Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Arolygiaeth Gofal
Cymru
Care Inspectorate
Wales

Supporting positive cultures

This guide explains the principles of positive cultures and why they matter. It also has links to resources, programmes and tools to help you use the principles.

The guide has been written by Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales.

Newid Cadarnhaol mewn
Gofal Cymdeithasol
**Positive Change
in Social Care**

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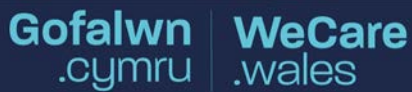
Thanks to WeCareWales for supplying many of the images in this guide.

Other formats:

This document is available in large text or other formats, if required. Copies also available in Welsh.

Contents

Foreword: about this guide

Society is changing quickly. The types of people who use social care services, and the people who support and care for them, are also changing.

We can't underestimate the importance of an organisation's culture. By culture, we mean 'the way things are done around here'.

This includes an organisation's leadership style, its values and behaviours, systems and processes and the partnerships that underpin the way it works.

The culture of our organisations affects how we deliver care and support, and the quality of services – including how well we support the well-being outcomes of people who receive care and support, and how staff feel about their work.

In Wales, our legislation – including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 – is underpinned by a strengths-based and rights-based approach.

Using this legislation, we can share an understanding and commitment to create and maintain positive cultures so that people who use, or give, care and support can thrive.

We know you may already be developing positive cultures and doing things to improve the quality of care and well-being outcomes for individuals.

So, we're delighted to present – together – this guide to help you build, maintain and improve cultures in your setting.

Leaders and managers are central to creating and maintaining organisational culture.

As leaders in our own organisations, we're committed to focusing on people's rights and strengths. We work compassionately to embed positive cultures in all aspects of our work – individually and together.

We're pleased to support you to do the same.

Albert Heaney CBE,
Chief Social Care Officer for Wales

Gillian Baranski,
Chief Inspector for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

Sarah McCarty,
Chief Executive of Social Care Wales

About the language in this guide

We know language is very personal. We believe in a strengths-based approach where we treat people as individuals.

When we collectively discuss racism in this guide, we may use "the experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people" or use "ethnic minority".

In social care, it's important to support people to express their identity in the way they choose. This helps us to develop a strong and inclusive positive culture.

It's essential that you talk and listen to your staff and the people who receive care and support.

Who this guide is for

This guide is for managers and leaders in social care. It recognises people can be leaders wherever they work in an organisation, regardless of their formal status or job title.

This guide is for anyone who plans, delivers or improves national or local social care services.

This includes:

- leaders and managers in social care services
  (including third sector organisations and user led organisations)
- health board and local authority commissioners
- Welsh Government policy leads
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Social Care Wales.

About positive cultures

What does a positive culture look like?

People told us a positive culture is one where:

- everyone feels listened to, valued and heard
- organisations acknowledge, accept and respect difference and diversity
- leaders and managers focus on recruiting, nurturing, challenging and supporting the behaviours and values they want to see
- national and local organisations work together and support each other to understand what matters to people and their communities
- leaders and managers, at all levels, understand why it's important for their organisation to have a positive culture
- national and local organisations work together to promote people's rights
- the organisation, its systems and processes all support staff to do what matters for people
- organisations that design and deliver services involve the people they care for and support in those processes
- organisations look outwards, are inclusive, and build working partnerships with their communities to support people's well-being outcomes.

It's important to make sure social care is anti-discriminatory and anti-racist. We should also recognise that anti-discrimination supports good quality care.

Positive cultures are inclusive, fair and equitable and proactively promote and value diversity.

Social care organisations grow and thrive when they recognise how diversity benefits their workplace.

We can tell a lot about an organisation's culture by looking at:

- how the organisation treats the people and communities it cares for or supports

- how the organisation does its work

- what people say about the care and support they receive

- how staff members feel about working there

- what other people think and say about the organisation

- how it receives and responds to complaints and feedback.

