



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

Employing 16 and 17 year olds in the social care sector in Wales

First published: 1 December 2021

Last updated: 9 November 2022

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You can employ 16 and 17 year olds in the social care sector in Wales.

16 and 17 year olds are still classed as children. There are some considerations you need to take into account, but these should not be seen as barriers to employment.

Benefits to employing young people

Young people can make a valuable contribution. Some will have experience of caring for family members or other relevant life skills.

You need to ensure that young people are not discriminated against because of their age.

Guidance for employing 16 and 17 year olds in the Social Care Sector in Wales

You should:

- Comply with the 'service regulations'. Specifically you should ensure that:
 - staff have the knowledge, skills and competency to meet an individual's well-being needs;
 - staff have the appropriate language and communication skills.

You can find more information about the regulations [here](#).

- Undertake safe recruitment processes, including references and [DBS checks](#).
- Access appropriate learning and development, including an apprenticeship. For more information on apprenticeships visit [Social Care Wales](#) and [Careers Wales](#).
- Support the young person in their learning programme.
- Place younger people in an established team to help them learn from experienced staff.
- Ensure young people aren't asked to do work they're not trained, or physically or mentally suited to do.

- Consider the young person's lack of experience when completing risk assessments.
- Ensure that appropriate ongoing support is offered; learning and development programmes, coaching, peer support, shadowing or mentoring.
- Build in regular time with the young people for personal reflection, allowing opportunities for discussions and questions and to provide feedback on their personal development and work.
- Ensure the registered manager (or a delegated person) undertakes appropriate supervision and appraisal of the young person.
- Ensure the young person is familiar with the codes of professional practice.
- Ensure that an inexperienced young person is never left in charge of a care setting or left to work on their own
- Protect the young person's time for learning activities.
- Pay anyone above school leaving age at least the [National Minimum Wage](#)
- Adhere to the health, safety and safeguarding requirements that apply to young people and legal restrictions on working time. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and Careers Wales provide guidance on the rules around the hours young people can work and considerations that need to be made in supporting young people in the workplace can be seen at the following links:
 - <https://www.acas.org.uk/young-workers-apprentices-and-work-experience>
 - <https://careerswales.gov.wales/employers/employing-young-people>

For more information and guidance about employing 16 and 17 year olds, please visit:

- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/index.htm>
- <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/youth-employment-experts/>