



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

Code of Professional Practice for Social Care Employers



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Other formats

This document is also available in Welsh
It's also available in large text, braille or other formats, if required.

Code of Professional Practice for Social Care Employers

This Code of Professional Practice for Social Care Employers (the Employers' Code) is published by Social Care Wales under Section 112 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (the Act).

The Code is a list of statements describing the standards expected of social care employers. The Employers' Code focuses on the standards required of employers to make sure the social care workforce is safe, skilled and appropriately supported. It's not intended to cover all situations or aspects of employer responsibility.

Employers have to meet a range of other requirements set out in legislation, statutory regulations and guidance.

This Employers' Code replaces the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care Employers published in 2018.

This Employers' Code applies from **1 July 2026**

How the Employers' Code is used in regulation

For social care employers in services regulated under Part 1 of the 2016 Act*, the service regulations on Requirements on Service Providers as to Staffing say:

The service provider must adhere to the code of practice on the standards of conduct and practice expected of persons employing or seeking to employ social care workers, which is required to be published by Social Care Wales under section 112(1) (b) of the Act.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) can take action if providers don't comply with this regulation.

Under the following sections of the Act, Social Care Wales can also give advice to employers:

- Sections 69: Social Care Wales may give advice to any person providing a care and support service or other assistance (including grants) for the purpose of encouraging improvement in the provision of that service;
- Section 126: following a fitness to practise investigation relating to a registered person which is not referred for hearing by a fitness to practise panel, Social Care Wales may give advice to any person involved in the investigation in respect of any matter related to the investigation;
- Section 137: where a fitness to practise panel determines that a registered person's fitness to practise is not impaired, the panel may give advice to any person involved in the proceedings on any matter related to the allegation against the registered person or the information that gave rise to the proceedings.

*Regulated services include:

- care home services
- secure accommodation services
- residential family centre services
- adoption services
- fostering services
- adult placement schemes
- advocacy services
- domiciliary support services
- special school residential services.

Who is a 'social care worker'?

Social care workers manage or provide care and support in connection with services regulated under the Act.

Social care workers include:

- care and support workers
- social care managers
- social workers
- student social workers
- Responsible Individuals designated by service providers, CIW inspectors, childminders and providers of day care registered under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) measure 2010.

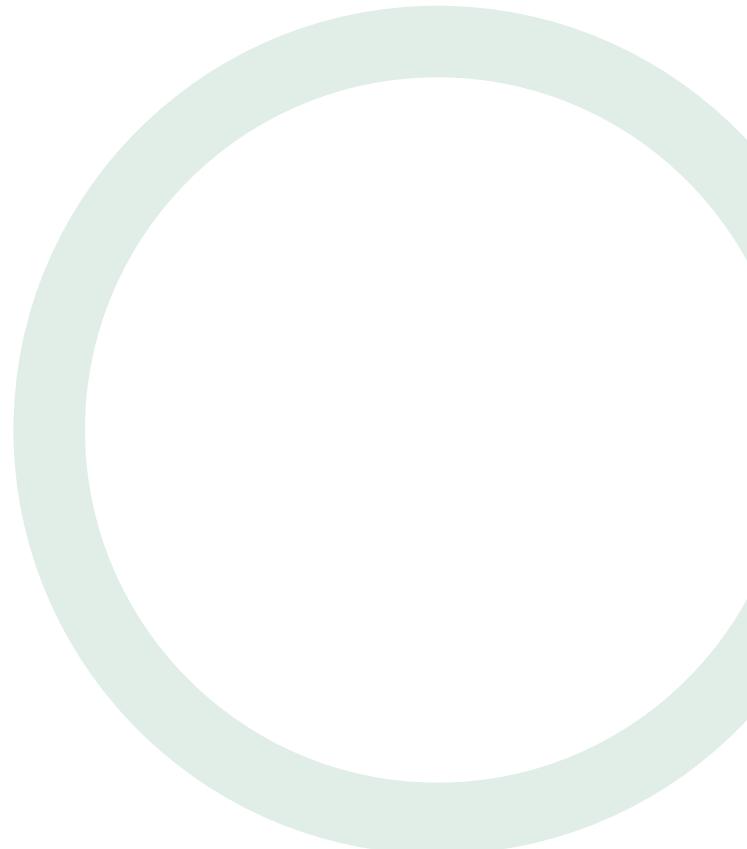
You can find out more about the list of social care workers at: www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/2/section/79

The list of social care workers may change over time.

Who does the Employers' Code apply to?

The Employers' Code applies to anyone employing or seeking to employ social care workers, as defined by the Act.

As childminders and day care providers aren't employed (they're contracted by parents), the employers' Code doesn't formally apply to them. But, since the employers' Code represents good practice, it's expected that childminders employing assistants and childcare practitioners would use it to complement staffing standard 13 of the National Minimum Standards for Childcare.



The Code

There are five sections of the Code.

- 1.** Make sure people who wish to enter the social care workforce are suitable and that they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- 2.** Have policies, systems and practices in place to enable social care workers to meet the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care.
- 3.** Provide and support learning and development opportunities to enable social care workers to develop their knowledge and skills.
- 4.** Have policies and systems to protect people from unsafe situations, behaviour and practice, and take steps to respond when unsafe situations occur.
- 5.** Promote the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations.

To meet all the standards in regulated services, where required, a suitable Responsible Individual and Registered Manager must be appointed and supported by the employer to carry out their responsibilities.

Section 1:

Make sure people who wish to enter the social care workforce are suitable and that they understand their roles and responsibilities.

