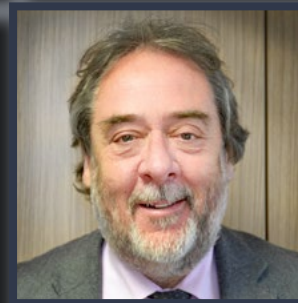
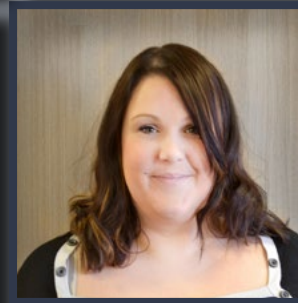
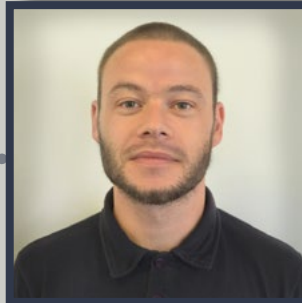
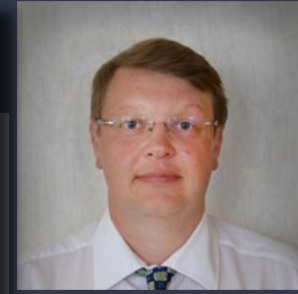
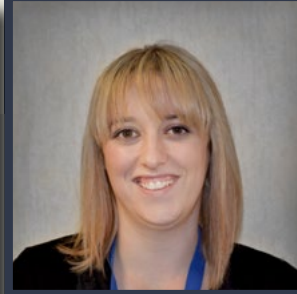
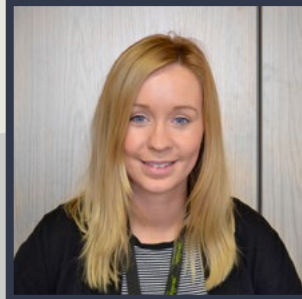




Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**  
Social Care **Wales**



Our **Voice**

How we sound

# Introduction

We all communicate with people in lots of ways in our roles in Social Care Wales.

We may all have different personalities, styles and ways of doing things but we need to work together as a team with one voice: Our Voice.

Our voice should be clear, easy to understand and easy to engage with. When people come to our website, see our logo or get an email from us, they should feel that:

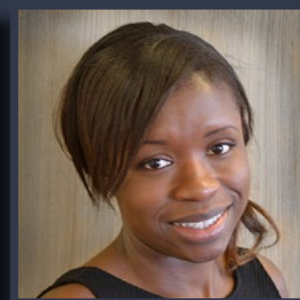
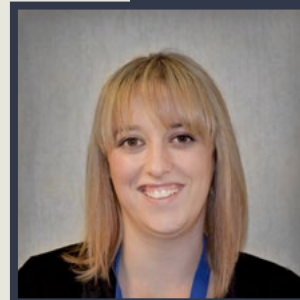
- they are important to us
- they can have confidence in us
- they can work with us
- they can trust us.

This guide gives you tips on how to write content for Social Care Wales and communicate with colleagues, partners and the public.

# Our values

Our values mean we:

- **respect everyone** – we see people as individuals and treat everyone with dignity and respect. Our voice helps us make sure no one feels excluded, as we will give them information in a way they'll understand.
- **take a professional approach** – we act responsibly and in the right way, holding each other to account. Our voice helps tell people we are experienced, knowledgeable and skilled, an organisation that understands its role and is clear about what it does.
- **are always learning** – we believe in improving ourselves and supporting others to be the best we can be. Our voice helps us give out information that's backed by evidence from what we've learned.
- **involve people** – we encourage and enable everyone to work together. Our voice will show people we are keen to listen to them and take on board their views.



# Our tone

We all have a personality that comes through when we express ourselves. We approach language with a mix of rules and styles that we pick up through school and at work.

If everyone uses their own style, then our tone as Social Care Wales won't be consistent.

## Why is tone important?

- It makes us human and easier for people to recognise and connect with
- It shows people our identity and personality even if we don't meet them face-to-face.

