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Social Care **Wales**

A Healthier Wales: a workforce strategy for health and social care, annual report 2021 to 2022

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The annual report summarises the main areas of progress achieved in the first full year and builds on the initial work carried out immediately after the launch of the strategy.

Introduction

2021 to 2022 was the first full operating year since Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales launched [Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care](#) in October 2020 to support the implementation of *A Healthier Wales*. This first year coincided with one of the most challenging periods of a generation, and tested and stretched the resources and systems of both health and social care.

This was coupled with legislative and political changes with the:

- introduction of the National Clinical Framework and the Liberty Protection Safeguards
- consultation on the White Paper *Rebalancing Care and Support*
- Senedd elections in May 2021 and the subsequent [programme for government](#).

Covid-19 continues to impact the sector and present a huge change in many areas of health and social care, such as the way we provide our services, including accelerated the use of digital and virtual technology to support new ways of working and supporting citizens. The Covid-19 pandemic is undoubtedly having, and will continue to have, a lasting impact on both sectors for years to come. In response, we will continue to put support in place that the workforce and employers need, by implementing the commitments set out in the strategy with pace and energy.

The golden threads of well-being, Welsh language and inclusion run through all the themes and actions, and continue to play an essential part in the culture change that is needed to provide modern and vital services that meet the needs of the population of Wales.

The issues of parity of esteem between the health and social care workforce are still in focus and work has begun on recognising and addressing some of the challenges that exist. The need to protect the safety and well-being of our people, particularly those at the frontline of service provision, remains, as does the need for increased focus on the diversity of our workforce, and the additional vulnerability some people, particularly our Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues, have faced. It reinforces the benefit of building on and further developing a compassionate leadership approach at all levels, developing an inclusive and diverse culture that reflects our local communities, where staff well-being is paramount and each person feels valued and supported as part of a health and social care professional fraternity.

This report summarises the main areas of progress achieved in the first full year and builds on the initial work carried out immediately after the launch, which you can read [here](#). It shows the progress we've made on our programmes of work and our work in partnership with HEIW. This progress has supported and informed the development of the new delivery plan for 2022 to 2023, which you can read [here](#).

In 2022 to 2023, we want to co-produce medium-term implementation plans with the sector, which will describe how we can collectively achieve and monitor the delivery and impact of the strategy's overall ambitions.

An engaged, motivated and healthy workforce

Together with HEIW, we:

- shared good practice and resources between health and social care to drive improvement, and we reciprocated places on health and well-being networks between us
- contributed to the launch of the new mental health support service 'Canopi'.

We:

- continued to add to, evaluate and refine the range of [well-being resources](#) available via our website and externally procured resources
- continued to offer employee assistance programmes to the social care workforce in the private and voluntary sector
- published and monitored achievement against our strategic equality plans
- contributed to the development and delivery of Welsh Government's *Race Equality Action Plan*
- developed a model for implementing the principles of our social care health and well-being framework, setting out the expectations of employers and our people to drive positive employee engagement
- continued to run a social well-being network for partners and stakeholders
- continued to run peer support groups for domiciliary care managers, care home managers and residential child care managers to support managers' resilience and well-being
- continued to collate well-being resources to support the well-being and resilience of social care leaders
- created a standard welcome pack for all new registered people
- continued to support the Community Resourcefulness Partnership to help it establish itself as a national, multi-sector forum for organisations that develop and promote local activities and actions to enable well-being improvement in

communities all over Wales

- continued to support the sector to work bilingually by providing targeted resources to support the current and future workforce, and contributing to the task and finish group of the review of *More than Just Words*
- continued to support the promotion of a care worker card, moving to a single digital solution and partnering with two major discount providers to increase the retail benefits available, bringing it in-line with the offer available in the NHS
- continued to contribute to the Welsh Government-led Social Care Fair Work Forum that's looking at improving working conditions in social care - you can find [its full remit here](#)
- piloted an all-sector employee well-being and engagement survey.

Attraction and recruitment

Together with HEIW, we:

- further developed Careers Network links between careers approaches in health and social care to make the most of our reach
- created a joint network to share good practice and resources to drive improvement in recruitment and retention across the sectors
- further developed the [Careersville](#) resource, and targeted schools and college learners during the apprenticeship campaign.

We:

- developed targeted schemes for professions experiencing shortages and those that were finding it difficult to recruit staff, such as domiciliary care

- continued to promote apprenticeships as a viable career choice for entering and staying in the sector, including running a three-week TV campaign and showcasing apprentices from the sector
- continued to work with stakeholders, such as the Department of Work and Pensions and Careers Wales, and awarding organisations, such as City & Guilds and the WJEC, to strengthen the links between job seekers and careers in social care
- provided training programmes promoting values-based resources and approaches to recruitment and retention
- launched schools-based resources to promote careers in social care
- continued to financially support the care career connector posts in the seven regions
- evaluated the introduction to social care programme pilot
- secured funding to offer the introduction to social care programme all over Wales
- partnered with City & Guilds to support their skills bridge programme and signposting to the [WeCare Wales website](#) as part of their approach
- continued to develop the WeCare Wales website, including providing specific resources and support to employers
- supported the continued development of the jobs portal by improving the user experience for employers and job seekers
- continued our 'always on' approach to social media-based recruitment campaigns.

Seamless working models

Together with HEIW, we:

- worked with partners to expand the training on offer to health workers in care homes through care home education facilitator roles
- developed a workforce plan to support Together for Mental Health, focusing on some early priorities around CAMHS, clinical psychology and perinatal services
- progressed work on the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards
- published the evaluation of the Hywel Dda joint health and social care induction pilot and shared the lessons learned.