Employers must:

- 1.1 make sure that only suitable people with the right knowledge, skills, values, potential, and any required qualifications or professional registration, enter the workforce, by using rigorous recruitment policies and processes
- 1.2 check criminal records, relevant registers, references from previous employers, any gaps in employment history, and legal entitlement to work in Wales before an appointment is made for someone to work in social care
- 1.3 seek and provide accurate and appropriate references about a person's suitability to work in social care and in a specific role
- 1.4 make sure workers understand their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities by giving them clear information
- 1.5 make sure workers know how they can meet relevant legislation, policies and procedures by giving them clear information and guidance
- 1.6 give workers clear information about lines of management, communication and support in the workplace. This includes information about support for their health, safety and well-being in the workplace
- 1.7 make sure workers' terms and conditions are lawful and adequate to sustain a suitable workforce. Review terms and conditions regularly to make sure they remain lawful and adequate.

Section 2:

Have policies, systems and practices in place to enable social care workers to meet the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care.

Employers must:

- 2.1 support social care workers (including agency staff) to meet the standards in the Code of Professional Practice and associated practice guidance
- 2.2 make sure the management and supervision of workers is effective, to promote best practice and good conduct. This includes supporting workers to improve their performance and making sure they are fit to practise
- 2.3 if employing workers from other professions (such as nursing or occupational therapy), support them to meet their professional codes and report workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired to the relevant regulatory body
- 2.4 put in place and monitor policies and procedures to respond to allegations of harm, neglect or abuse. Policies and procedures must make sure that workers have knowledge about signs of harm, neglect or abuse and know the action they should take
- 2.5 put in place and monitor written policies on confidentiality and record keeping and make sure workers understand their data protection responsibilities
- 2.6 make sure there are robust systems to actively listen to and respond to feedback from individuals and carers to shape and improve services and staff performance
- 2.7 make sure there are policies and systems for workers to raise concerns about any matter which might affect the delivery of safe and dignified care and support, and take adequate action to respond to concerns
- 2.8 make sure there is a supportive culture and systems in place so that workers will be open and honest if things go wrong (meet their duty of candour), report adverse incidents and learn from mistakes. This includes trying to resolve difficulties at an early stage
- 2.9 make sure you are compliant with legislation and duties in relation to safeguarding and provide appropriate training to staff.

Section 3:

Provide and support learning and development opportunities to enable social care workers to develop their knowledge and skills.

Employers must:

- 3.1 provide robust and accessible induction and ongoing learning and development opportunities to help workers do their jobs effectively. This includes giving workers access to their personal learning and development record
- 3.2 contribute to providing social care and social work learning and development, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning
- 3.3 support workers to meet and maintain the conditions for professional registration, including any requirements for post registration training and learning
- 3.4 respond appropriately to any workers who need support because they do not feel able, or adequately prepared, to carry out their work
- 3.5 provide effective, regular supervision to workers to support them to develop and improve through reflective practice, using the Code of Professional Practice and associated practice guidance as a basis for discussions.

Section 4:

Have policies and systems to protect people from unsafe situations, behaviour and practice, and take steps to respond when unsafe situations occur.

Employers must:

- 4.1 put in place and follow policies and procedures that promote the health and well-being of workers, individuals and their families and carers, and take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed
- 4.2 put in place and follow policies and procedures that promote and protect the equality, diversity and inclusion of workers, individuals and their families and carers, and take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed
- 4.3 put in place and follow policies and procedures that make it clear to workers that bullying and harassment is not acceptable and take action to deal with such behaviour
- 4.4 put in place procedures for workers to report dangerous, discriminatory, or abusive behaviour and practice, and deal promptly, effectively and openly with reports
- 4.5 make it clear to workers, individuals, families and carers that violence, threats or abuse are not acceptable. This includes having clear policies and procedures for reducing the risk of violence and managing violent incidents
- 4.6 put in place policies, procedures and support for workers who experience trauma, harassment or violence in their work
- 4.7 put in place and follow policies and procedures to make sure there's compliance with relevant health, safety and security requirements. This includes making sure workers are aware of these, including mandatory requirements, any changes or updates, monitoring compliance and taking appropriate action where policies and procedures are not being followed
- 4.8 put in place and follow policies and procedures to investigate and deal adequately with disciplinary matters, including where the worker leaves the organisation. Take steps to act where policies and procedures are not being followed, such as making referrals to the Social Care Wales Fitness to Practise Team
- 4.9 provide support to workers who have had a fitness to practise concern raised about them and give clear guidance about the limits on their work. While doing this, make sure that the care and safety of individuals using services is the priority.

Section 5:

Promote the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations.

Employers must:

- 5.1 inform social care workers about this Employers' Code and what it means for them and the workplace
- 5.2 make sure social care workers know about and understand their Code of Professional Practice for Social Care and their professional responsibility to adhere to it
- 5.3 support social care managers to meet their additional responsibilities in Section 7 of the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care
- 5.4 make individuals and carers aware of the codes of professional practice for employers and social care workers and inform them of how to raise issues relating to the codes, including how to contact the employer and Social Care Wales
- 5.5 use the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care when making any decision that relates to a worker's fitness to practise
- 5.6 refer workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired to Social Care Wales. If appropriate, tell the worker a referral has been made
- 5.7 co-operate with Social Care Wales's investigations and hearings, including providing documents and attending hearings
- 5.8 respond appropriately to the findings and decisions of Social Care Wales about a worker's fitness to practise.

More information

For more information about the Code, including practice guidance and other resources, visit our website:

www.socialcare.wales/codes



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