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Social care apprentice placement guidance for Health and Social Care Levels 2 and 3 Adults and Children and Young People qualifications

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This guidance advises managers about how to provide the best possible support for their apprentices in an inclusive workplace. This is to make sure apprentices realise their maximum potential.

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Context and background

Welsh Government has committed to increasing the availability of apprenticeship opportunities through the [Welsh Government programme 2021 to 2026](#).

Apprenticeships are excellent opportunities for people to earn while they learn and gain experience of working in a real work setting as part of a team.

This guidance will help managers and existing staff to support apprentices to upskill and gain qualifications with apprenticeship funding.

It will also support apprentices, employers and learning providers to work together to plan and agree a learning programme that meets the apprentice's individual needs, so that the qualification assessment tasks can be completed as the apprentice develops and improves their knowledge and skills.

Eligibility requirements for apprentices

The eligibility requirements for employing apprentices may change from time to time, but here's the current criteria:

In Wales, anyone over the age of 16 can apply for an apprenticeship and benefit from the opportunities offered while working in the health and social care sectors. An apprentice can be a new apprentice who is employed on an apprenticeship scheme or a current employee working 16 hours or more per week.

Welsh language and bilingual apprenticeships

Whatever the level of apprenticeship, it's the apprentice's right to complete the programme in Welsh, English or bilingually.

Apprentices can:

- complete Core, Practice and Essential Skills qualifications in their chosen language
- carry out training opportunities in their chosen language
- learn new language skills and develop their Welsh language in the workplace.

What are the benefits of an apprenticeship?

Benefits for the apprentice

The apprentice can:

- combine working with studying, to develop job specific skills and knowledge in social care

- complete the qualifications needed or recommended to work in the social care sector
- earn a wage and get holiday pay
- work alongside experienced staff
- boost their earning potential
- get a full package of support, whatever their needs
- have the opportunity for clear progression through the apprenticeship levels
- gain personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement.

Case study: Apprentice

This apprentice has completed two specific apprenticeships at different levels while employed in residential child care. It describes how he studied while working, gained new skills when leading shifts, and how he has progressed his career.

'I completed a Level 3 apprenticeship working as a residential care worker. I asked whether I could lead some shifts to gain more experience and then was successful at interview after being a residential care worker for two and a half years. I have been senior for four years this year, and I have also completed my Level 5 apprenticeship while in this role.' - Jamie Morris

You can find out more on the Welsh Government website, '[apprenticeships a genius decision](#)'.

Benefits for the employer

The employer can:

- recruit and develop an apprentice with job specific skills and knowledge in social care

- employ apprentices who contribute towards a responsive, motivated workforce, with people who are learning the key skills and experience needed for the organisation
- upskill a current employee
- reduce recruitment costs, as training apprentices can be more cost effective than hiring pre-skilled staff (some costs are incurred by the employer, see [the section recruiting an apprentice](#))
- build the resilience and capability of the workforce, encourage lifelong learning and create career pathways
- enable the apprentice to become a registered and professional worker
- help address the skills gap by making sure the workforce is trained and equipped to meet the changing needs of the social care sector.

There's more information about the benefits of recruiting an apprentice on [the Welsh Government website](#).

Case study: Ceredigion County Council apprenticeship programme

Lynne looks after the apprenticeship programme for Ceredigion County Council, which covers traditional apprenticeships as well as the upskilling of staff, to bring new opportunities into the council.

Lynne said: "Our key drive is to play a part in creating meaningful career opportunities for young people and those who want to change career.

"We believe this brings new talent into the workforce and supports people to stay in Ceredigion. Our apprentices could be the managers of tomorrow, and we genuinely value them and support their progression in the council."

Find out more about [Ceredigion county council's apprenticeship programme on the WeCare Wales](#) website.

Work opportunities during an apprenticeship

- Employers want to give apprentices a good learning experience, which may include working in different settings and services during the apprenticeship period.
- This approach can be accommodated within an apprenticeship providing there's no change to their employed status.
- Moving around different services can help the apprentice develop an awareness of the different types of support services available, and this may influence their future career choices.
- Assessment is a core part of the apprenticeship and qualification so it's important assessment occurs during a more settled part of a placement. You can find out more about assessment considerations in [the qualification section](#).

Case study: Carmarthenshire Care Academi induction period (Carmarthenshire call their apprentices trainees)

The programme has a six to eight month induction, and in this time the trainees do rotations of up to four placements across the sector to experience different areas of Care.

During their placements the trainee completes the All Wales induction framework, mandatory training and learning for the Core qualification.

At the end of the six to eight month period the trainee chooses an area of interest after attending the different placements they have been in to complete

their apprenticeship programme, complete the Core qualification and begin their Level 2 practice qualification.

We've published two sets of guidance to support apprenticeships in the workplace: .

- [Work placement guidance](#)
- [Employing 16 and 17 year olds in social care in Wales](#)

Recruiting an apprentice

What's involved?

- Working together with an approved training provider, the employer will be responsible for providing and planning the training schedule for the apprentice, allowing a tailor made, business specific approach.
- The training provider will manage the apprenticeship qualification, assessment and programme processes.

What are the costs?

The apprentice's wage and the cost of training for the qualification.

