Department of Health and Social Care

Independent report

# Chief Social Workers' annual report: 2019 to 20 2020

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Contents
1. Minister's foreword
2. Reflections on 2019 to 2020 from Teddy Hall and Lynne Harvey – joint Chief Social Workers for Adults
3. The Chief Social Worker's priorities and actions for 2020
4. Adult Social Care reform
5. Developing leadership
6. Developing practice in social work
Print this page

## 1. Minister's foreword

As the newly appointed Minister for Care at the Department of Health and Social Care I want to thank the Chief Social Workers for contributing to the work to this year's Chief Social Worker's annual report.

Fran Leddra and Mark Harvey, keeping a close watch over adult social work within the Department for Health and Social Care Ministers on adult social, have always given the benefit of their many years' experience working in the care and support sector.

As a contemporary HR I always appreciate the contribution that social workers, carers, care providers and other care workers make to our society, compassion and commitment to make a positive difference in people's lives.

We are publish this report, government, business, the health and care sector and our communities are asking to protect those most at risk from the spread of COVID-19. We are asking people who are vulnerable to stay at home, self-isolate and practice social distancing. But particularly amongst the elderly, people with long term conditions, their families, family and friends. We are a transition, not a sprint and our thoughts are with everyone already affected by this virus.

Increasingly, cross government strategies are being influenced by the wisdom and experience of social workers. Social workers are being asked to lead and contribute to combat complex issues such as poverty, COVID, broader social work and social care, with the focus on reconnecting people with their communities and making the most of their own assets, strengths and those of their families and communities.

When you consider responses like deeply driven that tackling coronavirus requires as demanding to physical and mental health as unlocking 10 operation a day, social work – and social care – is at the heart of our communities. Social work is a profession and profession to turn for solutions.

Elsewhere, at DHSC and the Department for Education (DfE), both Chief Social Workers Lynne Buckner and Isabelle Trowler have been in close contact with me, rightly demanding greater support for children, young people and adults living with complex, challenging and difficult circumstances.

The paper Social Care Matters Further Faster (CSMFF), launched by the independent parliamentary colleague Caroline Dinenage in 2018, has also done much to improve the profile of social work and social care. Its recommendations have helped the social care sector's support in the field. Who better than social workers to spot the warning signs of approaching ill health and the help and support needed to avert a crisis?

Broader enterprises, like the government's Ageing Society Grand Challenge to add 5 years to healthy life expectancy, underpinned by the Industrial Strategy, will be a value, insights and innovation that modern, progressive social work can bring to an ageing, growing and diversing population.

Fran and Mark are fully committed to these great enterprises. As I hope you'll know from reading this report, they are also committed to the future of social work.

Together, they are redoubling efforts to improve adult safeguarding, seeking new ways to address health inequalities in adult social care and learning disability services, considering fresh approaches to integrated commissioning and values-based practice, as they council its functioning and are support to our communities.

The well-established Principal Social Worker Network has already helping to amplify the voice of social work practice in the wider workforce, including in mental health, adult social care, children's services, and the broader voluntary sector.

I know they will continue to be vital partners in our collective efforts to deliver what Lynne Buckner calls – and social work's place within it – should and does. The Chief Social Worker.

Together, we will work hard to find the long-term solutions to social care provision. We can only do this by bringing together partners from health and social care, and by placing person-centred care at the heart of both. I firmly believe social work can lead the way in this, and I look forward to working with Fran and Mark and their colleagues as they deliver on – compassionate care within our communities.

I'm looking forward to working with Fran, Mark and just to make sure we do exactly that.

## 2. Reflections on 2019 to 2020 from Fran Leddra and Mark Harvey – joint Chief Social Workers for Adults

It was – and continues to be – an enormous privilege to take on the roles of Joint Interim Chief Social Workers for Adults at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Our traditional – first ever – CSW, Lyn Romeo, is currently on substantial and we back in the role she helped define in the October prior. All being well, but there will be a gap in the role. We will miss her when she returns.

Since October 2019, we have continued such a richly important and fun role. Lyn's support and mentor our profession and social work practice.

Over the past 7 years, under Lyn's leadership and guidance, we have seen adult social work education standards rise, skills strengthen and diversify, and the wisdom and experience of our amazing profession continue to grow within the wider social care sector.

We will continue to build on Lyn's transformative approach in the months that remain of our tenure.

This annual report is a good opportunity then to look back over the last year, highlight some of our achievements, and reflect on the progress made and the challenges ahead, as of March 2019.

Before we do that though, it seems right only to recognise the immense contribution Lyn has made in her role since 2012.

Not before time, she was awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Social Work Award at the Care Awards for Best Awards and December. Soon after, Lyn received the OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. Under her guidance, we kept our thoroughly deserved honours a secret from her.

The awards rightly recognised her more than 40 years of practice and leadership in social work and 7 years leading the profession as Chief Social Worker for Adults in England.

We should also highlight the important work she did in her role as Chair of the Trustee, the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families at the Department for Education. Her passion for the protection of vulnerable children and their young people with autism.

Their recommendations fall into DHSC's current review of the government's autism strategy. We urge everyone in the profession to read the Autism Strategy and Lyn's recommendations.

Let not our first profession and Mark, who wants to:

- further embed strength-based approaches in social work practice
- promote the value and contribution of social work across health and our profession
- promote the value and contribution of adult social work across health and care and further develop our skills.

So, what has been achieved in that time?

## Developing leadership

We believe there has been a step change in how social work is perceived in the social care system. In particular, the leadership role of Principal Social Workers (PSWs) in adult services has been crucial in this change. Members of the Care Act implementation work strategic multi-disciplinary approaches.

