Department of Health & Social Care

Independent report

Chief Social Workers' annual report: 2020 to 2021

Published 1 April 2021

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1. Minister's foreword

Over the last year as coronavirus coursed its way around the globe devastating individuals, families, and communities alike, adult social work proved unequivocally why it is vital to our nation.

I know that Mark and Fran, who are both doing incredible jobs as interim joint Chief Social Workers for Adults, have been bowled over by the ingenuity and innovation of the profession.

You have maintained and even strengthened connections with colleagues and other health and care professionals by using video calls, WhatsApp groups and other ingenious workarounds. The ongoing public health crisis has only served to spur collaboration across systems.

COVID-19 propelled us out of our respective comfort zones, but adult social workers – just like their children and families counterparts – have shown amazing compassion, adaptability and fortitude to remain present, responsive and supportive in the lives of people needing help.

On a strategic level, adult social work has been front and centre of our national pandemic response too, informing the work of the Social Care Sector COVID-19 Support Taskforce, our Winter Plan and now, the recently announced roadmap out of lockdown announced by the Prime Minister.

Under the Joint Chief Social Worker's watch the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care has been further embedded in practice, making sure the needs and strengths of all individuals are respected and kept central to decision-making.

Allied to this, transitional safeguarding, in the specific areas of criminal and sexual exploitation, has remained a consistent priority for Mark and Fran. A code of practice for adult safeguarding teams is now being developed to support local authorities in taking consistent and person-centred actions. Consultation on this work begins in early 2021, with the aim to finalise it for publication in Spring the same year.

Throughout, the profession's collective voice has reminded us of the need for collaboration, community out-reach and a focus on the protection and dignity of those who need help the most.

On this point, the virus has exposed the persistent health, social and economic inequalities still present in our population. That's why the taskforce included a subgroup, led by social workers and social care experts, dedicated to improving support for black and minority ethnic communities disproportionally impacted by coronavirus.

It should be a matter of great pride just how ethnically diverse our health and care workforce is and the wealth of talent, skills and experience this diversity brings to our health and care system. It remains a priority to offer our full support and protection to everyone working on the frontline, taking all health and cultural concerns into account.

Similarly, as our vaccine uptake plan continues to roll out, I know adult social work has a vital role to play in helping us reach all communities – including those groups most impacted by the pandemic, especially those still anxious about vaccination.

Echoing the goals of the taskforce subgroup to promote equality of support, important work has also been underway to improve representation, advocacy and respect within the wider adult social care sector itself.

Again, informed by the wise counsel of adult social work (led by our own Nimal Jude and valued sector partners including Skills for Care), a new workforce race equality standard (WRES) for social care has been introduced, with 18 councils across in England set to join the framework in Phase 1, from April 2021.

Aims include increasing diversity at a leadership level, but also recognising the true value of a culturally vibrant and varied workforce. The more employers and employees see themselves in each other – but also respect their differences where they exist the happier, healthier and more supportive our workplaces will be.

On a related issue, the review into reform of the Mental Health Act 1983 and the subsequent white paper, has been extremely well served by the work of Mental Health Social Work Lead, Mark Trewin and his colleagues. I hope all will agree the review was a real achievement, featuring many positive suggestions to modernise the Act, including a renewed emphasis on human rights, dignity, equality, choice and appropriate care and support.

Which brings us back to the times we live in now. The pandemic continues to have a mental, physical and practical impact on our communities and the people you support. As society tentatively begins to open up once more, you will be helping many people navigate their way back to some kind of normality. Your service has never been more highly prized or needed right now and I am honoured to support your profession in these uniquely challenging times.

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

The annual report is our opportunity to look back over the last year and reflect on the progress made on the priorities set out in last year's plan and celebrate achievements. However, 2020 was a year like none other and one which proved enormously challenging to our profession.

We saw first-hand the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the people and the communities we support, our colleagues, loved ones and our friends and families. We moved from offices and bases to our bedrooms, living rooms, and kitchens to work. But, we also continued to be a presence in our communities and on the front-line providing support and care for those that needed us.