These are usually affected by:

- the people who lead and guide others
  (including managers and team or community leaders), and their leadership style

- the organisation's values principles and policies, and how it puts these into practice

- team values and behaviours.

Why do positive cultures matter?

Developing a positive culture can help to improve the quality of care you provide to people. A positive culture can:

- support people to achieve what matters to them

- improve people's well-being

- help staff to feel happier at work, so they want to work there longer

- make an organisation an attractive place to work

- strengthen communication, collaboration, and support different ways of working

- help staff feel supported and capable of doing their best work when things are challenging

- help to improve services, by learning from and working with other organisations, partners and the people you support

- help you be clear about your purpose and the things you need to focus on.

How to use this guide

The guide explains the principles of positive cultures. Positive cultures promote the well-being of people who access, or work in, social care services and support them to thrive.

The values and behaviours behind the principles aren't new – they're embedded in legal duties and professional standards. But the principles bring the evidence, values and behaviours together and show how they all contribute to a positive culture.

Each principle in this guide is important on its own. But when we use them together, we can help make a positive difference to people's lives.

The guide includes links to resources, programmes and tools to help you put the principles into practice. You should use the guide flexibly to meet the needs of your organisation.

You can use it to:

- prioritise well-being and what matters to people and the staff who support them
- have a shared understanding of positive cultures, so we can work together to make sure social care is the best it can be
- create a culture that values continuous learning and improvement, by:
  - sharing what works
  - learning when things don't go to plan
  - changing things that aren't working.

We'll use data from research, and people's experiences and outcomes, to keep developing this guide.

This guide supports:

- the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and its evaluation**
- **Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016**
- the *Rebalancing care and support programme*
- the *Anti-racist Wales action plan* and the **Equality Act 2010**
- *More than just words* – Welsh Government's strategy to promote the Welsh language in health and social care services in Wales
- the *National commissioning framework for care and support code of practice*
- the *Your well-being matters* framework
- the *Code of professional practice for social care.*

The principles

This guide has six sections. There are tools and resources to help you use the principles, and examples of how other people have used that principle in their work.

There are five principles:

1. positive cultures protect, promote and support people's rights
2. positive cultures have compassionate leaders
3. positive cultures share positive values and behaviours
4. positive cultures have good relationships based on strengths
5. positive cultures support learning, development and continuous improvement.

Each of these principles must be supported by systems and processes that promote positive cultures. We explain how this could work at the end of the guide.

They each depend on one another, with everybody and everything working towards a common purpose.

