

# Ymlaen implementation plan: 2024 to 2025

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How we'll work with partners to achieve the ambitions of Ymlaen - the research, innovation and improvement strategy for social care.

People working in social care go above and beyond to deliver services that improve outcomes for the people of Wales.

We want to create a culture where evidence is central to policy and practice and used to inform decisions at all levels of social care, and where people feel inspired and supported to try new things.

Ymlaen – meaning 'forward' in Welsh – is the strategy we've developed together to deliver on those aims.

## **Our vision**

To help people leading, developing and delivering social care feel confident, supported and inspired to use practice, evidence and innovation to make a positive difference to care and support in Wales.

Delivering the vision will need strong collaboration across a wide range of partner organisations. Social Care Wales will lead this new strategy and work with partners to deliver it.

Social Care Wales will keep track of the implementation and will bring partners and stakeholders together regularly to share progress and agree our future work.

Our new strategy aims to make each partner's contribution to support for research, innovation and continuous improvement clearer. This is an opportunity for all of us to 'join the dots' for people who work in social care and to do the hard work of finding what they need to make a difference to how they provide support.

## Read the strategy

To achieve Ymlaen's vision, Social Care Wales will work with partners to:

### **Set direction**

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Identify shared priorities for research, innovation and improvement so we can direct attention, resource and action to where it's needed most.

### **Why?**

We want to make sure our focus is positive, helpful, productive and informed by what matters most to people. We need to take an intersectional approach, where we consider how different kinds of discrimination can interact and shape people's unique experiences.

### **What Social Care Wales will do in the first year**

We'll explore an approach for horizon scanning and setting joint priorities for research, innovation and continuous improvement work for social care. This work will then be designed and implemented in 2025 to 2026.

We'll carry out research prioritisation exercises. This will determine where more research is needed and prioritise it, to inform the work of researchers, funders and other stakeholders on:

- transitions between children's and adults' social care
- using linked data for research on adult social care.

We'll provide leadership, expertise and input for policymakers for continuous improvement and innovation work by:

- leading the agreed programme of work to support innovation for social care on behalf of Welsh Government, as set out in [Wales innovates: creating a stronger, fairer, greener Wales](#)
- developing evidence for key policy issues, such as in our Workforce Insights Series and the National Social Care Data Portal for Wales.

We'll deliver a data maturity assessment to provide direction for data work that supports the continuous improvement of social care.

We'll carry out a digital maturity and literacy assessment across local authorities and providers to provide direction for digital development and learning in social care.

We'll lead the social care theme for the Administrative Data Research Wales programme of work.

## **Connect**

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'Join the dots' between different types of support for research, innovation and continuous improvement in social care.

### **Why?**

We need to co-ordinate the support for people co-designing, delivering and leading services that nurtures a positive culture of working together. We need to bring about action and be flexible to meet different needs.

### **What Social Care Wales will do in the first year**

We'll bring Ymlaen partners together to join up and learn from our work on research, innovation and continuous improvement by:

- collaborating with ExChange on joint events and publications

- supporting Health Technology Wales in their social care work
- promoting findings from partner work with our networks, such as from the Networked Data Lab work on reablement
- supporting social care projects and ‘challenge’ projects with the Small Business Research Initiative
- helping people in social care apply for the Bevan Exemplar programme
- supporting the Regional Safeguarding Boards to implement the [Group B safeguarding training package](#).

We’ll share and promote findings from partner work with our networks through the [Insight Collective website](#).

We’ll bring together our community of practice for Responsible Individuals, with the support of Care Inspectorate Wales.

We’ll bring together our Evidence Community for social care researchers and practitioners.

We’ll fund, support and promote the Developing Evidence-Enriched Practice (DEEP) programme to:

- design, develop, deliver and support the implementation of new DEEP tools, approaches and resources
- deliver DEEP training and events
- provide coaching and advice on research skills.

We’ll promote the [collaborative communication programme](#) to embed strengths-based practice.

We’ll work with Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) to explore bespoke support to encourage and nurture evidence-enriched practice ambassadors across the sector.

## **Enable**

Show

Create conditions that enable positive and lasting change in social care.

## **Why?**

We need to make it possible for people to learn, grow and respond to the challenges in social care. Things like regulation and funding approaches have the potential to put up barriers if they're not designed to support the vision and ambitions for social care.