The challenges of the last year highlight just how vital our profession is, how our skills and knowledge can adapt to new situations. How, no matter what, we put people first and continued to support human rights, relationships and social justice. We couldn't be prouder of the social work profession.

We also recognise the toll it will have taken on you all personally as well as professionally, and time will be needed to heal and reflect on the trauma that the country has and continues to face. It is important that as social workers we also allow ourselves that space and reach out to others for and to give support.

The future will require us to adapt and enhance our skills in working with individuals and communities We will continue to develop and support initiatives that provide you with the support and tools you need, to be able to practice positively and with impact, in a post COVID world.

At times it will feel like one leap forward and two leaps back but together we must ensure that our profession comes out of this stronger and more united for the benefit of the people and communities we support every day.

2020 also saw the murder of George Floyd and the trigger of protests across the world with the challenge that change has to happen now As a profession that upholds human rights and challenges social injustice we are often the people leading the discussion about racism and oppression, helping to develop anti-racist organisations and employment environments for social care staff everywhere. Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice is at the heart of our profession and we need to ensure it is visible in our training, continued learning and the support that we provide to people.

We both, along with Lyn Romeo, would like to say a big thank you to every social worker and social care practitioner across the country. Your commitment, passion and dedication, often when the odds were stacked against you, has been nothing short of inspirational and lifesaving to so many. The year that we had anticipated turned into a year and a half. We saw our goals and plans impacted by the need to urgently respond to COVID-19 but despite this, we started some exciting work and will ensure these strands most of which are outlined below, are continued.

Lyn returns from her career break this spring, which means our secondment will be coming to an end over the next months. We wish you all well for the future and thank you for the support you have given us during this period. The learning for us has been immense and we thank everyone of you for making this time a special and a memorable one.

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

We are delighted to present the Chief Social Worker for Adults' seventh annual report, for the year 2021 to 2022.

The past year saw a shift from the priorities that we had set for the year as we needed to rise to the challenges of supporting a rapidly changing a social work and social care programme amidst a pandemic.

However, despite not following through with all of our set priorities we are pleased to celebrate some significant successes and outcomes. These include the introduction of guidance to ensure that the Easements to the Care Act were enacted only when truly needed and ensured that social work was pivotal to that decision making at a local level.

Throughout our response, we have maintained focus on the quality of care for individuals and our workforce notably through the Ethical Framework for Social Care. We have also supported the Music for Dementia guide to encourage the incorporation of music into care plans for people with dementia and also ensuring that support is in place for Prinicipal Social Workers (PSW's) in managing during these challenging times.

Our practice must reflect, adapt, and continue to respond to the challenges that present every day. We will learn and develop new approaches, boosting our knowledge and sharpening our practice. We have been impressed by the innovative actions which have enabled local services to deliver care during the pandemic, working with our communities. Our priorities, as set out in this report, will flex to cope with the demands placed upon them but they will not be cast aside.

As we hand back to Lyn, we will recommend that we continue to ensure a link between our annual report and PSW's work plans for continuity and a joined up approach to deliver our ambition to always drive new learning for the development of social work, achieve what is important to people, and fulfil the responsibilities of our profession through collaboration and joined up work.

We also want to sincerely thank and pay tribute to the work of the Civil Servants within the DHSC Social Care Group and in our CSW office. The work and effort of these civil servants is rarely seen and even more rarely acknowledged and thanked but they have worked tirelessly and selflessly over the last year to make a difference.

This report will review the challenges and achievements during COVID-19 and will see a rollover of priorities as well as a mixture of new ones, reflecting the voices of adults and carers who interact with social work and social care services across the country, and continue the commitment to co-production and adding the voices of people with lived experiences.

