguiding-cymru), in collaboration with Girlguiding Cymru. The launch celebrated the dedication and hard work of the young members who took part in the pilot programme. The WeCare Wales community care badge is designed to encompass the 6Cs of care (care, compassion, competence, communication, courage, commitment) along with resilience and safeguarding. This badge represents a fun and inspiring approach to care, fostering essential skills and values in the young members

A logo with a heart and a hand



1. **Hold an annual**  [**Accolades awards ceremony**](https://socialcare.wales/the-accolades) **to celebrate the work of the sector**

**We:**

* celebrated the work of the sector at the 2024 Accolades awards ceremony. We shared the positive stories of the winners and finalists to build better awareness and understanding about the value of social care and the excellent work of the social care workforce. Ninety-three projects and care workers from across Wales entered or were nominated for the 2024 awards. They were then whittled down to a final shortlist of eight projects and 10 workers or teams, by a panel of expert judges. The winners across the six categories were:
  + Building bright futures for children and families – [Born into Care, Swansea Council](https://socialcare.wales/resources/born-into-care-swansea-council-the-accolades-2024)
  + Looking after and improving workforce well-being – [Antur Waunfawr](https://socialcare.wales/resources/antur-waunfawr-the-accolades-2024)
  + Working in partnership – [Newport Strategic Partnership](https://socialcare.wales/resources/newport-strategic-partnership-the-accolades-2024)
  + Effective leadership – [Sandra Stacey, Residential Care Home Manager at Flintshire County Council](https://socialcare.wales/resources/sandra-stacey-flintshire-county-council-the-accolades-2024)
  + Working to the principles of strengths-based practice – [Becky Evans, Powys Team Leader at Credu](https://socialcare.wales/resources/becky-evans-credu-the-accolades-2024)
  + WeCare Wales award – [Linda Campbell, Care Worker for Cerecare N&DS Ltd in Lampeter](https://socialcare.wales/resources/linda-campbell-cerecare-the-accolades-2024)
* launched the [2025 Accolades](https://socialcare.wales/the-accolades/2025-accolades) and received 127 entries, which is around a third higher than last year’s total. We invited members of the public to vote for the two people they think should be crowned the winners of the Inspirational Leadership award and the WeCare Wales award for outstanding care workers – with more than 5,700 people voting. The award ceremony will be held on 1 May 2025.
* celebrated workers who provide care through the medium of Welsh through the [2024 Caring in Welsh award](https://socialcare.wales/the-accolades/previous-awards/2024/caring-in-welsh-award-2024), held at the Rhondda Cynon Taf National Eisteddfod. The winner, Elain Fflur Morris, Senior Care Worker at Cartref Bryn yr Eglwys in Conwy, was chosen by a public vote in which more than 5,200 people voted, double the number who voted in 2023.

1. **Commission research to understand more about the contribution volunteers can make to social care**

**We:**

* commissioned a new research study to understand how volunteering contributes to social care. The research was funded by Welsh Government's Volunteering Wales Strategic Grant, administered by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The study ran until early 2025 and we worked with the University of South Wales, the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care and the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School to carry out this work
* learned more through this research, about the benefits and opportunities created by volunteering. We also got a better understanding of the challenges of volunteering and working with volunteers in social care, particularly in adult residential care settings in Wales
* will use the findings of the research, which will be published in early 2025, to influence the type of support that is put in place for volunteering. We will also use what we learn to inform a sustainable and positive model that recognises existing good practice and the valuable contribution of volunteering within the sector
* we have also received further funding from WCVA to build upon our research findings in 2025 to 2026. This will include creating a bilingual resource showcasing the roles volunteers have in care homes, and a new piece of research to explore the journeys of volunteers who become, or intend to become, paid social care workers in Wales.

### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **Implement approaches to better understand and improve public perceptions**

* This action will be progressed further in 2025 to 2026, but work has already started with questions asked in the bi-annual November 2024 public perceptions survey carried out through the Wales Omnibus Survey to assess the public views of the social care sector.

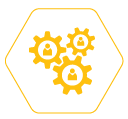
1. **Improve sector recruitment and retention practices, including developing a retention framework and resources to support good employment practice, for example retention and exit interviews, succession planning guidance and safer recruitment guidance.**

**We**

* will progress this action further in 2025 to 2026. During 2023 to 2024, we commissioned an organisation called Urban Foresight to carry out [research that explored how the workforce challenges facing social care in Wales can be addressed](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/reports/understanding-recruitment-retention-and-job-seeking-behaviours-reports-and-resources-for-employers). The research was split across two themes: 1) Understanding job-seeking behaviours and 2) Understanding attraction, recruitment, and the role of WeCare Wales. As well as creating reports and recommendations across both areas of research, including a report that focuses specifically on the early years and childcare sector, the work also produced two new resources for employers:
  + [an attraction, recruitment and retention guide](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/assets/documents/WeCare-reports/Guide-for-employers.pdf) – that includes advice about things like how best to attract people to work in the sector and make staff feel valued once they have joined
  + [a user personas toolkit](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/assets/documents/WeCare-reports/User-personas-toolkit.pdf) – that describes how user personas can be used to support jobseekers in the social care sector, with several example personas.

|  |
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| 1. **Develop systems that monitor:**    * + **learners’ journeys from when they complete their award through to employment.**      + **retention once they are in employment.**      + **the journey from the WeCare Wales website into employment.** |

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027



## 3. Seamless workforce models

### Our ambition by 2030

**Multi-professional and multi-agency workforce models will be the norm.**

### Impact measures

Seamless working is affected by a range of factors, so positive progress in this theme, would mean:

* **engaging with regional workforce boards every year to get feedback about how integrated workforce needs are met**

Regional Partnership Boards have been created as part of the[Social Services and Well Being Act](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents) to:

* + improve the well-being of the population
  + improve how health and care services are delivered.