Principles of positive cultures

Protect, promote and support people's rights

Support learning, development and continuous improvement

Have compassionate leaders

Have good relationships based on strengths

Share positive values and behaviours

Supported by systems and processes
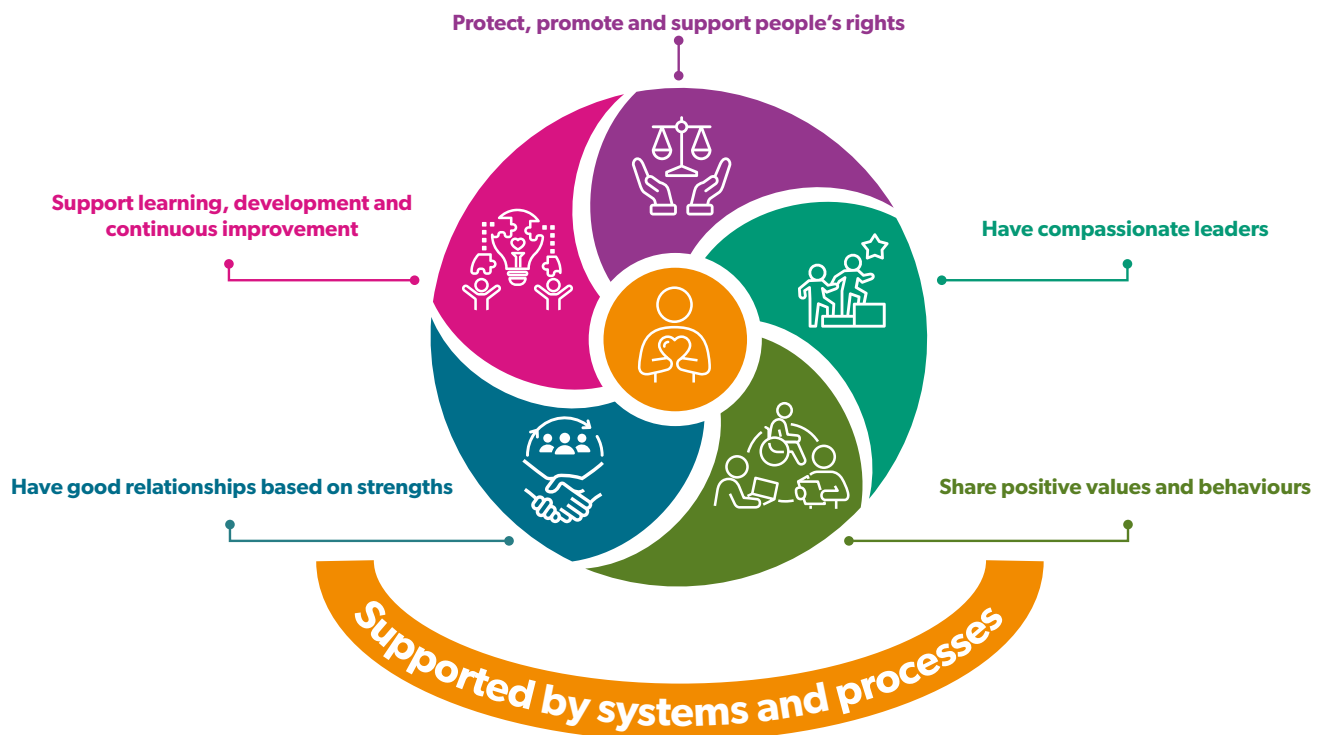
How we developed the principles

High profile inquiries, including the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Winterbourne View and Operation Jasmine, have all highlighted what can happen to people when the culture of the service they're receiving is poor.

We asked the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) to research evidence about the key ingredients of positive culture in social care.

This guide is based on this research and from conversations with our partners, including:

- the National Commissioning Board
- Welsh Government policy leads
- ADSS Cymru
- local authority representatives, or heads of services for children and adults
- the Older People's Commissioner
- the Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Carers Wales.

SCIE's research showed us:

- there's clear evidence and links between a positive culture and good outcomes for people (people who access services and the people who support them)
- a positive culture is the basis for good quality care
- we have to focus on people's rights when we develop positive cultures
- different models of care have common principles, but no specific model 'does it all'
- there are resources to help support a positive culture, but the information isn't available in one place
- leadership is crucial when creating and maintaining positive cultures in social care
- the sector needs to work together to achieve what matters to people.

SCIE's *Leadership in strengths-based social care* briefing says:

> *"To promote positive cultures, we need to ensure systems and processes are relevant to people and staff."*
>
> *"This includes changing practice, systems, and processes in pursuit of a shift from a focus on deficits and services to personalised and place-based outcomes."*

Read SCIE's research on supporting positive cultures in social care settings in Wales.

You can read the Operation Jasmine practice review on the Social Care Wales website.

Principle 1: positive cultures protect, promote and support people's rights

Listen to Abyd talk about supporting, promoting and protecting people's rights in a positive culture.

Protecting, promoting and supporting rights is at the heart of all social care work. It includes protecting people who are at risk of harm or abuse.

People who work in social care have a legal duty to protect people's rights under:

- the Equality Act (2010), including the nine **protected characteristics** – which is also part of the **Code of Professional Practice**
- **Welsh Language Act (1993).**

What is a rights-based approach?