## Top five ingredients to make our personality come alive through our writing

- Always use 'we' after first introducing Social Care Wales
- Say the most important things first – what people want to know not what you want to tell them
- Keep it short and simple so everyone can understand, even if they know nothing about the subject
- Avoid any jargon or acronyms
- Use a more verbal style – read it aloud and decide if that would be how you'd tell someone.

## Thinking about tone

Tone of voice doesn't mean having a different voice for every audience. We have one voice, but we use different aspects depending on the situation and the audience.

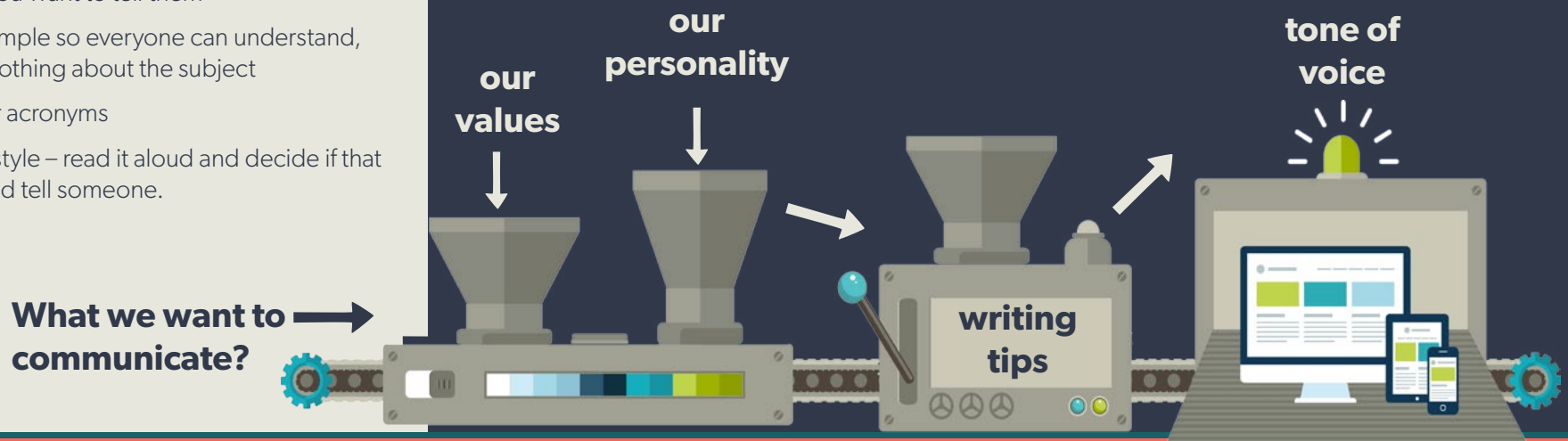
### Sensitive complaint letter



### Social media post



### General information



# Our personality

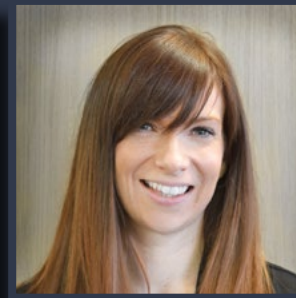
Our tone of voice is rooted in the personality of our organisation, Social Care Wales.

Our personality has five key features:

- reliable
- approachable
- firm but fair
- supportive
- forward-thinking.