All Regional Partnership Boards must:

* + create a regional population assessment and a regional area plan
  + create a regional annual report
  + show citizen engagement and co-production

There are seven Regional Partnership Boards in Wales:

[Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board](https://cavrpb.org/)

[Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board](https://www.ctmregionalpartnershipboard.co.uk/)

[Gwent Regional Partnership Board](http://www.gwentrpb.wales/home)

[West Wales Regional Partnership Board](https://www.wwcp.org.uk/)

[North Wales Regional Partnership Board](https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/regional-partnership-board/)

[West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board](https://www.westglamorgan.org.uk/)

[Powys Regional Partnership Board](https://www.powysrpb.org/)

* **annual monitoring and reporting of the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) to understand the workforce priorities of integrated services.**

The [Social Care Wales Workforce Development Grant](https://socialcare.wales/social-care-wales-workforce-development-programme-scwwdp) (SCWWDP) is a long-established grant programme to support training and workforce development across social care in Wales. We annually monitor the SCWWDP grant and report to our Board. We have published the national themes and findings report of [how the SCWWDP grant was invested by regions in 2023 to 2024](https://socialcare.wales/social-care-wales-workforce-development-programme-scwwdp/main-findings-from-the-social-care-wales-workforce-development-grant).

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Continue to support practice frameworks and similar developments to emphasise and support multi professional working.**

**Welsh Government:**

* as part of the transformation programme for children’s social care in Wales, carried out a phase of national engagement on the National Multi-Agency Practice Strategy for Children. The engagement with local authorities and their partners in the delivery of children’s social services across Wales, including the third sector, police, and safeguarding boards and national bodies, collected opinions and evidence about how a national practice strategy and framework can add the most value.
* have shared in the last year, two engagement papers which set out the aim of the framework and how it would work in practice, as well as drafts of recommended standards. After finishing the engagement phase, work was done to develop a revised draft of the framework to share for more engagement and feedback.
* revised the draft framework and condensed it down from a proposed 26 standards to five standards, which focus on multi-agency working. It was announced in [January 2025](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-national-multi-agency-practice-strategy-children-update) that more work was needed to strengthen the strategy and the five multi-agency standards, as well as develop additional resources.
* will publish the strategy and the first set of practice notes at the beginning of 2025 to 2026. More practice notes will then be published during 2025 to 2026, and work will also begin on the development of a joint accountability framework.

**Together with HEIW, we:**

* continued to contribute and support the strategic primary care programme’s workforce and organisational development theme
* launched an e-learning resource that supports shared decision making across health and social care, which is available on [Tŷ Dysgu](https://ytydysgu.heiw.wales/).

**We:**

* continued to support the [Welsh Government’s Transformation of Children’s Services programme](https://www.gov.wales/transformation-childrens-services-programme-0) of work, including the [National Multi-Agency Practice Strategy for Children](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-national-multi-agency-practice-strategy-children-update) and [CIW’s guidance for registering a care home for children](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-10/registering-a-care-home-for-children_0.pdf)
* commissioned a skills workshop on Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) for local authorities to support them as part of the removal of profit from the care of children looked after workstream
* continued to work with partners to expand the training, including nurse qualifying training, on offer to health and social care workers in care homes.

1. **Continue to promote resources and networks, based on the multi-professional framework for integrated working, that** **showcase examples of effective multi-professional working.**

**The strategic programme for primary care:**

* continued to raise awareness, promote, and support the implementation of the [Multi-Professional Framework for Integrated Working](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fprimarycareone.nhs.wales%2Ftools%2Fcommunity-infrastructure-ci-programme%2Fcommunity-infrastructure-ci-programme%2Fcommunity-infrastructure-ci-programme%2Fmp-framework-for-integrated-working-full-read-v1-0-docx%2F&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) (MPF). This included giving presentations on the MPF to various stakeholder and leadership groups and producing a MPF [webpage](https://primarycareone.nhs.wales/tools/multi-professional-framework-for-integrated-working/) with:
  + background information about the purpose, function, and use of the MPF
  + videos explaining each of the MPF domains
  + testimonial videos of practitioner experiences of using the MPF in their work
  + access to the interactive MPF Development Matrix
* started developing a phase 2 plan on a page, outlining a longer-term strategic approach to raising awareness, promotion and increasing the use of the MPF, along with gaining user insight to improve and increase its functionality.

**We:**

* continued to contribute to the delivery of the [Learning Disabilities Strategic Action Plan](https://www.gov.wales/learning-disability-strategic-action-plan-2022-2026-html), as part of our role on the Ministerial Advisory Group
* continued to support the use of a competency toolkit to support the role of trusted assessors
* continued to support and take part in regional workforce boards and regional partnership boards
* continued to support government policy and stakeholder initiatives, including removing profit from the care of looked after children, improving social care workforce conditions and [A Healthier Wales actions refresh](https://www.gov.wales/healthier-wales-long-term-plan-health-and-social-care)
* continued to support the work of the Learning and Improvement Network for Reablement to share practice and look at solutions. This included sharing the main findings from the research from the Networked Data Lab (NDL) Wales which found that, although reablement services vary in how they are organised and delivered across Wales, fewer people were given long-term care plans after using these services. The research contributed to the UK Networked Data Lab report by the Health Foundation ‘[Are intermediate care services stretched too thin?](https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/briefings/are-intermediate-care-services-stretched-too-thin)’.

**For the Social work workforce plan, we:**

* continued to attend national meetings with workforce managers and the higher education institutions so we are aware of any challenges facing the social work profession
* continued to co-ordinate and chair the Social Work Profession Stakeholder group on a quarterly basis
* are working closely with our colleagues in education quality assurance to explore the development of guidance to aid social workers with their continued professional development (CPD)

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* continued to support the All Wales Approved Mental Health Professional Leads Network to share good practice and resources to support role development and improvement
* contributed to the work, carried out by the Allied Health Professions (AHP) mental health practice education team, to scope mental health placements in the AHP professions
* launched the national recovery college project to scope the business case for developing a national recovery college in Wales. A recovery college is a peer-led mental health service guided by the principles of hope, control, and opportunity in everything it does. Its courses are co-produced and co-delivered by peer trainers with lived experience of mental health challenges and mental health, social care, or voluntary sector staff.

