

1. This evidence is provided by Social Care Wales, a new organisation created under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) 2016. Care Council for Wales, a predecessor organisation, provided written and verbal evidence to the review in 2012 and we are pleased to be able to provide an update on progress. We are responsible for developing apprenticeship frameworks, supporting their delivery, promoting them with employers and certifying apprenticeships in social care and child care in Wales, as part of Skills for Care and Development.

Background to Social Services and Early Years Workforce in Wales

2. Social care services are provided primarily through the public purse through services supplied directly by, or commissioned by the local authorities by the private and voluntary sector. 205,000 people work in the health and social care sectorⁱ, making it the second largest workforce in Wales and a critical part of the economy. There are around 1,400 commissioned social care services employing around 50,500 staff across Wales in 2015-16ⁱⁱ. Of these 22% are located within the voluntary sector and 78% within the private sector. In addition there were 21,840 staff employed directly by social services in local authorities in March 2016ⁱⁱⁱ. This suggests an increase of 3.4% of that workforce over the last 2 years. In the early years and child care sector there are around 23,300 people who work with our youngest children in childcare and Foundation Phase settings^{iv}. In total across the social care and child care sector employed around 7.0% of the working population in Wales in 2015-16^v.

Demographic changes and the impact of social care.

3. CSSIW estimate that around 108,699 people were using regulated services in March 2016 across social care and early years^{vi} an increase of 2.5% in one year. The House of Lords Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change warned in March 2013 that the UK was “woefully underprepared” for the social and economic challenges presented by an ageing society and that a “radically different model” of care would be needed. These challenges have recently become regular news again in both England and Wales. New models of care are emerging including a rise in community based care to try to keep people in their communities and their own homes for as long as possible; a rise in the use of direct payments and a move driven by new laws to supporting people to take greater responsibility for their wellbeing. At the same time, conditions resulting from age that increase social care and support needs are on the rise, including dementia, physical frailty and disability and sensory loss. In Wales, the number of older people (those aged 65 and over) receiving residential care services is projected to increase by 82% between 2015 and 2035, and the numbers receiving community based services by 67% when 2015 population figures are used to forecast population growth in older people^{vii}. Between 2015 and 2035, there is predicted to be a 72% increase in people over 65 with dementia^{viii}.

Role of Apprenticeships in social care and early years.

4. We strongly welcome and support the return to all age apprenticeships announced in May 2016 and in *Taking Wales Forward 2016-21*.
5. Apprenticeships remain vital to the education and training for the social care and early years staff in Wales. Our sector is the largest sector using apprenticeships in Wales^{ix} this amounted to 29.2% of all learners registered on frameworks in Wales in 2015/16 and an increase from 25.9% in 2012-13.^x The 2016-17 figures will show a small drop in numbers for our sector, due to the imposition of age restrictions between October 2015 and May 2016 since around 71% of apprentices in our sector are over the age of 25. We saw a 17.1% down turn in level 2 and level 3 apprenticeship completions during this time^{xi}, but are already seeing a rise in the numbers completing since June 2016.
6. The intention to remove level 2 apprenticeships expressed in the *Aligning Apprenticeships to the Welsh Economy* statement in February 2017 gives cause for concern in the care sector. While we note that health and social care and construction are seen as special cases in the document, we understand from our subsequent discussions with civil servants that level 2 apprenticeships may still be withdrawn from our sector. This will leave a significant training gap detailed below.
7. By April 2018, the Welsh Government will require all care at home workers to register with Social Care Wales and by April 2020 all residential care home workers for adults. These steps aim to support public protection and support continued professional development. In order to register, these workers are likely to have qualification requirements. This will mean raising the current qualifications levels from around 56% of level 2 workers and 78% of level 3 workers^{xii} to 100% having the required qualifications by 2021 and 2023 respectively. This means that there will be a need to train around 27,000 level 2 workers in adult residential social care and care at home by 2023. This projection takes into account the predicted growth of the sector at 4% per annum to meet demographic changes of an aging population and the turnover of around 32% per annum. Any removal of level 2 funding for our sector will have a negative impact on reaching the registration targets, the retention of the workforce and the care for vulnerable people.

Care Apprenticeships and Productivity.

8. It appears that productivity and economic growth outlined in the policy rely on the traditional measures used for private industrial businesses. This does not reflect the realities in people driven services, such as ours. The measures of productivity used in the document seem to be driven through investment in physical capital (building, machinery and equipment); innovation including new technology and new products; higher level skills therefore needed to support innovation of physical capital; enterprise and new ways of working bring more efficient outcomes and higher levels of competition which may bring savings in structures or technology. The current legislative position in our sector (and indeed best care practice) in Wales is to retain people in the own homes and communities for as long as possible is likely. This involves more 1:1 care and support with often long drives between visits for care at home staff against the previous service which brought people together in one place for residential care services. The apprenticeship policy should recognise the broader economic benefits supplied by the foundational economy, including the care sector. It is important to remember that the care sector is critical to enabling productivity – through supporting individuals to work; through being a significant employer in its own right; and by supporting people to live fulfilled lives in communities.

