

WALES | CARE INSPECTORATE WALES

CIW Registration Guide and Checklist 2026

For care homes, domiciliary support services and childcare in Wales. What Care Inspectorate Wales asks for, the 2026 not-for-profit rule, and the checks to run before you apply.

Inside this guide

- Whether you can apply, and for which service type
- The documents and checks each type of service needs
- Tick-box checklists written for Welsh law
- The mistakes that slow applications, and the steps in order

Updated September 2026. Free to download, print and share.

How to use this guide

In Wales, care services register with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, often called RISCA. Childminding and day care for children under 12 register under a separate law, the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. A CQC registration does not carry over to Wales.

Since 1 April 2026, a new for-profit provider cannot register a children's home, secure accommodation or a fostering service in Wales. Read Checklist 1 before you spend money on anything else.

Use the table on the next page, then work through the checklists. Tick a box only when the item is finished. This guide is based on CIW, Welsh Government and Social Care Wales guidance and on our own registration work up to September 2026. Check CIW's website on the day you apply.

At a glance

Regulator	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Wales only.
Main law	Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016; Regulated Services (Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2017; Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017. Childcare: Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare.
How to apply	Online through CIW Online. First you phone CIW to prove your identity and get an activation PIN.
People you need	A Responsible Individual for each service, and a manager who is registered with Social Care Wales before their first day.
How long	CIW says up to 14 weeks for a new service when the application is complete. Childcare applications take up to 3 months.
Before registration	No service may start until CIW issues its Notice of Decision.

Which documents does your service need?

Yes means CIW asks for it or expects it to be in place. Check means you need it only in some cases, explained in the row. No means it does not apply to this type of service.

Document	Care home (adults)	Care home (children)	Domiciliary support	Childminding or day care
Can you apply?				
Provider is a local authority or a permitted not-for-profit body (restricted children's services, since 1 April 2026)	No	Yes	No	No
Application				
CIW Online account and online application	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Statement of purpose for the service (Check: childcare, as the National Minimum Standards ask)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Check
Responsible Individual designated for the service (Check: day care run by an organisation)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Check
Details of each place where the service is provided	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evidence the service is financially sustainable (Check: childcare, if CIW asks)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Check
Public and employers' liability insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
People				
Enhanced DBS certificate under 3 months old, or on the DBS Update Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manager registered with Social Care Wales before their first day	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Care staff registered with Social Care Wales within 6 months of starting	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
DBS checks for household members aged 16 and over (Check: childminding)	No	No	No	Check
Paediatric first aid certificate and medical references	No	No	No	Yes
Policies				
Safeguarding policy using the Wales Safeguarding Procedures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consent and capacity policy using the Mental Capacity Act 2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Welsh language Active Offer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
After registration				
Annual return through CIW Online, published on your own website by 30 June	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
CIW rating shown on your website and, in most cases, at the service	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Restricted children's services are children's homes, secure accommodation and fostering. Applications for them submitted by 31 March 2026 were assessed under the old rules.

Checklist 1: can you apply, and for what?

- ☐ I know which service type I am registering: a care home for adults, a care home for children, a domiciliary support service, or another RISCA service. Childminding and day care register separately under the 2010 Measure.
- ☐ Children's homes, secure accommodation and fostering: I am a local authority or a permitted not-for-profit body. Since 1 April 2026 a for-profit company cannot register these services in Wales.
- ☐ If I already run one of those services for profit, I know I cannot vary my registration to add services or places.
- ☐ My plan does not include starting the service before CIW issues its Notice of Decision.
- ☐ If I also work in England or Scotland, I know each country needs its own registration.

Checklist 2: the Responsible Individual and the manager

- ☐ A CIW Online account is set up. I phoned CIW, proved my identity and received an activation PIN.
- ☐ A Responsible Individual is designated for each service, with the seniority and time to oversee it. They are ready for a fit person interview, which can include how they will promote the Welsh language.
- ☐ The manager is named in the application, suitably qualified, and registered with Social Care Wales for that type of service. Since early 2025 CIW expects this when you apply, not part-way through.
- ☐ Everyone who needs one has an enhanced DBS certificate less than 3 months old on the day I apply, or is on the DBS Update Service.
- ☐ Adult domiciliary care managers will complete the Level 5 qualification in Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care within their first three-year registration.

Checklist 3: statement of purpose and policies

- ☐ There is a statement of purpose for each service, written with CIW's guide to compiling a statement of purpose.
- ☐ It matches the service type, places, ages and needs in the application.
- ☐ Policies use Welsh law: the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which applies in Wales as well as England.
- ☐ Policies explain how the service will make the Welsh language Active Offer, as set out in More Than Just Words.
- ☐ Policies follow the Social Care Wales Codes of Professional Practice for workers and employers that apply from 1 July 2026.
- ☐ I can show that the service is financially sustainable.