**People don't always remember what you say or even what you do, but they always remember how you made them feel.**

Maya Angelou

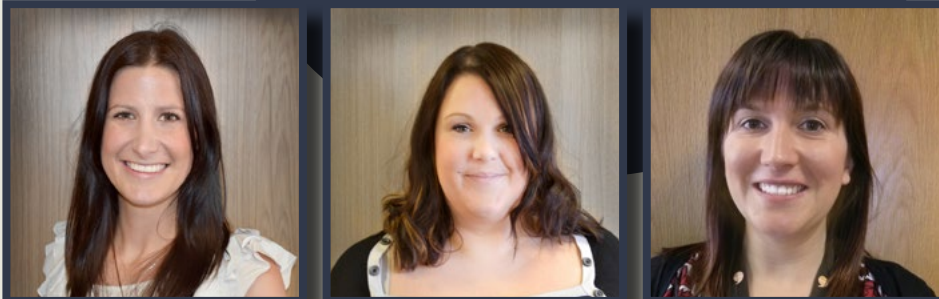


# Reliable

We're an organisation people can trust to work hard and do what they expect us to do. If what we say sounds unsure or like we're hiding something, then people won't trust us.

## **Reliable:**

trustworthy, dependable, steady, strong, solid, and consistent.



## **Example of being reliable:**

### **Instead of this:**

As you may be aware, the Welsh Government is intending to end voluntary registration from 31 March 2017 and you will need to be removed from the Register by that time. You can request voluntary removal from the Register now through your MyCareCouncil account, and by doing this you will not need to apply for renewal of registration. The Register will re-open to domiciliary care workers in April 2018 and to adult care home workers in April 2020. Further information on the future mandatory registration of these groups can be found on the Care Council website.

### **We want to write more like this:**

The Welsh Government will end voluntary registration on 31 March 2017. This means you need to take yourself off the Register by then and you can do this on SCWonline.

You will be able to re-register when the Register opens:

- for domiciliary care workers in April 2018
- for adult care home workers in April 2020.

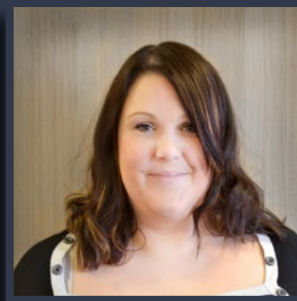
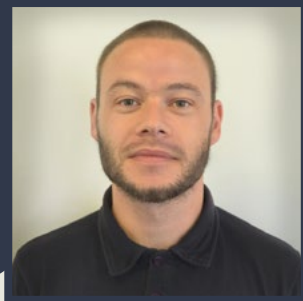
You can find more information on our website.

# Approachable

We're good listeners and easy to talk to. The way we communicate needs to connect to people. It means taking time, listening and treating people like humans. And it means avoiding jargon and academic terms that people might not understand.

## **Approachable:**

kind, good at listening, and happy to help. We work well with others and we're well-mannered, tolerant and flexible.



## **Example of being approachable:**

### **Instead of this:**

Question: Is there a time limit for investigations from date referral received to hearing?

The Care Council aims to complete an investigation from initial referral to final hearing within 10 months, although this is not always possible due to delays in investigations with employers, the Police, Safeguarding and other regulatory bodies. The majority of referrals to the Care Council do not reach a hearing stage and are investigated and closed during the early stages of the Fitness to Practise process.

### **We want to write more like this:**

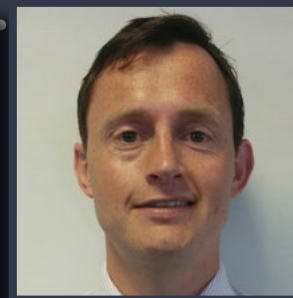
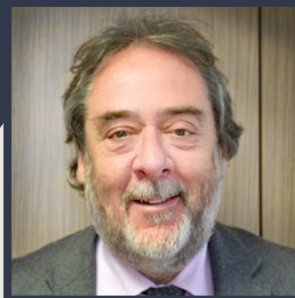
No, but we do try to finish an investigation within 10 months. This isn't always possible, as it can take longer when we're working with employers, the police and other groups.

# Firm but fair

We often deal with difficult situations and face challenging decisions. If we sound too apologetic or unsure people may feel we're not confident. If we sound too distant or judgmental people may react in a negative way. It's important we sound firm but also fair.

## **Firm but fair:**

open, trusted and reasonable. Holding strong principles that help us make decisions and stand by them.