## **What Social Care Wales will do in the first year**

We'll promote our workforce wellbeing framework and the principles of compassionate leadership. We'll help people turn these values into practice through dedicated learning and information sessions.

We'll promote information and resources to enable a greater range of partners to understand and engage with social care in Wales, through things like our [What is social care?](#) videos.

We'll develop and share a guide to help people create and nurture positive cultures and support its implementation and learning. The positive cultures guide will describe the components that help create a culture where people and services thrive.

We'll implement our [researcher support offer](#) for universities and research centres by:

- supporting research about social care through our research support and engagement framework
- establishing and maintaining an adult social care linked data research group
- sitting on research funding panels.

We'll produce and publish high quality [evidence summaries](#) around priority topics in social care.

We'll carry out research and collect and analyse data about the workforce, including through:

- our annual data collection exercise with local authorities and social care employers
- 'Have your say', our annual workforce survey.

We'll work with Digital Health and Care Wales to implement the information sharing governance portal in local authorities to make it easier to share data that could help drive improvement.

## Support

Show

Provide direct support to people working in social care to encourage research, innovation and continuous improvement.

## Why?

We need to support research, innovation and continuous improvement in ways that respond to the ambitions and complexities of social care, with a focus on our national policy aspirations to create a fairer and more equal country.

## What Social Care Wales will do in the first year

We'll support the Welsh Government's programme for the transformation of children's social care by:

- embedding evidence-based therapeutic approaches through the delivery of [PACE](#) training and events to support models of care

- bringing together our community of action for people leading the development of new models of residential care in local authorities
- working with the [WeCare Wales](#) programme to promote careers in residential care.

We'll support people and organisations to develop their approaches and confidence in strengths-based practice, by:

- delivering bespoke workshops and training to partner agencies
- creating and sharing a new guide for commissioning and evaluating training
- bringing together the National mentors network.

We'll deliver [evaluation support](#) for people working in social care, by:

- delivering a series of evaluation modules
- providing bespoke advice and support through drop-in sessions
- developing evaluation resources.

We'll enhance our knowledge mobilisation offer and continue to deliver direct mentoring and support.

We'll launch a resource to support people to develop their skills in practice research, innovation and continuous improvement.

We'll design, develop, deliver and support the implementation of new innovation tools, approaches and resources by:

- providing [innovation coaching](#) to groups and individuals
- establishing and managing a peer support network of people who've been through the coaching process
- providing innovation coaching training, to introduce the tools and methods used as part of the coaching
- identifying and developing ambassadors for innovation coaching.



We'll embed and champion an evidence-enriched community-management approach for social care.

We'll provide expertise, advice, and digital space for partners to design, set up and manage their own communities of practice.

We'll help leaders in social care to develop the skills and cultures for [compassionate leadership](#) using our positive cultures guide by:

- delivering / introduction to compassionate leadership sessions to social care managers
- providing support, information and resources through our compassionate leadership pages and on the [Gwella portal](#)
- building a network for compassionate leadership in social care.

## **Disrupt**

Show

Inspire new ways of working.

### **Why?**

We need to be bolder and more courageous in tackling the challenges and inequalities faced in social care. This is the only way we'll create innovative and sustainable models of care and support.

We need to challenge the way things are done now, which will deliver more of the same, while appreciating work already being done to improve outcomes. This will help us respond to what matters, now and in the future.

### **What Social Care Wales will do in the first year**

We'll support the delivery of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan by:

- developing a programme to provide mentoring, shadowing and skill development opportunities for people from ethnic minority backgrounds to progress in the workplace
- leading on the collection of data for the health and social care Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). This will offer a set of twelve measures to shed light on the barriers and opportunities for the ethnically diverse social care workforce in Wales.

We'll use research and engagement evidence to review, implement and test new and innovative ways of supporting social care, such as our innovation coaching service.

We'll bring together our community of interest to explore and share opportunities for developing place-based care.

We'll publish innovative practice examples and research initiatives on our [project finder](#), to help spread ideas and practice.

We'll advocate for social care in national policy and working groups to make sure their work reflects the goals and needs of social care, such as the Health and Care Research Wales Advisory Group, the National Data Resource Programme Board and the AI Commission.