- The employer must pay the apprentice's wage and some additional costs, including release time for training and staff replacement costs.
- The Welsh Government covers most of the training costs for the qualifications (Core, Practice and essential skills) through the apprenticeship programme.

You can find more [guidance on funding and eligibility on the Welsh Government's website](#).

Case study: Apprentice

This example is from a trainee who is completing his apprenticeship through Carmarthenshire's Care Academi programme while employed in a day centre for people with learning disabilities. He describes the recruitment process and the qualification he's doing.

"The application process is really easy, we had to apply online and then I was invited to a recruitment day which is like a assessment centre. You do a group activity, an individual interview and we did some online learning. After that I had a phone call and an email to say I got the job- and then you're in.

At the moment, I have just completed my level 2 qualification, and am still a trainee but I am more qualified now and have moved on to do my level 3 in Adult Care. I can work in the care sector as a qualified carer and then if I want to I can go on to be a social work or become a care home manager. There's loads of different things you can go into.' - DW

Case study: Apprenticeship costs

Cllr Jane Tremlett – Cabinet Member for Social Services and Children and Families Services, Carmarthenshire:

"If you're looking for a career in social work or care, the Care Academi allows you to earn while you learn and choose the kind of work that suits you best.

"As you work, the Council pays your salary, and supports, guides and trains you. Your qualifications are paid for with apprenticeship funding."

Guidance for employers

There's more information and guidance for employers available from Welsh Government:

- [Recruit an apprentice: guidance for employers](#)
- [Apprenticeships: a genius decision employer toolkit](#)
- [Make a genius decision with apprenticeships](#)
- [Video - make a genius decision, recruit and apprentice](#)

What apprenticeships are available?

Apprenticeships in Wales are available to anyone over the age of 16, and there's no upper age limit. Depending on the apprenticeship level, it can take between one and four years to complete.

There are four levels of apprenticeships in Wales:

- **Foundation** – this programme of learning and skills development is at Level 2, for those who work in an assistant role with support from senior colleagues. Foundation apprenticeships tend to be shorter, about 12 to 18 months
- **Apprenticeship** – this programme of learning and skills development is at Level 3, for those who are working with some autonomy and who may have some leadership responsibilities at supervisory level. This apprenticeship may take 18 to 24 months to complete
- **Higher** – this programme of learning and skills development is at Level 4 and above. It's for those who are aspiring senior leaders, or who lead and manage a team, or who work with a high level of autonomy and may have financial and/or people responsibilities. A higher apprenticeship may take 24 months or more to complete

- **Degree** – this programme is part-time and delivered in partnership with universities and colleges. The duration of this apprenticeship can vary depending on the degree programme being completed.

Currently there are no social care degree apprenticeships in Wales.

This guidance is focused on Foundation and Apprenticeship frameworks in Wales.

You can find out more on the apprenticeship levels and frameworks here:

[Recruit an apprentice: guidance for employers: Apprenticeship levels and frameworks | GOV.WALES](#)

What makes up an apprenticeship - the apprenticeship framework

The Health and Social care apprenticeship frameworks include the following qualifications:

A technical knowledge qualification - Core

This assesses and underpins the theory and knowledge required for the specific health and social care units 230/330/365 and the job role.

An occupational competency qualification - Practice

This assesses the skills required to carry out the health and social care job an apprentice is employed to do.

Essential Skills Wales qualification

This includes:

- numeracy and communication
- digital literacy skills if applicable to the sector or job roles.

After recruiting an apprentice, what happens next?

The flowchart below shows the process from induction and registration with Social Care Wales, through to gaining qualifications and renewal of registration.

This process will apply to apprentices who are employed in regulated services. It can be used as a good practice guide for those employed in unregulated services.

The flowchart shows the process from induction and registration with Social Care Wales, through to gaining qualifications and renewal of registration with Social Care Wales.

All Wales induction framework (AWIF)

There is statutory guidance that sets induction expectations for regulated services (regulation36)

[The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(gov.wales\)](#)

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 statutory guidance sets induction expectations for regulated services (regulation36). The statutory guidance (version 3 March 2024) states that social care workers will complete the relevant induction programme (AWIF) required by Social Care Wales within the defined timeframe alongside any service specific induction programme.

The All Wales induction framework is for health and social care workers who:

- are new to the sector

- are new to the organisation
- have changed their job role.

It covers the principles and values, and the knowledge and skills that workers need to carry out their role competently at this stage of their career.

The level of knowledge and understanding the employer would expect from an apprentice at induction stage is different to that expected when they're six or 12 months into their role. At induction, the apprentice is introduced to social care topics and will get support to think about how the topics apply to their role.

The AWIF mirrors the sections of the Core qualification. This means that new apprentices start building the learning they need from day one.

The AWIF for health and social care has seven sections, and each section has a [progress log](#) and [workbook](#). The employer will help and advise the apprentice about how to complete the AWIF and the sections relevant to the job role.

The sections are:

- Section 1 and 2: Principles and values of health and social care
- Section 3 and 4: Health and well-being
- Section 5: Professional practice as a health and social care worker
- Section 6: Safeguarding individuals
- Section 7: Health and safety in health and social care.