1. **Continue to work jointly with HEIW on workforce plans that affect both sectors and make the most of opportunities for seamless working and joint training, including nursing, primary care, and the joint Mental Health Workforce plan.**

**HEIW:**

* launched the [Strategic Workforce Plan for Primary Care 2025 to 2030](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/swppcplan2024/)
* launched the [Strategic Nursing Workforce Plan for Wales 2025 to 2030](https://heiw.nhs.wales/news/heiw-launch-the-strategic-nursing-workforce-plan-for-wales-2025-2030/) and we continued to attend the 'Registered Nurses in Social Care' Stakeholder group.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* continued to progress with the implementation of the Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan
* published an [independent evaluation](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/evaluation-of-the-implementation-of-the-strategic-mental-health-workforce-plan-2024/) of the first-year implementation of the Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan
* published a [summer newsletter](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/strategic-mental-health-workforce-plan-for-health-and-social-care-summer-newsletter-2024/) and a [2024 to 2025 highlights newsletter](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/smhwfp-2024-highlights-newsletter/) to update and inform stakeholders of the progress against the ambitions of the Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan

### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **In response to service models, adjust or implement workforce focused initiatives and resources to support working across health and social care boundaries.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027



## 4. Building a digitally ready workforce

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### Our ambition by 2030

**The digital and technological capabilities of the workforce will be well developed and widely used; to optimise the way we work and help us deliver the best possible care for people.**

### Impact measures

A digitally ready workforce is affected by a range of factors. To understand progress in this theme we need to establish appropriate ways of measuring digital maturity and literacy, including confidence. We plan to do this, following the publication of the national report for the digital potential tool findings, due in early 2025 to 2026.

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Carry out a digital maturity and literacy assessment with the social care sector.**

**We:**

* co-produced with partners, a [digital potential tool](https://socialcare.wales/research-and-data/understand-your-digital-potential) to help organisations and individuals learn more about their digital maturity. As of March 2025, 1,200 people from across social care in Wales used the tool. The information collected will give us a snapshot of the situation across Wales, which we will share in a report later in 2025.

1. **Continue to develop resources and consider opportunities to widen access to digital learning and developmen**t.

**Together with HEIW, we:**

* continued to support the ongoing work of the [Gwella](https://nhswalesleadershipportal.heiw.wales/about-gwella) professional development website, that sets out learning pathways and opportunities for professionals in social care and health
* continued to work with partners to increase the availability and catalogue of virtual learning solutions, including e-learning, virtual classroom, and simulation.

**We:**

* continued to promote the range of digital learning resources and [learning modules](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/learning-modules), including the following areas:
  + Safeguarding
  + Infection prevention and control
  + The Welsh language
  + Strength-based practice
  + Well-being
  + Balancing rights and responsibilities
  + All Wales induction framework
  + Employer assessment
  + Neurodiversity
* reviewed the [balancing rights and responsibilities digital learning module](https://socialcare.wales/learning-modules/balancing-rights-and-responsibilities) with the Care Aims community of practice, who gave us great feedback

The group absolutely love how accessible the content is, the engaging format, that there is different learning styles catered for and how the module drew us all in without becoming overwhelming. 
In terms of the resources, the pdfs are helpful to have to refer to and print off, such that the module doesn’t feel like a 'one off' but a resource to support daily practice. As well as the balancing rights and responsibilities content, there is such an appreciation of the links made to policy and legislation which gives strength to the work. 
Feedback from Care Aims


* continued to prioritise improving digital literacy and digital infrastructure in the workforce through the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) grant. The [SCWWDP annual report](https://socialcare.wales/about-us/workforce-strategy/social-care-wales-workforce-development-programme-scwwdp/main-findings-from-the-social-care-wales-workforce-development-grant) shows the workforce priorities of digital and technological capabilities funded by the grant
* supported Traumatic Stress Wales to develop trauma enhanced and trauma skilled e-learning which will be rolled out in 2025 to 2026. This will be free for children's social care practitioners to access
* continued to represent social care interests in a range of policy and working groups including:
  + Artificial Intelligence (AI) working group and skills sub-group, which sit within the AI Commission for health and social care
  + Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Domiciliary Care Project Board
  + ADSS Cymru, CoPilot and PredicAire project steering groups
  + digital inclusion community of practice.
* worked with Life Sciences Hub Wales to develop a guide to the safe and ethical use of AI in social care, to support the work of the AI Commission in Health and Social Care. We will publish this in spring 2025.
* promoted and shared learning about the innovative use of technology in social care through the [project finder](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/project-finder/switching-from-paper-based-to-online-systems-at-nursing-homes-in-cardiff-and-newport), including:
  + [digital medication management technology trial in Bridgend](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/project-finder/digital-medication-management-technology-trial)
  + [using digital technology to support strengths-based, person-centred working in day opportunities in Torfaen](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/project-finder/using-digital-technology-to-support-strengths-based-person-centred-working-in-day-opportunities)
  + [artificial intelligence pain assessment app pilot in Gwent care homes](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/project-finder/artificial-intelligence-pain-assessment-app-pilot-in-gwent-care-homes)
  + [switching from paper-based to online systems at nursing homes in Cardiff and Newport](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/project-finder/switching-from-paper-based-to-online-systems-at-nursing-homes-in-cardiff-and-newport)
* supported Digital Communities Wales to deliver two digital champion workshops so that people interested in becoming a digital champion for their workplace could learn how to help coworkers develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence in using digital technology to support them in their roles.