We:

- developed a workforce plan for the direct care workforce
- contributed to the development of induction standards for volunteers
- developed a workforce plan for the social work profession, including a new post-qualification framework
- set up an All Wales Approved Mental Health Practitioner Leads Network to share good practice and resources to support role development and improvement
- contributed to the development of the Learning Disabilities Strategic Action Plan, as part of our role on the Ministerial Advisory Group.

Building a digitally ready workforce

Together with HEIW, we:

- developed digitally infection prevention and control (IPC) training.

We:

- supported the development of increased digital capability throughout our workforce
- continued to develop digital learning resources
- launched a digital learning platform and tested opportunities for once for Wales training including safeguarding, a well-being conversation toolkit and so on
- monitored the provision of a national priority for digital approaches in the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme grant for 2021 to 2022
- began research to understand the shift to digital learning solutions for learning and development.

Excellent education and training

Together with HEIW, we:

- worked with City & Guilds to share intelligence and data about the impact of Covid-19 on the provision and achievement of vocational qualifications.

We:

- worked with partners to improve opportunities for learners to undertake education and training through the medium of Welsh
- made the most of opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships as viable career choices to enter and stay in the sector
- revised and updated placement guidance for learners and employers
- led on developing a programme of learning to support the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards

- monitored the take up and provision of the new Level 2 and 3 health and social care qualifications and supported the implementation of new Level 4 and 5 health and social care qualifications
- supported the sector to identify further development of the practice qualifications to meet learner needs
- supported the ongoing implementation of Level 2 and 3 health and social care qualifications through a series of employer engagement events and best practice exchange events
- supported the implementation and take up of the revised Level 4 and 5 apprenticeship frameworks
- maintained and developed an All Wales Network of Mentors for outcomes-focused practice
- launched a digital safeguarding learning resource
- began work on developing a training framework for safeguarding based on the agreed national training standards
- revised our resource about restrictive practices in social care and began discussions about developing a digital learning resource to support the guidance
- worked with Qualifications Wales, City & Guilds, WJEC and HEIW to share intelligence about the impact of Covid-19 on the provision and achievement of vocational qualifications, and worked together to set mitigations and adaptations so that learners could progress to gain their qualifications
- completed a review of funding streams that support workforce development, including the SCWWDP grant
- provided ongoing support to student social workers through qualifying training into employment, including reviewing the funding arrangements that support qualifying and post-qualifying training
- carried out a review of the qualifying framework to take account of levels of provision and funding
- developed a post-qualifying learning framework for social workers

- supported the roll-out of the induction framework for social care managers
- developed detailed workbooks for the *All Wales induction framework for health and social care*
- supported the development of resources for the Social Services Practitioner qualification
- developed a competency framework for information, advice and assistance workers
- supported the development of an advocacy workers competency framework
- continued to promote the Carer Aware training that's available to social workers.

Leadership and succession

Together with HEIW, we:

- launched the principles for compassionate leadership for health and social care in Wales to enable a shared definition, understanding and language around what compassionate leadership looks like across both sectors in Wales. We also developed compassionate leadership online engagement content to 'spotlight' individual principles and themes.

We:

- continued to invest in developing compassionate leaders across health and social care
- published a 'compassionate leadership' page on our website
- continued to invest in specific leadership programmes for social care professional heads of service and statutory directors, including TMDP and MMDP qualifications, with bespoke development programmes in place for

directors and assistant directors of services and workforce

- worked with the third sector to develop a collective and compassionate leadership offer in social care
- supported peer networks for registered social care managers in private, voluntary and public services to improve well-being and help protect resilience
- continued to support the promotion and implementation of the new Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications, including the related apprenticeship pathways
- continued to provide a leadership role in the development and promotion of bilingual working
- contributed to, and responded to, the review of Welsh Government's *Mwy na geiriau action plan*, including the workforce development sub-group
- published a 'first steps in management' resource
- published an 'effective supervision' resource.

Workforce supply and shape

Together with HEIW, we:

- developed the workforce plan for the mental health workforce.

We:

- contributed to the development of an induction standard for volunteers
- launched the revised model of workforce data collection using the newly created employer dashboard
- continued to change data collection approaches to make sure robust data is available, including improving reporting on data around language and ethnicity

- continued to enable the adult care home workforce to register on a voluntary basis
- developed the workforce plans for the direct care workforce and the social work profession
- provided data reports to better understand the profile of the workforce so there's intelligence to support effective decision making, such as profiling of nurses in social care and turnover rates for key areas, including social work and domiciliary care
- carried out a full review of the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme grant
- made extra funding available through the regional facilitation grant to additional sponsored social work students.

Conclusion

As we look towards 2022 to 2023, there will inevitably be more changes and challenges due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. These will include the continuation of the vaccination programme, the removal of restrictions of movement and the return to more normal operating systems for health and social care.

Achieving the ambition of the 10-year strategy will continue to require excellent and committed collaborative working across health and social care, between local organisations and national bodies working in social partnership. The work carried out since the strategy's launch, which clearly links the work to the strategy's seven key themes and underpinning golden threads, has allowed us to gain a momentum that we can built upon in future years, in-line with our longer term aspirations and goals. This puts us in a good position to meet the challenges and opportunities that 2022 to 2023 will bring.

We continue to review the strategy to make sure its ambitions and actions are still relevant, while recognising that this report covers the areas we needed to fast track to meet very pressing challenges for the sectors.

With this in mind, we're continuing to work on strengthening the strategy's joint governance and this work will continue in 2022 to 2023, with plans in place to work with the sector to refresh and modernise the strategy ready for its first formal review in 2023. This meets one of the strategy's original underlying principles – that it would remain a live and dynamic strategy that could continue to set the way forward for the health and social care workforce.

Social Care Wales

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