## **Example of being firm but fair:**

### **Instead of this:**

The Care Council is unable to consider a complaint while the matter is in the Court arena. On conclusion of the court process, should there be concerns which would call into question (Registrant's name) fitness to practise, I would suggest that you contact xxxx to access their Complaints process. Should you have any concerns on conclusion of this process, the Care Council will review the outcome of the report at that time.

### **We want to write more like this:**

Sorry, but we cannot deal with a complaint when it has gone to court.

However, when the court finishes, if you still have concerns about xxxxxxx, then you should contact xxxxxxx about their complaints process.

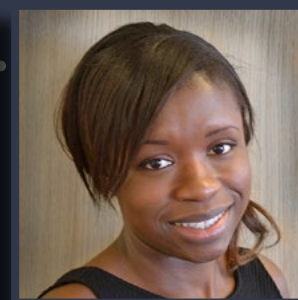
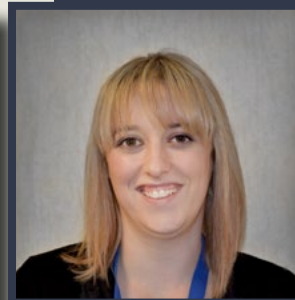
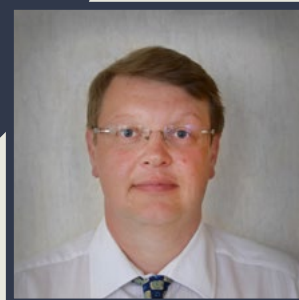
If you wish, we can also look at their report.

# Supportive

We support many partners and people. What we write should show we listen and are prepared to work on reaching a solution, even when it means making difficult decisions.

## **Supportive:**

co-operative, responsive, constructive and practical. We understand others' needs, and care enough to listen and be part of the solution. We're always happy to help.



## **Example of being supportive:**

### **Instead of this:**

Dear Mr X  
I am responding to the contents of your complaint form which I received on 11 May 2016. I am sorry to hear that you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received by the Care Council. I have had the opportunity to review your complaint form. Your complaint raises a number of questions which are dealt with in turn below.

### **We want to write more like this:**

Dear Mr X  
I've had the opportunity to look at your complaint. I am sorry that you're unhappy with the service you've received from us.

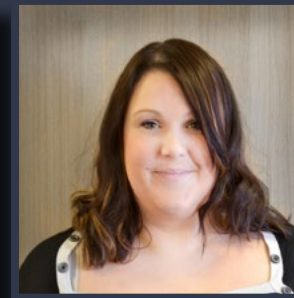
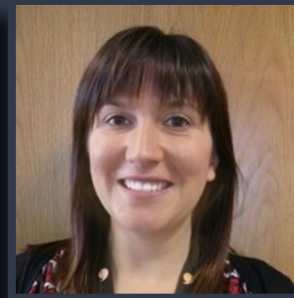
We take your concerns seriously. This letter aims to answer some of the questions you raised in your complaint and the issues you mention.



# Forward-thinking

We believe we should never stop learning. Wales is changing and people's needs change too. We must adapt and prepare for the future. If we sound negative or like we're not open to new ideas, then we won't inspire others.

**Forward-thinking:**  
uplifting, bold, hopeful,  
and experienced.  
We're open to learning,  
innovative, and outspoken  
when we need to be.



## Example of being forward-thinking:

### Instead of this:

This is the first profile of domiciliary care managers registered with the Care Council for Wales (Care Council). The profile is based on the data about domiciliary care managers and their employment, provided during the application process to register onto the Care Council for Wales Register of Social Care Workers (the Register) and to maintain registration with the Care Council. The data is from the Register on 20 February 2014.

### We want to write more like this:

This is our first report about domiciliary care managers and their employment.

The information comes from our registrants' applications to maintain their registration or join our Register of Social Care Workers. It was collected on 20 February 2014.

# Developing content

Our content should always give people the information they need, be clear and help them to trust us.

Take time  
(have a coffee).  
Walking away  
from the task can  
improve it.