3.1 Achievements

3.1.1 COVID-19

- We supported and led elements of the Adult Social Care Action Plan that formed the first focused social care response to the pandemic and subsequently supported the work of the Social Care COVID-19 Support Taskforce and the Adult Social Care Winter Plan. We provided direct support to the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and self-directed support sub-groups and have been pleased to see the action and progress made following their significant and important recommendations.
- The Care Act Easements were introduced as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020 as a temporary measure during local COVID-19 responses. As CSW, we led on the development of guidance to ensure, where used, they were done so with clear decision making and oversight. Principal Social Workers were central to the decision-making process and as such ensuring that a social work perspective led local processes and had a clear voice in any decision. We ensured that the guidance was drafted with user-led, professional and sector organisations. Over the year, eight local councils officially implemented the easements, over time all reduced and then ended their use.
- The CSW Office developed an Ethical Framework to support national and local response planning and decision making throughout the pandemic. The framework introduces a set of core ethical values and principles, which provide a structure to ensure rights and strengths-based social work values are embedded when organising and delivering adult social care. We will be looking to review how this document has been used during the pandemic and whether lessons can be drawn for beyond COVID-19.
- The mental health act (MHA) easements were also introduced and covered both councils and NHS Trusts. These were not used, and we commissioned the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) to undertake a study of approved mental health professional services to understand how they had been affected.
- We worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to develop a hub of resources in April 2020, to address some of the questions and challenges faced by people with learning disabilities and autistic people, their families and carers. We published guidance to support care staff and support people who provide unpaid care during COVID-19 to complement the SCIE resources.
- We know that day services are an important form of support for people with learning disabilities and autistic people and provide important forms of respite or short breaks for unpaid carers. We worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance in July 2020, to help make decisions on restarting services and to provide quality care safely.

COVID-19 has shed a light on existing and new inequalities in our systems and society, which we are committed to address and develop lasting solutions. The CSW Office is continuing our engagement with sector partners to conduct research, share learning and bring together practice guidance for culturally competent and inclusive care which learns from COVID-19.

3.1.2 Discharge to Assess (D2A) insight learning

The use of the principles of discharge to assess have rapidly grown and changed over the last year. Since the implementation of the care act the ideas of working with people post hospital admission, understanding the next steps and the care and support required to allow them to be as independent and autonomous as possible has developed and informed local practice.

Over the COVID-19 period, D2A has further changed and there is a move to set social work outside of the hospital and alongside those on the discharge to assess journey in the community. These developments have added new working practices and pathways and now is an appropriate time to understand the impact of these models and the experiences of those who have experienced them.

We have therefore asked SCIE to complete an initial evaluation on the impact of the D2A model on people who use services, carers, and on the health and care system. The evaluation will explore what is working well, what we can improve on, key learning, and identify examples of good practice. They will also highlight lessons and recommendations for policy makers in the DHSC and national stakeholders, such as NHS England and Improvement and ADASS

3.1.3 Leadership and development

Despite the pandemic we were able to support PSWs and POTs to complete the leadership programme provided by Skills for Care

> "All the Principal Occupational Therapists and Principal Social Workers enjoyed learning together and were amazed at the synergy of approaches, ideas and models used in our professions. We all agree that we finished the course with a great appreciation of our fellow professionals and how we can all add value to our practice in social care, whatever professional toolkit we utilise. We were very proud to have this opportunity to study alongside Principal Social Workers and highly recommend the Skills for Care programme for future Occupational Therapy strategic leaders in social care."

We are delighted to say that the sixth cohort of 20 PSWs together with five Principal Occupational Therapists, commenced their five-day programme in January 2021

3.1.4 Adult safeguarding

Social work, informed and skilled in the area of safeguarding, has the potential to make a real difference with its strong professional influence in partnership arrangements, helping to prevent long-term mental health issues, avoid further harm and put an end to exploitation.

Transitional safeguarding, particularly criminal and sexual exploitation, was one of our priorities last year. We engaged with the sector through a number of roundtable discussions and are working with partners to produce guidance for the sector in 2021.

We set up an Adult Safeguarding Forum in 2020 which brought together key sector partners across systems to regularly share good practice and learning, and address issues as and when they arise. We look forward to this ongoing partnership and acting to ensure high quality safeguarding practice across the country, ensuring systems work with one another towards

Last year, we committed to producing a code of practice for adult safeguarding teams which was unfortunately delayed due to immediate COVID-19 pressures. We have re-started this work to support local authorities to ensure statutory responses are informed by a consistent and person-centred approach. Consultation will begin in Spring 2021, with publication aimed for Summer 2021.