9. There is growing evidence that independent organisations providing residential and home care are struggling, and in some cases failing, to remain viable^{xiii}. They are caught between the squeeze on local authority funding available for care contracts, the challenge of recruiting and retaining the staff they need, and increasing workforce costs (national living wage, pensions and national insurance employer contributions)^{xiv}. Thirteen of Wales's 22 local authorities told the [BBC](#)^{xv} in a freedom of information request in 2017 that they had seen contracts handed back to them by care providers not wishing to bid because the price being offered to them was not viable. This makes the additional investment in training for their staff, currently met by level 2 apprenticeships, very unlikely, and could jeopardise the professionalisation of the workforce envisaged in the Welsh government policy statement *Sustainable Social Services in Wales: A Framework for Action 2011*.

Progression

10. The new apprenticeship policy places a reliance on progression from one level to another within apprenticeship frameworks, in keeping with traditional academic progression from school to university. We have long been advocates for a parity of esteem between academic and vocational education and training, and support any move to make this happen. This does not mean that they are directly comparable in how they are attained. Academic progression is principally about confirming knowledge, while vocational progression is about knowledge, skills and testing of occupational competence.
11. Vocational qualifications in our sector are not progression awards, but test the occupational competence requirements while doing a job at that particular level. The push in the new document towards completion of level 2 then progressing to level 3 etc. is not possible in our sector without a job promotion. In a lean sector, like ours where only 10% of jobs in commissioned services in social care are management level (4/5)^{xvi} this limits the numbers of people who can therefore do higher level apprenticeships. Within all social care settings, 64% of all staff are employed as care assistants or care workers (level 2) with only 12% being designated as senior care workers (level 3) but in certain sub sectors such as care at home- the growing sector, the level 2 care worker percentage rises to 84%^{xvii}. There is clearly a need to retain funding options for people through apprenticeships or other means at level 2.
12. Level 3 workers have more responsibility. They are usually supervising small groups of staff and are working unsupervised. For their part, workers trained to levels 4 or 5 are typically found managing services, larger groups of staff and regulatory functions. The occupational components in the apprenticeships require them to demonstrate these competences in a real work setting to ensure the safety of vulnerable people. If they cannot do that because they are not in a job at the level required, they cannot complete the qualification or the apprenticeship. Indeed to do so would require fabrication of evidence or simulation of competence driving down the quality of the learning and assessment.
13. This is a common dilemma in vocational education and it is not clear from the policy document that this system or requirements have been fully considered. This needs to form the basis for any system that seeks parity of esteem between the two systems.

Regional Skills Partnerships

14. We have contact with all the Regional Skills Partnerships and it appears to us that they are all at different stages in their development and the involvement of employers

in our sector varies considerably.

15. In North Wales, the skills partnership receives input directly from the North Wales social services partnership board's workforce sub-group. In South West and Mid Wales the skills partnership has recently established a health and social care cluster. Meanwhile in South East Wales a group for the foundational economy was established last year. Social Care Wales supports the work of each group. We will continue to seek to ensure that the voice of the social care employer is effectively heard and that the views of education and training providers do not dominate.

Barriers to taking up apprenticeships.

16. **Public perceptions of care.** A change in public perception is needed to encourage more people to take up care apprenticeships. Research conducted by Anchor found that a quarter of men (25%) aged 16 to 25 say they would never consider becoming a care worker. A third of these say it is because they simply didn't know enough about the job. But 94% of young people agree care is a suitable profession for a man and 23% of 16- 25-year-olds said they would be more inclined to think about a career in care, if there were a more positive public perception of the role^{xviii}. The majority (82%) of staff working for care providers commissioned in Wales were female^{xix}. Moreover, females make up 86.4% of the apprenticeships in the sector in 2015-16, which is slightly higher than the total in the workforce. Encouraging men to join the care sector as a first choice career has been difficult. Positive role models such as those offered in Welsh Government funded child care campaign a few years ago have had some short term success.
17. **Age:** Of the 4,520 apprenticeship certificates issued by us in 2015-16, 1,218 were to people under the age of 25, or 27% of the total. This has been a 5.1% decrease on last year's percentage of under 25s (32.1% under 25 in 2014-15) which is particularly surprising given the age restricted funding bias at that time; 63% of frameworks were still issued to people over 25. Social care is often a second career for people including female returners to work after child care or caring roles.
18. **Ethnicity** 87% of staff employed by care providers commissioned by Welsh local authorities stated their ethnicity as White. 7% of staff preferred not to state their ethnicity.
19. **Working hours across Wales,** the percentage of staff who work full time for commissioned care providers is 51% with the remainder working part time. The current apprenticeship requirements mean that in our sector settings, especially in early years settings such as Cylch Meithrin, which only provide a part time service there has been a reduction (from around 100 per year to around 20) in the numbers of Welsh Speaking early years apprenticeships since the introduction of Progress for Success in October 2016^{xx}.
20. **Language in Wales:** 11% of staff in commissioned care providers were able to communicate effectively through the medium of Welsh. Regionally, 2% of staff employed by care providers commissioned in the South East were able to communicate effectively through the medium of Welsh compared to 6% in Western Bay, 17% in Mid and West and 24% in North Wales. There is a lack of assessors operating through the medium of Welsh and a lack of teaching and learning resources^{xxi}, which was also noted by the recent Qualifications Wales Review of Qualifications in the Health and Social Care Sector. There is an urgent need to build this infrastructure and promote learning and apprenticeships through the medium of

