



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

Proposed changes to the Codes of Professional Practice

We're updating our Codes of Professional Practice, and we want to hear your views about our proposed changes.

First published: 30 September 2024

Last updated: 7 October 2024

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Go to <https://socialcare.wales/codes-of-professional-practice-consultation> for the latest version.

We're updating our Codes of Professional Practice, and we want to hear your views about our proposed changes.

The consultation closes at midday, Friday 17 December 2024.

Proposed changes to the Code of Professional Practice for workers

What is the Code of Professional Practice for workers?

The code is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional conduct and practice required of people employed in the social care profession in Wales.

It's a tool to support social care workers to understand what good conduct and practice looks like.

The code also forms part of the wider package of legislation, practice standards and employers' policies and procedures that social care workers must meet.

Where there's a concern that a social care worker has breached part of the code, they may be referred to the fitness to practise team at Social Care Wales. The fitness to practise team investigates concerns about registered workers to make sure they have the skills, knowledge and character to carry out their work safely and effectively.

You can see the current code [here](#).

Who does it apply to?

The Code of Professional Practice for workers applies to everyone who is registered with Social Care Wales. This includes:

- social workers
- domiciliary care workers
- care home workers
- residential child care workers
- managers of social care services.

You can find a full list of who needs to register with us on our [website](#).

But the code is also relevant to other social care workers, such as personal assistants, who don't have to register with us. It sets the standards of conduct and practice expected of the social care professions in Wales.

Social care workers are responsible for making sure they work to the standards in the code. Their conduct and practice must not fall below the standards.

For individuals receiving care or members of the public, the code will help you understand how a social care worker should behave towards you and how employers should help them to do their jobs well.

What's included in the Code of Professional Practice for workers?

There are seven sections in the Code of Professional Practice for workers, that workers must comply with. These are:

1. Respect the views and wishes, and promote the rights and interests, of individuals and carers.
2. Do what I can to gain 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. Support individuals and their carers to not harm themselves or others while respecting their rights and choices.
5. Act in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in the social care profession, whether I am at work or outside work, online or in person.
6. Be accountable and responsible for the quality of my work and for maintaining and developing my knowledge and skills.
7. In addition to sections 1 to 6, if I am responsible for managing or leading staff, I must embed the Code in their work.

Practice guidance for social care workers

Following this consultation, we'll publish new and updated practice guidance on our website. This will be at the same time as the new, revised codes are published.

When you think about each section, let us know what would be helpful for us to include in practice guidance, to better support social care workers to work to the code. You can also tell us the easiest way for you to access that guidance, for example, on a website. You can include this information in the 'any other comments' box.

What's changed in each section

Section 1: Respect the views and wishes, and promote the rights and interests, of individuals and carers.

The main change we've made to this section of the code is removing words and phrases that aren't needed. We've also moved some of this section into other

sections of the code to make them more relevant.

We've:

- changed wording from 'you must' to 'I must' to make it clearer for workers that they're responsible for working to the code
- put more emphasis on the rights of the individual and care that puts the person at the centre
- put more emphasis on challenging and reporting discrimination and on people's right to care in the language of their choice
- moved the current statement about choice and control for individuals into section 3.

New wording for section 1

I must respect the views and wishes, and support and promote the rights and interests of individuals, their carers and my colleagues.

I must:

1.1 work with and support individuals in ways that are person centred and that respects their dignity, privacy and culture

1.2 respect, support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and not discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against individuals, carers, colleagues or other people

1.3 challenge and report any discrimination and stand up for the rights of individuals, their carers, families and my colleagues

1.4 support individuals and carers to communicate their views and choices using their preferred method and language.

Questions to answer

1a) Is section 1 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

1b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

1c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 2: Gain and maintain the trust and confidence of individuals and carers

The main change we've made to this section of the code is removing words and phrases that aren't needed. We've also combined some sections to make expectations clearer.

We've:

- changed the wording from 'you must' to 'I must' to make it clearer for workers that they're responsible for working to the code
- moved the current statement about language preference into section 1
- strengthened section 2.3 to make requirements around data protection clearer
- strengthened the wording around professional boundaries and gifts (statement 2.5), so it's clearer that workers need to explain the rules to individuals and families they provide care and support to.

New wording for section 2

I must do what I can to gain and maintain the trust and confidence of individuals and carers.