3.1.5 Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)

It is vital that we have a clear and accurate understanding of the challenges faced by our staff, including their experiences, progression opportunities and workplace discrimination and action for equality. We announced a Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) for social care in December 2020, which will begin with initial implementation in 18 local authorities from 1st April 2021.

The key driver for the WRES for social care is to support local authorities and other employers to truly adopt anti-discriminatory and anti-racist cultures. Phase 1 will see us working with social care departments in 18 local authorities, to see how data is captured and monitored locally, and to measure progress against indicators of workforce race equality. Throughout the first year, we will listen to staff, management, and the sector directly on what gaps exist and what areas need strengthening.

We are excited about this programme and the tangible outcomes this could yield for our colleagues and social care workforce in the future

3.1.6 Self-directed support

We were pleased to work with Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) across the pandemic, engaging with a group of 'experts' to support with the development and delivery of policy and guidance documents.

We are pleased to see a co-produced approach and the significant benefits this brings. Ensuring that people with lived experience have a seat at the table alongside the Department and other social care stakeholders, will allow us to develop guidance that are not only aligned with the Care Act, but are also user friendly and at the right level to make an immediate impact.

The pandemic has shown us that we have become too prescriptive on some things such as the application of direct payments, and as social workers we must return to delivering professional support and guidance to enable positive outcomes for all.

3.1.7 Supporting workforce wellbeing during COVID-19

We know, of course, that the achievements of this year do not lessen the impact of the losses many of us have experienced and will continue to cope with. It is more important than ever to prioritise our mental health as well as physical health, look after ourselves and one another as a collective workforce.

We worked with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to publish guidance for the support and wellbeing of adult social workers and social care professionals during a pandemic.

We also worked with our DHSC colleagues to develop health and wellbeing advice for the adult social care workforce. This outlines services and support on offer from an employee and employer perspective.

As the Chief Social Worker within the Department of Health and Social Care we also wanted to support our civil service colleagues who were have been key to the response to COVID-19. We developed adapted guidance for managers to provide support to their teams and set up a number of facilitated sessions for colleagues to safely reflect and support one another.

3.1.8 Improving evidence through better research

We have been pleased to continue to support the implementation of the Post Qualifying Standards for Practice Supervisors and have been able to move the face-to-face learning programme to online delivery which completed in February. The University of Birmingham have been a delivery partner in this second phase of the programme, moving online. As part of this work Research in Practice developed some specific resources to support supervision during the pandemic, with a focus around virtual supervision and social work in a crisis.

3.1.9 Supporting people with learning disabilities and autistic people

Alongside Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, we undertook a study of social work practice with autistic people (0 to 25) to review and recommend improvements to practice in this area in 2019. The focus of the practice study was on how responsive social workers were to the needs of autistic people and their families, what the barriers to effective interventions were, and how things could have been done differently to achieve better outcomes. Our findings and recommendations were published in February 2021. These recommendations will feed into the development of the refreshed cross-government all-age autism strategy and will also offer insights for health and care professionals, local and national policymakers.

We have been pleased to continue working with BASW on the Capabilities Statement and CPD Pathway to support adult social work practice with people with learning disabilities and autistic people. As part of this work, BASW launched implementation resources in June 2020 to support embedding the Capabilities Statement relating to adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults. The work was co-produced with people with lived experience, sector partners and educators.

3.1.10 Mental health

The CSW office has been working to support and develop mental health social work and the Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) role during 2020/21. This work has included reviewing and collating information on how mental health services have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. AMHP services and social care mental health services have had an important role during the pandemic, and this is one of the reasons that the Mental Health easements have not been used.