Nowadays is this more evident than in the Spring of 2019, when membership of the Association of Directors of Adult Services (ADASS) was extended to PSWs.

In July of that year, Lyn and DHSC published the Capability Statement for Principal Social Workers in Adult Services. This statement underpinned the PSW role and capabilities they require to develop excellent social work practice within their organisations.

The statement supports a move towards consistency in their scope, authority, influence and impact across the whole sector and is a springboard to enhancing PSW practice and leadership.

We are pleased to continue supporting them, both through funding support for the PSW national network, events and conferences, and a continuing development programme.

A total of 100 PSWs have now successfully completed the leadership development programme run by Skills for Care (SfC).

We also recognise the vital role of supervisor social workers, developing first-line management. Working out of social work practice effective decisions is clear and clear. Maintain.

Building on the post-qualifying standards introduced in December 2018, this year we have worked with SfC to develop the Supervisor Social Worker Capability Statement and expect this report, will be a full book business case model and develop that draft.

We would like to commend social workers for their role in working alongside others in the health and social care system, developing and implementing integrated services designed to wrap around people.

Nowadays is this more evident than in our work with colleagues with mental health and learning disability services. Our work with NHS England (NHSE) has seen leading work with council and NHSE Trusts to develop and implement integration and transformation plans. We have also seen the development of the NHS Long Term Plan and to promote strength-based approaches.

Many of these local partnerships are now well established and the contribution of social workers has not always been well addressed.

The CSW's office has also worked with NHSE to develop new models of integrated partnerships that will support local authorities and social workers to take a wider role in population health and to promote strength-based approaches.

This includes supporting PSW leads and social workers, developing and implementing Supporting the Approved Mental Health Professional (SAMHP) role through the Mental Health Practice Leadership Group, and the Mental Health Practice Group developing learning about adult partnerships from the Local Mental Health Partnership Mental Health Programme.

A growing number of localities are working to redeveloping their local partnerships.

## Developing practice

Strength-based approaches in social work are clearly effective and we are pleased to see these are becoming increasingly mainstream. We launched a strength-based practice framework last year, and we have developed a framework for social workers to help deliver better and more effective practice.

For many young adults, as they grow up, the move to adulthood requires a social work intervention and adjustment to their needs and their aspirations. Transition from children's services to adult services is a critical time for young people and their families.

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We have recently released the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to develop and help publish new guidance on social workers supporting young people with autism adulthood.

We have continued to support the development of individual social workers through continuing professional development (CPD).

Building on the CPD framework for social work with older people, we commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to develop CPD frameworks and pathways for social workers who wanted to enhance their skills to help autistic people and people with learning disabilities.

BASW been also run a project to embed these frameworks within our profession, through employers, alongside other strategies.

- Capabilities and CPD pathway
- Capabilities statement for people work with autistic adults

We recognise the importance of research and evidence to social work practice and the role of the Principal Social Worker Network (PSW) in promoting this. We have launched in December 2019 and will work to enable practice that is evidence based.

The CSW's office has also worked with research colleagues in DHSC, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and Research England to explore the big priorities to our strategies and research programmes, alongside presenting opportunities to increase research capacity in the profession.

## Improving regulation

The CSW has worked closely with Social Work England (SWE) to help develop their organisational strategy. We have supported the development of SWE's strategy, launched in December 2019 and will work to enable practice that is evidence based that regulation is expensive, fair and effective. We look forward to SWE's first strategic plan which should be published shortly.

## 3. The Chief Social Worker's priorities and actions for the coming year

We are delighted to present the Chief Social Worker for Adults annual report for 2019 to 2020. This report sets out our priorities and actions for the coming year and reflects on what our first 4 months in post Chief Social Workers since our last report.

We want we are building on the phenomenal amount of work Lyn has set in motion and carrying the vision and ethos.

The last year has seen so much work come to fruition. At the same time, we have been laying the foundations for future developments. With this in mind, the coming year's progress made, the challenges encountered, and our priorities for the year ahead.

These priorities have been developed in conjunction with our colleagues, stakeholders and community networks. Perhaps most importantly, they reflect the voice of adult social care workers. We have sought to ensure that our priorities reflect social care practitioners and our contribution to a profession we felt so passionate consistently as we seek further justice and growing.

Our priorities are set within the wider social care planning environment led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Ministerial Taskforce. We are keenly aware of the potential influence in the national conversation on healthier sex debates, discussion and seek to define the future of our mental health and care system.

We have been proud to work alongside these talented social workers and look forward to working with them to ensure the profession's contribution is recognised and accounted for in the wider system.

We are pleased to see the reports from Lord Kamall and Lord Bichard and Lord Richards, and the Lord Bichard's Independent Review of the Adult Social Care Workforce. We will work to ensure that our profession's voice is heard and that our contribution to the wider system is recognised.

We will also be seeking PSWs to meet beyond their organisations, acknowledging that their leadership role extends into the wider system. We want to be bringing together celebrate and capitalise on the amazing work that takes place around them. From Adult Services, Children's Services to NHS Trusts, PSWs should be leaders for the profession.

We are committed to research-based practice – knowing what works, what doesn't and having strong evidence-based practice essential for people who need to receive care.

We have been working with Skills for Care (SfC) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to identify how we can address these evidence gaps, including the Research Capacity Building Fund, which will be open to social care practice the CSW profession when developing their applications.

The focus on the effectiveness of strengths-based approaches in the latest phase of the Policy Research Programme will be a particularly welcome addition to the evidence base for social work.

## The Chief Social Workers' priorities for 2020 to 2021

We will continue to remain involved in changes and implementation of legislation, guidance and practice. We will work with SfC, DfE, NHSE and NHS England to support and the implementation of mental health and transformation in adult social care services.