I must:

2.1 be honest and trustworthy

2.2 communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way

2.3 respect confidential information and only share it in ways approved by my employer

2.4 not abuse the trust of individuals and carers or the access I have to their personal information, property, home or workplace

2.5 clearly explain policies about confidentiality, professional boundaries and accepting gifts to individuals, families and carers and follow them at all times

2.6 be reliable and dependable, doing what I have agreed to do and, if I can't, explaining why to individuals and carers

2.7 Recognise and be open about where my interests are affected in my work and taking steps to ensure that they do not influence my professional judgement or practice.

Questions to answer

2a) Is section 2 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

2b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

2c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 3: promote the well-being, voice and control of individuals and carers, while supporting them to stay safe.

The main change we've made to this section of the code is changing or removing words and phrases that aren't clear. We've also combined several of the current statements to make the links between them clearer.

We included a new statement at 3.3, to make clear that people have the right to make their own decisions and choices.

We've removed:

- the current statement 3.4 'recognising and using sensitively and responsibly the power that comes from your work with individuals and carers', as it's hard to evidence this, so it's better placed in guidance
- the current statement 3.9 'bringing to the attention of your employer or the appropriate authority, resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of the delivery of safe social care and support', as it is duplicated in section 6.

New wording for section 3

I must promote the well-being, voice and control of individuals and carers, while supporting them to stay safe.

I must

3.1 work with and support individuals in ways that promotes their well-being and safety

3.2 support individuals and carers to raise concerns or make complaints, and take complaints seriously, following relevant policies and procedures

3.3 work with and support individuals in a way that maximises their decision making and control over their lives

3.4 work with colleagues and other professionals to promote the well-being, voice and control of individuals and carers, using agreed systems and procedures to share information where needed

3.5 challenge or report concerns, such as unsafe, dangerous, abusive, exploitative or discriminatory behaviour or practice.

Questions to answer

3a) Is section 3 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

3b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

3c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 4: support individuals and their carers to not harm themselves or others while respecting their rights and choices

The main change we've made to this section of the code is changing some words and phrases to make things clearer.

We've:

- changed the wording from 'you must' to 'I must' to make it clearer for workers that they're responsible for working to the code
- put a clearer emphasis on positive risk taking in statement 4.1
- included a new statement in this section about safeguarding (4.2).

New wording for section 4

I must support individuals and their carers to not harm themselves or others by their behaviour while respecting their rights and choices.

I must:

4.1 work with individuals and carers to balance risks with their rights and personal choices

4.2 follow relevant safeguarding policies and procedures when working with individuals and carers

4.3 follow risk assessment policies and procedures to assess if the behaviour of individuals and carers presents a risk of harm to themselves or others

4.4 take necessary steps to reduce the risks of individuals' and carers' behaviour causing or potentially causing harm to themselves or others

4.5 ensure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.

Questions to answer

4a) Is section 4 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

4b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

4c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 5: maintain public trust and confidence in the social care profession whether I am at work or outside work, online or in person.

The main change we've made to this section of the code is removing words and phrases that aren't needed, combining some sections and removing statements that are duplicated in other sections of the code.

This section now specifically references the importance of being professional when online, for example on social media.

We've:

- removed references to discrimination, as this is now covered in section 1
- changed the wording from 'you must' to 'I must', to make it clearer for workers that they're responsible for working to the code. This section has a mix of 'I must' and 'I must not' statements.

New wording for section 5

I must act with integrity and in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in the social care profession whether I am at work or outside work, online or in person.

I must

5.1 not abuse, neglect, harm or take advantage of or exploit individuals, carers or colleagues

5.2 always maintain professional boundaries with individuals, their families and their carers

5.3 not form inappropriate personal relationships with individuals, their families or carers

5.4 let my employer know about issues that might create conflicts of interest and take steps to ensure they do not influence my practice

5.5 not break any laws, and understand that if I do, my fitness to practise may be questioned

5.6 inform my employer and Social Care Wales if I am arrested or charged with an offence

5.7 avoid putting myself or other people at unnecessary risk

5.8 not behave in a way, in work or outside work, online or in person, which would call into question my suitability to work in the social care profession.

Questions to answer

5a) Is section 5 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

5b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

5c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 6: be accountable and responsible for the quality of my work and for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills.