Checklist 4: staff

- ☐ Managers are registered with Social Care Wales before their first day in the role.
- ☐ Care workers in care homes and domiciliary support, and residential child care workers, register within 6 months of starting.
- ☐ Social Care Wales fees are in the budget: £80 a year for a manager and £30 a year for a worker.
- ☐ Induction and training follow the Social Care Wales qualification framework for each job role.

Checklist 5: childminding and day care

For childcare and play services for children under 12.

- ☐ The service meets the Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010 and the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare, in force in their refreshed form since 18 May 2023.
- ☐ Enhanced DBS checks are done for the childminder, any assistants and household members aged 16 and over. For day care: the registered person, the Responsible Individual and the person in charge.
- ☐ A paediatric first aid certificate and medical references are ready.
- ☐ I have allowed up to 3 months for CIW to decide.
- ☐ From 1 April 2027 some activities that are exempt today, such as some coaching and tuition, will need registration. I have checked whether this affects me.

Checklist 6: after registration

- ☐ The annual return goes through CIW Online by the deadline (26 May in 2026) and is published on our own website by 30 June. Not publishing it is an offence and can lead to a penalty notice.
- ☐ Care homes and domiciliary support services: our CIW rating is shown on our website and, in most cases, at the service. CIW has published ratings since 1 April 2025.
- ☐ We tell CIW about changes, such as a new manager or Responsible Individual, through CIW Online.

Eight mistakes that slow CIW applications

- 1 A for-profit company applying for a children's home.**
Since 1 April 2026 the application cannot succeed. Children's homes, secure accommodation and fostering are restricted to local authorities and permitted not-for-profit bodies.
- 2 English policies with the regulator's name changed.**
Welsh law, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the Active Offer are different, and CIW notices.
- 3 No manager, or a manager not registered with Social Care Wales.**
CIW expects both when you apply.
- 4 An old DBS certificate.**
It must be less than 3 months old when you apply, or on the Update Service.
- 5 A statement of purpose that does not match the application.**
Places, ages and needs must be the same in every document.
- 6 Missing information.**
CIW wants everything with the application. A gap adds weeks.
- 7 Forgetting the Welsh language.**
The Responsible Individual can be asked how the service will promote it.
- 8 Forgetting the duties after registration.**
Publishing the annual return by 30 June is a legal duty, and so is showing your rating.

The registration process, step by step

- 1 Confirm you can apply**
Check your service type, and for children's services check that you are a permitted not-for-profit body.
- 2 Set up the basics**
Company or charity, premises, insurance and a budget that covers Social Care Wales fees.
- 3 Appoint your people**
Responsible Individual and manager. Start their DBS checks and the manager's Social Care Wales registration early.
- 4 Write the statement of purpose first**
Then write the policies to match it, using Welsh law.
- 5 Open a CIW Online account**
Phone CIW, prove your identity and activate the account with the PIN.
- 6 Apply online**
Send everything CIW asks for at once. Missing information slows the decision.
- 7 Assessment**
CIW reviews the application, asks questions, interviews the Responsible Individual and may visit the premises.
- 8 Decision**
CIW issues a Notice of Decision with conditions of registration. You can start only after that. Inspections and published ratings follow.

How long does it take?

CIW says it decides a complete application for a new service within up to 14 weeks, and a new Responsible Individual or a variation in about 6 weeks. Childcare applications take up to 3 months. Missing information makes every one of these longer.

Want a second pair of eyes on your application?

Cura Compliance UK has helped more than 100 care providers register and pass inspection across the UK. For Wales, we write statements of purpose and policies for Welsh law, prepare your Responsible Individual for the fit person interview, and check your application before you send it.

Book a free 30-minute consultation: curacompliance.co.uk/cqc-registration-free-consultation

Care Inspectorate Wales registration support:

curacompliance.co.uk/care-inspectorate-registration-support

CuraFlow Registration: your whole application in one place: curaflow.net/registration

Sources

CIW: Register to provide a service, and CIW Online (careinspectorate.wales), checked September 2026

CIW: Guide to compiling a statement of purpose, and Removing profit from children's care

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, and the Regulated Services (Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (legislation.gov.uk)

Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025 (legislation.gov.uk) and Welsh Government statements on its commencement

Social Care Wales: registration, fees and Codes of Professional Practice (socialcare.wales)

Welsh Government: National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (gov.wales)

This guide is general information based on published guidance as at September 2026. It is not legal advice. Requirements depend on your service, and CIW and the Welsh Government can change them. Always check the current requirements with CIW before you apply. Copyright 2026 Cura Compliance UK. You may share this guide as long as you do not change it.