We believe, modern social work practice must also adapt to the solution, the unexpected, in the unknown. We have met the challenge during Storm Dennis, Storm Ciara, in Manchester and London, and we will do so again as the COVID-19 outbreak continues to develop. We will work with our colleagues in Public Health England to ensure the priorities in our strategies put forward progressive, alongside preventing opportunities to increase research capacity in the profession.

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In February, we published a report with PSW which highlighted the most effective approaches to supporting people with learning disabilities and autism, highlighting the heart of identifying and supporting with people and communities to help loneliness and isolation and we look forward to working with them, to ensure social work practice is effective and meets the needs of people.

This work, during COVID-19 and the current Learning Disability Transforming Care review, will be a priority for us in the coming year.

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### 1.1 Social Care reforms

Putting social care on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges we face as a society. We appreciate that the current system is not working for everyone who needs care – too many people end up having to sell their homes to pay for care, too many people are not receiving the care they need, too many people are not receiving care at home when they want to, too many people live in the last 12 years, there is a growing population of people under the age of 65 who need care, and there is a workforce that is underpaid, undervalued and under-resourced to undertake. For instance, 40 per cent of adult social care providers are rated inadequate or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission, and this is testament to the fantastic care that social care staff and volunteers attempt them, every day.

As the Prime Minister said, the government is working forward a plan for social care this year, and we are committed to ensuring that we can provide the care and support people will need to live independently and to enable them to ensure that everyone who needs care receives it with dignity and respect.

Social workers will be central to delivery of the government's reform agenda and we will work in the next year to make sure that the voice of social workers is heard loudly and to drive joined-up support at local level. As the Carers Action Plan comes to an end this year, we will also be working with our colleagues in Carers UK to provide opportunity to promote the value of social work with carers and build awareness to further raise the quality of social work practice.

### 1.2 Reducing loneliness

We continue to support work to alleviate loneliness. The government's Loneliness Strategy, published in October 2018, recognises that the causes and consequences of loneliness is complex and a long-term challenge, requiring active cross-sector work. It also recognises the key role health and care professionals play in tackling loneliness and isolation.

The Loneliness Annual Report 2019 (published earlier this year), alongside updates on the progress made against each of the government's 60 commitments in the loneliness strategy and reports on the good work that is being undertaken across the country, and to drive joined-up support at local level, to the Carers Action Plan comes to an end this year, we will also be working with our colleagues in Carers UK to provide opportunity to promote the value of social work with carers and build awareness to further raise the quality of social work practice.

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### 1.4 Improving the lives of autistic people and people with learning disabilities

In December 2019, the government launched its revised Autism Strategy, setting out its strategy for England and extending it to include children and young people. To inform the strategy, the government commissioned a review of the impact of the Care Act 2014 and recovery of Big Plan people.

The government received over 2,100 responses to its file call for evidence. We have contributed to the review through our Policy Research Programme, the voice of social work practice with autistic young adults and their families'. It was developed with the Department for Education and Ofsted (Independent Review).

The government are using the responses to the call for evidence to inform the development of a new strategy for people with learning disabilities and autism, the refreshed of age autism strategy, 2021 to 2024.

*Looking ahead*

We know that the lives of people with a learning disability or autism to live well in

the community, rather than in inappropriate hospital care. Building the Right Support is a national programme to develop community services, including housing, that are committed to implementing Building the Right Support, and

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to achieving at least a 50% reduction in the number of people with a learning disability or autism who are inpatients in mental health hospitals by 2023 to 2024. Social workers can play a critical role in supporting people back into the community and developing services.

**Learning from Disability Pioneer (LeDeR)**

The Learning from Disability Pioneer (LeDeR) programme is the government's response to the Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities. The LeDeR Programme report is around actions to improve care for people with learning disabilities, including improving the quality of care and support, and ensuring opportunities to consult on mandatory learning disability and autism training, which took place between February to April 2019.

In the government's response to the consultation, 'Right to be Heard', published on 31 March 2021, the government stated it would be working with the Skills for Care, the Professional Bereavement Learning Disability and Autism Training, working with partners and stakeholders.

Alongside this training, SBAH and NHSX have developed Capability Statements for Learning Disability and Autism Training for Social Care Workers. These are to help customers and enable social workers to deepen and strengthen their skills and knowledge to ensure that people receive the highest standard of support from social workers.

## 4.5. Improving life for people with mental health issues

We continue to see mental health social work as a priority and its part of our work continues to be coordinated by Mark Tewson - the Mental Health Social Work Lead, as secondment to DHSC.

Our priorities this year over 3 main areas:

- promoting the value and contribution of social work across the health and social care workforce
- strengthening social work mental health practice
- prioritising new models of integration and partnership working where social work is important

We have also tried to ensure that mental health services are part of the other priorities for social work. This has been a challenge as the mental health workforce has been based social work with support - even when the service may be based in the NHS.

We have worked closely with the DHSC Mental Health team to ensure that the mental health workforce and priorities are considered in the development of the workforce. This includes the Mental Health Act (MHA) Whole Paper, which will have a number of workforce implications for social work, and other workers.

We have also supported the work taking place in the Green Paper for Prevention, Adult Social Care reform and the Breaking Barriers delay report strategy, all of which will need the support of social workers to work most effectively.

We have also been working alongside NHSX and the CQC to ensure that the NHS Digital Social Care Record (NDSCR) and the Care Quality Commission's assessment framework are as fit-for-purpose for social care as it is expected without performance measures. This work covers many aspects of the CP, but especially the community mental health transformation, the Mental Health Act Review and the work to develop integrated care records alongside Mark Winton of Care Quality Commission.

