

A person in a wheelchair talking to an old person

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# Registration is changing

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# Have your say on our proposals for:

* a new way to register and reducing the time to register
* continuous professional development for social care workers.

Consultation closes on 22 March 2022

# Overview

We want to hear from you about our proposals for:

* a new way to register social care workers and reducing the time to register
* reducing the number of hours of continuous professional development (CPD) for social care workers.

For the purposes of this consultation, the term **‘social care workers’** means residential child care workers, domiciliary care workers, adult care home workers and residential family centre workers.

Social Care Wales was established in 2017 and we are responsible for leading improvement in social care. Part of our role is to ensure the best care and the protection of the public, as set out in the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

We keep a Register of workers to help safeguard the public and improve standards for people receiving and providing care, who are fit to practise. There are more than 34,000 workers on our Register and all adult care home workers will have to register with us by October 2022. This will mean that most of the social care workforce in Wales will be regulated.

The pandemic has led us to look at our processes and systems to make sure we continue to meet our commitment to protect the public. As the social care workforce continues to grow, we know how important it is to make our registration process simpler, to help encourage people to work in the social care sector.

## **How to respond**

Our proposals are explained in each section. If you’d like to have your say on our changes, you can do so by:

* completing the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/gofrestru>
* completing this document and emailing it to [consultations@socialcare.wales](mailto:consultations@socialcare.wales).
* registering to attend our webinar at 10am on 15 February 2022 by emailing [consultations@socialcare.wales](mailto:consultations@socialcare.wales).

If you need a copy of this consultation in a different format or have any questions, please contact us at [consultations@socialcare.wales](mailto:consultations@socialcare.wales).

The closing date for the consultation is **5pm, 22 March 2022**.

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think.

**New way to register social care workers and reducing the time to register**

Introduction of a new employer assessment route

What are we changing?

We propose:

* to introduce a **new way** to register, which will allow employers to endorse their workers’ application to register after assessing them against a list of competencies. This route will be for people who don’t have a required qualification and will replace the [Principles and Values Award](https://inductionframework.wales/) and/or the [All Wales Induction Framework](https://socialcare.wales/learning-and-development/induction-for-health-and-social-care-awif)
* to work with Care Inspectorate Wales to reduce the time period before a social care worker must register to its previous period of six months.

Why are we changing it?

The pandemic has shown us the importance of having robust ways to register. We have looked at what is necessary and appropriate, while making sure that we meet the requirements of public protection.

The new employer assessment route will follow a similar approach to the [confirmed competence](https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Confirm-Competence-FAQs-2.pdf) route. Employers will provide assurance that the social care worker has met the required level of competence. This new route recognises that employers are, in the main, responsible for the competence of their workers.

Social care workers who use the employer assessment route to register will need to complete one of the qualifications listed in the qualification framework within the first (three-year) period of registration.

The Principles and Values Award will be available as a route to register up to the introduction of the new route, but after this workers will not be able to register using the award. The All Wales Induction Framework will still be an important resource and we will continue to develop and promote it.

We will work with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to review the period before social care workers must register, to **reduce** the time from 12 months to **six months.**

Under regulations, care staff working in care homes for children, secure accommodation or domiciliary support services must register with us within six months of the date they start employment. The regulations give CIW the power to extend the six months period of grace in exceptional circumstances.

In response to the exceptional circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, CIW temporarily extended the period of grace to 12 months for all new employees in these services. CIW took this decision to support providers to recruit and retain extra staff when they needed them most.

But, this extended time means that workers are not visible on the Register available to the public. They are also not subject to the same oversight as registered workers.

We believe the new employer assessment model for registration will make the process simpler for social care workers and will allow them to register earlier. The change will mean more of the workforce will be on the Register sooner and this will strengthen public protection.

We will continue to work with CIW to review the time period before social care workers must register, with the aim of changing it to six months when the pressures of the pandemic have eased.

**Continuous professional development**

Reducing the number of hours of continuous professional development (CPD) social care workers have to do to renew their registration.

What are we changing?

We propose to:

* **reduce** the amount of CPD social care workers have to do to renew their registration, from 90 hours to **45 hours**
* develop an **outcome-focused approach** to CPD, which will allow people on the Register to apply their knowledge by reflecting and showing how they meet the requirements of the [Code of Professional Practice](https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Code-of-Professional-Practice-for-Social-Care-web-version.pdf) when they are providing care and support.

Why are we changing it?

We are committed to the professionalisation of the social care workforce and know that gaining qualifications and completing continuous professional development are important when developing a more skilled workforce.

Currently, everyone who is registered with us must show evidence of [90 hours of appropriate CPD](https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/PRTL-Requirements_ENG.pdf) over the three-year registration period. We believe the current system is challenging for social care workers and we want to reduce the number of hours of CPD needed.

We also recognise that the current system places more weight on formal learning and development, when we know practical experience is often as effective as studying. So, we want to move towards an outcome-focused way of recording learning in the future.