**For the Social work workforce plan, we:**

* ran a session as part of Social Work Week, with speakers from Cardiff University and the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS Cymru), about ‘Artificial Intelligence (AI) and social work - balancing innovation and integrity,’ which focused on:
  + how AI technologies can be used within social work, and their potential advantages
  + the ethical challenges associated with AI in social work, including issues of privacy, consent, and bias
  + how AI influences the dynamics between social workers and clients, and strategies to maintain trust and empathy
  + best practices for the ethical integration of AI in social work, making sure technology enhances the profession
  + the latest guidelines and recommendations for using AI in social work, to make sure you are complying with current standards and practices.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* launched Foundation Mental Health Literacy (Level 1) and Trauma Awareness courses, within the digital learning platform [Y Tŷ Dysgu](https://ytydysgu.heiw.wales/), to help staff feel more knowledgeable about mental health and more comfortable in talking to people about their situations. The courses are also designed to support people to make positive signposting recommendations and to give appropriate advice when dealing with mental health
* launched a number of online learning modules including:
  + perinatal mental health
  + child and adolescent mental health services
  + NEST - Nurturing, Empowering, Safe, Trusted
  + DiADeM - Diagnosing dementia
  + Learning disabilities (tier 2 enhanced)

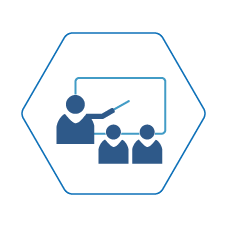
### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **Develop an action plan based on the findings of the digital maturity and literacy assessment.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2025 to 2026

1. **Implement ways of enhancing the digital maturity and literacy, including the confidence, of the wider health and social care workforce in Wales, reflecting the action plan.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027



## 5. Excellent education and learning

### Our ambition by 2030

**The investment in education and learning for health and social care professionals will deliver the skills and capabilities needed to meet the needs of people in Wales.**

### Impact measures

Excellent education and learning are affected by a range of factors, so positive progress for this theme would mean:

* **A reduction in the percentage of the registered workforce who do not have the qualifications needed to renew their registration.**

In December 2023, the percentage of the registered workforce who did not have the qualifications needed to renew their registration was:

* + 52 per cent of the adult care home workforce,
  + 43 per cent of the domiciliary care workforce, and
  + 73 per cent of the residential childcare workforce

During 2025 to 2026 we will be working to get an updated picture of this measure

* **an increase in the percentage of the workforce who say they get the right training to support them in their role**

87 per cent of the workforce said they have the right training for their role (compared to 79 per cent in 2023). Similarly, the vast majority (80 per cent) have enough training to fulfil their CPD requirements.

Although the vast majority stated they had sufficient training in their role and enough to complete their CPD, one in four wanted more. Conversely, qualitative data has suggested a lack of career development opportunities was an issue in the sector. This suggests that while people feel they have enough training to perform their current role, it is perhaps not enough to support career development.

For those who suggested they did not have enough training, we asked what the barriers were to receive it. They mentioned a lack of time, financial cost to both them and their employer, a lack of training available, and that sometimes it was not accessible enough.

* **an increase in the number of individuals completing apprenticeships**

In 2024 to 2025, 3,272 people completed a health and social care apprenticeship compared to 2,390 in 2023 to 2024.

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Continue to work with partners and education providers to make sure education meets the needs of the health and social care system, and includes programmes offered in Welsh.**

**We:**

* continued to work with awarding organisations to improve and maintain the delivery of vocational qualifications
* continued to work with employers and learning providers to support with sustainable approaches to delivering vocational qualifications
* continued to hold the Qualification and Standards Advisory Group (QSAG) and All Wales induction framework (AWIF) networks to work together and to address common issues
* developed a set of bi-lingual national resources to be used by learners, learning providers and employers to support the teaching and learning of Essential Skills qualifications. The resources have been written to develop application of number and communications skills reflected through common work activities in social care
* continued to work with colleagues across Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England to review the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for social care, early years, and childcare. We also shared information about the review with the social care sector in Wales through engagement events which led to 25 people joining us to represent the review group for Wales. To date around 75 out of over 200 NOS have been reviewed
* continued to support the social care sector to improve their Welsh language skills.
* developed a [training resource](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/improving-care-and-support/strengths-based-practice/strengths-based-practice-resources/leading-quality-as-a-responsible-individual-embedding-strengths-based-practice) to help those leading in registered settings to improve quality using strengths-based practice. It is a recorded training resource, where the trainer talks through the practical ways to improve experiences for the people being supported. It also includes exercises and examples for people to use in their settings.

**For the Social work workforce plan, we**

* continued to provide assurance on the quality of social work programmes in Wales through annual monitoring and education quality assurance processes.
* commissioned research about what learners think about regulated courses and shared the [findings](https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/adroddiad-newydd-yn-edrych-ar-brofiadau-myfyrwyr-ar-gyrsiau-gwaith-cymdeithasol-a-reoleiddir), which will shape how we can quality assure social work courses in Wales.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* started planning for two Wales AMHP conferences, in north and south Wales, to be held in the autumn of 2025. These will be the first of their kind in Wales
* continued to support the mental health workforce with CPD.

1. **Continue to invest in increasing the number of social care professionals who are trained and carry out continuing professional development (CPD) in Wales, including supporting learning opportunities for volunteers and unpaid carers.**

**We:**

* provided grant funding through the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) and for the first time published the [SCWWDP end-of-year trends and themes report for the 2023 to 2024 financial year](https://socialcare.wales/about-us/workforce-strategy/social-care-wales-workforce-development-programme-scwwdp/main-findings-from-the-social-care-wales-workforce-development-grant). This report includes the key metrics from the SCWWDP grant, information about the numbers of qualifications and training places funded and an analysis of spending on the main priorities. It also includes qualitative ‘highlights’ showing the outcomes of the regional action plans submitted.
* consulted on the Codes of Professional Practice as they were last updated in 2017 and since then the number of people registered with us has grown to over 60,000 people. More than 400 people responded to the consultation. The recommendations on any changes were presented to our Board in May 2025.
* continued to run online and face-to-face employer engagement and training sessions across Wales. We held 12 Level 2 and 3 events, and five Level 4 and 5 events this year. The sessions support the development and implementation of induction and health and social care qualifications across all levels, including employer assessment routes. We also held nine engagement and training sessions for learning providers.