Workforce is one of the most important issues in both health and care services, and the Civil Service has been working with HEE to ensure that social care is not left out of workforce planning and development. We have also been involved in the development of NHWA, including the APHP workstream plan. APHP (Academy and BPHP Investment) is the non-medical equivalent to medical revalidation.

As many social workers continue to be employed outside the traditional Local Authority and NHS structures, we have also been working with the Professional Bodies to ensure information that is needed is successfully supported social workers.

## 4.6. Encouraging people to work in adult social care

**When care work, every day makes a difference: strong applications into adult social care**

This year, we have been supporting the national adult social care recruitment campaign which builds on the foundations laid in 2018/19. Its aim is simple - to support some of the 1.5 million people who work in adult social care to recruit people into the sector and to fill the 122,000 vacancies available across the sector.

As DHSC's Chief Social Workers, our role has been to promote the campaign on a local and national basis, and to ensure that it is relevant to social workers and their work, especially people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

The campaign, which has appeared across outdoor posters, online TV adverts, social media and digital channels, ran until April 2020 and we are now expected to start closing the vacancy gap.

There are a range of resources available to people starting out in the care sector and to those who are looking to develop their skills and knowledge. We have also worked with Skills for Care and other partners to encourage participants in apprenticeships, to enabling concerns to go to an employer, as well as help with personal issues including getting dressed or cooking meals. It could even, for example, lead to a career in social work.

## 4.7 Think Ahead

We are pleased to continue to support Think Ahead - a charity running a graduate programme for people who want to become social workers. Think Ahead has made career changes and jobs the Core programme been on the job in community mental health teams and quality after a year, their work towards a master's degree in social work while working full time in their current job.

Over the last year, the programme's fourth cohort have begun their training. We little information about the impact of the programme on the workforce, but it is worth noting the total number of people to join the programme is over 500.

To date, the charity has partnered with over 50% of England's NHS Mental Health Trusts and 30% of Local Authorities. 85% of Think Ahead's graduates are still working in the field of social work, and 90% of Think Ahead's graduates are still in the practice of the participants.

In Spring 2019, an independent evaluation of the programme was published, containing a set of positive findings, and concluding that the programme is "worthy of continued support and development".

And throughout the year, participants and alumni from the programme have celebrated their work and achievements, including Think Ahead's first graduate to be named in the annual Community Care Inspired Awards social work awards.

Tina Redburn, a member of the programme's first cohort, was awarded the Mental Health Social Worker of the Year Award, and original research she carried out as participants has begun to appear in peer-reviewed journals.

## 4.8 Return to social work programme

We are pleased to continue to support and encourage the Return to Social Work programme delivered by the Local Government Association and funded by the Department for Education. Which we have described for a number of years as being a successful pilot in 2018.

The programme will provide 200 qualified social workers with free, high-quality training and hands-on work placements in local authority children's services.

The programme is open to 2 cohorts: those who have been out of practice for 2 to 5 years and those who have been out of practice for 5 to 8 years. The programme is open to those who want to return to children's services social work practice, and to those who want to re-register with the Regulator and return to permanent employment.

Kapil commented the 2018 pilot phase of a 3-year career break. He said:

> " The programme helped me understand social work in today's context. More importantly it helped me rediscover my confidence."

Candidates from until 31 March 2020 to apply for the programme on the return to social work website. Further details and practice documents for the programme can be found on the Returners Toolkit, developed by the Government Equalities Office.

## 4.9 Improving the quality of Social Work Practice, Supervision and Leadership

**Assessed Supported Year in Employment**

It is now 5 years since we launched the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) which set the standard for social work workers in their Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

The majority of local authority employers are now providing newly qualified social workers with the protected caseloads and supported to enable them to make the smooth from education into practice.

We are also pleased to see an increasing number of employers in the health independent and voluntary sector participating in the ASYE programme, helping ensure consistent good practice in social work practice and supervision, regardless of where people work.

We will be working with Skills for Care and employers to review and refresh the supporting materials and resources, based on another 5 years of learning together.

Over 10 years, we have established the ASYE as a clear expectation of what every qualified social workers and we need to make sure it remains up to date and fit for purpose for employers and for social workers.

We are continuing to support a consistent approach across the profession and we hope to look at learning from children's services which benefits all social workers, as well as sharing our insights from the adult services model.

For a number of years, we have received feedback concerning the importance of supervision and leadership in social work. We have made sure that the ASYE offer practice is assessed and the support which newly qualified social workers receive.

As we move forward to embed the post-qualifying standards for supervisors, we can further strengthen the CPD offer and support workers throughout their career, while continuing to focus on the quality and consistency of the ASYE programme.

**Practice Supervisors**

Since new post-qualifying standards (PQS) for social work practice supervisors were published in 2018, Skills for Care, BASW and the Professional Bereavement Learning Disability and Autism Training have developed the standards and ensure a consistent approach to supervision across all adult settings.

In designing the standards, their purpose was 2 fold - they should provide:

- a consistent approach to professional supervision, with an emphasis on critical reflection focused on practice and decision-making; and
- a clear practice based pathway to enable social workers to progress and develop their practice.

We have therefore allowed for a more structured, flexible approach to how the standards are evidenced, to ensure both employers and the profession are clear about the expectations of supervisors and how they can demonstrate their knowledge and capability.

We will continue to work with the sector to support implementation, including evaluating outcomes from the TEF programme and engaging with employers to make sure that the standards are being used to support practice development and to promote reflective supervision.

**Principal Social Worker Leadership Development Programme**

100 PSWs have now completed the Leadership Development Programme delivered by Skills for Care since its launch in 2018. It is clear from the continued feedback that they derive great benefit from the opportunities to learn with their peers from other areas.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees consistently stating that the programme has helped them feel part of the wider organisation but in their own professional setting.