Use headings to  
frame new ideas and  
help the reader find  
what's important to  
them.

What is the  
purpose or goal of  
this piece and how  
does it fit into what  
we do?

Who's the  
reader or group of  
readers, and what do  
they need?

What are the  
facts behind your  
content? Use examples  
but don't bombard  
people with things they  
don't need to know.

Show  
your work to  
someone else, as it's  
always good to get a  
second opinion. They can  
help you edit and tell you  
if it says what you need  
it to.

Organise  
and include any  
images, media,  
quotes or contacts  
you need.

Accept that the  
first draft may look  
a little ugly. Writing  
content can be hard  
work.

Simple doesn't  
mean simplistic.  
Make things easy to  
understand.

**If you can't explain  
it simply, you don't  
understand it well enough.**

Albert Einstein

Next? Imagine  
the reader asking  
'What now?' Is there a  
call to action, an email,  
more to read?

You're ready to  
publish!



# Writing for the web

Most people visiting our website are looking for information or need a quick answer to a question.

People don't read websites like other material, they scan them. So be specific, informative, clear and to the point.

- It needs to be scannable.
- Use headings for different sections, as well as sub-headings, if you need to.
- Explain how and why.
- Highlight keywords.
- Use short sentences.
- Create lists like this one.
- Write short paragraphs with one point each.
- Put links on separate lines.
- Use simple language – not jargon.
- Good online content is easy to read and understand.
- It helps people find what they need.



# Writing for social media

Writing for social media is similar to writing for websites. It gives us a chance to interact with people in real time.

- Are you joining in a conversation or starting your own?
- Be prepared for people to answer.
- Is there a call to action or are you just broadcasting?
- Keep it short.
- Use plain, easily understood language.
- If in doubt – don't post it.
- Check the sensitivity of the post before pressing submit.
- It's permanent – once it's online it won't go away.
- Be accurate – check spelling, grammar, data, links and images.
- This isn't your personal social media platform, it's ours – use our voice.

**When something can be read without effort, great effort has gone into writing it.**

Enrique Poncela

# Writing for the Board

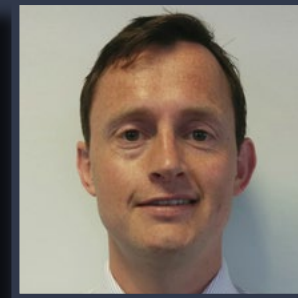
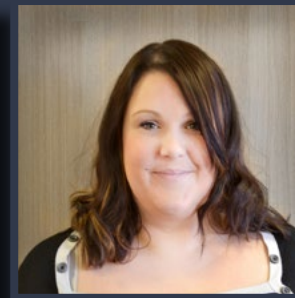
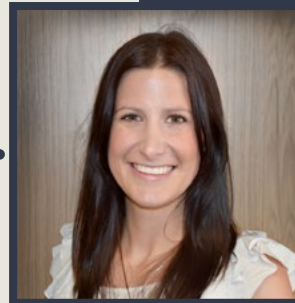
Board papers are written for members to help them make decisions on our work. So they need to be specific, informative, clear and to the point.

Members are aware of the work we do, so it's not necessary to repeat the history of how we got there, just explain clearly and concisely what you need them to do.

- Start by explaining what you'd like members to do – include the purpose, the issues and what decision or action is needed.
- Use headings and sub-headings for different sections.
- Use short sentences.
- Write short paragraphs with one point each.
- Use simple language – avoid jargon.
- Make sure the recommendations are clear.
- Background information, if necessary, should be included at the end of the paper.

**The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out, communication is getting through.**

Sydney J. Harris

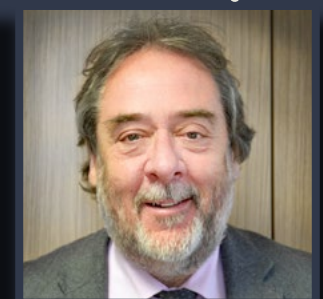
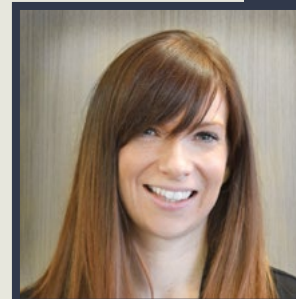


# Style guide

A style guide covers grammar, language, formatting and tone. It helps us sound consistent.

