

Resource for workers who are new to working in social care in Wales

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Introduction

Social care workers in Wales provide vital care and support to the people who live here. We welcome and appreciate your contribution.

We want to help you feel at home and part of the community in Wales.

Wales' culture is distinct with its own language, customs, festivals, music, art, cuisine, mythology, history and politics. Wales is a bilingual country, where we speak Welsh and English.

At Social Care Wales, we aim to make a positive difference to care and support for children, adults and their families and carers in Wales.

Our role includes:

- Registration and regulation: Ensuring that social care workers meet professional standards
- Improvement and development: Providing resources, training, and development opportunities
- Innovation and research: Promoting new approaches and gathering data to improve services.

We want to make sure you have the right information to help get you started on your social care career, or to continue your career journey, in Wales.

We've put together this guide to highlight the resources we have available to help you settle in.

You can use this guide to support your employer's usual induction process. You'll find helpful resources and ideas to get you started. You should read this guide alongside your employer's own policies and procedures.

Your employer will support you and your career development, but it's important that all workers also take responsibility for your own professional development throughout your career.

Social care in Wales

Social care means different things and is delivered differently across the world.

These short videos introduce social care specifically in Wales:

[What is social care?](#)

[How does social care work in Wales?](#)

Social care in Wales is underpinned by the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

The [WeCare Wales](#) website has a range of resources. This includes information about [different roles in social care](#), [stories from workers across Wales](#) talking about what it's like to work in social care and [resources](#) about social care in Wales.

The Welsh Government has produced a resource to support [international workers in social care to settle in Wales](#).

Getting started

All Wales Induction Framework

For new social care workers, your employer will ensure you have a full induction into your role which includes completing the [All Wales Induction Framework](#).

Social care workers who are new to the sector, organisation or job role should also complete the All Wales Induction Framework.

The [framework](#) is split into seven sections about the knowledge, understanding and skills you'll need to gain during your induction period.

There are also [digital learning modules](#) that cover the code of professional practice, the importance of the Welsh language and culture and legislation that supports a rights-based approach.

Newly qualified social workers

Newly qualified social workers have [guidance for their first three years in practice](#). Anyone qualifying after April 2016 will need to complete a [consolidation programme](#) in the first three years. We also encourage internationally qualified social workers to complete this programme if you qualified before April 2016, but it is optional.

If you qualified outside of Wales, to register as a social worker you need to have a qualification that's been assessed as equivalent to social work education in Wales. We have more [information for social workers](#) who qualified outside the UK, who want to register to work in Wales.

The [social worker title is protected](#). Only people with a professional [social work qualification](#) who are registered can practise as social workers.

Qualifications

Anybody who'd like to work in social care, childcare and early years in Wales needs a qualification that's listed in the [qualification framework](#). If you hold an international qualification that isn't on the list, [you can ask us to assess your qualification](#).

If you have any questions about qualifications, we have a 'chat' function on our website to help you. You can also talk with your employer.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding practices differ in other countries. It's important you're aware of the safeguarding procedures in Wales. You can find out about the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#) on our website or via the app, which can be found in the app store for your device.

The [Group A safeguarding](#) e-learning module will give you an introduction and a practical understanding of safeguarding. You can identify which group training is required for your role [here](#).

We also have [resources and case studies](#) to help you.

You should use these resources alongside your employer's safeguarding policy and procedures.

On 21 March 2022, Wales joined more than 60 nations around the world in prohibiting the use of physical punishment of children in line with the **Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020**.

This means children in Wales have the same protection from assault as adults and means the physical punishment of children is prohibited in all settings in Wales.

Strengths-based practice

Strengths-based practice is when we work with an individual to understand what matters to them. We develop an understanding of what needs to happen to help the person live the best life possible, focusing on their overall well-being.

You can find out more about [strengths-based practice on our website](#).

We've produced an [e-learning module](#) which contains information on strengths-based practice and legislation that supports a rights-based approach.

Welsh language and culture

Wales' culture is distinct with its own language, customs, festivals, music, art, cuisine, mythology, history and politics. We want to help you feel at home and part of the community in Wales.

Wales is a bilingual country, where we speak Welsh and English. There's an expectation that a person who uses care and support services receives this in their language of choice. Receiving care and support in their preferred language means people feel more comfortable and can fully understand. There is more information about the 'active offer' and what this means in social care in [More than just words](#).

You may want to consider learning to speak Welsh. Learning Welsh can help you provide care for everyone in Wales. It can also help you in your new life here in Wales. There's [a free online tool](#) you can use to assess your Welsh language skills.

We've developed an [e-learning resource on Welsh language awareness](#) for new workers who want to learn more about the Welsh language, culture and working bilingually. It includes information about the Welsh language and bilingualism, what the law says, and what we must do and why.

We've created [Camau courses](#) in partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh especially for people working in social care. You could start by learning a few key phrases that would mean a lot to the people you support. This flexible, bitesize learning focuses on the Welsh words and phrases workers are most likely to need when you're communicating with the people you support.

Infection prevention and control

You should read your employer's policies and procedures for infection prevention and control carefully.

Good infection prevention and control (IP&C) practice is essential for maintaining a safe environment for everyone and reducing the risk of the spread of infection and infectious diseases.

We've developed a set of [digital learning modules](#) to help anyone working in social care or early years and childcare understand how to reduce the spread of infections.

You can find out more by [watching this short video](#) by Health Education Improvement Wales.

Employment rights

We understand that starting a new job in a new country can be daunting, exciting and overwhelming.

It's important to know you have employment rights here in Wales and your employer will have policies and procedures in place to support you. You should read these carefully and ask questions if you're unsure of anything.

