



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

# Improved well-being for the workforce

First published: 3 January 2024

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Go to <https://socialcare.wales/about-us/our-outcomes/impact-report-2022-to-2023/improved-well-being-for-the-social-care-and-early-years-workforce> for the latest version.

## **Improved well-being for the social care and early years workforce.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

## **Your well-being matters**

The well-being of the workforce is a key focus of our work. We want the workforce to be happy, healthy and supported, so that they in turn support the well-being of the people in their care.

We heard from more than 1,000 people who told us that the health and well-being of the workforce was of the most importance and it's a key focus of the [workforce strategy for health and social care](#).

Last year was our second full year of realising the strategy and it continued to be a challenging period for the sector. Despite the significant challenges of the last three years we've made progress and have started looking at the next phase of the strategy's implementation, from 2023 onwards.

During the year, we published three plans to help put the workforce strategy into practice. These are:

- [social work workforce plan](#)
- [direct care workforce plan](#)
- [strategic mental health workforce plan](#).

## **Health and well-being framework**

In October 2022, we introduced our first [health and well-being framework](#) for those working in social care and childcare, play and early years.

It describes what good well-being in the workplace looks like and how to create workplaces that support staff well-being.

**“I have been using the framework model to share learning with leaders in my local authority.”**

**- Workforce manager**

## **Peer support**

In 2022 to 2023, we ran fortnightly online **peer support sessions** for domiciliary care managers and bimonthly sessions for care home managers:

- **93 per cent** of participants told us they felt emotionally supported and supported others
- **69 per cent** of participants told us they felt less isolated in their role.

**“I didn’t realise how much I needed these sessions until I started them, possibly one of the very few positives to come out of the pandemic.”**

**- Social care manager**

## **Well-being community**

The workforce told us they'd like to be able to connect and speak to others who support well-being in the workforce, and find out what works.

So we launched our online well-being community of practice during the year, where people can speak to others about supporting well-being at work, and find out what works. At the end of the year, we had **95 members** and the community continues to grow.

In 2022 to 2023, we developed [resources](#) to support the well-being of the social care and early years workforce and more than **7,000 visitors** looked at the information and resources on our website.



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# A highly recognised and valued workforce

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## **A social care and early years workforce that is highly recognised and valued.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

Our social care and early years workforce deserve fair reward that reflects the crucial part they play in the well-being of people and communities.

As members of the [Fair Work Forum](#), we will continue to influence and commit to embedding Fair Work and improving terms and conditions for those working in the social care sector.

## **Recognising and celebrating the workforce**

We held the **Accolades awards**, which recognise, celebrate and share excellent social care and childcare, play and early years in Wales, in person on **21 April 2022** for the first time since 2018.

In 2022:

- we received **76 entries and nominations**, across **7 categories**
- **135 guests** attended the ceremony at the Royal College of Music and Drama in Cardiff, which was also livestreamed over the internet.
- guests gave the ceremony an average rating of **92 per cent**.

## **‘Have your say’ - the first workforce survey of the registered social care workforce**

By the end of March 2023, **900 people** had responded to our first [workforce survey](#). The survey of registered social care workers asked questions about pay and conditions, health and well-being, and what people like about working in care.

The results will be analysed and we'll work with partners to see how we and our partners can best provide support in response to the survey responses.

## Public recognition of the workforce

The workforce is valued by the Welsh public, with more than two thirds thinking they do a good job and almost three quarters having confidence in them.

These results were part of an Omnibus survey run in 2022 to 2023 with 1,000 members of the public in Wales.

Almost **80 per cent** of the Welsh public said they believe care workers should have similar levels of pay and benefits to those working in the NHS.

## Care worker card

The new version of the [care worker card](#) issued during the year will have a positive impact on social care and early years workers as they can benefit from a cashback card, as well as a range of retail offers. This will be achieved through a dedicated discounts provider, Discounts for Carers.

At the end of March 2023:

- **36,247** social care workers were card holders

- **1,756** early years and childcare workers had downloaded the care worker card.





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# A workforce that has the public's confidence

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## **A registered social care workforce that has the public's confidence.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

We protect the public by making sure the regulated workforce is registered and fit to practise.

People who rely on care and support can be sure that a registered worker is suitably qualified and has agreed to meet the professional standards we have set for the sector.