The main change we've made to this section of the code is removing words and phrases that aren't needed and combining some sections to make things clearer.

We've:

- changed the wording from 'you must' to 'I must' to make it clearer for workers that they're responsible for working to the code
- split the current section 6.1 into two separate statements:

- 6.1 read, understand, and meet relevant standards of practice and conduct
- 6.2 follow procedures correctly and always work in a lawful, safe and effective
- included a new statement on supervision (6.8).

New wording for section 6

I must be accountable and responsible for the quality of my work and for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills.

I must:

6.1 read, understand, and meet relevant policies, procedures and standards of practice and conduct

6.2 follow procedures correctly and always work in a lawful, safe and effective way

6.3 maintain clear and accurate records

6.4 tell my employer or another relevant practitioner about any difficulties that affect my ability to do my job competently and safely

6.5 ask for help from my employer or another relevant person if I'm unable to or unsure how to carry out any aspect of my work

6.6 be open and honest with people if things go wrong, giving a full and prompt explanation and co-operating with any investigations into practice by my employer, Social Care Wales or any other appropriate bodies

6.7 seek out and complete relevant learning and development to maintain and improve my knowledge and skills to ensure I am fit to practise

6.8 actively and effectively engage in supervision to reflect on my practice and where I could improve my knowledge and skills

6.9 work openly and co-operatively with colleagues and other professionals, supporting them where I can

6.10 understand that I am responsible for work that I delegate to other workers.

6.11 co-operate with investigations into my practice, or the practice of others, undertaken by my employer, Social Care Wales, or by any other appropriate bodies.

Questions to answer

6a) Is Section 6 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

6b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

6c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 7: If I am responsible for managing or leading any staff, I must also embed the Code in their work.

This section applies to any managers or leaders of social care workers. For workers, it sets out what to expect from your managers and leaders.

The new wording includes a description of who this section of the code applies to.

We've also removed the word 'workplace' from the current version of the code, as we recognise some workers, such as domiciliary care workers, may not always meet in a physical workplace.

We've included a new statement to improve safe and responsive ways of working (7.6).

New wording for section 7

If I am responsible for managing or leading any staff, I must also embed the Code in their work.

This section applies to any managers or leaders of social care workers. If you are not a manager or leader, you should still read this to understand what to expect from your managers and leaders.

I must

7.1 support an open culture where staff can raise concerns and access, discuss, reflect on and share best practice

7.2 ensure staff know about the Code and understand how it applies to their conduct and practice

7.3 ensure induction, training, learning and development opportunities support staff to maintain and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding

7.4 provide effective supervision and appraisal to guide, support and motivate staff to meet the responsibilities and accountabilities associated with their role

7.5 take steps to know what is happening in the delivery of social care, such as by reviewing complaints and feedback or monitoring staff performance

7.6 respond to any concerns or complaints promptly and effectively, following any relevant policies and procedures.

Questions to answer

7a) Is section 7 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

7b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

7c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Proposed changes to the Code of Practice for social care employers

What is the employers' code?

The Code of Professional Practice for social care employers (the employers' code) is a list of statements describing the standards social care employers must meet to ensure a safe, skilled and appropriately supported social care workforce.

It's not intended to cover all situations or aspects of employer responsibility. Employers must also meet a range of other requirements that are set out in legislation, statutory regulations and guidance.

Who is the employers' code for?

The employers' code applies to people employing or seeking to employ [social care workers](#) as defined by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

The employers' code represents good practice, so it's also expected that childminders employing assistants and childcare practitioners would use it to

complement staffing standard 13 of the National Minimum Standards for Childcare.

How the employers' code is used in regulation:

The employers' code is published by Social Care Wales under Section 112 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

For social care employers in services regulated under Part 1 of the 2016 Act, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) can take action if providers don't comply with these regulations.

To meet all the standards, in regulated services, where required, a suitable Responsible Individual and Registered Manager must be appointed and supported by the employer to carry out their responsibilities.

What's included in the Code of Professional Practice for employers?

