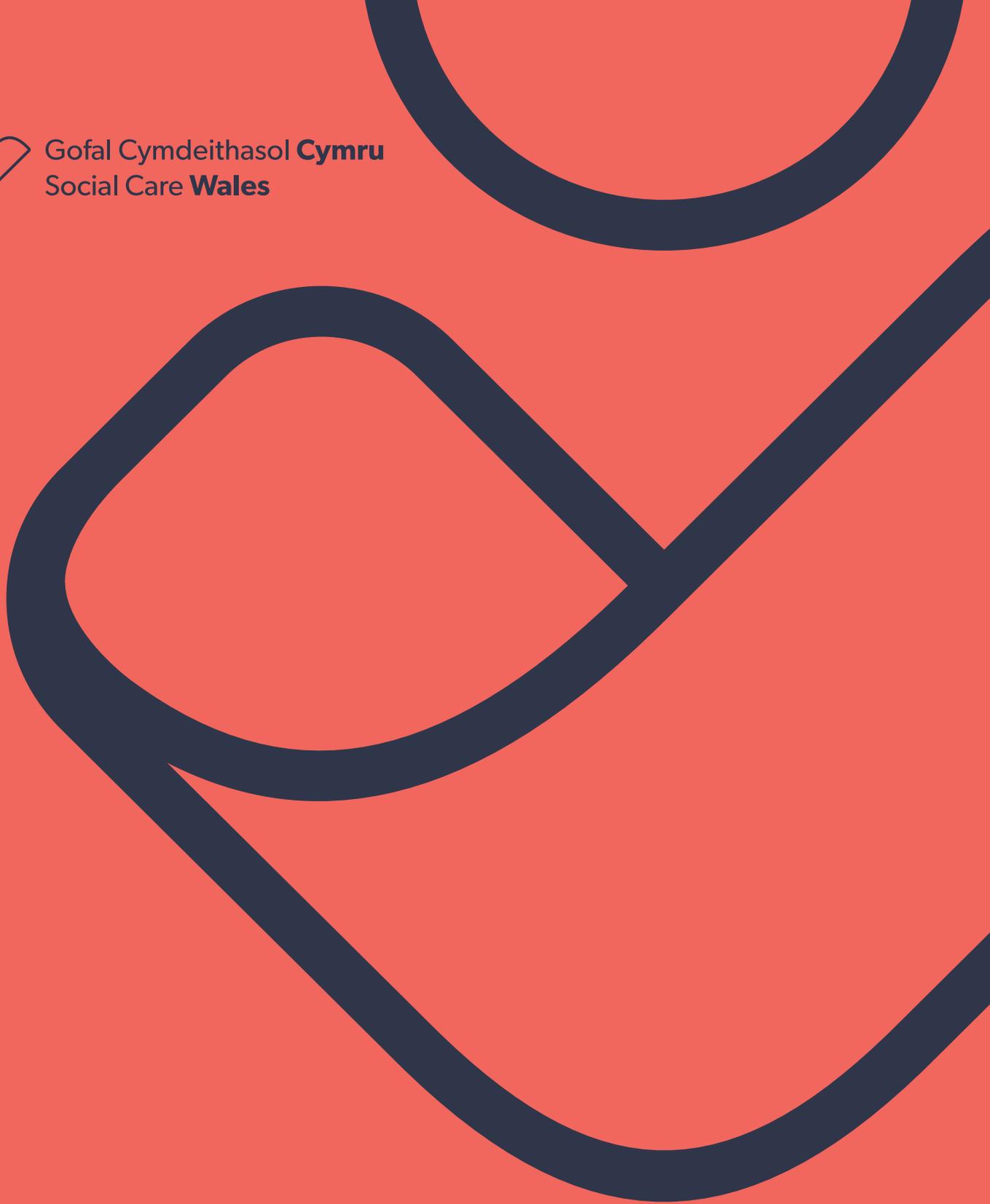




Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**



The residential child care worker

**Practice guidance for residential child care
workers registered with Social Care Wales**



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government

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Other formats:

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

Copies also available in Welsh.

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1. About this guidance

This guidance is for residential child care workers (workers) registered with Social Care Wales:

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

- describe what is expected of workers
- support workers to deliver a good service.

It is based around relevant national occupational standards, the views of children and young people, and other stakeholders.

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

2. How this guidance applies to you

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

This guidance can be used to let children and young people, families and the public know what they can expect from you as a worker.

It is your responsibility to follow this guidance. While the *Code of Professional Practice* is a principal document used if there are concerns about a worker's fitness to practise, this guidance can be used by us to illustrate a failure to keep to the Code.

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

Care Inspectorate Wales may also take this guidance into account in their work.