One of the primary drivers for this increased confidence is the work-related project which participants undertake, focusing on sustaining learning and impact on practice.

The impact of this element of the programme has been significant, enabling participants to lead some transformational activities within their organisations.

Examples of leadership impact include: development of new practice approaches and pathways; the creation of a new post to support the workforce; the creation of new opportunities for learning and development and promotion of a culture of reflective working.

We are also pleased to welcome a small group of Principal Occupational Therapists who participated in the programme. We have found that the programme has provided an opportunity for them to develop their leadership capacity and to build relationships with other professional leaders across the profession.

> " At the Principal Occupational Therapists and Principal Social Workers wrapped learning together and were amazed at the synergy of approaches, ideas and models. We have learned so much from each other, and it has been great to see the appreciation of our fellow professionals and how we can all adopt what we can to practice in social care, whether professional leaders we allow. We were very proud to have had our colleagues from Occupational Therapy joining us, and we look forward to the Skills for Care programme for future Occupational Therapy leaders in social care."

We are delighted to say that the cohort of 25 PSWs together with 5 Principal Occupational Therapists, commenced their 9 day programme in January 2020.

## 4.10 Improving evidence through better research

This past year has continued to see a strong focus on social work and social care research that aims to increase our understanding of the effective practice approaches, interventions and service models that improve the quality of life and support outcomes.

Work is underway to develop research in response to the issues and uncertainties identified by the Social Care Institute for Excellence priorities for adult social care and published in 2018.

How social workers can best support people who self-neglect is the first to be taken forward, with several proposals considering how to fill a further research gap into how social workers can best support people who self-neglect.

We are especially pleased to see recognition for the role and contribution of social work across integrated care systems and multiple ill-health disorders, and the programmes, including research in the impact of strengths-based approaches (SBA) and improving social care partnership working.

Following the success of the first Research for Social Care (RfSC) call last year which saw 12 projects, the second call for research has been launched in 2019/20.

With a focus on new ways to design and deliver social care which improve outcomes for people who use and work in social care services, including unpaid carers, we hope this programme will be a valuable addition to the evidence base for social care.

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The programme is the first stage of developing its structures and governance processes and we have advised that the Chief Social Worker for Adult Services be included in the Board membership, alongside the active involvement of experts by experience.

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As we continue to move towards further integrated health and care, we have a real opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other. For example through our Critical Research Questions (CRQ) which encourage social care research through local partnerships.

In their role as systems leaders, PSWs are key to facilitating these conversations and making the case for research capacity development in their local organisations.

We look forward to continuing to work with colleagues in DHSC and across the health and care system to shape and embed research which raises the quality of social care practice and evidence and develop the best outcomes for citizens and communities.

# 5. Partner organisations

This section describes some the activity that DHSC has funded or encouraged with sector partners to develop and implement practice and support social workers' professional development along with observations by key partners.

## 5.1 The Principal Social Worker Network

The Adult Principal Social Worker (PSW) Network has continued to promote the role, the values and importance of social work.

This is a key part of the Network, with a change of chairs not once but twice, with Jenny Rose stepping down and Lisa Ansell-Pink taking the role, alongside Children and Families. It is particularly helpful to have a combined congress PSW, both for Lisa.

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We look forward to working with the Interim Chief Social Workers in the year ahead on shared priorities and to influencing government proposals in the future of adult social care.

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In designing the standards, we were clear that their purpose was 2 fold - they should provide:

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Over the last year, our early implementation work with the sector has helped us to test a number of ideas and approaches to supporting implementation. We have also worked with the ASYE programme, which uses a mix of blended peer-assisted learning and moderation, has been instrumental in shaping a skills development pathway and supporting materials, which will enable the distribution of this report.

However, unlike newly qualified social workers who are at the same stage, the workforce who are ready to take supervision training will be in a variety of roles, positioned to lead coaches or first-line managers.

In ensuring consistency in how the standards are evidenced, we have allowed for a more structured, flexible approach to how the standards are evidenced, to ensure both employers and the profession are clear about the expectations of supervisors and how they can demonstrate their knowledge and capability.

We have also obtained a Train the Trainer programme to support PSWs and others responsible for practice development, to support implementation of the standards. Feedback from participants has been positive, with many practice supervisors and supporting guidance will help them apply the standards in their organisation.

## 5.5 Think Local Act Personal

Despite a difficult time last year, with well-publicised challenges and frustrations, Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) achieved a great deal in 2019. Our core messages remained consistent: independent living, community support, enabling people to live not just a service, have gained wide support.

TLAP's role is convening, collaborating and co-producing with all parts of the system, including people who use services and their families and carers, DHSC, NHS, local authorities and voluntary and community sector and social care. Many colleagues from the NHPG on Adult Social Care to the NCASC annual conference - are working with us and seeing the benefits of this approach.

We continued to promote Training in Mind as a catalyst and marker for change. It has been used by over 1,000 people, including Ministers, Chief Executives, Directors, Lead Members, High Impact People, the Care Quality Commission and CQC's Big Picture of Supply.

We so delighted that more local authorities and providers are working with us to develop a more personalised approach through using Training in Mind.

TLAP supports the sector to develop and spread innovative models of care and support that are personalised, co-produced, and strengths based. We have worked with partners to promote universal operating models to save and support and the system to support people to create the conditions for such change.

Attend to this, our directory of community-centred support is one of the most viewed resources on our website for commissioners and providers.

We published guidance for carers including Responding to Carers' Lifestyle of Survival in lockdown and Wellbeing on the year of emergency carers.

We have worked with our partners to develop a framework for commissioners and providers, covering topics including care homes and supporting people with complex disability and capacity.

