



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

2023 Accolades awards ceremony, winners and finalists

Who were the 2023 Accolades winners and finalists? Find out here and watch the 2023 ceremony

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Who were the 2023 Accolades winners and finalists? Find out here and watch the 2023 ceremony

Watch the awards ceremony

The 2023 Accolades awards ceremony was held at City Hall in Cardiff on 27 April 2023.

The ceremony was hosted by broadcaster Garry Owen and our Chief Executive Sue Evans, and streamed live over YouTube

The ceremony was also translated into British Sign Language and our interpreters for the ceremony were Julie Doyle and Stephen Brattan-Wilson.

[Watch the 2023 Accolades ceremony on YouTube.](#)

2023 Accolades winners and finalists

Nine projects and six individuals or teams were chosen by our panel of judges as finalists for the 2023 Accolades. There were five categories.

Building bright futures for children and families

Sponsored by Blake Morgan

This category celebrates organisations, settings or projects that work with children, young people, families and their carers to help them achieve what matters to them.

Winner:

Newport City Council for its Oaklands Short Breaks Service

Oaklands provides short-term breaks for children with additional needs. The service supports families by providing their children with a safe, caring and nurturing family-oriented home from home. Before the children come to stay, the service will find out from families what matters to the children, so it can support the children positively during their stay and relieve any anxieties they may have.

Highly commended finalists:

Adoption UK Cymru for its 'TESSA (LLWYBRAU: PATHWAYS)' project

This project works in partnership with the five regional adoption services in Wales to provide early support to families who adopt children from the care system. The six-month programme provides families with peer support from an experienced adoptive parent, as well as support from psychologists or psychotherapists who will help parents understand how the world might look from the child's perspective.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council for its 'Pathway to Work' project

This project helps care-experienced young people, aged between 16 and 25 years old, learn the skills they need to get an apprenticeship, get a job, or study at college or university. It's also partnered with EE to pilot an employability scheme, Seren Dyfodol, for 14- to 16-year-olds who are looked after, to support and mentor them with homework, work experience and sports activities.

Looking after and improving workforce well-being

Sponsored by Data Cymru

This category recognises how employers have supported staff since the pandemic and the longer-term steps employers are taking to look after and improve their workers' well-being.

Winner:

Right at Home Cardiff & Newport

Right at Home Cardiff & Newport has been taking steps since the pandemic to improve staff well-being. Since the pandemic, it's made it easier for staff to spend more time with family, given staff training and development opportunities, held open days for staff to discuss their goals and aspirations, and provided more company cars, as well as higher mileage rates.

Highly commended finalists:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council for its 'Recovery and Resilience' project

This project was set up during the Covid-19 pandemic to improve staff well-being at the council. It now offers social services staff four sessions per year, where they spend time with their team doing activities to improve their team resilience, reduce their isolation and help them feel valued as people. These activities have included pottery classes, beach barbecues and walks around the estuary and local parks.

Seren Support Services for its 'Wellbeing Improvement Project'

Seren Support Services set up its Wellbeing Improvement Project in 2022, after a staff survey showed staff needed more well-being support. It aims to improve

all aspects of staff well-being. Since it was set up, the project has put in place mental and physical health support, support for people who feel socially excluded, and training to help managers understand well-being issues.

Supporting unpaid carers

Sponsored by Life Sciences Hub Wales

This category celebrates teams or groups of workers who support unpaid carers.

Winner:

[Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for its 'Families First - Young Carers' project](#)

The project supports unpaid carers aged five to 25 years old in Blaenau Gwent by giving them direct support and training opportunities, and championing their rights. It also offers respite, so that young carers can make new friends, try new activities, and have time away from their caring responsibilities in a safe, friendly and inclusive environment.

Highly commended finalists:

[Newport City Council for its Newport Community Connector Service](#)

The Community Connector Service gives unpaid carers in Newport information, advice and assistance every day. The project's team runs a Carers Café, which provides carers with professional and peer support, as well as a Carers Network, which shares regular information and ebulletins with more than 230 members. It also carries out specific outreach work at events and in ethnic minority

communities.

Supporting Young Carers Project, Gwynedd and Anglesey

The project aims to improve the quality of life for young carers in Gwynedd and Anglesey. It's created an app, AIDI, to support young carers in secondary school and college – the first of its kind in Wales. The app helps them alert their school or college if they're going to be absent or need extra support. The project's also teamed up with local businesses to provide discounts to young carers with an ID card.