I thoroughly enjoyed this session and learnt a lot. I attended the same session online but did not find that as informative as the session in person. I learnt much more asking questions and hearing examples from other organisations. Keep them in person where possible. 
Feedback from Level 2 and 3 event


The training was brilliant, comprehensive and supported my understanding of the topic. The three speakers were excellent, friendly, clear and really helpful. Thanks very much all. 
Feedback from Level 2 and 3 event


Lovely day, great friendly presenters who actually took time to listen to us. Fantastic as it was a smaller group so gave everyone the opportunity to be heard.
Feedback from Level 4 and 5 event


Really good session - and I for one will be checking the Social Care Wales website more often as I didn’t realise there is so much information on the website 
Feedback from Level 4 and 5 event


* worked with the sector to create [new guidance](https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/new-guidance-managers-night-residential-child-care) to help managers of night residential childcare workers support those studying for their qualification
* attended events hosted by the qualification consortium of awarding bodies, City & Guilds and Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) to give feedback about progress and support the implementation of the qualifications in the health and social care sector
* held an online event with more than 60 CIW inspectors to update them about the health and social care qualifications at all levels, the AWIF and AWIF for managers
* completed a mapping exercise around suitable unit availability for workers in residential special schools. The exercise found that unit choice was enough but identified a possible gap in the children and young people practice qualification around neurodiversity
* held a Level 2 and 3 qualifications, All Wales induction framework (AWIF) and Employer Assessment Route information session. The event was held online for recruitment agencies and nine people attended. This is a good number as this has been a difficult group to reach, with many attempts to engage with them in the past year. Participants were positive and engaging, especially around qualifications needed for working in Wales from agencies across the border
* attended the care roadshow and answered many questions about qualifications and registration of social care workers. A number of these enquiries were from new domiciliary care and adult residential services
* published as part of Safeguarding Week, a new National safeguarding training, learning and development standards [training pack](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/safeguarding-list/safeguarding-training#section-577767-anchor) for Group B practitioners. To support use of the training pack we ran in-person implementation days with safeguarding boards across Wales, reaching 173 people. We also held two virtual events which reached another 116 people
* delivered six workshops to partner agencies on the principles of strengths-based practice and positive cultures
* continued to offer and deliver the collaborative skills communications programme, supporting Pembrokeshire, Flintshire, and Rhondda Cynon Taf this year.
* continued to deliver Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE) training. In the first phase, we provided 60 places across four courses on intensive two-day PACE training in therapeutic parenting approaches. The second phase of training was a ‘team train’ approach where we trained whole home teams together and provided reflective clinical supervision support to help embed learning and change. We supported three teams (Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, and Blaenau Gwent) reaching a total of 43 people
* ran two Models of Care events, one in north and south Wales, to bring people together to learn and talk about the evidence available on models of care in residential care for children. Across both events, 156 people attended from local authority, not for profit and private providers.

**I was thinking of giving up and closing my home because of red tape. No way now!! Powerful messages from the young people. Brilliant.
Feedback from Models of Care event
**

It was an insightful event and felt we all worked collaboratively together even though we’re from different providers.
Feedback from Models of Care event


**I’m going to encourage my organisation to use different  terminology and other ways of going through personal plans and so on, which are more child friendly.
Feedback from Models of Care event
**

* continued to support knowledge mobilisation within the social care sector to get the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time, to help inform practice and decision-making. As part of this work we:
  + delivered bespoke sessions to the workforce looking at understanding research and how to consider and embed research into practice
  + delivered sessions to local authority teams, both online and face to face, to support practitioners who are developing the use of research and evidence locally
  + supported newly qualified social workers and those going through consolidation to use knowledge mobilisation as part of their practice development
  + worked with local authority learning and development teams to identify knowledge mobilisation as part of their training needs analysis for the whole sector
  + ran four research roadshows across Wales for local authorities, focusing on topics they wanted to explore more, bringing the researchers to them for a day of exploration, learning and reflection
* continued to work in collaboration with Swansea University and Bangor University to develop, deliver, promote, and support implementation of Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP) methods, tools, approaches, and resources. As part of this work we:
  + launched the [using evidence resource guide](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/the-using-evidence-resource-guide) to help the workforce meet the reporting requirements of the [Performance Improvement Framework for Social Services](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/guidance-understanding-experiences-and-outcomes-september-2021.pdf)
  + delivered 36 DEEP bitesize training events, reaching 323 people including frontline practitioners, managers, policy staff, public representatives, and researchers or those in training and learning.
  + delivered the 10-week DEEP catalyst course, which 19 people attended and created a blog sharing the [feedback from participants](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/whats-on/news-and-blogs/sharing-the-benefits-of-catalyst-training).

A white speech bubble with text: I feel that my work has a deeper level of integrity and meaning and is highlighting the importance of an unpaid carer’s experience, as they truly are the experts in relation to their lived experience and support needs.
Feedback from a three month follow up evaluation


* launched a [research, innovation and improvement skills resource](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/research-innovation-and-improvement-rii-skills-resource). This resource will help people find opportunities to support them with using research and evidence, evaluating ways of working and introducing new approaches. It can help people to:
  + develop their skill set
  + introduce skills development opportunities to their teams
  + create cultures that challenge existing ways of working.



* continued to provide support, coaching and advice on [evaluation](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/evaluation-support-2). We ran 10 demystifying evaluation training events which 92 people attended, and we supported more than 20 people with one-to-one support outside the set training events. We had very positive feedback for both the training and one-to-one support.