- **Scannable content** – we make our content easy to read and understand by:
  - using frequent, informative headings
  - creating lists
  - writing short paragraphs
  - putting links on separate lines.
- **Abbreviations** – only for titles such as Mr, Mrs, and Dr.  
We should not abbreviate Social Care Wales to SCW.
- **Acronyms** – write in full first time and include the acronym after it in brackets, then use the acronym. Plural acronyms don't contain an apostrophe e.g. GCSEs.
- **Etc** – just don't use it.
- **Be positive** – it sounds friendlier and is usually more effective.
- **Use 'we'** – when writing for Social Care Wales, after first use say 'we'.
- **Use 'you or your'** – when possible.
- **Be gender neutral** – where possible, use 'them', 'their', 'they'.
- **Be active** – say 'You can' rather than 'You may be able to'.
- **Use contractions** – words such as cannot or should not can be harder to read so use can't, or shouldn't. It often flows better too.
- **Sentences** – keep them short. If there's more than 25 words look at dividing it. Keep to one point per sentence.  
It's okay to use words like 'and', 'but', and 'so' at the start of a sentence. Because it sounds friendly.
- **Use 'to'** – instead of a dash or slash in dates. It's quicker to read 'tax year 2013 to 2014'.
- **Use 'and'** – rather than '&', unless it's a name.
- **Spellings** – watch out for 'ize' – sometimes computers sneak these in. We organise not organize.

**Jargon and buzzwords  
– don't use them –  
you'll lose readers.**



# Punctuation tips

## → Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used to abbreviate, such as I'd for I would and to show possession, such as Dave's boat.

## → Brackets

Use brackets for a list: a) b) c) or in statements that are separate from the sentence.

When brackets end a sentence, the full-stop goes after (like this).

## → Bullet points

If the bullet points are a list after a colon, each bullet point should start with a lowercase letter. There should only be a full-stop at the end of the last bullet point.

## → Capital letters

Too many capital letters can seem THREATENING and are more difficult to read than lower case text. They should be avoided in full words.

You should use capital letters in the following cases:

- to start a sentence
- in job titles when they're part of a proper name, e.g. Sue Evans, Chief Executive
- to start a headline
- for official names of policies, teams or committees, e.g. the Workforce Committee
- for government departments, e.g. Health, political parties, e.g. Labour Party, parliamentary acts and bills, e.g. Social Care Act
- for names of buildings, streets and areas, and some official institutions, e.g. the Church, as opposed to a church building
- for the Government, when referring to the current administration, but government, when referring to an institution (like government bodies).

You **should not** use capital letters in the following cases:

- for names of jobs or posts used in a general way, e.g. the administrators; care workers
- for general references to policies, teams, local authorities, local health boards or committees
- for jobs such as social worker or childcare worker that are not part of a proper name
- for whole words (LIKE THIS) for emphasis
- for nouns that are not proper names
- for seasons of the year.

## → Colons

Colons are used:

- to introduce a list or to announce some important news, e.g. everyone was surprised: Dave went to Bangor.
- to separate two closely related but contrasting statements, e.g. Empowerment: a risk worth taking.

## → Exclamation marks

Don't overuse these and never use more than one.

## → Hyphens

Use hyphens for prefixes: anti-, semi-, mini-, non-, sub-, multi-, post-.

A hyphen can change the meaning of something so don't use it unless it's confusing without it. A little used-boat is different from a little-used boat.

## → Full-stops

As well as at the end of sentences full-stops are used for a list: 1. 2.

Don't add full-stops to abbreviations except for e.g. and i.e. which should be written with two points. Only use e.g. and i.e. if you're short on space, otherwise write for example in full.