We have a [Code of Practice for Social Care Employers](#) (the employers' Code). This sets out the standards expected of social care employers. The focus of the employers' Code is the standards required of employers to ensure a safe, skilled and appropriately supported social care workforce.

If you'd like more information, [ACAS \(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service\)](#) provides guidance and advice on employment rights here in the United Kingdom.

Trade Unions

If you're a worker in Wales, you have the right to belong to a Trade Union. You can find out more about joining a union on [The Trade Union Congress \(TUC\) website](#).

Modern slavery

We know modern slavery (although rare) can happen in the social care sector. Modern slavery is a serious crime.

If you feel you're a victim of slavery, you should seek help as soon as you can.

The Welsh Government have [information about your rights](#) and where you can get help to break free from slavery.

The [Live Fear Free helpline](#) provides help and advice to:

- anyone experiencing modern slavery, domestic abuse or sexual violence
- people who know someone who needs help
- practitioners seeking professional advice.

Well-being

Your well-being is important.

Well-being at work means every part of our working life, including the environment we work in, how we feel about our work, the organisation and the people we work with.

Good well-being at work is important because:

- it gives us a sense of purpose and achievement in our role
- we perform better if we're happier at work and confident in what we're doing, which means we can better support people
- staff who feel supported at work are more likely to stay with an organisation.

Our [well-being pages](#) provide health and well-being information and advice for social care and early years and childcare workers.

Being new to working in Wales may feel overwhelming, but prioritising your well-being will help you settle into your new role. Your employer can help you feel comfortable in your workplace, and support your well-being at work.

You may go through life experiences and circumstances which could impact on your ability to do your job.

These could include pregnancy, menopause, a caring responsibility, illness or living with a long-term condition. You may also be feeling isolated. It's important that you talk to your manager about any difficulties or challenges you're facing. Having open and honest conversations with your employer is important for your well-being.

Your manager will work with you to decide how best to support you, and can make adjustments to help you keep working in a way that works for you.

This [online module](#) can help you prioritise your personal well-being.

Support

[Canopi](#) offers a free and confidential mental health support service for social care and NHS staff in Wales aged 18 years and over.

They offer various levels of mental health support including:

- self-help resources
- support from Wellbeing Allies
- guided self-help
- virtual and face-to-face therapies with accredited specialists.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The UK's Equality Act is a law which aims to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promote a fair and more equal society. It protects people from discrimination. Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly or differently because of who they

are based on protected characteristics.

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) website provides information about discrimination. The nine [protected characteristics](#) are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Discrimination of any kind shouldn't be tolerated in social care in Wales. Your employer should have policies and procedures in place to support individuals reporting discrimination and to address these reports.

You should report any discrimination you've experienced or witnessed in your workplace.

Anti racism

The Welsh Government has published an [Anti-racist Wales action plan](#) which sets out a commitment to eliminating racism in Wales. Anti-racism means actively opposing racism in all its forms.

You should report any racism you experience or witness in your workplace. Racism is not acceptable in social care in Wales.

LGBTQ+

The Welsh Government has published [an LGBTQ+ action plan for Wales](#). LGBTQ+ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual/bi, transgender/trans, queer or questioning people.

This action plan has the ambition to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe.

People receiving care support or working in social care shouldn't be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation.

HIV Action Plan

HIV-related stigma is unacceptable in social care in Wales.

The Welsh Government have produced a [HIV action plan](#) to make sure people can live well with HIV.

We all have a part to play to ensure people living with HIV who work in social care or receive care and support aren't discriminated against.

Public Health Wales have created an [animation](#) to help educate professionals and the public on HIV as well as combat HIV-related stigma.

Regulation

Social Care Wales is a regulatory body and our vision is to make a positive difference to care and support in Wales for children, adults and their families and carers. Social care workers in Wales need to register with us.

At the moment those working in early years and childcare don't need to be registered in Wales.

Social care workers new to Wales may not have registered with a regulatory body before. The main purpose of registration is to protect the public as it ensures only those who are competent and qualified can deliver care and support in roles where registration is required.

Being registered with us means you're part of a professional workforce and can show that you have skills and knowledge vital to providing good care and support to the people of Wales.

You can find out more about why we register and [what registration means here](#).

You can find out about [different ways to register here](#). Your employer should also help you to register.

Codes of Professional Practice

Once a worker has registered with us you'll be required to adhere to the [Codes of Professional Practice](#).

We have a Code of Professional Practice which is a set of rules, or standards, care professionals must work to, to help keep individuals and themselves safe and well. All social care workers in Wales must follow this code.

You should be familiar with the Codes of Practice if you're working in social care in Wales. When you apply to register, you'll be asked to confirm you've read the code and agree to follow it as it sets out the expectation and standards you should work to.

Your employer may also reference the code in their policies.

There is also [practice guidance](#) for most roles in social care. Your employer will use the practice guidance to support you in meeting the standards in the Code of Professional Practice. There is also explanatory guidance around using social media and openness and honesty when things go wrong.

Fitness to practise

We have a very committed social care workforce in Wales who provide excellent care every day to the people who live here. But sometimes concerns are raised to us.

As part of our responsibility to make sure social care workers on the [Register](#) have the skills, knowledge and character to carry out their work safely and effectively, we investigate concerns raised about registered social care workers.

You can find out more about the [fitness to practise process on our website](#).

Social Care Wales

You can find out more about Social Care Wales and our role [here](#).

We have a number of resources available on [our website](#) to help and support you in your career in social care here in Wales.

The Insight Collective

We have a research, data, innovation and improvement service for social care called the [Insight Collective](#). Here you'll find the latest research and data, guidance on training, opportunities to work together, and advice on available support.

[Our Insight Collective website](#) is a place where people delivering and accessing care can discuss the topics that matter to them, share their knowledge, and gain confidence. Our aim is to work together to make a positive difference to social care.