Developing the social work workforce has been a priority for the CSW Office and we have been working closely with Health Education England and Skills for Care to develop guidance for social workers in integrated mental health services, a report on social work in forensic services and a range of resources to support Approved Mental Health Professionals. We also commissioned BASW and the AMHP Leads network to prepare a report on the effect of the pandemic on AMHP mental health services.

We have continued to support the department with the development of the Think Ahead fast track programme, which has expanded to 160 places this year and we continue to work closely with the education sector and delivery partners, to support social work students.

Over the last few months, we have been supporting the DHSC mental health team with developing the post COVID-19 Mental Health action plan as well with launching the Mental Health Act White Paper, and made sure that AMHPs and social care mental health services are informed and involved with the process.

We have also been supporting the treasury to develop guidance and training for the Breathing Space debt support initiative which is a part of our commitment to supporting equality for people with mental health issues. This will be introduced by the treasury in 2021.

Mark Trewin, our Mental Health Lead will be leaving the department as his secondment comes to an end March 2021. We want to say thanks to him for progressing the thinking around mental health; for leading very high-level conversations; adding to briefing papers; and ensuring mental health is on all agendas with a plan for joined up work and to ensure continuity and sustainability.

3.1.11 Loneliness

We have worked to support social workers to be proactive in assessing loneliness and its impacts, and supporting people experiencing loneliness. The 'Evidence Scope: Loneliness and Social Work' report was published in February 2020.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the government has invested over £31.5 million to support people who experience loneliness. This is a part of the government's package of support for the sector during the pandemic. We have also seen the refresh of the 'Let's Talk Loneliness' campaign offering guidance on how to support yourself and others, and the formation of the Tackling Loneliness Network made up of private, public and charity sector organisations who want to make a difference.

4. Action around social care

4.1 Transitional safeguarding: criminal and sexual exploitation

We will build on the growing understanding of the impact of trauma on young adults and our commitment to prevention and drivers for Transitional Safeguarding. Research is being undertaken in the sector to explore how Making Safeguarding Personal could be adapted for use with older adolescents, and guidance for practice is due to be launched in Spring 2021.

Dez Holmes, Director of Research in Practice, shared the following quote from the team we have partnered with to deliver exemplar work:

> "We at Research in Practice see first-hand how social workers with experience of working with adults have so much to offer this system reform agenda – their nuanced understanding of risk and rights, their commitment to participative person-centred practice, and their understanding of how capacity can be affected by experiences are all essential to developing a more Transitional Safeguarding approach. We look forward to continuing to work with the CSW office and the sector to progress this agenda."

One key task for Spring 2021 will be to develop and publish a briefing for social workers on transitional safeguarding practice.

4.2 Learning disabled adults: the right to live a full and happy life

There continues to be a spotlight on the health inequalities that learning-disabled adults experience every day. The pandemic has magnified this disparity some of which was highlighted in the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review LeDeR Report from Bristol University.

We shared these headlines in our last report and will share again as key insights to note and which are pertinent as we look at mechanisms and work streams for COVID-19 recovery, and as we continue to shape health and care for people in our society.

- Adults with learning disabilities from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups appear to be under-represented in notifications of deaths.
- Just under half of the reviews completed in 2018 reported that the person had received care which met, or exceeded, good practice.
- One in 10 (11%) of reviews completed in 2018 reported that concerns had been raised about the circumstances leading to a person's death.
- 71 adults (8%) were reported to have received care that fell so far below expected good practice that it either significantly impacted on their wellbeing, or directly contributed to their death.
- Women with learning disabilities died 27 years earlier and men 23 years earlier, when compared to the general population.

It is vital that social work helps lead the change and tackle the health inequalities so clear evidence is needed. Health inequalities re often driven by social inequality and that is the area where we must have the most impact. The CSW office will remain actively involved in the Minister's building better support ambitions and further embedding the work developed by BASW on practice competencies.

4.3 Social work and commissioning: developing a new approach

We will move forward with this action to set up a series of roundtables to consider the relationship between social work and commissioning. We will bring forward the intention to develop a guidance note that will take the very best of social work, its professional practice and knowledge base, as well as its experience of working alongside citizens to help shape commissioning principles. Likewise, commissioning models can help influence how social work can support and lead the future transformation of social care. Drawing on the essential values that underpin our profession and the personal stories people share with us, including what works and what needs to change.