A rights-based approach means we:

- protect human rights
- value people's lived experience, respecting their voice, choice and control
- give people the personalised support they need to achieve what matters to them
- value diversity, and think about how policies and practices will affect people with protected characteristics – especially when we need to make decisions, or talk to people about the support they need
- make sure people have a say in decisions that affect them
- remember what we have to do to meet our responsibilities set out in equalities legislation and the **Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014**
- move from a position of non-discrimination (protecting) towards proactive anti-discrimination
- look at ways to promote and enhance people's rights and change how we do things to benefit all
- address organisational practices, policies and rules to make sure they don't lead to unequal outcomes and institutional discrimination
- lead in a way that encourages collaboration, internally and externally, to make sure we're all protecting people's rights (sometimes called a 'whole-systems approach')
- make sure people have fair work, which includes fair pay and are recruited fairly.

How does rights-based working lead to positive cultures?

By focusing on rights in all parts of our work, we can create positive cultures for the people we care for or support, and our staff.

Rights-based working has a positive effect on the people we care for, or support.

This is because everyone working in social care can:

- recognise, protect, and promote people's rights
- offer people voice, choice and control in their care or support
- recognise and understand people's priorities
- make changes to services, behaviours or policies so they uphold people's rights
- encourage people to make their own decisions and take positive risks
- offer sustainable services by motivated and empowered social care workers.

Rights-based working also leads to a positive culture for people working in social care because it helps them to:

- have a say in the things that affect them at work
- have fair work, which includes fair pay and working conditions
- have their rights protected
- get support when they need it
- feel happier and well at work, so they're more likely to stay much longer with their employer and feel motivated to give better care
- be part of stronger teams that are built on trust, confidence and the right to be heard and feel safe and respected
- focus on identifying and understanding other people's rights
  - This encourages better working relationships and supports people working in social care to balance their roles and responsibilities confidently.
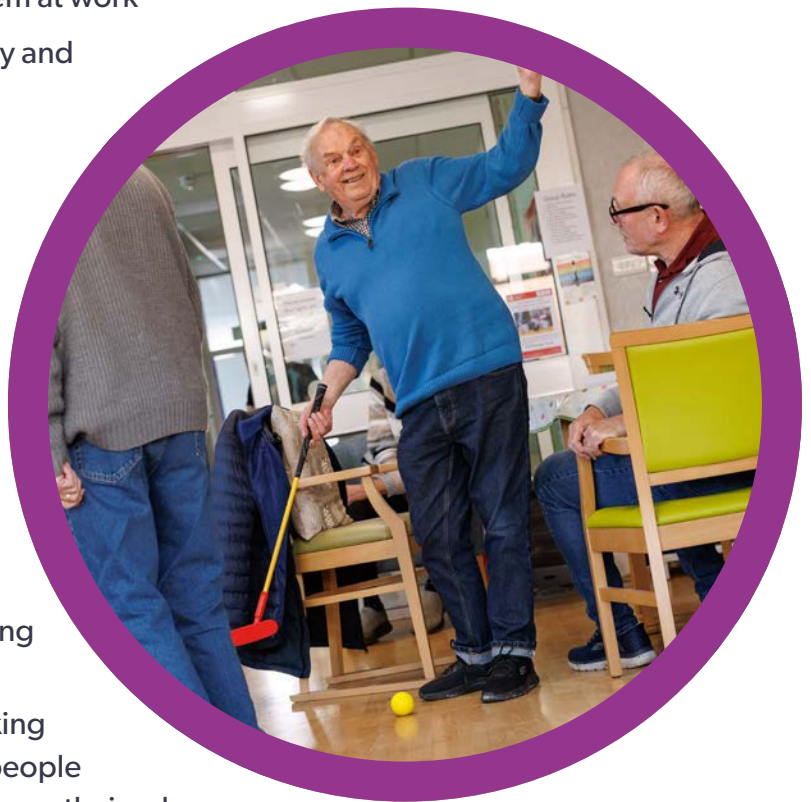
Where to find out more

Go to the Insight Collective website for links to information and resources to help you to work in a rights-based way to promote a positive culture.