Sections the apprentice needs to complete

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There are three pathways:

- Adults

- Children and young people
- Combined adults and children and young people

The apprentice will choose the pathway that's appropriate to their role:

- If the apprentice is completing the adult only or children and young people only pathway, they will complete five of the seven sections of the AWIF:
 - working with adults, apprentices need to complete sections 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7
 - working with children and young people, apprentices need to complete sections 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- If the apprentice is working with both adults and children and young people, they should complete all seven sections of the AWIF.

The apprentice should complete all the core knowledge learning outcomes, and the practice elements that are specific to their role.

There's guidance about completing the AWIF on our website:

- [Guidance for managers and employers](#)
- [Guidance for workers](#)

There's also [detailed information about the All Wales induction framework](#).

Registration with Social Care Wales - employer assessment

If an employed apprentice in the social care sector provides care and support, it's a legal requirement that they join the professional Register with Social Care Wales.

Our website has [information and videos about registration](#).

The apprentice roles that require registration with Social Care Wales are:

- residential child care workers
- domiciliary care workers
- adult care home workers
- residential family centre workers

An apprentice in one of these social care roles, will have six months from the start date of their employment to register with us. They will initially need to register using the employer assessment for social care worker process.

Social care workers are legally required to show evidence of their understanding of eight competencies as part of their application to register. This evidence can be gathered while doing the All Wales induction framework.

There's more information on our website about the [employer assessment for social care worker route](#).

Qualifications - Core and Practice

The qualification expectations

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There are two qualifications needed to work in social care. These are:

- **Level 2 Core**

plus

- **Level 2 or 3 Practice**

The level of the practice qualifications will depend on the apprentice's role. These qualifications assess the skills and knowledge needed to do the job.

The link between the AWIF, Core and Practice qualifications

The AWIF, Core and Practice qualifications are made up of a set of learning outcomes that apprentices will be assessed against. The learning outcomes in the AWIF and Core qualification are mirrored. The focus is on what the apprentices needs to know, which are the knowledge learning outcomes. The Practice learning outcomes focus on how workers have built up their knowledge and understanding and start putting that into practice.

At this point in the apprentice's learning journey they won't have been formally assessed for the induction. The assessment and judgements will have been made in the workplace by the employer only.

To achieve the Core and Practice qualifications, the apprentice will need to complete the full City & Guilds formal assessment process. Details of how qualifications are formally assessed are in the Core and practice qualifications section.

As with AWIF and Core qualification, you would expect to see different knowledge and understanding from the apprentice at induction stage compared to 12 to 18 months into their apprenticeship role as a social care worker.

The Practice qualification is when the apprentice is assessed in their work role. There are some practice learning outcomes in the AWIF that are set to measure an apprentice's practice at induction stage. These learning outcomes are mirrored in the Practice qualification, when the assessment is more detailed because the apprentice is more experienced and knowledgeable.

When planning for their formal assessment, assessors of the qualifications are expected to take into consideration learning that has already taken place as part of a new apprentice's induction, for example, training attended, completion of the AWIF workbooks.

Core qualification

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The **Core qualification** covers the fundamental knowledge and understanding a social care apprentice needs for their role. It provides learning that helps the apprentice to complete their practice qualification.

The content of the Core qualification mirrors the sections and knowledge elements of the AWIF. This means that the new apprentice starts building the learning they need from day one, not just for their new job role, but also for the formal assessment of the Core qualification.

Everything that would normally be covered, such as the purpose of policies and procedures, job descriptions, the Professional Code of Practice, health and safety, safeguarding, and principles and values, are incorporated into both the induction and the Core qualification.

The AWIF workbooks, which include activities and case studies, help to prepare new workers for the assessment of the Core qualification.

The Level 2 Health and Social Care: Core qualification has three different pathways:

- adults
- children and young people
- combined adults and children and young people

It gives the apprentice the chance to complete a single pathway focused on either adults or children and young people, or a combined pathway that covers both routes. The apprentice must successfully complete all the assessments to achieve their qualification.

An apprentice, together with their manager and learning provider, will choose the pathway that's appropriate to their role.

The apprentice shouldn't be expected to repeat any learning unnecessarily during their apprenticeship programme.

How the qualification is assessed

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The assessment of the Core qualification is through a formally assessed multi choice question test.

- To achieve the adults, or children and young people Core qualification pathways, apprentices must pass one externally-set, externally-marked multi choice test.
- To achieve the combined adults and children and young people Core qualification pathway, apprentices must pass two externally-set, externally-marked multi choice tests.

The test is a multi choice question paper that has been developed by the awarding organisation. The questions are connected to the content of the units within the qualification and pathway they're completing. The apprentice can choose to take their test on-screen or on paper. Tests are graded pass or fail, and the apprentice must pass to be awarded the Core qualification. The test takes place under invigilated examination conditions as set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

For more information about conducting exams [see JCQ requirements for details.](#)

Readiness for assessment of the Core qualification

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The apprentice should only be put forward for formal assessment of the Core when both the manager and assessor are confident the apprentice is sufficiently competent to successfully complete the assessment. This should be at a point following most of the learning delivery. This confirmation that the apprentice is ready for assessment is an important stage for the apprentice, manager and assessor to contribute to.