There are five sections of the employers' code, where employers must:

1. Make sure people who wish to enter the social care workforce are suitable and that they understand their roles and responsibilities
2. Have policies, systems and practices in place to enable social care workers to meet the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care
3. Provide and support learning and development opportunities to enable social care workers to develop their knowledge and skills
4. Have policies and systems to protect people from unsafe situations, behaviour and practice, and take steps to respond when unsafe situations occur
5. Promote the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations

What's changed in each section

Section 1: Make sure people who wish to enter the social care workforce are suitable and that they understand their roles and responsibilities

The main changes we've made to this section of the code are rewording statements to make them more outcome focussed.

We've:

- changed the wording from 'employers will' to 'employers must' to make it clearer for employers that they're responsible for working to the code
- split the current code 1.4 into two new statements, which you can see at 1.4 and 1.5. This is to make the responsibilities clearer.

New wording for section 1

Make sure people who wish to enter the social care workforce are suitable and that they understand their roles and responsibilities.

Employers must:

1.1 make sure that only suitable people with the right knowledge, skills, values, potential, and any required qualifications or professional registration, enter the workforce, by using rigorous recruitment policies and processes

1.2 check criminal records, relevant registers, references from previous employers, any gaps in employment history, and legal entitlement to work in Wales before an appointment is made for someone to work in social care

1.3 seek and provide accurate and appropriate references about a person's suitability to work in social care and in a specific role

1.4 ensure workers understand their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities by giving them clear information

1.5 ensure workers know how they can meet relevant legislation, policies and procedures by giving them clear information and guidance

1.6 give workers clear information about lines of management, communication and support in the workplace. This includes information about support for their health, safety and well-being in the workplace

1.7 make sure workers' terms and conditions are lawful and adequate to sustain a suitable workforce. Review terms and conditions regularly to ensure they remain lawful and adequate.

Questions to answer

1a) Is section 1 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

1b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

1c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 2: Have policies, systems and practices in place to enable social care workers to meet the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care

The main change we've made to this section of the code is rewording the statements to make them more outcome focussed.

We've:

- changed the wording from 'employers will' to 'employers must' to make it clearer for employers that they're responsible for working to the code
- included 'agency workers' under statement 2.1 and added in data protection responsibilities under section 2.5.

New wording for section 2

Have policies, systems and practices in place to enable social care workers to meet the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care.

Employers must:

2.1 Support social care workers (including agency staff) to meet the standards in the Code of Professional Practice and associated practice guidance

2.2 Ensure the management and supervision of workers is effective to promote best practice and good conduct. This includes supporting workers to improve their performance and making sure they are fit to practice

2.3 If employing workers from other professions (such as nursing or occupational therapy), support them to meet their professional codes and report workers whose fitness to practice may be impaired to the relevant authority

2.4 Put in place and monitor policies and procedures to respond to allegations of harm, neglect or abuse. Policies and procedures must ensure that workers have knowledge about signs of harm, neglect or abuse and know the action they should take

2.5 Put in place and monitor written policies on confidentiality and record keeping and ensure workers understand their data protection responsibilities

2.6 Ensure there are robust systems to actively listen to and respond to feedback from individuals and carers to shape and improve services and staff

performance

2.7 Ensure there are policies and systems for workers to raise concerns about any matter which might effect the delivery of safe and dignified care and support, and take adequate action to respond to concerns

2.8 Ensure there is a supportive culture and systems in place so that workers will be open and honest if things go wrong (meet their duty of candour), report adverse incidents and learn from mistakes. This includes trying to resolve difficulties at an early stage.

Questions to answer

2a) Is Section 2 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

2b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

2c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 3: Provide and support learning and development opportunities to enable social care workers to develop their knowledge and skills

The main change we've made to this section of the code is rewording the statements to make them more outcome focussed.

We've:

- changed the wording from 'employers will' to 'employers must' to make it clearer for employers that they're responsible for working to the code
- added in that the codes are to be used in supervision, in statement 3.5.

New wording for section 3

Provide and support learning and development opportunities to enable social care workers to develop their knowledge and skills

Employers must:

3.1 provide robust and accessible induction and ongoing learning and development opportunities to help workers do their jobs effectively. This includes giving workers access to their personal learning and development record

3.2 contribute to providing social care and social work education and learning, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning

3.3 support workers to meet and maintain the conditions for professional registration, including any requirements for post registration training and learning

3.4 respond appropriately to any workers who need support because they do not feel able, or adequately prepared, to carry out their work

3.5 provide effective, regular supervision to workers to support them to develop and improve through reflective practice, using the Code of Professional Practice and associated practice guidance as a basis for discussions.