Principle 2: positive cultures have compassionate leaders

Listen to Fôn talk about compassionate leaders in a positive culture.

An organisation's leaders and their leadership style have a huge effect on workplace culture.

What is compassionate leadership?

Compassionate leadership is a commitment to giving the right support to our colleagues, partners and people in our teams. It helps them to respond effectively to challenges and thrive in their work.

It's a key part of Social Care Wales and Health Education and Improvement Wales's joint workforce strategy, *A Healthier Wales.*

The model focuses on four behaviours:

- listening
- understanding
- empathising
- helping.

It also has seven principles:

1. agreeing direction, alignment and commitment for working together
2. creating environments where collective leadership thrives
3. establishing conditions for our workforce to reflect, learn, continually improve and innovate
4. managing difficulties openly, courageously and ethically
5. developing supportive and effective team, and inter-team, working
6. improving equality, inclusion and diversity, consciously removing barriers
7. enabling safe, trusting and engaging systems and cultures.

We developed these principles with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW).

This way of working is an essential part of health and social care in Wales.
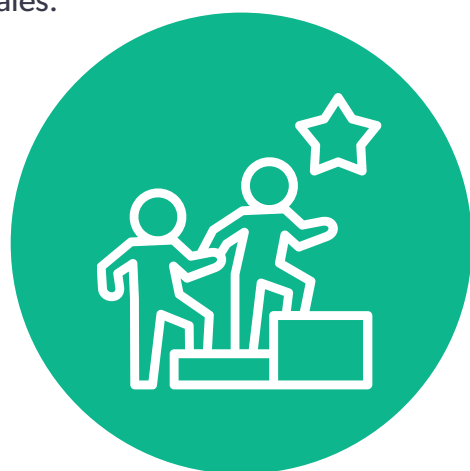
How does compassionate leadership lead to positive cultures?

When we lead with compassion, we prioritise staff well-being and development.

This means the people we lead are working in a culture that's inclusive, effective and positive. Staff need a supportive culture with clear direction and encouragement alongside a commitment to open dialogue.

Leading with compassion gives them that direction and encouragement. It helps teams to feel valued and respected, so they can do their best work.

It takes resilience and courage, but compassionate leaders give confidence to their teams. That confidence means teams can:

- work together to reach shared goals
- learn from mistakes at work
- feel motivated to do a good job
- feel safe and confident to have open discussions where staff can express their feelings, opinions and ideas without holding back
- feel comfortable raising concerns and making suggestions to make things better
- keep staff longer because they're happier
- be compassionate to other people.

This allows us to support people to live the best life they can through better care and support.

Where to find out more

Go to the Insight Collective website for links to information and resources to help you understand more about compassionate leadership and how you can lead with compassion.

Principle 3: positive cultures share positive values and behaviours

Listen to Keri talk about positive values and behaviours in a positive culture, from a manager's point of view.

Listen to Josie talk about her experience of positive values and behaviours in a positive culture, as a member of staff.

What do we mean by values and behaviours?

Our values are the things we think are important. They guide our actions, decisions and how we behave.

Values and beliefs are often something we feel strongly about without knowing why.

If we try to do things based on our values, we can be more mindful in our actions and our attitude.

We all have different values depending on our background, our experiences, or the people in our lives.

For example: if we experience discrimination, we may notice when other people are facing the same barriers and feel it's important to support them.

While we need to value and respect our differences, a positive culture sets clear standards and expectations for staff.

Some jobs have specific values and behaviours. This is where values-based recruitment can help.

If you're a social care worker, for example, you'll need to follow the *Code of Professional Practice.* It says that all workers need to:

- help people who receive care and support to say and achieve what matters to them
- respect others' dignity, privacy, preferences, culture, language, rights, beliefs, views and wishes
- support individuals to stay safe
- be honest, trustworthy and reliable
- be qualified to do their job properly and to a certain standard.