We are keen to draw commissioning processes and practice together, becoming a single point that embraces co-production and NICE guidance to provide a clear evidence base.

4.4 Principal social workers – leading the way

We will continue to support and showcase the great work of the sector and will ask PSWs to share their plans with us and be involved in measuring progress towards their implementation.

Social work takes place in many adult settings, from hospices and charities, to academia, NHS trusts and many other areas. We know there are many thousands of registered social workers working outside of local authorities and now is the time to reach out to them. We will:

- ask all PSWs to develop an action plan, responding to the priorities in this report
- ask PSWs to develop a plan to engage with adult social work across their area and not just within their authority
- hold a national event for PSWs to share the outcomes of these plans and celebrate

practice

4.5 Social work and health inequalities: promote the value and contribution that social work and social workers bring to the health and social care system in areas where there are significant health inequalities

We will continue to work closely across government, with arm's length bodies, and with partners in the NHS, local authorities, and the voluntary sector to promote and maximising the social determinants of poor health and improving health outcomes for people who receive social work and social care support. We will:

- strengthen social work in acute settings to better meet the needs of people who have mental health issues
- ensure social work is reflected in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's plans for social care reform
- engage in the work of Breaking Barriers Innovations to ensure place-based social work is influential in our communities
- ensure that NHS and other national partners to support and promote good evidence in this area
- Supporting the development of the Mental Health Equality Commission with the Centre for Mental Health

4.6 Adult social care reform

This government has been clear that fixing the social care system is one of its top priorities. Our ambition is to ensure everyone who needs care and support can live with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges that our society faces. There are complex questions to address, to which we want to give our full considerations in light of the current circumstances.

As set out in the Spending Review, the government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals this year.

The CQC Office have continued to support the government to develop a strategy for adult social care reform. We will continue to work with other partners to ensure that all the principles of strength-based working, rights and dignity are at the core of the government's vision as it is developed.

4.7 Rolling out the Workplace Race Equality Standards for social care (WRES)

The first phase of the WRES will provide us with a rich database to learn from and shape future roll-out, and drive tangible action within the sector.

We will be working with the 18 LAs throughout the year to learn from their experiences, listen to their staff, and support them to develop robust and tangible action plans to address areas of improvement.

We will be holding events over the course of the year to engage with the wider sector and are excited to keep you updated on this journey through blogs from ourselves and the sites involved.

5. Partner organisations

Despite the pandemic, we have continued our work with our partner organisations who oversees some of the activity that DHSC has funded or encouraged. We'd like to thank all these partner organisations for their passion and commitment to these pieces of work.

5.1 The Principal Social Worker network

Thank you to Simon Homes and Jennifer Rees, Co-Chairs of the Adult Principal Social Workers' Network, for the following contribution.

A priority for the PSW network is to build on and strengthen key partnerships, as well as increase involvement of PSWs in network activity.

We continue to build on the good relationships with the Chairs of the National PSW Networks. The Network offers a range of support to PSW's on a more informal level, including opportunity to have some Professional Peer Support or participate in our Action Learning Sets. There will be more Leadership Training opportunities in the future and we are piloting the PSW Leadership Programme through the ADASS Sign-Posted Programme.

We hold regular meetings with BASW, ADASS, Social Work England, DHC, and other Chief Social Workers across the UK.

Social Work Practice has been transformed as a result of COVID-19 which has strengthened the opportunity to be more collaborative and joined up across teams, organisations, community and health partners. The improvement and our use of technology in communicating, assessing, and supporting people has helped to bring the footmark of practice, providing greater flexibility, agility, accessibility, and convenience to, and in the way we do things.

The pandemic more people than ever before working remotely which has proved beneficial to maintaining relationships with family, friends and colleagues, and has for a whilst spending more time with family. Remote working does however bring a set of challenges such as the potential for increased social isolation of both Social Workers and people needing support, digital exclusion, the importance of retaining human contact at the heart of social work, the pros and cons of fast hospital discharges for very vulnerable people, the impact of virtual social work on strengths-based practice and safeguarding practice.