A chat bubble with text. Really glad I managed to attend today, something I think would be useful for our whole team.
Feedback from demystifying evaluation training participant


A white speech bubble with black text: I liked how the learning was delivered; it gave me a lot of 'food for thought' on the range of approaches that could be used.
Feedback from demystifying evaluation training participant


A white speech bubble with black text. It has broadened my rather closed and boring mind to other ways of undertaking this (evaluation).
Feedback from demystifying evaluation training participant


* continued to raise awareness of innovation coaching benefits through engagement events across the sector, publishing blog posts and coaching case studies on the Insight Collective. We provided innovation coaching support and advice to around 50 people on an individual or group basis. We also delivered two sold out innovation coaching training events, attended by 31 people.

**A white speech bubble with text: As my first experience of coaching this has been fantastic. I never thought it would lead to so much progress on a practical level, and also some personal development and stronger feeling of confidence.
Feedback from innovation coaching participant
**

A white speech bubble with black text: Innovation coaching has provided a space to reflect, create and plan. In social care we can often become consumed in managing the here and now, it’s important to think about change and implementing this. Innovation coaching is providing support and direction that is meaningful to me and my personal and professional goals.
Feedback from innovation coaching participant


A white speech bubble with black text: I've laughed, cried and felt more empowered after each and every session undertaken and this has been possible from the psychologically safe environment you provided.
Feedback from innovation coaching participant


* created [two new videos](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/whats-on/news-and-blogs/new-video-resources-building-a-better-understanding-of-social-care-in-wales) to help explain and build a better understanding of social care in Wales.

**For the Social work workforce plan, we:**

* provided a total of 336 social work students with bursaries to support them in their studies. Of these, 118 were new students and 218 were continuing with their studies
* continued to give advice and information about bursaries to prospective social work students through:
  + replying to phone-call and e-mail queries
  + attending university careers evenings
  + participating in a bi-lingual video to support the University of South Wales’s recruitment campaign for attracting more social work students in 2025 to 2026.
* ran, as part of Social Work Week, a session called “Consistent values and changing roles - social work identity over time.” We were joined by social workers at different stages of their careers, from Cyngor Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire County Council, Cardiff Council and Neath Port Talbot Council, to:
  + explore what social work identity means to us and what shapes this
  + consider whether social work identity changes over time and in different contexts
  + discuss why social work identity matters.
* ran, again as part of Social Work Week a session called ‘Relationships and professional boundaries,’ with speakers from the University of Sheffield, Liverpool John Moores University and Swansea University to consider alternative approaches to professional boundaries, explore relationship-based practice and reflect on systemic change.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* trained 250 people in Level 1 and Level 2 brief solution focused practice
* funded additional AMHP training, with 20 people starting their training during the year.

1. **Make it easier for people to start social care careers by removing barriers and developing work-based learning models.**

**We:**

* developed a qualification equivalence assessment process for people who wish to work in Wales but hold qualifications that are not specified in our qualification framework as recommended or required for practice and/or registration. This process is open to UK and international workers and individuals do not need to be in a post to apply to have their qualification assessed
* continued to promote apprenticeship opportunities for health and social care and developed animations as a reminder of the benefits apprenticeships bring to both [individuals](https://youtu.be/zfyETAvuL6c) and [employers](https://youtu.be/aCU22fEdqJg). We developed [apprenticeship guidance](https://socialcare.wales/social-care-apprentice-placement-guidance#:~:text=This%20guidance%20advises%20managers%20about%20how%20to%20provide,benefits%20of%20an%20apprenticeship%3F%20What%20apprenticeships%20are%20available%3F) that advises managers about how to give the best possible support for their apprentices in an inclusive workplace to make sure that apprentices reach their potential.
* developed and launched a qualification [chatbot](https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/streamlining-your-qualification-enquiries-with-our-new-chatbot) to respond to queries and help users navigate the qualifications needed for their roles
* delivered an Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Workforce Competency Framework workshop attended by 29 people, to introduce the teaching and learning resources available to support the competency framework for the IAA workforce. The workshop also included a session on how strengths-based practice can support the IAA workforce as a first point of contact. The Social Services Practitioner (SSP) unit teaching resources have been uploaded as learning resources on the Health Care Learning Wales website for use with IAA workers
* continued to support the provision for the Social Services Practitioner award. We published two videos on the WeCare Wales website to promote the role – a [video promoting the Social Services Practitioner qualification](https://youtu.be/w6DbIgXFGrg) and another video highlighting [Ruby’s story](https://youtu.be/LH2zQL3r-nM)
* celebrated the achievements of the first cohort of students on the Level 4 Social Services Practitioner apprenticeship programme, at an award event held by Neath Port Talbot. One of the students has progressed straight onto year two of the Open University social work degree, using the credit transfer process to gain equivalence to year one. They are the first students to use the progression route to social work and during Social Work Week we [shared their journey](https://wecare.wales/news/my-job-means-so-much-to-me) as a highlight of the progression pathway
* published the Social Services Practitioner closure report for the cohort one pilot project.

### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **Develop ways of presenting career and learning pathways that are linked to the Pay and Progression Framework being developed by the Social Care Fair Work Forum and align these to the revised CPD expectations of Social Care Wales.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027

1. **Develop and deliver qualifications that support the recognition of a range of working arrangements, such as students and night workers.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027

1. **Develop a ‘passport’ for training specifically aimed at recognising training, making sure it is portable from one role to another and links to CPD expectations.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027



## 6. Leadership and succession

### Our ambition by 2030

**Leaders in the health and social care system will show collective and compassionate leadership.**

### Impact measures

Excellent leadership and succession are affected by a range of factors, so positive progress in this theme would mean:

* **an increase in the percentage of the workforce who would like a leadership position in the future**

47 percent of the workforce would like a leadership position in the future, which is an increase from 36 per cent in 2023. About six in ten people (60 per cent) suggested they believe it is possible to become a leader and in the past 12 months, 37 per cent had looked to progress in social care

* **an increase in the percentage of the workforce who feel supported by their manager**

70 per cent of the workforce feel supported by their manager compared to 66 per cent in 2023.