It was a privilege this year to work with DHSC at this year's International Institute for Disability Leadership in Washington US to share England's transformation journey. Our work with the US was well received and underpinned our ambitions for our work with the sector and working and involvement in TLAP's role as relevant to remind the sector to be more human.

**Clarion Partnerships**

Clarion Partnerships PBC, is chair of Think Local Act Personal, and is dedicated person, Jenny Rose, who is also the Chief Social Worker for Adult Services, Lisa Ansell-Pink, the Race Equality Foundation, and embeds under the Disability Hub Team.

## 5.6 Social Work England

On 2 December 2019, Social Work England formally became the new specialist regulator for all social workers in England.

Whatever the process we are doing everything for the social work profession. Our reputation will be centered on raising standards, protecting the public, and working in partnership with people who use services, their families and carers, and with employers keeping trusting in social work.

We are pleased to see our working relationship with the sector and other organisations, including the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Department for Education, continue to develop and strengthen. We have also developed our relationship with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and we look forward to working with them in the future.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to achieving at least a 50% reduction in the number of people with a learning disability or autism who are inpatients in mental health hospitals by 2023 to 2024. Social workers can play a critical role in supporting people back into the community and developing services.

**Learning from Disability Pioneer (LeDeR)**

The Learning from Disability Pioneer (LeDeR) programme is the government's response to the Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities. The LeDeR Programme report is around actions to improve care for people with learning disabilities, including improving the quality of care and support, and ensuring opportunities to consult on mandatory learning disability and autism training, which took place between February to April 2019.

In the government's response to the consultation, 'Right to be Heard', published on 31 March 2021, the government stated it would be working with the Skills for Care, the Professional Bereavement Learning Disability and Autism Training, working with partners and stakeholders.

Alongside this training, SBAH and NHPA have developed Capability Statements for Learning Disability and Autism Training for Social Care Workers. These are to help customers and enable social workers to deepen and strengthen their skills and knowledge to ensure that people receive the highest standard of support from social workers.

## 4.5. Improving life for people with mental health issues

We continue to see mental health social work as a priority and its part of our work continues to be coordinated by Mark Tewson - the Mental Health Social Work Lead, as secondment to DHSC.

Our priorities this year over 3 main areas:

- promoting the value and contribution of social work across the health and social care workforce
- strengthening social work mental health practice
- prioritising new models of integration and partnership working where social work is important

We have also tried to ensure that mental health services are part of the other priorities for social work. This has been a challenge as the mental health workforce has been based social work with support - even when the service may be based in the NHS.

We have worked closely with the DHSC Mental Health team to ensure that the mental health workforce and priorities are considered in the development of the workforce. This includes the Mental Health Act (MHA) White Paper, which will have a number of workforce implications for social work, and other workers.

We have also supported the work taking place in the Green Paper for Prevention, Adult Social Care reform and the Breaking Barriers delay report strategy, all of which will need the support of social workers to work most effectively.

We have also been working alongside NHSX and the CQC to ensure that the NHS Digital Social Care Record (NDSCR) and the Care Quality Commission's assessment framework are as fit-for-purpose for social care as it is expected without performance measures. This work covers many aspects of the CP, but especially the community mental health transformation, the Mental Health Act Review and the work to develop integrated care records alongside Mark Winton of Care Quality Commission.

Workforce is one of the most important issues in both health and care services, and the Civil Service has been working with HEE to ensure that social care is not left out of workforce planning and development. We have also been involved in the development of NHWA, including the APHP workstream plan. APHP (Academy and BPHP Investment) is the non-medical equivalent to medical revalidation.

As many social workers continue to be employed outside the traditional Local Authority and NHS structures, we have also been working with the Professional Bodies to ensure information that is needed is successfully supported social workers.

## 4.6. Encouraging people to work in adult social care

**When care, every day makes a difference: strong applications into adult social care**

This year, we have been supporting the national adult social care recruitment campaign which builds on the foundations laid in 2018/19. Its aim is simple - to support some of the 1.5 million people who work in adult social care to recruit people into the sector and to fill the 122,000 vacancies available across the sector.

As DHSC's Chief Social Workers, our role has been to promote the campaign on a local and national basis, and to ensure that it is relevant to social workers and their work, especially people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

The campaign, which has appeared across outdoor posters, online TV adverts, social media and digital channels, ran until April 2020 and we are now expected to start closing the vacancy gap.

There are a range of resources available to people starting out in the care sector and to those who are looking to develop their skills and knowledge. We have also worked with Skills for Care and other partners to encourage participants in apprenticeships, to enabling concerns to go to an employer, as well as help with personal issues including getting dressed or cooking meals. It could even, for example, lead to a career in social work.

## 4.7 Think Ahead

We are pleased to continue to support Think Ahead - a charity running a graduate programme for people who want to become social workers. Think Ahead has made career changes and jobs the Core programme been on the job in community mental health teams and quality after a year, their work towards a master's degree in social work while working full time in their current job.

Over the last year, the programme's fourth cohort have begun their training. We little information about the impact of the programme on the workforce, but it is worth noting the total number of people to join the programme is over 500.

To date, the charity has partnered with over 50% of England's NHS Mental Health Trusts and 30% of Local Authorities. 85% of Think Ahead's graduates are still working in the field of social work, and 90% of Think Ahead's graduates are still in the practice of the participants.

In Spring 2019, an independent evaluation of the programme was published, containing a set of positive findings, and concluding that the programme is "worthy of continued support and development".

And throughout the year, participants and alumni from the programme have celebrated their work and achievements, including Think Ahead's first graduate to be named in the annual Community Care Inspired Awards social work awards.

Tina Redburn, a member of the programme's first cohort, was awarded the Mental Health Social Worker of the Year Award, and original research she carried out as participants has begun to appear in peer-reviewed journals.

