



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



Continuing Professional Education and Learning for social workers

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is the CPEL framework?

The Continuing Professional Education and Learning (CPEL) framework is a series of education and training programmes to support qualified social workers as they progress through their careers and take on new roles. It is relevant to social workers in the statutory, third and independent sectors.

Why was the CPEL framework developed?

The CPEL framework was developed to provide social workers with access to high quality learning throughout their career. It provides social workers with the advanced knowledge and skills they need to take on more complex work and new roles. It is intended to improve professional confidence by increasing knowledge, and introducing new tools and interventions for practice.

What are the CPEL programmes and who are they for?

The CPEL framework consists of four programmes:

Consolidation Programme

This supports social workers as they make the transition from social work graduate to competent practitioner. The programme builds on the social work degree and is part of **The First Three Years in Practice** framework.

Social workers qualifying after 1 April 2016 who take up a social work position must complete the Consolidation Programme in their first three-year period of registration in order to renew their registration. For social workers who qualified after 2012, it is an entry requirement for the Experienced Practice in Social Work Programme. Social workers receive a minimum of 30 credits at Level 6 (graduate level).

Experienced Practice in Social Work Programme

This extends an experienced social worker's knowledge and skills through analysis of, and critical reflection on, specific areas of practice. Social workers receive a total of 60 credits at Level 6 (graduate level) or

Level 7 (master's level). The programme takes place over two years:

Year 1 – core teaching and learning in three areas:

- children and families or adults
- mental health and well-being
- enabling others.

Year 2 – a specialist area of enquiry agreed between the social worker and their employer.

Senior Practice in Social Work Programme

This equips social workers who are carrying out social work practice at a more complex level and supervising others. Social workers receive a total of 60 credits at Level 7 (master's level). The programme takes place over two years:

Year 1 – core teaching and learning in two areas:

- engagement and practice
- professional leadership and development.

Year 2 – a specialist area of research agreed between the senior social worker and their employer, or credits can be transferred from specified accredited courses that have been completed.

Consultant Social Worker Programme

This is for social workers in expert practice, and developmental and leadership roles. Social workers receive 60 credits at Level 7 (master's level). The programme has two routes:

The modular route – completing three modules over two years:

- Year 1 – professional social work practice
- Year 2 – analysis and evaluation, development and dissemination.

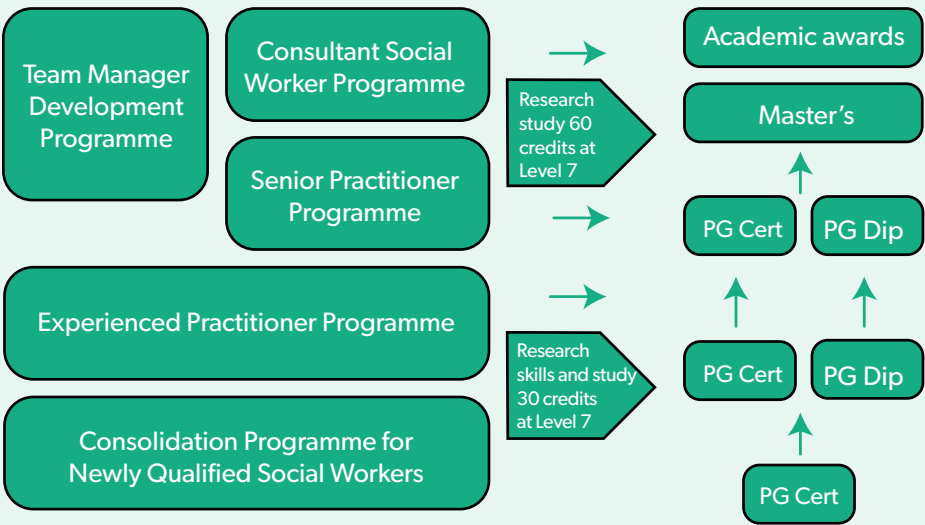
The dissertation route – completing a dissertation over two years.

The social worker develops a detailed research project in their specialist area of practice.

Do the programmes lead to academic awards?

Social workers who successfully complete the full CPEL programme will receive an academic award. For example, a social worker who completes the Experienced Practice in Social Work Programme at Level 7 will receive a postgraduate certificate.

It may be possible to build up academic awards. For example, a social worker who completes the Experienced Practice in Social Work Programme at Level 7 and then completes the Senior Practice in Social Work Programme may be awarded a postgraduate diploma.



How can I access the CPEL programmes?

Social workers who work in Wales access the CPEL programmes through their employer. If an employer is unsure how to access the programmes, they should contact us. Independent (self-employed) social workers should also contact us for information.

You can call us on **0300 30 33 444** or email us at **info@socialcare.wales**

Who runs the programmes and how are they provided?

The Consolidation Programme is provided by employers working in partnership with a university. Social workers can expect a mix of face-to-face teaching, self-directed study and to prepare a portfolio.

The remaining CPEL programmes are provided by an alliance of Bangor, Cardiff, Glyndwr and Swansea universities. Cardiff University is the awarding body.

While there is some face-to-face teaching and tutorial support, there is strong emphasis on distance and online learning. We approve all the CPEL programmes, in accordance with our role as the regulator of social work training in Wales.

What if I already have post-qualifying qualifications?

We provide guidance about how other recognised post-qualifying qualifications, such as the approved mental health professional and practice assessor qualifications, fit or compare with the CPEL programmes. For social workers who already hold a post-qualifying qualification, it may still be useful to complete individual CPEL modules to meet your ongoing learning and development needs.

What if I am a social work manager?

The CPEL programmes are aimed at practising social workers. We also approve the Postgraduate Certificate in Managing Practice Quality in Social Care (the Team Manager Development Programme) which is aimed at social workers in a management role.

What about quality assurance?

As the social work education regulator, we quality assure the CPEL programmes. An independent evaluation of the CPEL programmes' impact is also being carried out to make sure they are supporting social workers in their practice.

How can I find more information?

For more information, you can:

- access our CPEL information online – [**socialcare.wales/learning-and-development/social-work-qualifications**](https://socialcare.wales/learning-and-development/social-work-qualifications)
 - access the CPEL alliance information online – [**www.cpel.ac.uk**](http://www.cpel.ac.uk)
 - if you're a social worker, you can speak to your employer about arrangements for accessing CPEL or other post-qualifying programmes.
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