

Social care worker card FAQs

What is the social care worker card?

This is a card that identifies social care workers in Wales and confirms they are key workers in fighting the current pandemic. It is not a registration card.

Why are you producing this card for social care workers?

Social care workers have made us aware that it can be difficult for them to prove their identity with the police, when travelling from home to their work, and supermarkets, when trying to benefit from special shopping arrangements made for NHS staff and other key workers. This, in turn, can have an impact on their ability to provide effective care and support for vulnerable people. As the social care sector is made up of thousands of organisations, there is currently no single card that identifies social care workers as key workers. The card we have developed is a response to this need at a time when it's needed the most.

Will this guarantee benefits for social care workers?

While we cannot guarantee that this card will always be recognised and acted upon by retailers and others, we hope it will provide more social care workers with the benefits offered to other key workers. Working alongside the Welsh Government, we have communicated with the police, Transport for Wales, bus companies and retail representatives, raising their awareness of the new card and encouraging them to formally recognise it.

Why do social care workers need to access the same benefits as NHS workers?

Social care workers are facing similar practical challenges as those working in the NHS and other key worker jobs. They are often working long hours and shifts, which gives them little time to do their shopping. Many of them, particularly those providing care at home to vulnerable people, often have to go shopping for the individuals they are supporting, while staff at adult care homes have to go out shopping for their workplace, if they are unable to secure deliveries.

Social care workers are playing a vital role in caring for adults and children in every community in Wales during this unprecedented crisis. They are supporting people to stay safe and well, which is crucial in helping relieve pressure on colleagues in the health service who are treating people with acute symptoms of COVID-19 in our hospitals.

When is it being launched?

The digital version of the card will be available from Wednesday, 15 April.

Does the card have an expiry date?

The digital and hard copy versions of the card are valid until 31 March 2021.

What kind of card is it?

There are two forms of the card – there is a digital version and a physical card which is made of plastic.

Why have two different kinds of cards?

We wanted to make these cards available quickly, so that social care workers can access potential benefits as soon as possible. A digital version allows us to do that, as workers can download it immediately. At the same time, we are producing a plastic card, which looks the same and will be available within the next three weeks. Social care workers will be able to use either version of the card.

What kind of information is on the cards?

Each card displays the worker's full name and identifies them as a key social care worker. The cards also include the logos of Social Care Wales, Welsh Government and Care Inspectorate Wales to demonstrate their official endorsement.

Does the card include a photo of the social care worker?

No, it does not include a photo. We would recommend that any worker using it to access benefits also presents a form of photo ID, such as a driving licence or a pass from their workplace.

Who will get them?

We aim to distribute them to all frontline social care workers in Wales.

How will the card be distributed?

An e-mail will go out to all professionally regulated social care workers (approximately 30,000) on our Register on Wednesday, 15 April, introducing the card and providing them with instructions on how to download it onto their smartphone. The plastic cards will be posted to the registered workers when they are ready.

What about those social care workers not on the Register?

When the instructions about downloading the digital card are sent out on Wednesday 15 April, all managers on our Register will be asked to distribute the same information to members of their teams who need the card but are currently not registered with us. Registered managers, heads of service and senior managers will also be asked to provide us with details of the number of hard copy cards they will need for unregistered members of their teams.

We will work with local authorities to distribute the card to other social care workers.

Will social workers get the card?

Yes, all social workers will be able to receive the card.

What if people haven't got a smartphone?

We believe most social care workers will have access to either a smartphone supplied by their employer or their own device. Even if they do not have a smartphone, they will not miss out, as a hard copy card will be available within the next three weeks.

How can these cards be used?

Along with Welsh Government and other partners, we are working with the police, retailers and transport providers to encourage them to recognise this card. This will then hopefully result in social care workers having practical help by allowing them to

shop at the same preferential times as other key workers and being able to move freely between their homes and workplaces.

What about the risk of them being misused?

The digital and hard copy versions of the cards are being distributed in a controlled and secure way. We will have a record of the names of all social care workers downloading the card and the physical card will have a magnetic signature strip which the holder will only be able to sign once. Only the person who has signed the card will be able to use it. We would recommend that any worker using the card to access benefits also presents a form of photo ID, such as a driving licence or a pass from their workplace. This will allow organisations to verify the identity of the individual, if necessary.

All social care workers work to a Code of Professional Practice which requires them to act with integrity and uphold public trust and confidence.

How will you make sure that this card is recognised by supermarkets, the police and other organisations?

Along with Welsh Government and other partners, we are working with the police, retailers and transport providers to encourage them to recognise this card. This will then hopefully result in social workers having practical help by allowing them to shop at the same preferential times as other key workers and being able to move freely between their homes and workplaces.

How is this card being promoted?

The card is being promoted by ourselves, Welsh Government and many of our partners involved in social care in Wales. This is being done through direct contact with the many organisations we would like to see formally recognising the card, social media, our website and the general media.

What if a card is lost?

If the physical card is lost, a worker should use their digital card instead. If they need a replacement for the physical card, they should contact us by e-mailing iwqueries@socialcare.wales

Are you looking to do something more long-term?

We are responding to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The card is designed to support social care workers during this time. As always, we will review feedback and take that into account when considering any further plans for the future.

If a social care worker and hasn't yet received a card, how do they get one?

In the first instance, the worker should contact their manager who can then notify us that an additional card is required.

What should you do if you have any questions about this card?

If anyone isn't clear about how they can access the card or what it is for, they should e-mail iwqueries@socialcare.wales