If you provide a regulated service, the regulations expect you to promote a culture of openness, honesty and candour at all levels.

It's also important that we recognise some people we care for and support may not share the same values.

How do positive values and behaviours lead to positive cultures?

Sharing the same positive values can lead to positive cultures because they:

- **promote respect and dignity** – they encourage us to step into someone else's shoes and think about how our own actions will affect other people

- **encourage trust and transparency** – by having values that prioritise being honest and open when we communicate, we can understand what other people need or expect, and we can explain our own needs or expectations

- **help us to build collaborative relationships** – when we focus on teamwork and working together, we can bring in different perspectives and make the workplace more inclusive

- **help us to keep improving things** – when we all work to the same values, we can share a vision of what good looks like, and what matters to us and the people we work with

- **promote accountability and ethical ways of working** – when we share the same values, we'll hold each other to similar standards and that can give us a safe space to say when we need more support.

Where to find out more

Go to the Insight Collective website for links to information and resources to help you work on your organisation's values and support others to uphold them.

Principle 4: positive cultures have good relationships based on strengths

Listen to Rebecca talk about strengths-based relationships in a positive culture.

What is strengths-based practice?

Strengths-based practice is a way of supporting people that's based on relationships. It's sometimes called:

- relationship or relational-based approaches
- outcome-focused practice
- person-centred approach
- having a 'what matters' conversation
- balancing rights and responsibilities.

The **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** tells us to focus on people's well-being, and make sure they're at the centre of their care and support planning.

Organisations that work in a strengths-based way work with other sectors to design and deliver better quality care and support for people. This includes grassroots community and user-led organisations.

What does strengths-based practice look like?

Strengths-based practice focuses on talking, exploring and listening to:

- the strengths of the person we're supporting, which includes:
  - what they can already do, their skills, knowledge and experience
  - the things that matter to them, such as their values, interests, and relationships
- what a person is worried about and any risks to their safety and well-being
- how everyone involved, such as the person, their family and the people who give care or support, can help to manage the person's changing needs while keeping everyone as safe as possible
- working with a person, and their family, friends and community networks, to understand and plan what needs to happen to support their well-being to live the best life possible.
  - This is also called 'setting outcomes' or 'setting personal goals'.

Working out a person's strengths means having supportive conversations about what matters to the people we care for and work with. This includes the conversations we have with colleagues in the organisation and our partners.

How does recognising strengths support a positive culture?

Strengths-based practice:

- helps us to hear, value and understand the people we support, which:
  - can give them voice, choice and control in decisions and plans for their own care and support
  - allows us to recognise and value them as individuals
  - helps us to make them feel safe and supported.

- helps us build a better connection with the people we work with, which:
  - gives us an opportunity to understand the different skills and experience they bring
  - identify the things in our systems and processes that get in the way of delivering and achieving better care and support
  - allow us to work together to develop creative and different ways of working, so people can do the things that matter most to their well-being
  - helps them to feel valued as individuals
  - builds mutual confidence and trust.
- can create a common vision of what success looks like.

Where to find out more

Go to the Insight Collective website for links to information and resources to help you to start working in a strengths-based way.

Principle 5: positive cultures support learning, development and continuous improvement

Listen to Sarah talk about supporting learning, development and continuous improvement in a positive culture.

What does it mean to support learning, development and continuous improvement?

We can support learning, training and development by:

- taking time to reflect on what works well and involving people who get care or support, partners and staff to find any areas we need to improve

- including reflective practice in our conversations

- learning from feedback from the people we care for and support

- learning from complaints and critical incidents

- recognising why it's important to keep improving

- thinking about new ways to do things to making sure the people we care for, or support, get positive outcomes

- being committed to working with people who access and work in social care services

- being committed to staff learning and development

- being willing to learn from others and seeing how other people do things

- asking staff what learning and development they feel they need to do their work well and creating opportunities for learning

- making space for staff to share the things they've learned

- understanding what staff already know, and where there may be gaps in skills or experience

- keeping up to date with legal duties and statutory guidance.

