

# GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare Qualification Outline



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## Introduction

This document provides a high-level overview of the WJEC GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare qualification available for first teaching from September 2026.

It is based on Qualifications Wales's Approval Criteria ([gcse-health-and-social-care-and-childcare-approval-criteria.pdf](https://www.wales.gov.uk/docs/walesgov/190616-qualifications-wales-approval-criteria.pdf)). Our qualification **must** meet these requirements.

The qualification outline will provide a guide for the development of the Specification and Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs). Aspects of the outline may need to be revisited if issues arise during the development process.

## Qualification Overview

The GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare qualification will support the Curriculum for Wales by:

- supporting the statements of what matters<sup>1</sup> by giving learners the opportunity to:
  - understand the factors that affect physical health and wellbeing throughout the lifespan including health-promoting behaviours e.g. physical activity, including an understanding of health-harming behaviours
  - develop positive, informed behaviours that encourage learners to care for and respect themselves and others in a health and social care, and childcare context
  - help learners explore the connections between their experiences, mental health and emotional wellbeing
  - create a culture where talking about mental health and emotional wellbeing is normalised in health and social care, and childcare
  - develop the critical-thinking skills necessary to consider their decision-making in terms of possible implications including risks, for themselves and others
  - engage critically with social influences within their own culture, as well as those of others, to understand how norms and values develop
  - understand how decisions and actions impact on themselves, on others, and on wider society, both now and in the future
  - help to understand the factors that influence decision-making, placing them in a better position to make more informed and considered decisions around health and social care, and childcare
  - develop the critical-thinking skills necessary to consider decision-making in terms of possible implications in the health and social care, and childcare sectors.
- supporting the principles of progression<sup>2</sup> by encouraging learners to:
  - develop their independence and agency in matters relating to health and wellbeing, resulting in a growing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
  - develop conceptual knowledge and critical understanding in a range of aspects of health and wellbeing and personal behaviour
  - develop connections between aspects of health and wellbeing and a wide range of topics and issues in health and social care, and childcare contexts
  - develop an appreciation for the needs of others in health and social care, and childcare contexts and the impact of decisions, actions and circumstances
  - become more socially responsible
  - develop the understanding of advocacy on behalf of themselves and of others through health and social care, and childcare contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/health-and-well-being/statements-of-what-matters>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/health-and-well-being/principles-of-progression>

- supporting the subject specific considerations for GCSE Health and Social Care, and Childcare<sup>3</sup> by giving learners the opportunity to:
  - develop literacy skills, being able to organise writing and adapt language confidently, enabling learners to apply for learning pathways and a preferred career, possibly in health and social care and/or childcare
  - support learners to explore and understand in depth, developmental changes across the lifespan, as well as how those changes affect individuals in a range of different ways
  - learn and understand how to assess and manage risk so they can keep themselves and others safe, including safeguarding within a health and social care, and childcare context
  - reflect on the short-term, medium-term and long-term implications of the decisions they make. It should be recognised that learners do not necessarily have responsibility for many of the decisions affecting them and this responsibility grows over time
  - understand the role that social influences can play on learner behaviour and the influences that can promote and encourage healthy prosocial behaviours, as well as those that lead to issues such as discrimination, racism or prejudice throughout the health and social care, and childcare sectors
  - understand the role and importance of relationships such as family and friends, pets/animals, peers, professional, virtual, romantic, sexual, religious and spiritual – through health and social care, and childcare contexts, and those relationships which they may not yet be familiar with but are highly likely to encounter in their lives or whilst working in the sectors.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/health-and-well-being/designing-your-curriculum/>

## Qualification Structure

The following structure is prescribed by the Approval Criteria published by Qualifications Wales, June 2023.

### Unit 1: Health and Social Care, and Childcare in Wales in the 21st Century

Written examination  
40% of the qualification  
Available on-paper only\*

### Unit 2: Adult Health and Social Care

Non-examination assessment  
30% of qualification  
Set by WJEC  
Marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC

### Unit 3: Childcare

Non-examination assessment  
30% of qualification  
Set by WJEC  
Marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC

\* a digital assessment will replace the on-paper assessment within five years of the qualification being available.

The qualification will have 120 -140 Guided Learning Hours.