The most recent Omnibus survey of the Welsh public in March 2023 showed that people have a positive view of the workforce's skills and professionalism:

- **72 per cent** of those polled said they had confidence in those who work in care
- **82 per cent** of those surveyed knew what an acceptable standard of care was.

## **Registered social care workers**

- **53,537 social care workers** were registered with us by 31 March 2023
- This is **18,000** in place than in March 2022
- **Most of the social care workforce** in Wales is now registered with us.

## **Fitness to practise**

In 2022 to 2023:

- **394 social care workers** were referred to our fitness to practise team
- we held **50 final hearings**
- **36 people (0.07 per cent of the Register)** were removed from the Register, so they can no longer work in a registered social care role in Wales.

Taking part in a fitness to practise investigation can be confusing and upsetting. So we set up a **free, independent and confidential [well-being assistance helpline](#)** to support anyone going through the hearings process:

- **10 people** made contact
- **25 counselling sessions** have been held.



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# A qualified, knowledgeable and skilled workforce

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## **A social care and early years workforce that's suitably qualified, knowledgeable and skilled with the right values, behaviours and practice.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

We have supported people who are employed in social care and early years to develop their skills and improve their ability to effectively support people and provide care.

We have listened to the sector and worked with partners to make changes to some qualifications.

## **Public perception of the workforce's skills**

In March 2023, the Omnibus survey of the Welsh public revealed that:

**67 per cent** of the public think the workforce (residential care workers, home care workers and early years and childcare workers) is always skilled and professional in the work that they do.

While **67 per cent** think people should receive care in Welsh, if that's what they would prefer.

Our data suggests that around **29 per cent** of the social care workforce in Wales can understand Welsh to some degree and we continue to look at ways in which we can support the workforce to [use Welsh at work](#).

## **Investing in the workforce**

We paid **£7,144,856** to local authorities through the **Social Care Workforce Development Grant**, match funded by **£3,062,081** by local authorities, to support the social care workforce.

## Qualification changes

We made changes to the **Level 2 and Level 3 Health and Social Care, and Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development qualifications** after feedback.

We made changes to the assessments and added some more units.

## Safeguarding

In November 2022, we helped launch **Wales's first national safeguarding training, learning and development standards**.

The standards set out the skills, attitudes, knowledge and values people working with adults and children at risk need to have.

## Qualifications-based register

We published our [analysis on the qualifications of the registered workforce](#) who provide care and support. A qualifications-based register is essential to make sure registered workers are suitably skilled and knowledgeable.



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# Attract, recruit and retain people with the right values

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## **Social care and early years services that attract, recruit and retain people with the right values to meet the needs of those who need care and support.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

We continue to build on the WeCare Wales brand to attract, recruit and retain people in the social care and early years sector.

We've further developed our WeCare Wales national campaign and jobs portal, which is being valued and used by more providers. We've introduced a guaranteed interview scheme and have built on our partnership working to continuously improve our Introduction to social care and childcare programmes.

We have seen an increase in the volume of jobs being posted on our jobs portal and in the number of direct applications.

The jobs portal is an easy way for social care and early years employers to advertise their job vacancies and for people to see the vacancies available within their area.

## **WeCare Wales**

In 2022 to 2023:

- WeCare Wales ran **5 campaigns** focusing on: social care, social workers, early years and childcare, apprenticeships and the Welsh language.
- **62,461,120 impressions** across all campaigns (the number of times the content was displayed)



- **37 per cent** told us they felt more positive about social care and early years after seeing a WeCare Wales advert
- **19 per cent** of people in Wales told us they were aware of WeCare Wales
- the WeCare Wales website had **139,779 visitors**
- **6,442 jobs** were posted on the WeCare Wales jobs portal.

**600 people** had completed the **Introduction to social care** programme by the end of March 2023.

Following the programme, **20 per cent** of people have found either employment or continued with their education.

More than **70 members** of Swansea's African Community Centre completed the programme and **35** have since gone on to work in social care.

**116 people** completed the **Introduction to Childcare** programme in the first **six months** after it was launched.

**“As a result of this course I was considering a change in career. After 20 years at my current job, I have given in my notice to start a new career in childcare. Luckily, I have got a full-time job as a nursery nurse and start in two weeks, and I can't wait!”**

**- Introduction to childcare participant**



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# Practice and policy that's underpinned by innovation, research and data

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## **Social care practice and policy that's underpinned by innovation, high-quality research, data and other forms of evidence.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

We continued to lead the work around the:

- [Strategic approach to social care data](#)
- [National social care data portal for Wales](#)
- [Social care research and development strategy](#).