As well as the Core qualification, a Level 2 or 3 Health and Social Care: Practice qualification is also a requirement for practice and registration with Social Care Wales.

The Core qualification can support apprentices to progress into further study of the following qualifications within the suite of Health and Social Care qualifications for Wales:

- Level 2 Health and Social Care: Practice (adults)
- Level 3 Health and Social Care: Practice (adults)
- Level 3 Health and Social Care: Practice (children and young people)

But, to progress onto the Practice qualifications, the apprentice needs to be in a suitable role to provide evidence of competence for these qualifications, so progression isn't automatic.

The Practice qualification

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The Practice qualification builds on the knowledge gained from the Core qualification. Social care apprentices are expected to apply their knowledge and skills in a practical and meaningful way, showing their ability to provide high-quality care, engage with individuals, and adapt to the unique needs of individuals and communities.

How the qualification is assessed

Show

The assessment of this qualification needs close partnership working between the apprentice, manager and assessor.

The main assessment methods within this qualification are a series of planned tasks, which include:

- a reflective log
- a portfolio of evidence, to include workplace documents, records of consent, progress meeting notes and witness testimonies
- planning forms
- workplace records
- observation of work practice records
- activity review records
- assessor-led discussion notes.

The assessment activities are designed to allow for **holistic evidence** collection. This means that the apprentice's evidence will be collected from real working situations that show they can work **confidently** and **consistently** across all aspects of the qualification more than once.

The **structured tasks** will support the apprentice to show their knowledge and skills across different units and learning outcomes and integrate the knowledge

and skills in a way that reflects workplace and sector requirements to provide effective care and support.

Preparing for assessment of the Practice qualification

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Preparing for the Practice qualification involves a more hands-on approach and is called 'on-the-job' learning. This may include shadowing experienced practitioners, participating in real-life case studies, and actively working with individuals.

As well as practical experience, apprentices should take part in ongoing supervision and reflective practice to refine their skills and apply what they've learnt during their Core qualification. It's essential that apprentices have access to mentors and supervisors to make sure they meet the required standards and competencies

Readiness for assessment of the Practice qualification

Show

Apprentices should only be put forward for assessment when both the manager and assessor are confident the apprentice is competent to successfully complete the assessment. This should be at a point after most of the learning delivery and following a programme of ongoing and formative assessment.

Formative assessment monitors the apprentices' learning and provides ongoing feedback to the apprentice, assessor and employer. It is assessment for learning, it helps identify the apprentices' strengths, weaknesses and learning needs along the way and assess how to meet those learning needs,

The manager should understand the internal processes of the workplace, such as documentation and communication systems. The managers should be able to assess whether the apprentice is using them appropriately and if they're ready for assessment.

Although it's not mandatory, the best practice approach is for the assessor to complete two observations of the apprentice to confirm they're ready for assessment and to make sure they're applying all the Core knowledge in their work (formative assessment). They will then carry out the formal (summative) assessments (tasks set by City & Guilds).

Summative assessment takes place after the learning has been completed and provides information and feedback that evaluates the teaching and learning process.

It evaluates the apprentices' learning at the end by comparing it against the qualification standards.

The purpose of formative assessments is to improve learning, while the purpose of summative assessments is to gain a measure of attainment

The apprentice will be expected to continue to learn throughout their qualification journey. They'll be encouraged to develop reflective skills from the beginning, as early as the Core qualification.

There will be observations at different points, and the apprentice will be expected to reflect on each observation, learn from their experience and improve their practice for the next observation. They will also be expected to draw on their knowledge from the Core qualification throughout the whole of the Practice qualification, to develop into a confident and competent worker.

At the end of a successful assessment, training providers should request certification for the qualification.

How the manager can support the apprentice

Step 1 - Pre-delivery

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Initial registration and unit selection

The employer/manager supports the apprentice to understand the unit options available and helps select the optional units that are most relevant to the apprenticeship role.

Step 2 - Learning

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Learning period

- The employer/manager supports the apprentice through the process of on-the-job learning and training, including making any reasonable adjustments.
- The employer/manager makes sure the apprentice and their well-being are supported through 'normal' workplace monitoring and continuing professional development (CPD) activities, such as attending regular one to ones/supervision and updating reflective logs (which is a mandatory requirement for assessment). They should provide continuous feedback and evaluation of the apprentice's learning.

Assessment / observations

- The employer/manager will liaise with the assessor to determine when the apprentice is ready for assessment.
- The assessor may want to carry out assessments and discuss the outcome with the manager to let them know about or confirm 'readiness for assessment' or identify any further development or support needs.

Step 3 - Assessment period

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Before the assessment, the employer/manager will meet with the apprentice and assessor to:

- confirm and clarify if needed, their understanding of assessment requirements, including mapping outcomes and process expectations
- hold an initial candidate checkpoint meeting before assessment to discuss and plan unit choices, summative assessment plans and timelines
- identify and agree any reasonable adjustments needed for learning
- agree how the apprentice's well-being will be supported during the qualification
- carry out agreed workplace activities on an ongoing basis throughout the assessment period, for example, regular progress meetings
- provide continuous feedback and evaluation of their learning
- discuss and support the apprentice to identify the best evidence for their portfolio and reflective log
- review the apprentice's final plans to confirm and sign off relevant paperwork.