These are the percentages for the three assessment objectives within a tolerance of +/- 5 percentage points:

<b>AO1</b>	<b>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding</b> of concepts, values and issues in health and social care, and childcare.	30%
<b>AO2</b>	<b>Apply knowledge and understanding</b> of concepts, values and issues in health and social care, and childcare.	40%
<b>AO3</b>	<b>Investigate, analyse, and evaluate</b> values, issues and provision in health and social care, and childcare, making reasoned judgements and drawing conclusions.	30%

This will be a unitised qualification. Unit 1 should be taught before Unit 2 and Unit 3, as the content provides core knowledge and understanding for the whole qualification. There is no hierarchy implied by the order in which Unit 2 and Unit 3 are presented.

Unit 1 will be available annually from Summer 2027. It will be set and marked by WJEC and will be available on-paper only; a digital assessment will replace the on-paper assessment within five years of the qualification being available. It can be taken in the summer of Year 10 or Year 11.

The Unit 2 and Unit 3 assignment briefs will be released annually via Portal at the beginning of September, starting from September 2027. Unit 2 and Unit 3 may be completed at any time during the second year of study (Year 11) and submitted to WJEC in May. Centres must ensure that assessment of both Unit 2 and Unit 3 is completed **only** when learners have undertaken the necessary teaching and learning and developed the required skills and knowledge. The release date of September allows centres to start the delivery of the content of either Unit 2 or Unit 3, depending on their preference, as full specification content must be delivered before commencing the NEA.

## Unit Information

Learners will be given opportunities to explore human rights and diversity throughout the three units, including consideration of:

- access to service provision across health and social care, and childcare
- the impact of service provision and delivery on outcomes in relation to health and social care, and childcare
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, experiences and contributions.

### Unit 1 Health and Social Care, and Childcare in Wales in the 21st Century– Written Examination

**The purpose of this unit is to develop knowledge and understanding of:**

- the life cycle and the factors that affect growth and development
- the promotion and maintenance of health and wellbeing and tools that can be used to measure and support this
- core principles and values, underpinned by legislation and service provision within a Welsh context across the health and social care, and childcare sectors.

This unit will focus on:

- the promotion and maintenance of health and wellbeing of individuals throughout their life
- human growth, development and wellbeing across the life cycle
- factors affecting growth, development and wellbeing across the life cycle
- indicators and tools to measure and support health and wellbeing
- core principles, values and approaches when working in health and social care, and childcare
- legislation and service provision across health and social care, and childcare
- Welsh language and culture in health and social care, and childcare.

The unit will be assessed via a written examination available in the summer series of the course and will be available annually from the 2027 summer series onwards, with a mix of question types that will target AO1, AO2, and AO3. AO1 will have the higher weighting. The duration of the examination is likely to be approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.

## Unit 2 Adult Health and Social Care – Non-Examination Assessment

### **The purpose of this unit is to gain knowledge and understanding of:**

- individual needs and key conditions and illnesses in adulthood
- how professionals work in adult health and social care to achieve positive outcomes
- the role of health promotion in public health in Wales.

This unit will focus on:

- types of care to meet individual needs and achieve positive outcomes
- how professionals work to meet needs in adult health and social care
- public health and health promotion in adult health and social care
- key conditions and illnesses in adulthood.

The unit will be assessed via non-examination assessment, submitted in the final year of the course as part of the summer series. The non-examination assessment must be submitted digitally. The mix of tasks for this unit will target AO2 and AO3. AO2 will have a higher weighting than AO3. This unit will be set by WJEC, marked by the centre and externally moderated by WJEC.

## Unit 3 Childcare – Non-Examination Assessment

### **The purpose of this unit is to gain knowledge and understanding of:**

- physical, intellectual, language, emotional, and social (PILES) development
- key conditions and illnesses of children
- how professionals work, including play and play work, to meet the needs of children in Wales to achieve positive outcomes.

This unit will focus on:

- PILES
- play and play work
- types of care and intervention to meet children's needs and achieve positive outcomes
- how professionals work to meet children's needs
- health promotion and early intervention in childcare
- key conditions and illnesses in children.

The unit will be assessed via non-examination assessment, submitted in the final year of the course as part of the summer series. The non-examination assessment must be submitted digitally. The mix of tasks for this unit will target AO2 and AO3. AO2 will have a higher weighting than AO3. This unit will be set by WJEC, marked by the centre and externally moderated by WJEC.