Questions to answer

3a) Is Section 3 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

3b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

3c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 4: Have policies and systems to protect people from unsafe situations, behaviour and practice, and take steps to respond when unsafe situations occur

The main changes we've made to this section of the code are editing each statement to add 'follow' policies and procedures at the beginning, and adding information about taking steps at the end.

We've

- changed wording from 'employers will' to 'employers must' to make it clearer for employers that they're responsible for working to the code
- in statement 4.8, we included a specific reference to fitness to practise
- changed statement 4.1 to include individuals and families
- added a new statement about equality and diversity (statement 4.2), separating this out from the current combined statement around well-being. This should give separate and more emphasis on the importance of both well-being and of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

New wording for section 4

Have policies and systems to protect people from unsafe situations, behaviour and practice, and take steps to respond when unsafe situations occur.

Employers will:

4.1 put in place and follow policies and procedures that promote the health and well-being of workers, individuals and their families and carers, and take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed

4.2 put in place and follow policies and procedures that promote and protect the equality, diversity and inclusion of workers, individuals and their families and carers, and take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed

4.3 put in place and follow policies and procedures that make it clear to workers that bullying and harassment is not acceptable and take action to deal with such behaviour

4.4 put in place procedures for workers to report dangerous, discriminatory, or abusive behaviour and practice, and deal promptly, effectively and openly with reports

4.5 make it clear to workers, individuals, families and carers that violence, threats or abuse are not acceptable. This includes having clear policies and procedures for reducing the risk of violence and managing violent incidents.

4.6 put in place policies and procedures to support workers who experience trauma, harassment or violence in their work

4.7 put in place and follow policies and procedures to ensure compliance with relevant health, safety and security requirements. This includes making sure workers are aware of these including mandatory requirements, any changes or updates, monitoring compliance and taking appropriate action where policies and procedures are not adhered to. Take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed.

4.8 put in place and follow policies and procedures to investigate and deal adequately with disciplinary matters, including where the worker leaves the organisation. Take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed, such as making referrals to the Social Care Wales Fitness to Practise Team.

4.9 provide support to workers with fitness to practise concerns and give clear guidance about the limits on their work. While doing this, make sure that the care and safety of individuals using services is the priority.

Questions to answer

4a) Is Section 4 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

4b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

4c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Section 5: Promote the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations

The main change we've made to this section of the code is to slightly reword statements to make them clearer.

We've changed the wording from 'employers will' to 'employers must' to make it clearer for employers that they're responsible for working to the code.

New wording for section 5

Promote the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations.

Employers will:

5.1 inform social care workers about this Employers' Code and what it means for them and the workplace

5.2 ensure social care workers know about and understand their Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and their professional responsibility to adhere to it

5.3 support social care managers to meet their additional responsibilities in Section 7 of the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care

5.4 make individuals and carers aware of the Codes of Practice for employers and social care workers and inform them how to raise issues relating to the Codes, including how to contact us

5.5 use the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care when making any decision that relates to a worker's fitness to practice.

5.6 refer workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired to Social Care Wales. If appropriate, tell the worker a referral has been made

5.7 co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations and hearings, including providing documents and attending hearings

5.8 respond appropriately to the findings and decisions of Social Care Wales about a worker's fitness to practise.

Questions to answer

5a) Is section 5 clear and easy to understand? (Yes or No)

5b) Is there anything missing or not needed?

5c) Do you have any other comments?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Other questions to answer

1. Implementation date

We would like your views about how much time you would need to update references to the Codes of Professional Practice within your own organisation.

Between publication of the revised codes and these new versions becoming operational, would you need:

- a) six months
- b) nine months
- c) one year

2. Welsh language

We've set out our Welsh language impact considerations within the 'What's changing' section of the consultation.

Are there any further effects our proposals will have on the Welsh language?

3. Equality and diversity

We've set out our equality and diversity impact considerations within the 'What's changing' section of the consultation.

Are there any further effects our proposals will have on equality and diversity?

You can respond to these questions [through our online form](#), or by downloading the Word document below and emailing it to us.

Word version of the consultation

Download the consultation as a Word document

Go back to the consultation main page