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 says service providers need to have clear arrangements to keep checking the quality of their service.

Service providers also need to prove their service works in line with legal requirements and its statement of purpose, and that it supports individuals appropriately.

Services should use the information they get through monitoring to keep developing and improving the service.
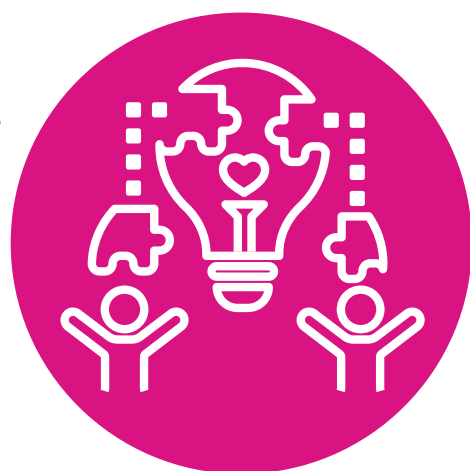
How does supporting learning, development and improvement lead to a positive culture?

By supporting learning, development and improvement, you can:

- improve well-being, because:
  - people feel they have a voice, are listened to, and can contribute in a meaningful way
  - staff have the skills and training they need to be confident at their job, so they feel prepared at work
  - staff feel trusted to do their job well, and see their job as somewhere they can thrive
  - staff feel better about themselves and trust their colleagues.

- improve the quality of your services, because:
  - there are regular opportunities to reflect, learn and improve
  - staff are more knowledgeable or experienced, so they're likely to be able to support people in the best ways possible
  - staff can try out new ideas, innovative solutions and new ways of working that deliver more effective services
  - by trying new things and learning from others, staff can see opportunities to build and improve
  - leaders understand the organisation's strengths and what it can offer partners and the people it supports.

- positively impact how other people think about the organisation, because:
  - it will attract more motivated and talented candidates (including future leaders and managers)
  - consistent care and support may make people feel more open to working with social care staff to achieve what matters to them
  - people speak well about their organisation and their role.

Where to find out more

Go to the Insight Collective website for links to information and resources to help you to start supporting learning and development to create a positive culture.

Systems and processes: making sure that everything works together

An organisation's systems and processes should all promote positive cultures, and work with the five principles.

They should be relevant, intuitive and support everyone who uses them.

Listen to Taryn talk about supporting systems and processes in a positive culture.

What are systems and processes?

Systems and processes are policies, arrangements, or ways of working.

They support us to run sustainable services that meet the needs of our staff and the people we care for or support.

Systems and processes include:

- national and organisational policies
- how we commission services
- how we record and keep track of the quality of services and their impact
- who we involve when we evaluate our service
- how we make sure we're including supported people, teams and partners when we design care and support services, or decide how they're managed
- understanding the kind of care or support someone needs to achieve what matters to them
- safeguarding someone's rights, health and well-being so they can live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

We can design and use systems and processes to create positive cultures in our organisations.

We can also use them to create wider positive cultures when we work with our partners in other teams, organisations and sectors. This is sometimes called a 'whole-system approach'.

How do good systems and processes support positive cultures?

A whole-system approach supports positive cultures by:

- helping everyone involved to understand what matters to people and communities, including:
  - their strengths
  - what they need
  - their opportunities
  - what's expected of them
  - their resources and support.

- encouraging strong relationships, more trust and support for partnership working, which includes working with:
  - the private sector
  - the public sector
  - the voluntary community
  - social enterprises
  - grass roots organisations or user led community groups
  - experts by experience
  - organisations that represent ethnic minority communities, including race and equality.