## 4.8 Return to social work programme

We are pleased to continue to support and encourage the Return to Social Work programme delivered by the Local Government Association and funded by the Department for Education. Which we have described for a number of years as being a successful pilot in 2018.

The programme will provide 200 qualified social workers with free, high-quality training and hands-on work placements in local authority children's services.

The programme is open to 2 cohorts: those who have been out of practice for 2 to 5 years and those who have been out of practice for 5 to 8 years. The programme is open to those who want to return to children's services social work practice, and to those who want to re-register with the Regulator and return to permanent employment.

Kapil commented the 2018 pilot phase of a 3-year career break. He said:

> " The programme helped me understand social work in today's context. More importantly it helped me rediscover my confidence."

Candidates from until 31 March 2020 to apply for the programme on the return to social work website. Further details and practice documents for the programme can be found on the Returners Toolkit, developed by the Government Equalities Office.

## 4.9 Improving the quality of Social Work Practice, Supervision and Leadership

**Assessed Supported Year in Employment**

It is now 5 years since we launched the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) which set the standard for social work workers in their Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

The majority of local authority employers are now providing newly qualified social workers with the protected caseloads and supported to enable them to make the smooth from education into practice.

We are also pleased to see an increasing number of employers in the health independent and voluntary sector participating in the ASYE programme, helping ensure consistent good practice in social work practice and supervision, regardless of where people work.

We will be working with Skills for Care and employers to review and refresh the supporting materials and resources, based on another 5 years of learning together.

Over 10 years, we have established the ASYE as a clear expectation of what every qualified social workers and we need to make sure it remains up to date and fit for purpose for employers and for social workers.

We are continuing to support a consistent approach across the profession and we hope to look at learning from children's services which benefits all social workers, as well as sharing our insights from the adult services model.

For a number of years, we have received feedback concerning the importance of supervision and leadership in social work. We have made sure that the ASYE offer practice is assessed and the support which newly qualified social workers receive.

As we move forward to embed the post-qualifying standards for supervisors, we can further strengthen the CPD offer and support workers throughout their career, while continuing to focus on the quality and consistency of the ASYE programme.

**Practice Supervisors**

Since new post-qualifying standards (PQS) for social work practice supervisors were published in 2018, Skills for Care, BASW and the Professional Bereavement Learning Disability and Autism Training have developed the standards and ensure a consistent approach to supervision across all adult settings.

In designing the standards, their purpose was 2 fold - they should provide:

- a consistent approach to professional supervision, with an emphasis on critical reflection focused on practice and decision-making; and
- a clear practice based pathway to enable social workers to progress and develop their career.

We have therefore allowed for a more structured, flexible approach to how the standards are evidenced, to ensure both employers and the profession are clear about the expectations of supervisors and how they can demonstrate their knowledge and capability.

We will continue to work with the sector to support implementation, including evaluating outcomes from the TEF programme and engaging with employers to make sure that the standards are being used to support practice development and to promote reflective supervision.

**Principal Social Worker Leadership Development Programme**

100 PSWs have now completed the Leadership Development Programme delivered by Skills for Care since its launch in 2018. It is clear from the continued feedback that they derive great benefit from the opportunities to learn with their peers from other areas.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees consistently stating that the programme has helped them feel part of the wider organisation but in their own professional setting.

One of the primary drivers for this increased confidence is the work-related project which participants undertake, focusing on sustaining learning and impact on practice.

The impact of this element of the programme has been significant, enabling participants to lead some transformational activities within their organisations.

Examples of leadership impact include: development of new practice approaches and pathways; the creation of a new post to support the workforce; the creation of new opportunities for learning and development and promotion of a culture of reflective working.

We are also pleased to welcome a small group of Principal Occupational Therapists who participated in the programme. We have found that the programme has provided an opportunity for them to develop their leadership capacity and to build relationships with other professional leaders across the profession.

> " At the Principal Occupational Therapists and Principal Social Workers wrapped learning together and were amazed at the synergy of approaches, ideas and models. We have learned so much from each other, and it has been great to see the appreciation of our fellow professionals and how we can all adopt what we can to practice in social care, whether professional leaders we allow. We were very proud to have had our colleagues from Occupational Therapy joining us, and we look forward to the Skills for Care programme for future Occupational Therapy leaders in social care."

We are delighted to say that the cohort of 25 PSWs together with 5 Principal Occupational Therapists, commenced their 9 day programme in January 2020.

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However, unlike newly qualified social workers who are at the same stage, the workforce who are ready to take supervision training will be in a variety of roles, positioned to lead coaches or first-line managers.

In ensuring consistency in how the standards are evidenced, we have allowed for a more structured, flexible approach to how the standards are evidenced, to ensure both employers and the profession are clear about the expectations of supervisors and how they can demonstrate their knowledge and capability.

We have also obtained a Train the Trainer programme to support PSWs and others responsible for practice development, to support implementation of the standards. Feedback from participants has been positive, with many practice supervisors and supporting guidance will help them apply the standards in their organisation.

## 5.5 Think Local

A vital aspect of our preparatory work his has been our dialogue and collaboration with all those who have an interest in social work, be they a social worker, social work educator, or someone with lived experience of social work.

Together, we have developed the professional, education and training standards that are the foundation of social work regulation. The register is now open, and our online account established for all social workers to sign up and upload their CPD.

Our fitness to practise processes will allow us to resolve complaints at the earliest appropriate stage and with the full involvement of the profession.

Our Education and Training Quality Assurance approach will help ensure that social workers emerge from their training ready to practise, able to meet our professional standards, and join our register.

