

[National Assembly for Wales](#)
[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)
[Discussion on the Welsh Government's Co-investment in Skills Framework](#)

Evidence from Care Council for Wales – CIS 03

Response to call for evidence on the Co-investment Framework: discussion by the Enterprise and Skills Committee: June 2015

About Care Council for Wales

The Care Council for Wales (Care Council) is a Welsh Government Public Body created under the Care Standards Act 2000 as the workforce regulator for social care. The Care Council also has a leading role in making sure the workforce delivering social services in Wales is working to a high standard. This includes developing a confident and competent workforce in social services and childcare, which can work effectively, make well-informed judgements, based on up to date evidence, in the best interests of the people they support. The success of what the Care Council does depends on partnerships and contributions from people who have direct experience of social care. That's why the Care Council's board members, who govern the work of the organisation, represent many voices. Among others they represent the views of the general public, people who use services, carers, workers, trade unions and employers. This ensures that all these groups are given a voice in setting standards and improving social care in Wales. - See more at this [link](#)

The Care Council takes on the role of the SSC (Sector Skills Council) through Skills for Care and Development (SfCD) in Wales and is responsible for adult and children's social care and the early years and childcare workforces. The Care Council works as the SSC in partnership with Skills for Care in England, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the Scottish Social Services - See more at this [link](#)

Terms of Reference.

To what extent will the policy of co-investment help to meet the Welsh Government's aim of "ensuring that Wales develops a competitive edge in mobilising a productive and skilled workforce"?

The Care Council believes this policy of co-investment will go a considerable way to meeting the objective of mobilising a productive and skilled workforce, in the longer term and for young people joining the wider workforce across Wales.

The Care Council strongly supports the principle within the Co-investment Framework of sharing responsibility between government and employers to invest in the development of knowledge and skills for the workforce. Indeed the Care Council has included this expectation within our sector qualifications and learning strategy: *Professionalising the Workforce* since 2012, where the development of a learning culture including the need for employers to invest in the skills, knowledge and qualifications of their staff provides the context for the document. This is further identified as an expectation in *The Social Care Manager: Practice Guidance for Social Care Managers*¹. It is the view of the Care Council that investment in skills by managers and employers, not only underlines the importance and value of training for individuals and employers, but also reinforces the relationship between high quality and targeted training and development to meeting the organisational and public

¹ <http://www.ccwales.org.uk/practice-guidance-for-managers/>

sector policy goals and objectives for social care, early years and child care². Most recently this has been further emphasised in our publication of an *Employers' Toolkit* to support our quality improvement agenda encouraging *Best Practice in Learning and Assessment* for the sector's workforce.

The Care Council also understands and supports the need to focus the reducing public funding allocated to skills development, and recognises the importance to the future competitive edge of companies in Wales to a sustainable and prosperous economy. The Care Council also endorses the need to further reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training for the good of the future of Wales.

The evidence currently available within our sector suggests the co-investment framework as currently published, is less likely to continue to support the recent significant improvements to the qualification, knowledge and skills levels of staff currently working in, or joining the social care or early years sectors in Wales³. The Care Council has previously provided government with extensive evidence on the effects of this policy on the workforce within our sector. This is due to the demography of the workforce (largely older workers) and the reliance on the public purse for all services throughout the sector⁴. The significant increases required in the level of employer investment are particularly challenging during a period of public sector austerity. Attached is the detailed response we made to the consultation on the Skills Policy in April 2014, which provides more detail in this regard and these issues remain a real concern for employers in our sector.

The turnover in staff within the social care sector (specifically commissioned services) has just been estimated at almost 21%⁵ in the year 2013-14. Of these, 49% left the sector completely and 51% changed jobs or employers⁶. This turnover means that the level of employer investment required to retain qualification levels in the sector is considerable. These new figures also indicate continued growth in the sector with an estimated 5% growth during this same time period⁷. This together with the difficulties in recruiting and retaining younger people (under the age of 24) to the workforce⁸, is expected to have a disproportionately challenging effect on the social care and early years sectors in Wales, and is unlikely to deliver the intentions of this policy in this sector.

Will employers engage with the principle of co-investment? Are levels of training likely to increase or decrease as a result?