## → Quotation marks

Use double quotation marks, and single quotation marks for quotes within quotes.

## → Semi-colons

They can take the place of a full-stop to link what would otherwise be two closely related sentences, e.g. He's painting the boat; blue will look great.

## → Referencing

For books, references are listed like this: Author or editor name. (Year) Publication title in italics. Town of publication. Publisher.

Journal articles: Author(s). (Year) Article title. Journal title in italics. Volume number (issue number): page numbers.

## → Referencing URLs in print

When referencing a website:

- Last name, First initial (Year published). Page title. [online] Website name. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Month Year].

When no author is listed:

- Website name, (Year published). Page title. [online] Available at: URL [Accessed Day Month Year].

URLs don't need special treatment. Put the full-stop or question mark at the end of the sentence as normal. Highlight the URL by making it bold.

## → Referencing online

If you're referencing other websites: Hyperlink the title of the website, page or document, and make sure to include alt text. If you're referencing a publication: Title (hyperlinked), Date, Author

**For more detail on our house style, go to the relevant section on our intranet.**

# Plain language

A few alternatives that will keep us sounding human.

**abundance** › plenty or lots  
**accelerate** › speed up  
**accompanying** › with  
**accordingly** › then or so  
**additional** › extra  
**adjustment** › change  
**allocate** › give or divide  
**alternative** › other  
**amendment** › change  
**amidst** › amid  
**amongst** › among  
**and also** › also  
**approximately** › about or roughly  
**appropriate to** › right for  
**as of the date of** › from  
**assistance** › help  
**at this point in time** › now  
**authorise** › allow or let  
**beneficial** › helpful  
**breach** › break  
**by means of** › by  
**calculate** › work out or decide  
**cease** › stop or end  
**close of play** › end  
**combined** › together  
**commence** › start

**collaborate** › work with  
**comply with** › follow  
**consult** › talk to  
**contemplate** › think about  
**correspond** › write  
**cumulative** › added together  
**currently** › now  
**deficiency** › lack of  
**deliver** › do  
**depict** › show  
**detrimental** › harmful or damaging  
**dialogue** › speak with  
**diminish** › lessen or reduce  
**direction of travel** › direction  
**disclose** › tell or show  
**discontinue** › stop  
**during which time** › while  
**eligible** › allowed or qualified  
**emphasise** › stress  
**enable** › allow  
**engage** › talk to  
**ensure** › make sure  
**enquire** › ask  
**establish** › show or set up  
**evaluate** › check or test  
**excessive** › too many or too much  
**exclude** › leave out  
**exclusively** › only  
**facilitate** › help  
**finalise** › end  
**following** › after

**framework** › steps or structure  
**frequently** › often  
**further to** › after  
**furthermore** › also  
**generate** › make or give  
**give consideration to** › think about  
**help to** › help  
**henceforth** › from now on  
**illustrate** › show  
**implement** › work to or carry out  
**in order that** › so  
**in order to** › to  
**in the event of** › if  
**indicate** › show or suggest  
**inform** › tell  
**initially** › at first or to start with  
**instances** › cases  
**is of the opinion** › thinks  
**issue** › give or send  
**jeopardise** › risk or threaten  
**key** › important  
**liaise** › work with others  
**locate** › find or put  
**mandatory** › must  
**manufacture** › make  
**mislay** › lose  
**modification** › change  
**moreover** › also or and  
**moving forward** › in the future  
**negligible** › tiny or very small  
**nevertheless** › but or even so

**notify** › tell  
**numerous** › many  
**objective** › aim or goal  
**obligatory** › must  
**obtain** › get  
**on receipt** › when you get or we get  
**on request** › ask for  
**on the grounds that** › because  
**operate** › run  
**optimum** › best or highest  
**option** › choice  
**ordinarily** › normally or usually  
**participate** › take part or get involved  
**particulars** › details  
**pathway** › way forward  
**per annum** › each year  
**perform** › do  
**permissible** › allowed  
**permit** › let or allow  
**place** › put  
**possess** › have or own  
**practically** › almost or nearly  
**predominant** › main  
**prescribe** › set  
**preserve** › protect or keep  
**previous** › earlier or last  
**principal** › main  
**prior to** › before  
**proceed** › go ahead  
**projected** › expect or estimate  
**prolonged** › long