Welsh, if Wales is to meet the commitment in Mwy na Geiriau and the 1 million Welsh Speakers by 2020.

Careers Advice and the Apprenticeship Matching Service

21. Careers advice around apprenticeships remains patchy, in our experience. We have operated a 'care ambassador' scheme in schools and colleges for several years, and it has been consistently reported by the ambassadors that they rarely encounter any promotion or discussion of apprenticeships. Instead, the push is towards keeping pupils within the school system and then promoting traditional academic progression to Further Education College or Higher Education. We have excellent relationships with Careers Wales and they sit on our apprenticeship steering group. We believe that as an organisation they are very committed to apprenticeships, but this is not, in the experience of our ambassadors, finding its way to pupils. Better promotion of apprenticeships as a positive choice by schools is likely to reach families on low incomes and other more excluded groups. The recent TV adverts may also be help. However, it is important that such advertisements don't just focus on higher level apprentices but that they show a variety of options.
22. The Apprenticeship Matching Scheme has the potential to be a very useful service. However, despite our promotion of the service in all our apprenticeship materials and through a wide range of events and activities with employers; regular monitoring of the site indicates the numbers of employers in our sector (and more widely) using the service remains very small. In our own experience of recruiting apprentices for our offices, the response rate was also very low. We received only 2 applications for a Business Support Apprenticeship and this may put employers off using the service.

Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships

23. We believe we have reasonably good employer engagement through our apprenticeship steering group that brings employers who use apprenticeships together with other agencies including learning providers, Careers Wales, Care Forum Wales and National Day Nurseries Association. This group considers policy positions, practices and standards and works together to make changes to frameworks as required or to find ways to further support or promote apprenticeships. We support a wide range of events run by other umbrella groups to promote the take up of apprenticeships. Our Apprenticeship Champions, employers who have considerable experience using apprenticeships, provide practical information and advice to employers using the scheme for the first time. While there are many issues arising from the Apprenticeship Trailblazers^{xxii} in England, the ability for employers to work together with standard setting bodies to determine exactly what the outcomes of an apprenticeship should be, and not simply rely on existing qualifications, is one that our sector would welcome.

ⁱ Workplace employment by industry in Wales, 2001 to 2015, <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/161027-workplace-employment-industry-2001-2015-en.pdf>

ⁱⁱ The Social Care Workforce Development Partnership Data Collect 2015-16: Local Government Data Unit 2016

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Staffing/staffoflocalauthoritiesocialservicesdepartments-by-localauthority-posttitle>

^{iv} <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/consultation/140922-10-year-plan-for-the-early-years-childcare-and-play-workforce-in-wales-plan-en.pdf>

^v <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Persons-Employed/publicprivatesectoremployment-by-welshlocalauthority-status>

-
- vi <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Services-for-Social-Care-and-Childrens-Day-Care/cssiwservicesandplaces-by-servicetype>
- vii <http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk/>
- viii *ibid*
- ix <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Work-Based-Learning/learningprogrammesapprenticeships>
- x <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Work-Based-Learning/learningprogrammesapprenticeships>
- xi According to Apprenticeship Certification Numbers on Apprenticeship Certifications Wales.
- xii The Social Care Workforce Development Partnership Data Collection 2015-16: Local Government Data Unit 2016 Wales Data unit and Care Council for Wales
- xiii Daria Luchinskaya, Joseph Ogle, and Michael Trickey: A delicate balance? Health and Social Care spending in Wales Wales Public Services 2025 March 2017
- xiii *ibid*
- xiv *ibid*
- xv Week in Week Out : BBC Programme March 2017
- xvi The Social Care Workforce Development Partnership Data Collection 2015-16: Local Government Data Unit 2016 Wales Data unit and Care Council for Wales
- xvii *ibid*
- xviii International Longevity Centre-UK and Anchor research Ben Franklin; The Future Care Workforce 2014
- xix The Social Care Workforce Development Partnership Data Collection 2015-16: Local Government Data Unit 2016 Wales Data unit and Care Council for Wales
- xx Figures provided to Social Care Wales by Cam Wrth Gam in March 2017.
- xxi <http://qualificationswales.org/consultations/closed-consultations/health-social-care-sectoral-review-2015/?lang=en>
- xxii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-trailblazers-evaluation-final-report>