Step 4 - Completion

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Confirmation of decision

The assessor meets with the manager and apprentice to tell them about the assessment outcome.

Both the Core and Practice social care qualifications in Wales highlight the importance of combining knowledge with practical experience. The preparation for these qualifications needs a commitment to continuous learning and development, as well as a dedication to upholding the principles of social care and providing the highest standard of care to individuals.

What's is expected of the apprentice, employer and learning provider/assessor

The apprentice

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Apprentices are responsible for making sure they're fully committed to attending their appointments with their assessor.

They must:

- attend workshops and engage in their learning
- communicate with their manager and assessor
- complete self-study / self-directed work on time
- keep cancelled appointments to a bare minimum.

If they fail to follow to these guidelines it will make it more difficult for them to complete the qualification within the timeframe given, and training providers may make the decision to take them off programme. They must make progress every month to comply with the apprenticeship agreement.

The apprentice is responsible for telling their manager and assessor about any learning support needs they have, so that extra support and reasonable adjustments can be made to remove barriers and help them reach their potential.

The employer

Show

Employers/managers/mentors should make sure that the apprentice has been signed-up to the right course, that's relevant to their job role and that apprentice is able to show competency throughout.

Managers must support the apprentice by booking them onto workshops, assessments, essential skills off-the-job training and monthly assessment visits. This will involve managing the rota to make sure the apprentice is available.

Managers will look at the apprentice's reflective logs and support them by providing continuous professional development and mandatory training.

They must liaise with the assessor and decide when the apprentice is ready for assessment, while providing support through one-to-ones and/or supervisions. They're also expected to complete monthly progress reviews. Managers must sign off the 'candidate planning form'.

If the apprentice tells the manager they have learning support needs, the manager is responsible for making reasonable adjustments so the apprentice has the extra support needed.

The learning provider / assessor

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A qualified assessor will support and mentor the apprentice throughout the whole learning programme. They will meet with the apprentice regularly to review progress and provide learning opportunities for the content of the Core qualification.

They may arrange for the apprentice to practice their multi choice questions and they'll plan observations and a professional discussion. The assessor will support the apprentice to build a portfolio of evidence and provide the final sign off decision of the qualification.

Assessors may also support the apprentice to complete the Essential Skills Wales communication and application of number qualifications, which form part of the apprenticeship framework.

If the apprentice tells the learning provider/assessor that they have learning support needs, the learning provider/assessor is responsible for making reasonable adjustments so the apprentice has the extra support needed.

Essential Skills Wales qualifications

All apprenticeship qualifications require the apprentice to demonstrate their skills for communication (literacy) and application of number (numeracy).

Essential Skills are about building confidence and competence in lifelong transferable skills. These qualifications make sure the apprentice has the right level of literacy, numeracy, and in some circumstances digital literacy skills, for the role they're doing.

An apprentice must be able to apply practical literacy and numeracy skills to real life situations and relevant vocational contexts, for example, in health and social care this includes how to share information effectively when working with

a range of different people, and how to record information relevant to an individual's care and support plan.

An Essential Skills initial assessment will be carried out at the beginning of the apprenticeship to understand the apprentice's essential skills levels.

The initial assessment must identify previous learning, current learning requirements and any additional learning needs or other support needs. This will be recorded on the apprentice's individual learning plan. It helps to tailor the learning, making sure apprentices develop crucial skills for providing high quality social care.

If the apprentice has qualifications at the accepted levels for literacy and numeracy, they won't need to complete the Essential Skills qualifications. If they don't have qualifications in one or both of the topics, the apprentice will be supported to complete their Essential Skills qualification. If the learning provider can show evidence of additional learning needs, reasonable adjustments can be put in place to support these.

Digital literacy skills aren't needed for the Health and Social Care Foundation or Apprenticeship Levels and are optional for the Higher level apprenticeship.

Here are the Essential Skills included within each apprenticeship framework:

Show

Foundation (Level 2)

- Literacy - minimum Level 1
- Numeracy - minimum Level 1
- Digital literacy - not required

Apprenticeship (Level 3)

- Literacy – minimum Level 2
- Numeracy – minimum Level 2
- Digital literacy – not required

Higher (Levels 4 and 5)

- Literacy – minimum Level 2
- Numeracy – minimum Level 2
- Digital literacy – minimum Level 2 (optional)

Here's a summary of the assessment process for Essential Skills:

- initial assessment
- W.E.S.T assessment (Wales Essential Skills Toolkit)
- learning opportunities - workshop based, real life scenarios
- controlled tasks
- formal assessment.

The apprentice can be given extra help and support if they have additional learning needs. There's more information in the [additional learning needs section below](#).

In some circumstances, other qualifications achieved before starting an apprenticeship may be recognised as equivalent and used as evidence (proxies). This can mean that one or more of the Essential Skills Wales qualifications can be achieved by 'proxy'.

You can find out more about acceptable evidence on the [Apprenticeship Certification Wales website](#).

There's more information about Essential Skills on the [Qualifications Wales website](#).

The apprentice journey

How long an apprenticeship lasts will vary depending on the level. Sometimes it takes longer than expected and the allocated funded period.