**promptly** › quickly  
**purchase** › buy  
**qualify for** › can get  
**reduce** › cut  
**refer to** › about or mention  
**regarding** › about  
**relating to** › about  
**remain** › stay  
**remainder** › rest or what's left  
**remittance** › payment  
**remuneration** › pay or wages  
**render** › make  
**represent** › show  
**request** › ask  
**require** › need  
**reside** › live  
**restriction** › limit  
**retain** › keep  
**review** › look at  
**revised** › new  
**scrutinise** › read or look at  
**select** › choose  
**similarly** › also  
**solely** › only  
**specified** › written or set out  
**state** › say  
**statutory** › legal  
**strategy** › plan  
**sufficient** › enough  
**terminate** › end  
**transform** › change

**to date** › so far  
**transfer** › move  
**transmit** › send  
**ultimately** › in the end  
**unavailability** › lack of  
**utilise** › use  
**variation** › change  
**virtually** › almost  
**visualise** › see  
**whereas** › but  
**whilst** › while  
**with reference to** › about  
**with regard to** › about  
**you are requested** › please  
**your attention is drawn to** › please see

These are only ideas. Picking the right words and writing in a friendly way is often about making it sound like you're talking to someone over coffee.

If you're not sure which spelling to use for words that sound similar but are spelt differently, e.g. stationery or stationary, principle or principal, check the dictionary.

There are more examples and ideas here:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/content-design/writing-for-gov-uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/content-design/writing-for-gov-uk)

A Welsh version of this booklet will also be available.



# Appendix

## Instead of this:

Dear xxxxxx

Please support the Care Council in ensuring the registered workforce is a safe workforce and that standards in social care are high, by confirming the information required promptly.

An employee/former employee of yours has failed to apply to renew registration.

Please log into MyCareCouncil, select 'For removal' in the left menu and submit the form. This is to confirm that there are no current conduct or competence issues ongoing to the best of your knowledge. Please complete the confirmation required within the next 7 days. If there are conduct or competence issues relating to an individual please e-mail [FTP@ccwales.org.uk](mailto:FTP@ccwales.org.uk)

Doing this through MyCareCouncil is much quicker than filling in the form we previously used.

If you feel you are not the correct person to provide information regarding removing registrants from the Register, please inform us as soon as possible.

The Registration Rules state that:

"11 (6) The Council shall not remove a registrant from the Register, where the registrant is the subject of current or pending disciplinary proceedings under the Council's Conduct or Fitness to Practise Rules."

Where there are no conduct issues, an individual will be removed from the Register when they have:

"11 (4) (a) failed to make any application for renewal of registration before the expiry of the three year period

11 (5) submitted an incomplete application for renewal of registration and fails to complete that application before the three year period has expired."

Yours sincerely

Head of Registration

## We want to write more like this:

Dear xxxxxx

An employee/former employee of yours has failed to submit a completed application to renew their registration, so we have started the process of removing them from the Register under Part IV of the Registration Rules.

A full copy of the Registration Rules can be found here.

Can you please confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, there are no ongoing conduct or competence issues with this employee/former employee **within the next seven days**? To do this, log into SCWonline, choose 'For removal' in the left menu, then complete and submit the form.

If there are conduct or competence issues relating to an individual, please e-mail [FTP@socialcare.wales](mailto:FTP@socialcare.wales)

If you feel you're not the correct person to provide this information, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing [registration@socialcare.wales](mailto:registration@socialcare.wales)

We are grateful for your support in making sure the registered workforce is safe and that standards in social care remain high.

Yours sincerely

Head of Registration