3. Residential child care workers

Residential child care workers undertake a professional role, providing care and support for children and young people who require care away from their families for short or long periods. Workers play a critical role providing a safe, secure, supportive and homely environment, promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people and helping them reach their full potential. Workers can have a positive influence supporting children and young people to grow into thriving adults despite adverse childhood experiences and challenges.

Residential child care workers must register with us.

4. Child- centred care and support

Child-centred care and support means making sure children and young people receive care and support that meets their individual needs. It includes a strong commitment to the rights of the child and fully involving children and young people in matters that affect them. It involves working with the child to understand and achieve what matters to them.

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

4.1 Code of Professional Practice for Social Care

The Code describes the standards expected of workers. These standards reinforce the importance of a child-centred approach.

As a social care worker, you must:

1. Respect the views and wishes, and promote the rights and interests, of individuals and carers.
2. Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of individuals and carers.
3. Promote the well-being, voice and control of individuals and carers while supporting them to stay safe.
4. Respect the rights of individuals while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.
5. Act with integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the social care profession.
6. Be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and developing knowledge and skills.

7. In addition to sections 1 – 6, if you are responsible for managing or leading staff, you must embed the Code in their work.

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

4.2 Good communication

Good communication with children and young people is an essential part of your work. It involves verbal and non-verbal communication skills, the ability to establish trust and adapting communication to suit the age and ability of the child and the situation.

To communicate well you must:

- a. get to know and actively listen to children and young people
- b. respect their views, wishes and feelings
- c. take account of their preferred language and way of communicating
- d. know how to use relevant communication aids
- e. learn how to respond if they are withdrawn, angry, distressed or upset
- f. understand how best to respond to questions and concerns
- g. make sure children and young people know how information may be shared.

You should know how to access independent advocates or interpreters, where necessary.

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

You must not use offensive terms or bad language in your work with children and young people or colleagues.

4.3 Welsh language needs

Some children and young people can only communicate their needs effectively using the Welsh language. Communication in the child's preferred language is important to ensure that the child's needs are met. You should try and use any Welsh language skills you have, however basic, if it helps communication between you and a child.

Your employer will have a legal obligation to treat English and Welsh equally and to be proactive in offering services in Welsh¹.

¹ Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

4.4 Confidentiality

You must treat an individual's personal information with discretion. Personal information includes any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified, this can include all kinds – spoken, written, electronic, digital, photographs and so on. The Data Protection Act 2018 aims to secure the public's trust and confidence in the use of personal information within the digital world.

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

4.5 Family members

You must show respect to family members and others significant to the child or young person.

You should know the rights of children, parents and others to maintain family relationships. Where appropriate, and taking account of the wishes of the child, you should support constructive contact, including being encouraging and welcoming.

You should know when and how to encourage family members to take part in activities and special events.

You should be aware of and keep to any restrictions on contact, any requirements for monitoring contact and arrangements for supervision of visits. You must take advice from managers, where necessary.

You should have a good understanding of the arrangements for sharing information with family members and any restrictions.

If you have any difficulties working with family members, you must get advice from managers or senior colleagues.

4.6 Professional relationships and boundaries

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

You must work with your manager to:

- a. make sure you understand your professional role and your limits
- b. understand and keep to your organisation's policy on professional boundaries
- c. apply professional boundaries with fairness and consistency
- d. seek support and take sensitive action where a child or young person misreads or becomes confused about the relationship
- e. address any potential crossing of professional boundaries.

You must make sure all your actions with children, young people and their families are out in the open for discussion with your manager.

Professional boundaries apply to all forms of communication between workers, children and young people, and their families. This includes any use of mobile phones and social media (see also section 10.3).

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

- a. pursuing a sexual or other improper relationship with a young person using the service or someone close to them
- b. borrowing from or lending money to a child or young person
- c. giving special privileges to 'favourite' individuals
- d. failing to provide agreed care and support, for example, due to negative feelings about an individual
- e. trying to impose own religious, moral or political beliefs on an individual
- f. acting in any way which harms an individual
- g. any practice specifically prohibited in law or statutory regulations.

The apparent agreement of the child or young person or their family is never a defence for these things.

4.7 Rights and protections

Working with children and young people it is essential to recognise their distinct needs and specific rights. Your employer has legal obligations to protect children's rights and ensure people are not discriminated against. The relevant legislation includes the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and associated United Nations conventions.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an internationally recognised statement of children's rights adopted by the Welsh Government. The Convention has 41 articles covering all aspects of a child's life and setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults, children and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

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

5. Good residential child care practice

Good residential child care practice is based on putting the child at the centre of their care and support. As well as giving care and support, the quality of your relationship with the child is critical, contributing to quality of life, a sense of security and belonging. Children and young people need nurturing.

Your relationship with a child or young person may continue over a long time. You may support them through difficult situations and life changes. You will know very personal details about their circumstances.

