Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru
Social Care Wales

Understanding continuing professional development (CPD)

Find out how CPD supports your professional development, which learning activities count as CPD, and how you can use reflective practice to apply what you learn in your role.

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Continuing professional development (CPD) is the learning and development you do throughout your career to maintain and develop your knowledge, skills and practice.

CPD plays an important role in professional practice, helping you:

- keep your learning up to date
- adapt to changes in practice
- continue to provide safe, effective and person-centred care and support.

This page explains how CPD supports your professional development, which learning activities count as CPD, and how you can use reflective practice to apply what you learn in your role.

All registered workers need to carry out CPD. You can find out more about your responsibilities on our registration pages.

Why is CPD important?

CPD means you're keeping up to date on the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for your role. It helps you respond to changes in legislation, guidance, research and best practice, so you can continue to provide high-quality care and support.

CPD can also help you to:

- build confidence in your role
- develop your knowledge and skills
- identify your learning and development needs
- prepare for new responsibilities

- support career development.

What counts as CPD?

CPD includes both formal and informal learning.

Examples include:

- training courses and qualifications
- e-learning
- webinars, workshops and conferences
- reading guidance, research and articles
- podcasts and videos
- reflective supervision
- mentoring or coaching
- professional discussions
- shadowing colleagues
- learning from feedback and experience.

The learning activities you choose will vary at different stages of your career. You should focus on what helps you develop professionally and improves your practice.

Reflective practice

Reflective practice is an important part of CPD.

Reflection helps you think about what you've learnt, why it matters to your role and how you can use it to improve your practice.

You can reflect on learning by asking yourself:

- what have I learnt?
- why is it important?
- how will I use this in my role?
- what difference could this make for the people I support?

When you reflect on your learning, it helps you put new knowledge and skills into practice and supports your ongoing professional development.

You can also reflect through conversations with others.

You can find practical guidance, reflection tools and examples in the reflective practice section.

Supporting CPD through supervision

Supervision gives you an opportunity to discuss your learning and development needs with your managers. These conversations can help you identify learning opportunities that support your role and improve the care or support you provide.

Supervision also allows you to discuss what you've learnt and think about how you can use it in your role. Sharing learning with colleagues, for example in team meetings, gives everyone the opportunity to learn from each other and improve their practice.

Planning your development

Your learning and development should continue throughout your career.

The Codes of Professional Practice for Social Care and the National Occupational Standards (NOS) can help you understand the knowledge, skills and behaviours you need for your role. You can also use them to guide learning and development conversations during supervision.

Planning your development can help you:

- identify learning priorities
- build confidence
- prepare for new responsibilities
- explore career development opportunities.

You may also find the Pay and progression framework and Qualification framework helpful when planning future learning and progression opportunities.

Learning, reflection and supervision work together to support your continuous professional development.

Next steps

- Use the learning section to find resources that match your role and development needs.
- Talk to your manager about your learning and development needs during supervision. Together, you can identify learning opportunities that support your role and professional development.
- Visit the reflective practice section for practical guidance and tools to help you put your learning into practice.

- If you support others, visit the supporting learning and reflection section for guidance on creating a positive learning culture and using supervision to support professional development.

Related pages

- Learning
- Reflective practice
- Supporting professional development
- Continuous professional development (registration)
- Codes of Professional Practice
- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Pay and progression framework
- Qualification framework