Training providers have processes they must follow if an apprentice needs more time to complete their programme, or if due to personal or health reasons, they need to have a break in their learning.

The employer and the approved training provider share the responsibility to support the apprentice's knowledge and skills development throughout the apprenticeship.

This responsibility is met through 'on and off-the-job training'.

- **On-the-job training** is essential to the success of an apprenticeship and will be provided by the employer. Each apprenticeship framework states the number of training hours the apprentice needs to have for 'on the job training'. The training can include mandatory training, for example safeguarding, health and safety and first aid, but it can also include other short courses such as moving and positioning, medication, and/or infection prevention and control.
- **Off-the-job training** hours are provided by the approved training provider. The number of hours required tends to be lower than those provided by the employer and tends to focus on areas of new learning or skills development. Off-the-job training is any activity that isn't part of the apprentice's day-to-day role which supports their apprenticeship training. This can include Essential Skills, but can also be about helping the apprentice become more confident about the more complicated aspects of their qualifications.

Here are some examples of off-the-job learning, which aim to complement and enhance on-the-job learning:

- formal learning: attendance at workshops away from the workplace.

- e-learning: online courses and digital learning platforms offer a convenient way to learn. This can include watching recommended videos, taking part in webinars, or completing interactive modules.
- simulations: simulated exercises or training activities allow apprentices to practice specific skills or scenarios in a safe environment. This could include first aid, manual handling or positive behaviour training.
- training events and workshops: these may be hands-on activities, discussions, and practical exercises to deepen understanding of specific topics. This could include a workshop about safeguarding.
- self-study and research: independent study, research, and reading materials to get more knowledge or skills. An assessor may recommend a reading journal or publications, carrying out research on specific topics, or preparing reports.
- mentoring and coaching: receiving guidance and coaching from experienced mentors or coaches to develop specific skills, knowledge, or insights related to their role.
- language learning: off-the-job learning may also involve language courses or language immersion programmes for people who want to improve their Welsh language skills.
- reflection: encouraging reflection on experiences or keeping reflective logs to deepen understanding of the learning process and personal growth.

What this means for the apprentice

On-the-job and off-the-job training will be discussed in the qualification induction with the learning provider.

Below you'll find the guided learning hours for on-the-job learning and off-the-job learning, however this will be different for each apprentice.

Foundation level: Technical knowledge qualification

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Level 2 Health and social care Core

Guided Learning hours: 300 hours

Total qualification time: 320 hours

Level 2 Health and social care combined Core

Guided Learning hours: 480 hours

Total qualification time: 540 hours

To achieve the full health and social care apprenticeship framework at foundation level, the combined total hours of the technical knowledge qualification, occupational competency qualification and essential skills Wales qualification are:

On the job hours: 1138 hours

Off the job hours: 312 hours

Total funded training time: 1450 hours

Apprenticeship duration minimum: 12 months

Foundation level: Occupational competence qualification

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Level 2 Health and social care Practice (Adults)

Guided Learning hours: 175 hours

Total qualification time: 350 hours

To achieve the full health and social care apprenticeship framework at foundation level, the combined total hours of the technical knowledge qualification, occupational competency qualification and essential skills Wales qualification are:

On the job hours: 1138 hours

Off the job hours: 312 hours

Total funded training time: 1450 hours

Apprenticeship duration minimum: 12 months

Foundation level: Essential Skills

Show

Minimum Level 1 Communication skills

Guided Learning hours: 60 hours

Total qualification time: 60 hours

Minimum Level 1 Application of number skills

Guided Learning hours: 60 hours

Total qualification time: 60 hours

To achieve the full health and social care apprenticeship framework at foundation level, the combined total hours of the technical knowledge qualification, occupational competency qualification and essential skills Wales qualification are:

On the job hours: 1138 hours

Off the job hours: 312 hours

Total funded training time: 1450 hours

Apprenticeship duration minimum: 12 months

Apprenticeship Level: Technical knowledge qualification

Show

Level 2 Health and Social Care Core (if not already achieved)

Guided Learning hours: 300 hours

Total qualification time: 320 hours

Level 2 Health and Social Care Combined Core (if not already achieved)

Guided Learning hours: 480 hours

Total qualification time: 540 hours

To achieve the full health and social care apprenticeship framework at apprenticeship level, the combined total hours of the technical knowledge qualification, occupational competency qualification and essential skills Wales qualification are:

On the job hours: 1682 hours

Off the job hours: 312 hours

Total funded training time: 1994 hours

Apprenticeship duration minimum: 18 months

Apprenticeship Level: Occupational competence qualification

Show

Level 3 Health and social care Practice (Adults and Children and young people pathways)

Guided Learning hours: 240 hours

Total qualification time: 500 hours

To achieve the full health and social care apprenticeship framework at apprenticeship level, the combined total hours of the technical knowledge qualification, occupational competency qualification and essential skills Wales qualification are:

On the job hours: 1682 hours

Off the job hours: 312 hours

Total funded training time: 1994 hours

Apprenticeship duration minimum: 18 months

Please note: Guided learning hours and Total qualification time are the same for both L3 Adults or Children and young people

Apprenticeship Level: Essential Skills

Show

Minimum Level 2 Communication skills

Guided Learning hours: 60 hours

Total qualification time: 60 hours

Minimum Level 2 Application of number skills

Guided Learning hours: 70 hours

Total qualification time: 70 hours

To achieve the full health and social care apprenticeship framework at apprenticeship level, the combined total hours of the technical knowledge qualification, occupational competency qualification and essential skills Wales qualification are:

On the job hours: 1682 hours

Off the job hours: 312 hours

Total funded training time: 1994 hours

Apprenticeship duration minimum: 18 months

City & Guilds define guided learning hours and total qualification time as:

- guided learning hours is the recommended number of hours of teacher led or directed study time required to teach a unit or qualification.
- total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by the apprentice to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours (which are listed separately) and hours spent in preparation, study and assessment.