PSWs are now influencing the way in which reorientation and recovery is being managed in Adult Social Care Directorates up and down the country.

PSWs have been engaged with for care providers and their staff to publish a Calmness and Resilience Guide. This guide covers some simple tools that can help people keep a sense of calmness during the current COVID-19 situation and includes simple things people can practice in the moment or add to their daily routine.

PSW are moving forward by ensuring the network is better connected and joining some of our work streams to harness expertise from across the PSW network to ensure we have a joined-up resource. This approach mirrors our strengths-based approaches for the people we serve, so we are modelling connectedness and partnerships through the network.

5.2 British Association of Social Workers

Thank you to Pharis Sithalou, National Director at BASW, and Ruth Allan, Chief Executive Officer at BASW for the following contribution.

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) is the independent professional association for social work and social workers across the UK. Throughout the year we have been very pleased to continue close working with the DHSC and the CSW for Social Work Practice and throughout the pandemic, to work on common areas of concern and shared values and ethics.

This has been an incredibly challenging and sad year as well as one that has highlighted the kindness, humanity and resolve of many, including the social work and social care workforce. The challenges of Covid-19 have reinforced the importance of working in partnership and collegiality across organisations.

Projects and work streams overseen includes commissioned projects focusing on the Capabilities Statement for Social Work with Adults, Adults' Capabilities Statement for Social Workers working with Adults with Learning Disability, Organisational Evaluation Framework and Continuous Professional Development pathway.

We also supported the CSW Office in developing at pace the COVID-19 Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care, representing the voice and views of our members, people with lived experience and partnership organisations within this and in response to the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act. We continued our work with the PSW network to promote our campaign about the importance of testing, safe access and rights for citizens living in the community, residential, supported housing and with their family carers.

We have met with CSW regularly over the year, working together to support recognition of the importance and the needs of social work and social care colleagues during the crisis, ensuring the diverse crucial roles of social workers were recognised in government.

Collectively we have shaped and influenced practice guidance and standards for social workers and social care staff, including the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care including the role of Approved Mental Health Professional, as supported by the jointly commissioned research by BASW and DHSC. We have supported the development of Transitional Safeguarding Guidance.

We are particularly pleased to have worked together on the DHSC Workforce Race Equality Standards and we hope this will be an important common area of work going forward.

We have appreciated the involvement and support of CSW in specific BASW projects such as our work on the role of social workers in disasters and we continue to work across England and the UK to impact CPD and workforce wellbeing offers in this field of practice.

Through the CSW Research Advisory group, BASW and the CSW have also been able to work together on our mutual commitment to developing social work research and the dissemination and use of evidence in practice. In a reciprocal vein, we have been pleased to welcome the CSW and representatives to a variety of webinars, consultations, and learning events throughout the year.

As the representative body for social workers in England and as the UK representative body for social work globally, we value the in depth work we do with DHSC and the CSW while offering UK wide and global perspectives on social work to CSW and colleagues across the sector.

5.3 Social Care Institute of Excellence

Thank you to Gerard Crofton-Martin at SCIE for the following contribution.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has produced 2 major new resources aimed specifically at social workers.

The first was the Preparing for adulthood: The role of social workers that builds on work we have undertaken with the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme. This approach can improve support to people with learning disabilities. This resource takes lessons from that project and applies them to people with learning disabilities as they enter adulthood. This resource includes a framework and practice guide and sets out the five aspects of practice that are needed for good transition support to take place:

- the right support, systems and commissioning
- an understanding of social care law, social work theories and abolescent development
- a supportive human rights, and the confidence to apply this
- the ability to work effectively in multi-agency settings
- a focus on each person they support – what they want, what their family wants and what the social worker can do to support them to achieve their goals

The second resource is a suite of materials designed to support developments in social work education, incorporating accessible guidance, films, and scenario-based learning. It was cooperatively developed by social workers and people with lived experience.