# Consultation questions:

# About you/your organisation

Are you responding to this consultation:

1. **as an individual**

**If you’re responding as an individual, are you a/an:**

person who uses care and support

early years worker

social care manager

social care worker

social worker

social work student

owner of a setting providing care

responsible individual

employer of social care workers

educational professional

member of the public

other – please describe below:

1. **on behalf of an organisation**

**If you’re responding as an organisation, is the organisation:**

central or devolved government

a local authority

a social care employer

a learning provider

other – please describe below:

**Organisation name/type of work carried out:**

UNISON Cymru Wales, a public services trade union representing thousands of care workers.

**About our proposals**

We welcome your views about our new proposals and would be grateful if you could take the time to answer these questions:

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| 1. **Do you agree with our proposal that social care workers who do not hold the recognised qualifications should register using a list of competencies assessed by their employer?** |
| Yes  See comments below No |

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| 1. **Do you agree with our proposal to reduce the time social care workers have to register from 12 months to six months, once the employer assessment model is introduced?** |
| Yes  No |

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| 1. **Do you agree with our proposal to reduce the amount of CPD social care workers have to do to renew their registration, from 90 hours to 45 hours?** |
| Yes  See comments below No |
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| 1. **Do you agree with our proposal to move towards an outcome-focused approach to CPD in the future?** |
| Yes  See comments below No |