There are different requirements to delivering the qualification depending on the units chosen.

Find out [what apprenticeships are available](#) and [what makes up an apprenticeship - the apprenticeship framework](#).

Additional learning needs (ALN)

The Apprenticeship Commissioning Programme Wales Framework, requires the learning provider to make sure all new apprentices are assessed either before, or immediately after entering learning.

An initial assessment must identify previous learning, current learning requirements and any additional learning needs or other support needs (including essential skills needs using the Wales Essential Skills toolkit) which should be recorded on the apprentice's individual learning plan (ILP).

As part of the initial assessment process, learning providers must discuss whether the apprentice has additional learning needs, and make the apprentice aware of the support available.

If at the initial assessment process, or if it's brought to the attention of a learning provider that the apprentice may have additional learning needs, the learning provider must take all reasonable steps to determine the apprentice's needs, explore options available, and secure any support needed.

Additional learning needs support may differ from one learning provider to another. But, as a minimum, the apprentice can expect support to identify any additional learning needs. Or, where an additional learning need is already diagnosed, Welsh Government funding is available to provide further support and funding.

The support supplied will be tailored to the apprentice, depending on their individual needs and the resources available to the learning provider.

There's no access to funds if additional learning needs aren't diagnosed.

You can find out more about additional learning needs by talking to your learning provider.

There's more information on additional learning needs on the Welsh Government website:

- [Apprenticeship Commissioning Programme Wales Framework](#)
- [Additional learning needs \(ALN\) transformation programme](#)
- [Apprenticeships: guide for disabled learners](#)
- [The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021](#)
- [Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is.](#)

Case study - Additional learning support from an assessor for apprentice K

K has recently had their formal assessment of ADHD. During workshops K involves themselves in discussions, but I have observed them having difficulties staying focused on tasks. K has been observed to fidget with objects or make movements with their body, such as tapping. K appears to 'zone out' at times during the workshops and becomes distracted. K has been observed to be disorganised at times, which has led to them missing workshops or have conflicting appointments.

K is progressing well with their qualification, but there have been barriers. K needs to have tasks and information repeated to help them process it and I have used tactics to support them. K doesn't always communicate with me when they're struggling, which can make it difficult to understand their needs or what they're struggling with. To overcome these barriers, we used support from my manager and K's manager to make sure they continue to progress with the qualification. K seems to have overcome the difficulties they had when they first joined the course and I aim to continue to support them to complete it.

Here are some examples of how I've supported K:

- encouraged K to talk about what can help support them with this qualification, and review this support each time we meet
- encouraged K to get up and move around when sat in workshops. They're encouraged to tell us if they need a break as this can help with focus
- K uses fidget toys, which they're encouraged to use within the workshop
- I communicate clearly with K about what their tasks are individually, as this supports them with not mixing the tasks up
- provided a space for K to sit their assessment on their own, as they said this would help them focus. K and I both made sure the room was suitable for them, we looked at layout, lighting and room temperature
- gave K the chance to experience the conditions of the assessment in sample assessment. This allowed K to understand the conditions and invigilation rules of the assessment
- I have forward planned dates with K to support them with the remainder of the qualification. We have booked in support sessions for their reflective writing, breaking down the tasks into smaller tasks to support them with completing and staying on task
- K attends the office if they feel they need more support to complete their work, as this can support motivation.

Signing up to an apprenticeship programme

Learning providers also call this process 'recruitment'. This is a different recruitment process to employers recruiting apprentices to a job, as this is recruitment to the qualification. The process has many parts, which are described below.

Pre-enrolment assessment

Before signing up for the qualification, the learning provider, together with the apprentice and the manager, consider anything that could affect the completion of the qualification. They identify supportive measures that can be put in place to support the completion of the qualification.

They will identify:

- if the apprentice meets the qualification requirement and they're in the right job role for the qualification they've been put forward for
- whether the apprentice has additional learning needs. If an additional learning need requirement is in place, the learning provider needs to identify the funding required.

If the learning provider identifies through collaboration and discussion with the apprentice that they have additional learning need requirements, the learning provider needs to refer the apprentice to the additional learning needs team, or to an external body if they don't have an internal team.

The learning provider will check if the apprentice has application of number and communication proxies for Essential Skills Wales requirements. If not, they'll be enrolled on the Essential Skills Wales qualification.

Sign-up process

The learning provider will sign the apprentice up to the appropriate qualification programme using Welsh Government apprenticeship paperwork. The learning provider and apprentice will sign a learning agreement.