- making it easier for us to work together to share skills, knowledge and resources so they're used more effectively

- creating opportunities to share new ways of supporting culture change

- creating opportunities to share new ways to satisfy what people and communities need to achieve a life with good well-being

- creating the right working environment, behaviours and attitudes for us to shape and develop policy, or plans, to change things for the better.
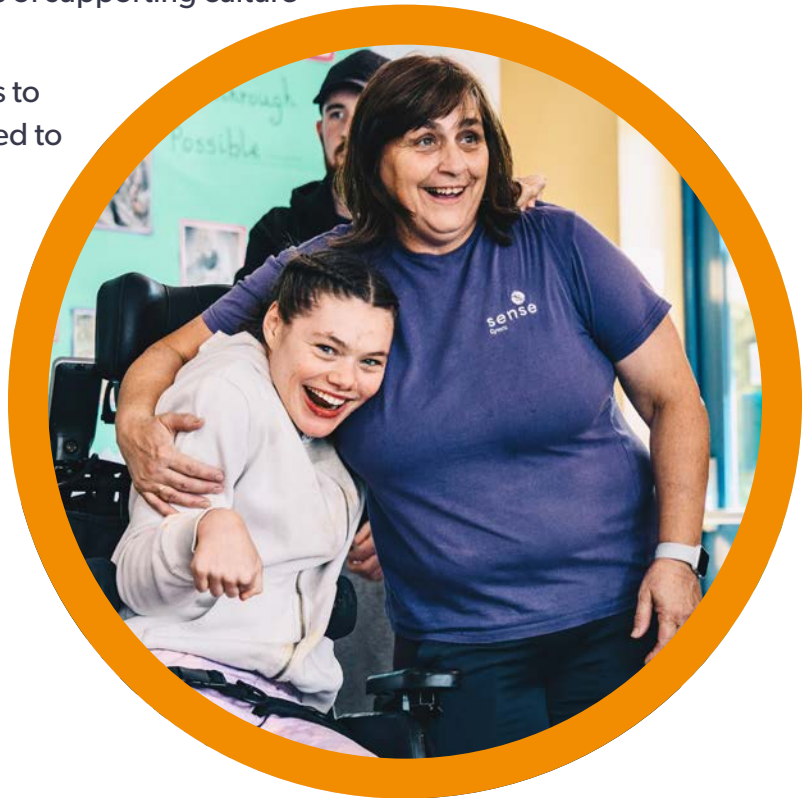
To succeed, we all need to work together to a common purpose and recognise our individual roles, strengths and contributions.

In a whole-systems approach, those roles may look like this:

- **people with lived experience**
  - Having a voice and being able to shape and co-produce care and support services to better promote their health and well-being.
- **people who work in social care**
  - Feeling able to be creative and empowered to make changes when they see barriers in the system.
  - Having opportunities and support to change systems that don't help the people and communities they support to achieve what matters to them.
- **policy leads**
  - Using the principles of positive culture when they develop policies or make decisions about policies in Wales.
  - Holding conversations with different people and organisations with practice and lived experience, to help everyone understand the challenges and the things they need to do. This is also called 'co-production'.
  - Collecting data and monitoring the impacts of change.
- **commissioners**
  - Making sure they commission services from organisations with positive cultures.
  - Including the principles of positive cultures in contracts and service specifications.
- **regulators**
  - Inspections consider if there's evidence of a positive culture and reflect the findings in inspection reports.
  - Making sure descriptors of ratings reflect positive cultures.
- **leaders in social care**
  - Working with people to understand what prevents people from achieving what matters to them and working with staff and partners to change those things.
  - Making sure organisational systems and processes support a positive culture.
  - Taking proactive and positive actions for change.

Where to find out more

Go to the Insight Collective website for links to information and resources to help you start thinking about how your systems and processes support a positive culture.

Get in touch

We'll be promoting positive cultures in all of our work.

We'd like to hear what you're doing to support positive cultures as well as your thoughts about this guide.

Please share any of your learning, reflections and ideas for improvement by e-mailing: **positivecultures@socialcare.wales**

Reading list

Go to the Insight Collective website to see our Supporting positive cultures reading list.