

Foundational Economy (Human Services) Task and Finish Group

Sectors: Social Care; Early Years and Childcare
Prepared by: Care Council for Wales

Context/Background:

Social care

Social care safeguards and protects children and adults of all ages, who may be at risk of harm due to their vulnerability. It helps people live their lives comfortably, particularly those people who require a certain degree of extra practical and physical help.

Social care workers endeavour to provide this service of practical support with a view of empowering individuals to maintain their independence, to increase their quality of life and to help them lead fuller more enjoyable lives.

The Welsh Government has introduced a range of legislative reforms which aim to transform the services people receive and hence the skills required of the workforce. The Social Services and Well-being Act places greater emphasis on professionals listening to better understand “What Matters” to people, who may need care and support or protection from potential harm. The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act will mean that more workers will be regulated and professionalised, further improving the quality of support provided.

Social care makes a significant contribution to regional expenditure. In 2014-15 local authority expenditure in south east Wales on social care was £809m.

Early years and childcare

The early years is defined as the period from pre-birth to 7 years of age. There is widespread agreement that early childhood experiences are crucially important for children’s long-term development and their achievements in later life.

Early years and childcare workers provide care and development. They plan and supervise activities and monitor the development of children in their care. ‘Building a Brighter Future: The Early Years and Childcare Plan’, is the Welsh Government’s strategic document for the sector.

Demographics:

Social care

The sector is a major employer in South East Wales with around 36,000 workers.

These workers are located in a variety of different settings, as noted in the table below:

Social care setting in south east Wales	Estimated total number of staff
Central Management and Support	1,000
Social Work	3,000
Domiciliary Care	12,000
Residential Care	12,000
Day and Community Services	6,000
Mixed	2,000
Total	36,000

Data on the early years and childcare workforce is limited to an all-Wales level. There are approximately 23,000 people working with the youngest children in Wales including play work and foundation phase settings. Of these, around 18,000 work in early years with the remainder working in specialist play work settings.

Skill Gaps/Skill Shortages:

Skills gaps

Management skills:

Managers and leaders in the sector are expected to support the delivery of the government's agenda for change, to increase the professionalism of their staff and improve the quality and diversity of services. This requires managers who are not only trained and qualified in social care but they also require leadership and business management skills.

General care workers skills

53% of people employed in services commissioned by local authorities have the required or recommended qualifications for their job, leaving 47% to become qualified. In general the majority of these workers currently require a level 2 health and social care qualification (QCF Diploma). From 2018 most social care workers will be required to obtain a licence to practice..

Welsh language skills

Percentage of social care staff in South East Wales identified as speaking Welsh: 4% The percentage of the population in south east Wales who speak Welsh is 10%.

Early years skills

The majority of the early years and childcare workforce have now reached level 3, the desired minimum for the sector. However, 12% of staff were reported to be qualified at level 2 and 10% were unqualified.

Skills to support people with complex needs

There are growing demands on the sector to care for people with increasingly

complex long term needs. This is true for people in residential settings and those living in their own homes. Dementia care is a particular example of this.

Skills shortages

Nursing staff in care homes

There is a shortage of nursing staff in care homes. The Older People's Commissioner said in a recent report that "workforce planning is not effective as it is based only on the needs of Health Boards and does not consider the needs of residential nursing care. This can cause particular issues around the recruitment of qualified and competent nurses to work in EMI (Elderly Mentally Infirm) settings. "

How do you meet current training needs?

The Care Council has worked closely with the sector to develop- a number of solutions to support the training and development of the workforce since 2001.

Social Care Workforce Development Programme

The Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) Grant is provided to local authorities to support social care workers to further develop skills and knowledge. For 2015/16, the Welsh Government provided a national SCWDP grant of £8.4m¹.

Social work

There are 140 qualifying social work places available in south east Wales with further places available through the Open University. 36% are at Masters level, the remainder being at undergraduate level. Once qualified, social workers are expected to develop their practice through a Care Council for Wales' framework of Continuing Professional Education and Learning. The local authorities in south east Wales are in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan and the University of South Wales for this framework.

Social care workers - qualifications required to practice

The Care Council has developed a range of resources that supports training needs of the workforce. The Social Care Induction Framework provides a structured start for workers in the first 12 weeks of employment.

Managers

The Care Council has developed a range of qualifications, practice guidance and resources to support the ongoing learning of managers. It is piloting a Step Up to Management programme in south east Wales. This responds to the skills gap in relation to management skills referred to above. It aims to provide social care workers with the knowledge and understanding to make the transition into a management role.

Apprentices

¹ [Social services workforce](#), webpage, Welsh Government

Apprenticeships in the care sector provide the largest number of placements of any sector in Wales. Women outnumber men on care apprenticeship frameworks. It is noticeable that a high proportion of care apprentices are older than 25.

Early years and childcare

The Care Council have developed Continuing Professional Development Principles for the early years and childcare workforce and resources on safe recruitment and supervision. The Early Years and Childcare Induction Framework provides a structured start for workers in the first 12 weeks of employment. Early years, childcare and play workers in the south Wales valleys will be further supported to gain new skills and recognised qualifications by the £6.3m Progress for Success Welsh Government programme.

Workforce Planning:

e.g. replacement jobs, jobs under threat, future roles

Replacement jobs

In the future there will be a need to replace substantial numbers of workers leaving the sector, due mostly to retirement, since there is an older demographic according to the Care Council's analysis of the registered workforce. Staff turnover is high in some parts of the sector. According to the National Care Forum the turnover rate for domiciliary care staff for older people is 28 per cent.

Future roles: new technology

In future it is expected that more individuals using care and support services will be supported by a confident, knowledgeable and skilled social care workforce, working creatively with Electronic Assistive Technology to support their well-being, choice and independence. This will increase independence and empower more people to find creative solutions to meet their well-being. However it will also produce knowledge gaps and skill shortages, as organisations seek to move to a greater use of technology, as they are unlikely to have staff who can meet these future requirements.

Future roles: integration and complexity

The Welsh Government has indicated that integration of social care and health is a priority. This will require a care workforce which has the skills to deliver a variety of health care related tasks and to be able to do so on their own in people's homes.

Vacancies

At the end of 2014 it was reported that there were approximately 3,000 vacancies across commissioned services in Wales, 41% of which were in the South East Wales region.

Key Areas/Issues for the Sector (in relation to education and skills):

The qualifications and courses offered to people who wish to develop their career in care have been subject of a review by Qualifications Wales. The findings have been welcomed

by the Care Council and the wider sector as highlighting key challenges which need to be tackled, namely:

- the effectiveness of the present models of assessment in determining the knowledge, skills and understanding of learners;
- the currency of some qualifications, particularly those qualifications taken by learners aged 14-16;
- the extent to which qualifications prepared learners for progression to higher education;
- the coverage of certain key aspects of learning for different areas of work, for example in relation to dementia care, domiciliary care and play work in the context of childcare; and
- the extent to which qualifications prepared learners effectively for working in a bilingual nation

Additional comments:

e.g. areas for further research and LMI

In April 2017 the Care Council will become Social Care Wales. We will have an enhanced role in research and labour market information. We plan to work closely with partners to increase the availability and clarity of information about the social care workforce.

In advance of this change we are proposing to agree a standard dataset for the social care workforce and other important related matters. We will be seeking the views of partners on the most important and useful information which can be provided. The views of the South East Wales Learning Skills and Innovation Partnership would be particularly welcome.

The Care Council is in discussion with the Centre for Workforce Intelligence about developing a horizon scanning model for the social care workforce.