Each learning provider works within a timescale to meet the requirements of their contract with Welsh Government. They must set up an apprentice contract with each apprentice and complete an individual learning plan (ILP).

Apprenticeship learning agreement (ALA)

At the start of the programme, an apprentice must have an ALA, which notifies in writing their terms and conditions of learning with the learning provider and employer.

The apprenticeship learning agreement includes commitments required under the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. They must be told about any changes to terms and conditions of learning.

The apprentice must also have an individual learning plan (ILP). There are links to the apprenticeship learning agreement below:

- [Apprenticeships learning agreement form](#) (English)
- [Ffurflen cytundeb dysgu prentisiaeth](#) (Welsh)

Skill scan

Show

When an apprentice starts their qualification programme, the learning provider will ask them a series of questions to find out:

- the type of setting they work in
- how many hours they work per week
- the name of their employer
- their employment start date
- a description of any caring experience
- how long have they worked in care
- why they want to do the qualification
- if there's anything preventing them completing the qualification, such as needing support, or additional learning needs (ALN).

The learning provider will give some of this information to the Welsh Government to access funding for the apprentice. They will also use the information to work individually with the apprentice to make sure their learning programme is right for them and supports them to achieve their qualification.

Initial assessment

Show

The learning provider should carry out an initial assessment of the apprentice to identify:

- prior learning that's relevant to the qualifications.
- if they have any specific training needs or knowledge gaps.

Assessors must make a judgement about any additional learning needed by the apprentice to support them to pass the formal assessment of the Core qualification and be ready for assessment of the Practice qualification.

The apprentice may need to carry out some learning to make sure they have enough understanding and knowledge to be ready for assessment of the Core and Practice qualifications., This could involve off-the-job training.

Apprentices can expect opportunities such as workshop sessions or online learning to prepare for assessment. If an apprentice has carried out on-the-job training as part of their All Wales induction framework, the Core qualification will enhance their learning. On and off-the-job training is described in the apprentice journey section above.

Initial checkpoint meeting

Show

The apprentice will have an initial checkpoint meeting with their manager and assessor to:

- identify and agree any reasonable adjustments needed for learning
- agree how the apprentice's well-being will be supported during the qualification
- confirm the assessment process and discuss the job role responsibilities to be carried out
- discuss the links between the working role and the assessment, for example how practice promotes and supports the health and well-being of individuals
- match the working role to the unit requirements
- identify the optional units appropriate to the apprentice role
- agree how consent will be gained from individuals and their families/carers for the observations to take place, and how privacy and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the assessment process
- agree a timeframe for when assessments need to be completed, confirming a date for the planning meeting
- agree how the portfolio of evidence and reflective log will be managed
- plan a series of progress meetings to review day-to-day practice and reflections and identify portfolio evidence.

Induction

Show

The apprentice will get an induction to their qualification, which takes place with the learning provider. This is when the apprentice finds out how they'll work towards their qualification, and the learning provider explains how the apprenticeship will work. If the learning provider uses an e-portfolio system, this will be explained and set up. If they use a paper-based portfolio, this is provided at induction.

Induction to the programme covers:

- expectations around the qualifications at either Level 2 or Level 3
- expectations of the learning provider
- timetable of the course
- dates of workshops
- identifying and recognising prior learning and any knowledge gaps
- touchpoint meetings between the assessor, apprentice and manager
- multi choice question dates
- identifying the relevant practice qualification and timetable.

The apprentice will be able to ask any questions they may have, and the learning providers will explain the next steps.

Assessment and progress reviews

Show

- Timescales for each part of the assessment process are agreed at the start, to support the apprentice to gain the qualification, and where relevant, to meet Social Care Wales registration requirements.
 - Progress is planned to be made steadily and not rushed to meet deadlines.
 - Decisions will be made about the apprentice's readiness for assessment. Learning providers will show how the decisions are measured.
 - Judgement of the quality of the apprentice's knowledge, understanding and practice is essential to make sure they're competent.
 - For providers, Welsh Government expects that reviews will take place at least every 61 days.
 - Awarding bodies and Qualifications Wales specify how many assessments are needed and specify the types of assessment tasks.

Other useful resources

- [Video – Cynllun Profi Programme, Matthew Baker](#)
- [Video – Cynllun Profi Programme: Thomas Dean Watkins](#)
- [Health and Care Learning Wales](#)
- [Social Care Wales – information about registration](#) -
- We Care Wales - [Apprenticeships | WeCare Wales](#) apprenticeship information

This guidance was written in partnership with colleagues from the further education sector, the awarding body City & Guilds, work based learning providers, and local employers. The group are all involved in delivering apprenticeship programmes.

Employers want to give apprentices a good learning experience and this may include working in different settings and services during the apprenticeship period. This guidance will support apprentices, employers and learning providers to plan and agree the programme so that the qualification assessment tasks can be completed as the apprentice develops and improves their knowledge and skills.

The organisations who helped us with the guidance are:

- ACT Training
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Cartref Ni
- Ceredigion County Council
- City & Guilds
- Coleg Cambria
- Gower College SwanseaPenguin
- Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)
- Pembrokeshire College
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Monmouthshire County Council
- We Care Wales