We've also worked closely with a range of partners to support research communities of practice, capability building, sharing practice and innovation work.

## **Social care workforce data report**

In June 2022, we published the [Social care workforce data report](#), which gives a clear picture of the workforce on 31 March 2021.

The report was based on data from all **22 local authorities** and **2,173 settings or providers**.

## **National social care data portal**

In May 2022, we launched a new 'look and feel' data portal, which has data about a range of social care services.

The portal is available for everyone, although its main audience is planners, local authority commissioners, researchers and people leading services.

In 2023, we'll be adding more data to the portal to support workforce planning.

## **Social care innovation support**

We began a long-term programme looking at how we can support social care innovation in Wales.

We set up a community of practice to support the use of evidence in designing social care services, which has more than **60 members**.

## **A new research, innovation and improvement strategy for social care**

During the year, we brought together partners and stakeholders to support the development of a new research, innovation and improvement strategy for social care. This will build on the [\*\*Social care research and development strategy 2018 to 2023\*\*](#), in partnership with Health and Care Research Wales.

We want to create a culture where evidence is central to provision and used to inform decisions at all levels of social care. In 2023 to 2024, we want to [\*\*hear your views\*\*](#) on the work that's been done so far.



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# Services that embed and deliver strengths- based approaches

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## **Social care services that embed and deliver strengths-based approaches to care and support.**

An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

Putting the person and their needs at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over the outcomes that help them achieve well-being is a key principle of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

People are the experts in their own lives, and by working with professionals, they're best placed to tell us what will help their well-being.

We've been producing practical tools and resources to help professionals use a [strengths-based approach](#) in their practice.

In 2022 to 2023, we provided training to **more than 260 Responsible Individuals** in Wales about:

- the legislative context in Wales
- outcome-focused and strengths-based practice
- how to put 'what matters' conversations at the heart of care and support provision.

We ran a network of mentors to champion the strengths-based approach in their organisation. Members include staff from **19 local authorities** and the unpaid carers' organisation Credu Cymru.

## **Management and leadership programmes**

We have oversight of a number of management and leadership programmes.  
To date:

- **751 people** have attended the Team Manager Development Programme
- **90 people** have attended the Middle Manager Development Programme.

**Ninety-nine per cent** of those who attended felt it was relevant to them and their organisation, and that it met their needs.

We also worked with the sector to develop **two new programmes** – one for aspiring middle managers and one about collective and compassionate leadership.



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# **Social Care Wales provides effective, high quality and sustainable services**

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An overview of our progress against this outcome from our [strategic plan](#) during 2022 to 2023.

As a national leadership organisation, we have a responsibility to lead by example in the way we work.

To be an effective organisation, we must understand and help meet the challenges and opportunities faced by people who work in the social care and early years sectors.

We continue to work with our customers to make sure our services meet their changing needs. We use feedback to challenge and shape our business, projects and strategies.

We've continued to show openness and transparency in our decision making (governance) in the way we work and the way in which we spend public money in meeting our five-year plan.

We received positive reports from Audit Wales and our internal auditors about our governance arrangements, as well as positive feedback from our sponsoring Minister and officials on our work to support the sector.

In 2022 to 2023, we published our:

- Strategic plan for 2022 to 2027, with a launch event at the Senedd in April 2022
- *internal marketing and communications approach* and *digital strategy*, which set out how we approach our work to support our customers. We want to make sure our online services align with our growing audiences and they meet our audiences' content, accessibility and experience needs

- *internal Welsh language strategy* to help us support our staff to learn Welsh and improve their bilingual skills
- *internal training and learning plan* to supports our staff's development
- Strategic equalities plan, which complements our strategic equalities plan.

We put our Decarbonisation action plan in place and since 2019, we've reduced our carbon footprint by **44 per cent**.

More than **1.8 million people** visited our website

We have more than **7,000 followers** on X (Twitter), **4,500 followers** on our Facebook page and more than **1,200 followers** on LinkedIn.

## **Our staff**

By the end of March 2023, we had:

- **201** staff members
- recruited **52** new employees
- **10.92 per cent** staff turnover
- **3.6 per cent** sickness absence rate
- **2.4 per cent** sickness absence rate, if we exclude long-term sickness
- **clean audit certificate** shown in our statutory annual accounts.