* **a decrease in the inequality of minoritised staff in managerial positions**

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) is a tool to help monitor the experience of people from ethnic minorities who work in health and social care in Wales. Together with Welsh Government and NHS Wales, we’ve [published the first WRES social care report](https://socialcare.wales/research-and-data/workforce-race-equality-standard).

The report found that despite an appetite to seek progression, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic social care staff are under-represented in managerial positions. 22 per cent of minority ethnic social care workers falls to seven per cent at a managerial level.

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Create accessible leadership development resources and offers for individuals and organisations, based on the compassionate leadership principles and improve access for those from diverse backgrounds.**

**Together with HEIW we:**

* delivered a joint expert leadership session on radical candour which was attended by 111 people from social care.

**We:**

* continued to support the sector to implement the Level 4 and Level 5 Leadership and Management qualifications, which are a registration requirement for social care managers. They are the higher-level qualifications that develop the knowledge, understanding, behaviours and skills underpinning professional practice within the sector. These include:
  + Level 4 Preparing for Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care, which provides the knowledge for managers to take their first step into a leadership role
  + Level 4 Professional Practice in Health and Social Care
  + Level 5 Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care: Practice
* developed and delivered an Introduction to Compassionate Leadership programme, running 14 online events during the year, which were attended by 214 people. Those who took part learned about the importance of compassion for improving outcomes, staff well-being and organisational culture. 99 per cent said they learned something new, and found the sessions were clear and met expectations.
* delivered face to face Introduction to Compassionate Leadership sessions for four local authorities, who requested the bespoke sessions after attending an online session.

The training was really valuable  when managing staff.
Feedback from Introduction to Compassionate Leadership participant


A white speech bubble with text: Everyone struggles at times with candour. I think I give myself a hard time if I find confrontation difficult at times. I'll take this forward and give myself some empathy.
Feedback from Introduction to Compassionate Leadership participant


A white speech bubble with black text: I will be more self-aware of my actions and be more present in my day-to-day practice.
Feedback from Introduction to Compassionate Leadership participant


A white speech bubble with text: The information shared, the anecdotal, along with the videos which were enhanced by listening to the trainer’s own expertise on the subject matter, all served to portray the subject in a memorable way.
Feedback from Introduction to Compassionate Leadership local authority participant


* launched and promoted our new [compassionate leadership webpages](https://socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/improving-care-and-support/compassionate-leadership) to support people who work in the sector to champion compassionate leadership at work. Between their launch in June 2024 and the end of March 2025, there have been 1,428 visits to the webpages
* evaluated the collective and compassionate senior leadership programme for local authorities and the voluntary sector. The overall programme was rated between 89 per cent to 96 per cent by participants. Those who took part reported it improved their confidence and resilience and gave greater clarity in their role. Everyone reported an increase in knowledge and skills.
* commissioned evidence-based research to help us understand what works when supporting people from diverse backgrounds to progress into leadership roles. We have commissioned a learning provider to develop the pilot programme, supported by a working group and expert panel of people working in social care from an ethnic minority background. The first cohort on the pilot programme will start in autumn 2025.

1. **Promote programmes that support aspiring leaders.**

**We:**

* evaluated the collective and compassionate senior leadership programme for local authorities and the voluntary sector. The overall programme was rated between 89 per cent to 96 per cent by participants, with the reported benefits including increased confidence, better resilience, more role clarity, and better well-being
* completed and evaluated the pilot of the Aspiring Middle Manager Learning and Development Programme. Everyone who took part in the pilot said the programme met their needs ‘very well’ or ‘quite well.’ The programme is now available nationally
* continued to deliver the bespoke development programme for new directors with eight directors taking part this year. The programme includes action learning sets, guest speakers and individual coaching sessions.

**For the Social work workforce plan, we:**

* continued to promote, support, and review the Team Manager Development Programme (TMDP) and Middle Manager Development Programme (MMDP) qualifications. A total of 32 students passed TMDP this year, over two cohorts, and 13 passed the MMDP, with positive feedback received from students. All students said the programmes met their needs and were relevant to their organisation

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* continued to deliver a fully funded Level 7 accredited Mental Health Team Manager Development Programme, with 180 people enrolling on the programmes over the year. The team also won the “Cross-Sector Working” award at the Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA) Cymru 2024 Awards.

1. **Continue to develop, promote, and widen access to the Gwella site.**

**Together with HEIW, we:**

* continued to develop, promote, and widen access to the [Gwella](https://nhswalesleadershipportal.heiw.wales/about-gwella) site. We have 130 people from the social care sector signed up to Gwella as members, with 46 of these being new signs ups during the year.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* launched the [Mental Health Leadership Hub](https://leadershipportal.heiw.wales/mental-health) on Gwella. The Hub is an online space to support mental health professionals in their leadership journey at any stage in their career. It offers compassionate and collective leadership resources, peer-recommended leadership programmes and much more.

1. **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Social Care Wales will publish principles of positive cultures to support services to embed them in practice.**

**Together with CIW, we:**

* engaged with the sector to understand what some of the key enablers and barriers are to supporting positive cultures
* developed a guide to supporting positive cultures and additional resources, which will be launched in summer 2025. These will help services to embed the principles of positive cultures
* secured funding from the Rayne Foundation to understand and test in 2025 to 2026 what direct support providers need to help embed positive cultures in the workplace.

### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **Develop joint leadership programmes across health and social care.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2026 to 2027

1. **Embed compassionate and positive culture principles in the refreshed Code of Practice for Social Care Employers and Social Care workers**

* This action will be completed in 2025 to 2026. We have completed the consultation on the Codes of Professional Practice and the revised Codes will be approved by our Board this year. We will make sure links to compassionate leadership and positive cultures are included in the associated practice guidance that is being developed.



## 7. Workforce supply and shape

### Our ambition by 2030

**We will have a sustainable workforce in sufficient numbers to meet the health and social care needs of our population.**

### Impact measures

Workforce supply and shape is affected by a range of factors, so positive progress in this theme, would mean:

* **a reduction in the percentage of vacancies as a proportion of the sector (nine per cent in 2022)**

There was a total of 5,346 vacancies in 2024,[[18]](#footnote-19) which represents six per cent of the workforce. In 2023, there was an estimated 5,299 vacancies – 47 fewer than 2024.