Children and young people have a right to expect you to be:

- honest
- caring and empathetic
- supportive
- kind
- reliable
- fair and consistent
- patient
- objective
- flexible
- trustworthy
- non-judgemental
- a good role model, setting boundaries.

Children and young people expect you to try and understand their world from their point of view. You need to have a good understanding of the child's background and which approaches will work.

5.1 Knowing your limits

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

If you make a mistake, you must be open and honest about it, including giving your manager a full and prompt explanation about what happened. You must be willing to learn from mistakes. Further guidance on this professional 'duty of candour' is available from us at: socialcare.wales/fitness-to-practise/codes-of-practice-and-guidance#section-29780-anchor

5.2 Personal plans

As appropriate, you should take part in developing an individual personal plan that:

- fully involves the child or young person
- is based on their strengths and needs, and
- the outcomes they want to achieve.

You should:

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

You must carry out your role in the personal plan.

5.3 Quality of life

Promoting quality of life is central to good residential care practice. You must actively promote quality of life, doing all you can in your role to make sure children and young people:

- live in a homely environment
- have information about their care and support
- have their individual needs met
- have their identity, culture, beliefs and sexuality respected
- are protected from bullying
- have respect for their privacy and personal space
- have security for their money and belongings

- have a voice including about the running of the home
- are supported to have friendships, interests and hobbies
- are supported to develop life, independent living and social skills
- enjoy purposeful activities
- receive extra support when they need it such as on admission to the service and other major events and changes
- know how to access independent advocacy
- know how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

Note: the above list is not exhaustive, but gives examples of promoting quality of life.

5.4 Health and education

It is essential that the health and education needs of children and young people in residential care are met and you have a key role to play ensuring this. You must implement your organisation's policies on health and education needs.

Your work with children and young people must encourage good physical, emotional and sexual health. You should know about and be able to respond to the particular health needs of an individual child. You must respond to any concerns.

You must fulfil your role supporting the child with their education. This may include, as appropriate, liaising with schools, supporting attendance, providing support for study and homework, and for extra-curricular activities.

5.5 Planning for the future

Young people see preparation for the future as essential: preparation for life and meeting their aspirations and potential. Young people need information and support on housing, employment, training, benefits, living independently and combating loneliness. Young people should be encouraged to be fully involved in planning, not 'done to'.

As appropriate, you should contribute to developing an individual transition plan. You must understand the plan and your role in it.

5.6 Keeping in contact with young people leaving care

You must keep to your organisation's policy on keeping in contact with young people after they leave care. You must keep to agreed ways of keeping in contact and be open and transparent about

your actions. This includes contact with a young person still receiving services and when the person is an adult no longer receiving services.

5.7 Working in teams

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

- a. understand your role and responsibilities
- b. communicate well
- c. promote the rights and well-being of children and young people
- d. respect colleagues' skills and contributions
- e. prepare for and contribute positively to meetings
- f. manage disagreements constructively.

You must be willing to raise and follow up concerns about practice.

You must use agreed communication methods such as staff meetings, opportunities for the team to reflect together, notice boards and recording systems to support a co-ordinated, consistent and safe service.

You must comply with handover procedures to your colleagues.

5.8 Records and reports

Children and young people have a right to expect that information about them is recorded accurately and used appropriately.

You must keep to agreed procedures for completing records and reports.

You must make sure records and reports:

- a. are factual, clear, complete and up-to-date
- b. reflect and respect the child or young person's views or wishes
- c. can be understood by those who have a right to see them.

You should ensure records and reports are stored and shared in a way which meets your organisation's requirements, including data protection requirements.

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

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

5.9 Comments and complaints about services

It is important that children and young people know how to comment or complain about their service. This includes both the residential care home and placing authority's processes. Receiving and discussing feedback is an opportunity for everyone to learn and develop together.

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

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

You should ensure children and young people understand the role of, and know how to access, independent advocacy to help them with their complaint.

You should know about the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The Commissioner has legal powers to give assistance to children and young people, parents, carers and professionals supporting looked after children.

You should encourage children and young people to take part in initiatives to give views and comments about their services, where appropriate.

6. Safe- guarding individuals

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

Residential child care workers have an important role to play and need to know how to respond to a range of potential risks:

- neglect
- self-neglect
- self-harm
- suicide
- substance misuse
- abuse
- domestic abuse
- sexual exploitation
- criminal exploitation
- financial exploitation
- scams
- slavery
- human trafficking
- bullying, including online bullying.

6.1 Understanding safeguarding

You must be familiar with:

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

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

6.2 Supporting children and young people to be safe

You should carry out your role in a way that helps children and young people to stay safe. This includes:

- a. promoting child-centred care and support
- b. following risk management plans
- c. supporting children and young people to understand their rights, express concerns and make complaints
- d. supporting children and young people to recognise when behaviour towards them is inappropriate.
- e. guiding children and young people to develop their ability to keep safe
- f. guiding children and young people to develop relationships that are safe and supportive
- g. supporting children and young people to access independent advocacy.