Categories for individual care workers

In each category, our judges were looking for exceptional care workers who go above and beyond the usual day-to-day requirements of their role and who help people achieve what really matters to them.

Effective leadership award

This category celebrates outstanding leaders in social care and early years and childcare in Wales.

Winner:

- **Polly Duncan, Recruitment Manager at Seren Support Services in Neath Port Talbot**

Nominated by: David Jones-Isaac, former Head of People (HR) at Seren Support Services

Polly is responsible for finding, recruiting and inducting new staff at Seren Support Services.

When the organisation found it difficult to adequately staff the business, Polly created an innovative strategy to overcome those challenges.

The strategy involved applying to the Visa and Immigration office to become a Tier A skilled worker employer. This allowed Seren Support Services to recruit migrant workers who wanted to stay in the UK and build a safe and productive life in Wales.

Polly developed and used effective advertising campaigns to attract new workers, using her knowledge of the complex legal rules for recruiting migrant workers.

Since Seren Support Services started to use her strategy, staff well-being and engagement and client satisfaction have improved, and the number of staff absences has dropped significantly.

David says: "Polly's resourcing strategy is the reason this business is now thriving. Her leadership and ownership in driving this key initiative forward had been outstanding."

In the words of Seren Support Services' Managing Director Nick Pambianchi: "I don't think we'd be here now smiling, growing and planning our company goals for the next three years, if it wasn't for Polly."

Highly commended finalists:

- **Cathie Long, Rachel Gavin and Mary Cartlidge, independent social workers based in Ceredigion, Bridgend and Yorkshire**

Nominated by: Zoey Luster, a retired solicitor from Cardiff

Cathie, Rachel and Mary are all independent social workers, who volunteer as a group to support professionals in the third sector.

Strong advocates for co-production, evidence-based practice and working with other disciplines, the group is popular with families and professionals in the special educational needs community.

Zoey has seen, first-hand, the trio's dedication to leading and improving practice through their webinars.

Their webinars bring together professionals including lawyers, barristers and psychiatrists to share knowledge with people who work with neurodivergent children and adults.

They provided advice and support throughout the pandemic to families with neurodivergent members to strengthen their coping abilities.

They also joined online cuppa and chats with charities, and held Q and A sessions and provided social care advice for families who were struggling.

Zoey writes: "They are the social workers you want at your door. Open, honest, knowledgeable, fair, balanced and true professionals who are very well thought of by many."

- **[Tracey Jenkins](#), Wales Care Operations Director and Responsible Individual for Abicare, based in Pontypool**

Nominated by: Anne-Marie Perry, CEO of Abicare

In a recent quality assurance survey, 100 per cent of its clients rated the Abicare team's commitment and care as excellent, very good or good.

This is due in no small part to Tracey Jenkins, who oversees the care operations for Abicare in Wales.

When Tracey joined Abicare in March 2021, the domiciliary care team was demoralised and had a high staff turnover.

But Tracey has since built a robust team that's committed to providing a quality service and has improved team morale, igniting a new passion within them.

She worked with the local authority to introduce a shift solution to improve the care workers' pay and conditions.

Tracey also decided to do more to take care of the team, developing a new office space for them with a kitchen and well-being room, so the team could have hot meals and a quiet place to reflect and rest.

Because of Tracey's hard work, vision and dedication, Abicare is now helping more people than ever in and around Monmouthshire.

Jinson says that Tracey "has created an environment that's happy, productive, cooperative and collaborative. She leads by example... The transformation to our Welsh team has been truly remarkable."

WeCare Wales award

Sponsored by WeCare Wales

This award celebrates social care and early years and childcare workers who've made a hugely positive difference to people's lives.

Winner:

- **Christel Hay, domiciliary care worker at Abicare in Pontypool**

Nominated by: Tracey Jenkins, Wales Care Operations Director and Responsible Individual at Abicare

Seventy-nine-year-old Christel had retired once already before she joined Abicare as a domiciliary care worker, feeling she had more to give.

Since then, she's earned respect and admiration from her colleagues and clients, becoming well-known for building trust and a rapport with everyone she works with.

Her talents in this area mean she's able to provide personal care to people who have previously refused it, by showing them that they can trust those around them. This means the individual gets the care they need, and their family gets some time to themselves.

Christel's priority is always the safety and well-being of her clients, usually going above and beyond for them. Christel has even been known to battle the snow to make sure her clients are cared for.