The Care Council believes that many employers in social care and early years already engage actively and effectively in the principle of co-investment, through buying training, providing funding to access required or recommended qualifications and continued professional education and learning for their staff. They release staff to complete qualifications and contribute substantial learning opportunities, training and assessment to learners outside of their own workforce undertaking qualifications that offer a 'license to practice' by developing and testing competence in real work settings to learners in schools and colleges across Wales. They contribute to learning experiences for Traineeships and

² Sustainable Social Services a Framework for Action

³ Social Care Index 2013-14: Figures for Wales. Comensura. London 2014

⁴ 19% of services commissioned by local authorities in Wales is to 3rd sector organisations with 81% to independent /private sector. Wales Local Government Data Unit report for Care Council for Wales (awaiting publication) May 2015

⁵ Wales Local Government Data Unit report for Care Council for Wales (awaiting publication) May 2015

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Only 2.1% of the social care workforce in Wales are aged 16-24 with the most popular age range being 54-64 (24.6%)⁸, 5.6% of the workforce are over the age of 65. *Ibid*

Bridge to Employment schemes across Wales. Many have developed their own learning provider status⁹ and workforce to ensure that the content and quality of the learning meets their own requirements, contributing not only to the knowledge economy and quality of social care and early years services in Wales, but to improving the educational workforce and outcomes.

There is however a large number of employers in social care and in early years and childcare who have supported apprenticeships and apprenticeship programmes for their staff to obtain the required or recommended qualifications for their job or to offer progression opportunities for their staff. While this reliance on public funding has enabled some employers to avoid investing in their staff directly, it has brought substantial growth in the numbers of social care and early years apprenticeships in recent years. This has contributed to the growth in the numbers of staff, especially within the social care sector, who have the qualifications required or recommended for their jobs¹⁰. Most importantly this has had positive outcomes for individuals who use services. The concept of co-investment should drive that rebalance to cultural change, but the practice of how that is being delivered in our sector will shift the burden of investment to employers immediately for around 76% of their staff¹¹.

The Care Council will do everything possible to encourage employers to continue to use apprenticeships to recruit younger staff and help them grow their business thus participating actively in co-investment, however the evidence available suggests that the sector does not have a high success rate in recruiting or retaining younger people. Only 2.1% of the social care workforce in Wales are aged 16-24 with the most popular age range being 54-64 (24.6%)¹².

The Social Care Workforce Development Partnership (SCWDP) Programme from Welsh Government¹³ may provide some pointers for good practice, but also indicates why achieving co-investment in social care has remained a challenge throughout the 12-year history of this programme. The grant is offered annually to local authorities to support some training activities across the sector in recognition of the magnitude of the training and development needs of the sector. The SCWDP grant is intended to provide a significant supplement to the resources provided by employers. However, even this grant requires that private and third sector employers can access training provided through the grant **free of charge**, in recognition of the challenges faced by them in funding training. The employer contributions come from local authorities and not private or third sector employers because co-investment has proved to be unsuccessful in the past.

Even with this level of investment there remains around 6,000 apprenticeships offered each year in our sector in an attempt to retain the training targets set by National Minimum Standards, and the ambition to professionalise of the workforce by increasing their

⁹ For example Cam wrth Gam offering Welsh medium qualifications education and learning for the early years workforce (and future workforce) in Wales, Smartcare who provide social care sector specific and expert staff and assessment to the sector though a contract with Coleg Cambria, RCT who offer their own learning and assessment centre for social care staff working within the Council. Many more examples exist.

¹⁰ In 2012-13, 42.7% of staff in Wales did not meet the qualification requirements for their job, to 34.1% in 2013-14¹⁰; smaller than the UK average of 37.4%. Social Care Index 2013-14: Figures for Wales. Comensura. London 2014

¹¹ Apprenticeship figures for 2013-14 indicated 76% of completers were over the age of 24. Apprenticeship certification on line data base May 2015

¹² Social Care Index 2013-14: Figures for Wales. Comensura. London 2014

¹³ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/130529socialcareciren.pdf>

knowledge and skills. Of these only 24%¹⁴ would qualify for funding under the scheme proposed in the co-investment framework document.

What impact (if any) will increased financial investment from employers have on the quality and relevance to the labour markets of training courses?

There is no doubt that the involvement of employers in the development and delivery of qualifications that meet the needs of their workers has a positive outcome on the relevance and quality of training and qualifications and indeed to the services provided to vulnerable people in Wales. Our sector has a long and successful history of working in partnership with employers and collaboratively with awarding organisations and learning providers to deliver relevant training that meets employers' needs and we continue to work collaboratively to improve and assure the quality.