6.3 Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is the coercion or manipulation of children and young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment, which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, place to stay, 'protection' or affection.

The vulnerability of the young person and grooming process employed makes them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent. Children and young people who are sexually exploited should not be regarded as being bad or committing a criminal act; they are victims of sexual abuse.

You must:

- a. be familiar with the vulnerabilities and common risk factors that may indicate CSE
- b. immediately report any concerns you have about the CSE of a child or young person
- c. contribute to the sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (SERAF) in accordance with your role
- d. contribute to plans to protect children and young people from CSE in accordance with your role.

6.4 Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. All social care workers, including residential child care workers, are under a duty to notify the police if, in the course of their work, they suspect that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Further guidance on this duty to report is available from the UK Government at: socialcare.wales/fitness-to-practise/codes-of-practice-and-guidance#section-29780-anchor

6.5 Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism

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

7. Health and safety

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

7.1 Meeting health, safety and security requirements

You must keep to statutory and organisational health, safety and security requirements including, among others, the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. You must undertake mandatory training on health and safety topics.

7.2 Medication

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

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

This includes prescription and non-prescription 'household' medication. You must never give any of your own medication to a child or young person, even if it is non-prescription.

7.3 Safety and well-being

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

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

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

7.4 Supporting positive behaviour

You must work in a way that supports positive behaviour based on a child-centred approach. This includes complying with relevant policies and procedures, contributing to behaviour support plans and prevention strategies.

Despite these approaches, children and young people may sometimes present challenging behaviour that places themselves or others at risk of harm. Responding to this behaviour requires a range of approaches, including as a last resort, restrictive physical intervention.

If you are required to use restrictive physical intervention you must:

- a. comply with your organisation's policies and guidance
- b. undertake training, including refresher training arranged by your employer

- c. only use professionally recognised methods appropriate to the child or young person concerned
- d. use minimum and proportionate intervention (in terms of force and time) necessary to prevent harm or reduce damage
- e. following any incident, inform the child's key worker and your manager
- f. record the incident in accordance with procedures
- g. contribute constructively to post-incident debriefs
- h. as appropriate, support the child to reflect on and learn from incidents
- i. use supervision for you to reflect on and learn from incidents.

You must not:

- a. use restrictive physical intervention methods reliant on pain to gain submission
- b. restrain a person in a face down position
- c. threaten intervention to punish, humiliate, degrade or discriminate.

You must keep to your organisation's policies about joint working with police, taking advice from managers and colleagues, as necessary.

7.5 Supporting health and safety

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

8. Learning and development

Learning and development is essential to providing a good service for children and young people. Your employer has a responsibility to provide you with opportunities to develop your knowledge, skills and understanding. You are responsible for achieving the required qualification for your role, engaging in mandatory training and undertaking ongoing learning, for example, to develop skills working with children with specific needs.

8.1 Keeping up-to-date

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

You should:

- a. keep updating your knowledge of practice
- b. listen and learn from others, including professionals, children and young people, and families
- c. seek help with gaps in your learning
- d. keep a record of your learning and learning hours
- e. make sure you meet the training requirements for your professional registration, including post-registration training and learning (PRTL) requirements.

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

You should keep up-to-date with information about local services and resources that may be relevant to the children and young people you are working with.

8.2 Supervision and appraisal

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

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

You must take part in supervision and appraisal in-line with your organisation's policy and with a constructive attitude. You must raise any urgent issues with your manager, not wait for a supervision meeting.

8.3 Supporting the learning of colleagues

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

9.

Contributing to service improvement

Residential child care workers may contribute to a range of activities to ensure a good service for children and young people. These may include developing policies, contributing to service planning, review and evaluation.

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

9.1 Resources

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

9.2 Raising concerns

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

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

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

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

10. Good conduct

Good conduct includes being honest and trustworthy, acting with integrity and meeting the standards in the *Code of Professional Practice* at all times. It requires you, both in and outside work and in your personal life, to behave in a way that justifies the trust children, young people, families and the public place in you.

10.1 Professional registration

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

This includes:

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

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

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

10.2 Gifts and donations

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

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

You mustn't put pressure on children, young people or families to make donations to other people or organisations.

10.3 Social media

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

Think carefully how you present yourself on social media and how your online presence – both now and in the future – may be seen by others including children and young people, their families, members of the public and other professionals.

How you behave on social media should be at the same high standard as your day-to-day behaviour and you must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

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

Further guidance on using social media responsibly is available from us.



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For more information visit
socialcare.wales

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