

New requirements to ensure care workers are treated fairly come into force

The new requirements are part of the Welsh Government's wider efforts to support the delivery of high quality social care which is focused on the individual and the personal outcomes they want to achieve.

The new regulations support good employment practices by addressing the use of zero-hours contracts. From today, providers are required to give domiciliary care workers a choice of contract after a three month period of employment.

The regulations also place requirements on these providers to ensure that time allocated for travel and care is clearly and transparently set out, so that care time and therefore the quality and continuity of care is not eroded by the need to travel between visits.

Social Care Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"The new regulations coming into force today are designed to support continued improvement in the care sector in Wales. They offer staff in the social care sector a fairer deal and help to safeguard the quality of care and support which people receive in their own homes.

"There is a very clear link between the use of zero-hours contracts and a reduced quality of care, due to issues around the continuity of care and communication between workers and those they support. These measures will ensure workers are offered a choice of contractual arrangements.

"Requiring providers to distinguish clearly between travel time and care time when arranging services, will also improve the experience of people needing care. Doing so will help tackle 'call-clipping', ensuring people's care and support time is not eroded by travel time between visits.

"The registration of domiciliary care workers will provide the public with confidence that care workers have the appropriate skills and qualifications to do their jobs in a professional, compassionate manner.

"I'm pleased the Welsh Government has been able to act to ensure people receiving care experience the best possible care, and to ensure fairness for social care staff across Wales."

The Welsh Government has also opened Social Care Wales' workforce register to include domiciliary care workers, as part of its ongoing commitment to professionalise the workforce. This will ensure care workers receive the recognition and support they deserve from the Welsh Government, Care Inspectorate Wales, and their employers.

These requirements are part of a package of measures put in place by the Welsh Government and partners to raise the profile and status of the workforce, so that social care is recognised as an attractive and valued career.

The regulations flow from the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, which sets the new legal framework for the regulation and inspection of social care services and reforms the regulation of the social care workforce in Wales.

Domiciliary support is at the very heart of the system, and domiciliary care workers play a vital role in supporting people to maintain their independence and live at home. There are estimated to be approximately 19,500 domiciliary care workers in Wales, delivering around 260,000 hours of care a week to 23,000 people.