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| 1. **Do you have any comments about our proposals?**   Please comment in the space below: |
| UNISON supports making the registration process simpler, to make it as easy as possible for people to work in the social care sector.  The truth is, however, it is the very low wages which can trap care workers in in-work poverty and the abysmal employment conditions which have led to the huge number of vacancies in the sector.  Care work is a demanding job with a high level of responsibility and until poor pay is properly addressed, care work will not be seen as an attractive job opportunity.  The care sector is in crisis after decades of chronic underfunding and outsourcing. Poor employment conditions and the resultant high staff turnover have a negative impact on the quality of care provided for clients.  UNISON Cymru Wales surveyed our care worker members around the changes proposed by Social Care Wales. In just a week, we received 358 responses. Our submission is informed by the comments of these care workers, of the day-to-day practice of many more and by UNISON’s experience of how Welsh government’s registration of another group of low-paid public service workers, school support staff, 6 years ago, has failed to achieve the professionalisation and improvement to wages and employment conditions that was promised to workers at the time.  Our full survey results are attached as an appendix and our comment on each question is given below. Not all respondents answered each question.  *UNISON: Do you currently attend CPD training in your own time or in work time?*  In your own time - 192 respondents  In work time - 162 respondents  *UNISON: Is it fair for employers to expect you to do training in your own hours?*  Yes - 54 respondents  No – 304 respondents  *UNISON: What barriers do you face in accessing training (CPD)?*  Getting time off to attend training – 141 respondents  Finding suitable training – 111 respondents  Other – free writing responses – 88 respondents  It is immediately clear that the very common practice of care workers being forced to do CPD (Continuous Professional Development) training in their own time, is a major impediment to improving the skill levels of care workers and their status. Overwhelmingly, our surveyed members felt having to undergo training in their own time was unfair. Training must be in work time and be fully paid. This crucial point has not been accounted for by the Social Care Wales consultation.  Industry standards will not improve if a significant proportion of the workforce is forced to undertake training in personal time and it is wrong for care workers to have to pay for their own training.  The comments of five respondents quoted below are illustrative of general feedback  “I am expected to complete training and courses in my own time. This means I NEVER have leave or days off to have a personal life. Work has taken over everything.”  “I don’t mind attending any training, but we are always short-staffed, so it is hard for my manager to give me time off to attend.”  “My care company expects us to attend training in the city centre, which is an hour’s drive away from me, in my own time.”  “Hours of training on top of working full time (plus over time) is exhausting. Coming in on your precious days off for courses/ training takes even more time away from your family.”  “I find it hard when we are just given dates for training and told it’s mandatory, sometimes not much notice for childcare.”  *UNISON: How confident are you that your manager will be able to fill out registration documents and give necessary support?*  My employer is good at supporting the registration process – 224 respondents  I’m not sure my employer will do this very well – 130 respondents  The good practice of many managers was reported by a majority of our surveyed members, but very significantly, more than a third were not confident their manager would be able to fill out registration documents and give necessary support. This is an enormous amount of care workers worried their manager may not/may not be able to process their registration in the correct manner.  One care worker commented:  “With reference to CPD training, although much is carried out in your own time, some questions require your manager’s input which isn’t always available, leaving the individual no option but to leave blank.”  People also complained about technical problems logging into the system.  There are concerns about the consistent application of standards if assessment is solely down to individual managers rather than an independent body. There is plenty of scope for the system to be abused by a private employer not as invested in the thorough training of their staff as a local authority employer would be. There is no outside monitoring.  It is noted, it is often down to the care worker to pay registration costs and undertake training in their own time, but then they are completely dependent on their manager for registration. This seems very unfair. Additionally, if there was personal animosity between the two, how would an individual appeal if their manager had not acknowledged what they had done and they felt they had not been objectively assessed?  Reducing the time to register  Care worker managers belonging to UNISON worried that 6 months is too short a time to get all the hours in and commented that it is already difficult to get people registered within 12 months. A reduction to 6 months, one said, would put pressure on managers to chase staff to complete their registration and pre-registration learning.  Reducing required CPD hours  It is not clear how Social Care Wales’ desire to increase sector standards would be met by halving required CPD time.  We acknowledge the extreme pressure the pandemic placed on care employers and care workers and in that emergency situation there may have been no time to send people on training, but we need to plan for the long term, ensure standards are high and that means quality training, undertaken in work time and paid.  *UNISON: Would you prefer to demonstrate your skills and understanding for registration through formal learning and development or by demonstrating practical experience?*  Formal courses and training – 144 respondents  Demonstrating practical experience – 210 respondents  A clear majority of UNISON respondents preferred to demonstrate their skills and understanding with practical experience.  A number commented about having a lack of confidence in the classroom and in traditional learning, perhaps from bad experiences at school, but that classroom ability was certainly not the only judge of what makes an excellent care worker. This was a perceptive comment from one UNISON member:  “It’s not always about a qualification or test result, it’s about the care worker and how they deal daily with the clients/ residents. It’s about their manner, their kindness, what they are willing to do for a person. Selfless, trustworthy, polite and above all remembering the person is a human being and deserves respect. How do you see that from a form of testing!!”  When and where formal training is provided is crucial. A night shift worker is unlikely to welcome a time when they could be sleeping or recuperating after working through the night.  More care workers are likely to be enthusiastic for formal training if it is paid and in work time.    Clearly, consideration needs to be given to the monitoring of demonstrating practical experience, to see that care workers can this easily and fairly.  We make a general comment about the use of unnecessary jargon in the consultation: Outcome focused. The meaning may not be clear to Social Care Wales consultation respondents and therefore skew feedback.  *UNISON: Will these changes in registration encourage people to do care work?*  Yes – 126 respondents  No – 225 respondents  *UNISON: What would improve the status of care workers and encourage more people to work in care?*  Free text responses.  A majority of respondents did not feel changes in registration would encourage more people to do care work. Answering the second question (across 12 pages of individual comments), almost every respondent said action to improve pay and employment conditions would encourage more people to work in care. To be treated with the respect they deserve, by employers and by society, was a common theme and to be listened to.  Higher pay they said, would make them feel valued.  In their responses, frequent reference is made to pay being higher in a supermarket or fast-food restaurant, for jobs with less responsibility. Care workers said they are providing the same personal care and support as NHS colleagues and ought to be paid and valued in the same way.  There is a universal desire amongst care workers for a pay structure that properly reflects their role, responsibility and experience. Many made reference to pay being inverse to their high level of responsibility and heavy workload.  It is a very low paying sector across all grades, care worker to supervisor and manager. To be classified as professionals they need to be paid salary on scale levels, not on hourly rates.  Care workers want high quality training, which is paid and undertaken in work time and job progression.  Improving workplace conditions goes hand in hand with improving pay for care workers. They told us they want action to improve sick pay and pensions, supplements for unsocial hours and Bank Holiday working, an end to zero hours - contracted hours and pay for all hours on duty, including sleep-ins and travel time. They want more certainty of future shift patterns and to be properly compensated for late cancellation of shifts.  Many respondents complained about the long hours culture – directly tied to low wages paid, and how it intruded into personal and family time. The poor support of employer support of employees in the private care sector was remarked upon as was the importance for trade unions to have access the care workforce.  Care workers want training of a higher quality and more support to complete that training. Pay could be attached to qualifications earned.  Care workers talked of the pressure of staff shortages on the rest of the care worker team and action in the areas described above would undoubtedly encourage more people to consider a career in social care.  Lastly, they said it was unfair for low paid workers to pay the cost of registration themselves.  UNISON campaigns for a National Care Service with the parity of esteem to the NHS and concerted investment. Care workers are providing a vital service and they are completely undervalued. The professional standards being embedded in the sector in Wales must be reflected in the standards of pay. All-Wales sector level collective bargaining would help set fair wages and a standard employment contract. |

**Effects of our changes**

1. **What effects will our proposals have on the Welsh language, specifically on:**

**i) opportunities for people to use Welsh**

**ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

**How could we increase the positive effects or reduce the negative ones?**

Please comment in the space below:

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1. **What effects will our proposals have on people with protected characteristics, specifically on:**

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

**How could we increase the positive effects or reduce the negative ones?**

Please comment in the space below:

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# How we will use your views

Any response you send us will be seen in full by our staff dealing with the issues this consultation covers. It may also be seen by other members of staff to help us plan future consultations.

We will be publishing a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish the responses in full. Normally, the name and address of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, let us know in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, but we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including Social Care Wales. This includes information that has not been published.

But the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. There may sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone’s name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we decided to reveal the information.



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