If the sector is to continue and accelerate the improvements to social care and early years services in Wales required by government policy, and to professionalise the workforce, it is important that service providers become 'learning organisations'. A learning organisation is not just about delivery in, accessing or buying 'more training' it means taking education, qualifications and learning seriously at the level of individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole. It recognises and promotes lifelong learning and embraces change. This is perhaps most sharply focused by requiring employers to make more overt investments in training for their staff¹⁵.

Whether any additional training should be exempt from co-investment for example for new start-up businesses.

The Care Council would certainly support more flexible funding for start-up businesses.

The Care Council would suggest that employers evidencing significant increase in staff numbers should also be given additional support in upskilling new staff, or staff undertaking new roles. This will be especially significant in Wales with the introduction of the transformational Social Services and Well-Being Wales Act 2014, which will bring significant changes to how services will be delivered and the knowledge and skills of staff.

Given the difficulty in accessing and delivering Welsh medium training and assessment we would welcome a review that provides some support to employers and learning providers offering this vital service. This would support the delivery of the Welsh medium strategy for Health and Social Care *More than just Words* and improve the quality of services for Welsh speaking individuals who use services.

Are there alternative methods of sharing the costs of training, for example a training levy?

Indications in the Skills Policy and Implementation Plan published in 2014, were that some government contribution (up to 50%) would be available to support employers with learners over the age of 24. This could be seen as a training levy that would be supported by the sector. The final co-investment framework removed this possibility and replaced it with the funding of 'pillars' where only higher apprenticeships and Essential Skills are available for

¹⁴ Figures taken from Apprenticeship Certification Online data base (social care and early years frameworks) May 2015.

¹⁵ Future pressures on Wales Public Services: Financial, demand and other cost pressures to 2025 and a review of potential response. Mark Jeffs. Wales Public Services and Cardiff Business School

funding to people aged 24 and over. The Care Council would suggest that to ensure the numbers and quality of apprenticeships in the sector in Wales is retained, the issue of the age of apprentices should remain under review.

The Care Council has always, and continues, to support the development of Essential Skills in the workplace and welcomes that inclusion in the framework. While the inclusion of higher apprenticeships in co-investment is very important to our sector it will only be available to around 10% of the workforce¹⁶, and that portion of the workforce already have training and qualifications.

The recent results of the Consultation on the Reform of apprenticeship funding¹⁷ in England (following the Richards review) noted the importance of differentiation on the employer contributions towards apprenticeships for small and micro businesses. This differentiation is significant to our sector where over 78% of employers commissioned by Local Authorities employ less than 50 people and 93% less than 100¹⁸. The Care Council would support the introduction of a system similar to that in England, that places the size of the employer as part of a pricing structure to access support for funding.

If co-investment is to be adopted by smaller employers in particular, some measure of co-investment in the qualifications needed or required for the role, is likely to offer better outcomes to the skills and qualifications levels of the workforce (levels 2 and 3), than the current option of funding pillars of learning. This could be considered to be a form of training levy, where costs are shared between employers and government.

In March 2014 the British Association for Early Education published a report¹⁹ that indicated 77% of nurseries were concerned about their future viability, while Wilkins Kennedy the accountancy firm reported a 12% increase in insolvency for social care homes while the insolvency rate in all sectors was only 5%, in May 2013. In 2011-12²⁰ overall 11.9 million hours of care were delivered in Wales by both the independent and statutory sector. 70% of state-funded homecare was provided under contract by the independent sector, with the sector providing 8.3 million hours of publicly funded homecare in 2011-12. For sectors like social care and early years which have a strong reliance on public funding even within the private/independent and 3rd sector parts of the sector, some opportunities for co-investment based on the needs of employers' and learners' qualifications and the size of the employer would be welcomed.

¹⁶ Figures taken from Apprenticeship Certification Online data base (social care and early years frameworks) May 2015.

¹⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302235/bis-14-597-future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-funding-reform-technical-consultation.pdf

¹⁸ Wales Local Government Data Unit report for Care Council for Wales (awaiting publication) May 2015

¹⁹ Maintained Nursery Schools: a hidden asset. March 2014

²⁰ Last available figures from UKHCA Overview report on Domiciliary Care in the UK March 2013 extrapolated from Statistical Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government, 2011. First Release – Assessments and Social Services for Adults 2011-12. page 6. Published September 2012.

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2012/120904sdr1462012en.pdf>