* **workforce plans in each region of Wales to meet the population’s needs.**

The main findings of a scoping study we commissioned in 2023 showed significant variation in workforce planning approaches across the 22 local authorities in Wales.

Most local authorities focused on short-term operational workforce planning, with more than half planning for the medium term (one to three years).

There was little evidence of organisations taking a strategic workforce planning approach for the long term (three to five years), which means they are not getting the benefits of this approach.

There’s also huge variation in who leads workforce planning and it is often split across roles. The variations are caused by several factors, such as capacity, capability, budgets, and not having the right tools, systems, and data to support them. This affects the organisation’s ability to plan effectively for a workforce that can address current pressures and future demand across social care.

### Workforce strategy actions 2024 to 2027

### Progress of actions during 2024 to 2025:

1. **Build capacity and capability in workforce planning**

**We:**

* delivered, in collaboration with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Local Government Association (LGA), a programme of support to enable local authorities to develop their workforce planning approaches, which included:
  + five workforce planning bitesize sessions, taking people through the workforce planning journey from start to finish
  + six workforce planning challenges sessions focusing on the different challenges we are facing as a sector and how workforce planning can help to overcome these
  + a workforce planning resource hub, using the LGA platform, where the programme resources and additional content can be accessed as and when needed.
* completed a pilot scheme to help social care employers with their Welsh language workforce planning and to develop their employees’ Welsh language skills. The scheme is now available to all social care providers in the sector.
* updated our [National Social Care Data Portal for Wales](https://www.socialcaredata.wales/) with a new look and more features, including [data summaries](https://www.socialcaredata.wales/articles) to support people in their work. The data portal is a one-stop shop for social care data in Wales including workforce data.
* published the [2023 social care workforce report](https://socialcare.wales/cms-assets/documents/Workforce-Report-2023-PDF_2025-02-03-160149_qyyf.pdf), which gives a snapshot of the social care workforce in Wales and ran the 2024 workforce data collection. The 2024 social care workforce report will be published in 2025.
* continued to refine the workforce data we collect to ensure the collection and quality of data. We have started a programme of work with Care Inspectorate Wales to create a joint data collection that will start in 2026. We hope the changes will improve the quality of data we receive, and lead to higher quality analysis in 2025 and a completely revised single unified data collection from 2026 onwards.
* commissioned an independent data maturity assessment of all local authorities in Wales and published the [report findings](https://insightcollective.socialcare.wales/reports/social-care-data-maturity-assessment-national-report-for-wales). We held a series of presentations with partners to share the recommendations and discuss actions to take them forward

**For the Social work workforce plan, we:**

* contributed to a session as part of Social Work Week called “How do we use data to contribute to the social work profession and how it is regulated?.” This was a joint discussion with the leaders of the United Kingdom's four social work regulators around their common experiences of social work regulation. The session looked at the role regulation plays in gathering, analysing, and sharing data to create positive change for the social work profession.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* have been working on providing workforce planning support to the mental health workforce using different approaches, including:
  + connecting colleagues with a suite of workforce planning training and support
  + bespoke workforce planning training
  + guidance and workbooks.

1. **Develop, evaluate, and refresh workforce plans based on agreed priorities**

**We:**

* published the Social Care Workforce Delivery plan 2024 to 2027, which includes the actions that are relevant to the direct care workforce. Because of this, the Direct Care workforce plan, which expires in October 2025, will not be repeated.

**For the Social work workforce plan, we**

* began to analyse the current version of the social work workforce plan to see:
  + what activities have been achieved so far and can be closed down
  + what activities need to carry on either because they have not quite finished or they are long-term activities
  + what new activities need to be included as part of the priorities of the Social Care Workforce Delivery Plan 2024 to 2027
* began to plan the work for 2025 to 2026 to develop a social work delivery plan, as the current plan is due to expire in October 2025.

**For the Strategic mental health workforce plan, together with HEIW we:**

* continued to make progress with the implementation of the Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan. At the end of December 2024, we assessed progress against the 33 actions within the plan. 18 per cent of the actions have moved to business as usual, two per cent will be delivered by March 2025 and 64 per cent are on track to be delivered as planned by March 2026. One action is closed, and one is currently under review.

1. **Support the development of a** [**National Care and Support Service**](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-12/Towards%20a%20National%20Care%20and%20Support%20Service%20initial%20implementation%20plan.pdf) **and respond to workforce implications.**

**Welsh Government:**

* continued with the delivery of The National Care Service (NCS) [Initial Implementation Plan](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-12/Towards%20a%20National%20Care%20and%20Support%20Service%20initial%20implementation%20plan.pdf) which sets out how they will consider and take forward the ambition for a National Care Service, as recommended by the expert group. The main achievements during the year include:
  + launching the [National Office for Care and Support](https://www.gov.wales/national-office-care-and-support)
  + launching the National Framework for the Commissioning of Care and Support in Wales: Code of Practice and the revised Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions)
  + continued implementation of the Fair Work Forum’s work programme, which included
    - the continued work to develop a pay and progression framework
    - development of the Social Care Workforce Partnership
    - ongoing work to consider Personal Assistants and Direct Payments, Recipient Employers, and Rights and Responsibilities as part of workforce matters.
  + ongoing work around the role of profit in the care system, including the introduction of the [Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill](https://www.gov.wales/introduction-health-and-social-care-wales-bill) to remove private profit from the care of looked-after children, part of the wider and radical transformation of children’s care in Wales.

### Actions to be progressed during 2025 to 2027:

1. **Develop a retention framework that supports organisations to improve retention.**

* This action will be progressed further in 2025 to 2026.

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**Other formats:** This document is available in large text, Braille and other languages, if required. You can request these by using the contact details above.

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