Tracey Jenkins, who nominated Christel, says she's "a shining example of what it is to be a carer", and all new Abicare staff are sent out to shadow her when they start.

Tracey adds that Christel "is in a league of her own" and "inspires others around her to excel in what they do and sets the benchmark for everyone else in her team".

- **Finlay Murphy, in-home carer at Right at Home Cardiff & Newport, based in Cardiff**

Nominated by: Holly Jones, Director of Care at Right at Home Cardiff & Newport

In-home carer Finlay has been described as “one of our most popular and sought-after caregivers in the community” who “works tirelessly to improve care delivery”.

Compassionate and empathetic, she always wants the best for her clients.

For example, Finlay’s made sure that her clients have better equipment so they can stay independent in their own homes for longer. She also successfully secured a dream day out for one of her clients at a bird watching centre.

Finlay has even been able to draw on the skills from her training to save a client’s life, recognising correctly, despite assurances, that they needed emergency treatment for sepsis.

Finlay will always go the extra mile to help and Holly says that Finlay “genuinely loves and cares for all those around her”.

Holly adds that “Finlay is an excellent advocate for the sector, arguing passionately for positive changes for her clients and team” and “if any of us were looking for the perfect caregiver for our own loved ones, Finlay would be at the top of the list”.

- **[Judith Prothero](#), Registered Manager for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council’s Residential Children’s Services**

Nominated by: Mandy Meredith, Responsible Individual for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Children’s Services

When a young person with early childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences was placed at the residential children's home Judith manages, Judith was committed to giving them a safe and stable home.

The young person had gone through lots of placement breakdowns over a period of years, and had run-ins with the police and the criminal justice system.

Judith has led a team who has worked diligently to ensure consistency for this young person, on good days and bad, providing the young person with stability, compassion, trust and commitment.

Judith has set boundaries and expectations for behaviour, and invested in the young person's well-being. She's proven to the young person that they're capable of changing things for the better.

This hard work means that the young person's placement at the home has been the longest they've had in more than four years.

Mandy says that "without Judith's passion and commitment to this young person, they would have had poor outcomes that... would have led to their further criminalisation".

The young person says: "I want to thank Judith and Tŷ Brynna for not giving up on me and it's been fab to have a great home."

Our sponsors

Blake Morgan

Sponsor of 'Building bright futures for children and families'.

[Blake Morgan](#) formed in 2014 from the merger of Blake Laphorn and Morgan Cole LLP. It offers a range of 70 legal services for commercial and private clients across many sectors, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Blake Morgan has 126 partners, 400 lawyers and more than 1,000 staff in six locations across the UK and has a strong commitment to making a difference.

Data Cymru

Sponsor of 'Looking after and improving workforce well-being'.

[Data Cymru](#) offers a range of specialist support designed to help people find and use data effectively. This includes helping to source, collect or collate data, data analysis, effective data presentation and much more. Its strategic focus is: "putting data and intelligence at the heart of public service delivery".

Data Cymru plays a central role in ensuring that data meets the needs of its audience by representing the views of local government in Wales around issues such as the Census, and population and migration data. It also holds a wealth of data available in maps, tables and reports in its national system Info Base Cymru.

Life Sciences Hub Wales

Sponsor of 'Supporting unpaid carers'.

[Life Sciences Hub Wales](#) acts as a catalyst to drive innovation and collaboration between industry, health, social care and academia - helping make Wales the place of choice for health, care and well-being innovation.

It accelerates the development and adoption of innovative solutions to support Wales's health and social care needs, and partners with industry to advance

economic development across the life sciences sector in Wales, driving business growth and creating jobs.

The team provides bespoke innovation support, from supporting clinicians with an innovative product or service, to facilitating partnerships with multinational life sciences organisations.

It also project manages the evaluation and adoption of innovation, knowledge sharing, offers funding guidance and signposting, and encourages engagement between industry, health and social care.

WeCare Wales

Sponsor of the 'WeCare Wales award'.

[WeCare Wales](#) is a major bilingual, multi-media initiative developed by Social Care Wales, working with a range of national and local organisations involved in different aspects of social care, early years and childcare.

It aims to raise awareness and understanding of social care, early years and childcare and attract more people with the right skills and values to work in caring roles with children and adults.

WeCare Wales aims to show the variety of roles and career progression opportunities available. By using real care workers, it focuses on the challenges they face, as well as what makes their work rewarding and worthwhile.

Contact us

If you have a question or can't find what you're looking for, [get in touch with us](#).