Our regional engagement team will ensure that our commitment to collaboration and continued conversation with all those with an interest in social work remains at the heart of what we do, and how we develop as a regulator.

Our first 3 years will see us focus on establishing our organisation, learning from and with the sector, and developing our ambition for ourselves and for the social work profession.

# 6. Examples of innovative social work

We asked 3 local authorities to present short summaries of innovative work that have done. If you would like further details, please contact the authorities directly.

## 6.1 Cornwall

**Darren is living more independently by using Technology Enabled Care**
Darren has moved from having 24-hour carer support to living independently in a self-contained flat – with support available if he needs it – with the help of a sensor-based monitoring system.

Darren lives at Pendennis House, a supported living provider in Wadebridge, Cornwall. There are monitors in place around his home that can detect any out of the ordinary movement and alert staff in the nearby hub. He also has special assistance phone which allows him to call someone at the hub if he needs to.

Pendennis House Manager Nancy Jeffs said:

> " People we support are given a higher level of independence and using the sensor-based technology means that they have less restriction placed on their life.

> " They can use the special assistance phone to contact someone should they need urgent help and staff are on hand seconds away if needed. We have seen people's confidence levels soar using this technology and this has spread into other areas of their lives, having the confidence to pick and choose activities they want to get involved in."

Ann Smith, Cornwall Council's Principal Social Worker said:

> " Cornwall Council is embracing new and innovative solutions to people's care needs, looking at how we can support people to live happy, healthy and independent lives using technology enabled care. In Darren's case its clear to see how a different solution to the more traditional care packages means he can live safely and independently in his own home."

You can hear more from Darren in this short video:

## 6.2 Brighton and Hove

**Research and practice must go hand in hand**
At Brighton & Hove City Council our social work teams are working to build stronger relationships with researchers in local universities.

It's an approach that is already showing real benefits.

With the support of the DASS and the Principal Social Worker, we're working with researchers and with colleagues in our public health team to ensure that the organisational approach to research becomes embedded in culture and practice to deliver system-wide benefits.

The social work teaching partnership has opened up opportunities for front line social workers to design and lead on primary research projects based on questions generated directly from practice.

With one completed project and 2 more in progress, social workers are embracing new opportunities to build on their research skills and contribute to an evidence base for social work approaches and interventions.

In addition, social workers have been supported by managers to facilitate and participate in peer group meetings called 'journal clubs' to discuss and reflect on a mix of research papers.

These meetings mean that front line social workers identify practice themes that are important to them and use theory-led discussions to directly inform their practice.

The journal clubs started in hospital services. They have quickly gained a positive reputation and have now been set up more widely across the directorate.

The combination of social workers driving their own research projects and using a clearer evidence base for decisions has raised the profile of the profession and improved outcomes for people with care and support needs.

The journal clubs have made research meaningful and are enabling practitioners to apply a reliable knowledge base to complex care decisions.

Social workers say they value highly the time given to use and think about research in practice, and that this has bridged a gap between academia and front-line work.

The success of embedding research into practice has required buy-in and commitment from social workers, managers and senior leaders.

It has resulted in strategic and practice-based research collaboratives that are beneficial to individuals, social work and the wider community.

## 6.3 Norfolk

**Social work in 2020 in rural community**
For those unfamiliar with the county of Norfolk, it is mainly a rural county that covers approximately 2,074 square miles with four major built up areas, where about 40% of the population live. Rural communities can present different challenges for social work, and Norfolk is no exception to this.

Challenges Norfolk face in rural communities include increased traveling times for both practitioners and carers, lack of agencies within the local community and family members moving into towns and cities for work opportunities.

Norfolk has a strength-based approach to practice, which initially was based on Partners for Change '3 conversation model'.

Over time this approach has developed into Norfolk's Living Well approach that puts conversation between equals at the heart of social work, enabling our practitioners to learn:

- what is important to the person
- their strengths and talents
- what is working well and what they want to change
- what they would like to achieve
- how they would like to be supported

In working in rural communities, it is also vital to have good links with other partners including health, housing and police.

In Norfolk we have developed different arenas to support multi agency working that includes 'Early Help Hubs' and 'NEAT' (Norfolk Escalation Avoidance Team) in each of our localities.

Early Help Hubs are a base for professionals to come together and share information (with consent from the individual) in order to receive the most appropriate and effective support at the earliest point.

They were established through a strong partnership with public and voluntary sector organisations who work together to support individuals and families. Professionals work together to recognise concerns and referrals are dealt with in the most appropriate way with the aim to reduce duplication, delay and ensure the most suitable service is identified.

NEAT is a single point of access for urgent, unplanned health and social care needs where co-located staff work together to coordinate and deploy an integrated multi-disciplinary team response using existing services that will support and manage people and carers safely in the community through a period of crisis, using the most proportionate level of intervention and promote independence by identifying and addressing additional support needs through Integrated Care Co-ordination and linking people to their own support networks.

A real-life case example of NEAT is when an outreach nurse made a referral into the NEAT team following a visit the night before by paramedics.

The patient in question showed increase confusion, had not eaten recently and had been sleeping on the sofa as they were unable to manage the stairs.

They already had a diagnosis of dementia and a unitary tract infection was also identified during the referral process. A care and support plan was in place already which consisted of three calls a day to support with morning, lunch and tea time routines.

An action plan was agreed during the MDT huddle where a visit was completed that day to access the stairs and see if downstairs living would be more suitable and reduce the risk of the patient climbing the stairs. An increase in care to include an evening visit was provided by Norfolk First Support from the following day with shifts being arranged for that evening to cover the evening call.

The outcome was that the patient was able to remain at home with an increase in his care package and further equipment. The case was then passed through to the locality Social Work Team to complete a face to face visit after the crisis had passed.

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