COVID-19 resources:

In response to the pandemic, guides were rapidly developed which supported social care providers and staff working during COVID-19. These were all co-produced and collaborating with organisations including BASW and the Principal Social Workers Network and were informed by those who use care and support services as well as social workers.

- Practicing independently and safely: Building support, and Virtual risk identification
- Technology checklist for video calling an adult care home
- Supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults/Delivering safe, face to face adult day care

These resources sit in the SCIE hub relating to social work and COVID-19.

Virtual social work meetups

SCIE hosted virtual social work 'meetups' which offered over 200 social workers across a number of CPD-accredited sessions. The opportunity to discuss issues, share practice and support each other, relating to the pandemic and strengths-based practice.

Social workers shared that:

- online work facilitated and improved multidisciplinary work and relationships with individuals that otherwise would have rejected face-to-face interaction
- many struggled juggling family lives and work during the pandemic, but most went the extra mile putting themselves and their family dynamics at risk to continue supporting vulnerable people
- most undertook community support initiatives developed by their local authorities, although recognise that relationships between local authorities and initiatives didn't always enable their sustainability
- they missed having the usual opportunities for peer support

Digital capabilities for social workers

SCIE has developed a digital capabilities framework and set of resources to help develop social workers' digital capabilities and skills, as part of the Building a Digitally Ready Workforce programme, commissioned by Health Education England, with support from NHS Digital.

Social workers can benefit from films, capabilities statements, information on ethical considerations as well as practice examples, to increase their confidence with digital technology and data to support their increasingly complex role.

5.4 Skills for Care – professional development for social workers

Thank you to Graham Mewburn, Programme Head at Skills for Care, for the following contribution.

Skills for Care values our strong working relationship with the Chief Social Workers and their team. It was good to work in partnership in response to the pandemic and to be able to support the connection with social work practice through additional communication channels with the Principal Social Worker Network. We are sure to acknowledge the way their employers of social workers have kept a strong focused and commitment to the care and support of people who need social work support. We have also noted the way they, along with more experienced colleagues have adapted to continue to support, supervise and assess newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) joining the workforce during this period.

As we approach the next year it's worth reflecting on some of our learning over the past year and how that is shaping our support for the social work workforce:

- The needs of supervisors have come to the fore once again. Through our ASYE quality assurance visits we have seen how supervisors focus on the needs of others which their own support and development often attracts lower priority. Whilst we are supporting the development of our supervision offer for ASYE assessors and assessing NQSWs, this is not just about the ASYE. So the work we are continuing to support of the Chief Social Workers to help employers implement the post qualifying standards for supervisors is crucial.
- We are really pleased to be working with the Chief Social Workers as they launch the Social Work Leadership Programme. Leadership development in social work has been focused on the issues of race and diversity in recent months, and we have interrelated our learning and approach to ensuring the ASYE is anti-racist and fully inclusive so that every NQSW has a consistent experience during their ASYE programme.
- We know that work has changed dramatically, with our NQSWs having experienced different practice placements and many starting and completing their ASYE entirely or physically meet their team. Whilst we will try to refresh the ASYE resources, the circumstances of the last 12 months have changed the employers. We will continue to work with the sector, to ensure that the ASYE is flexible and responsive in supporting the needs of employers and NQSWs in this challenging time.
- We have continued to work with the Chief Social Workers Research Advisory group to Principal Social Workers through a Leadership Development Programme. Like everything else this programme has adapted and changed, and we are considering its impact in order to ensure it continues to meet the needs of PSWs whilst maintaining some of the benefits of working in a virtual world.

5.5 Think Local Act Personal (TLAP)

Thank you to Pharis Sithalou, Policy Adviser at TLAP, for the following contribution.

TLAP has worked closely and productively with the Chief Social Workers office this year. Our ability to bring together a range of people with different perspectives and positions has come to the fore. People working in government have benefitted from TLAP's experience in rapidly facilitating such meetings, almost exclusively online. We have made sure that many different groups have benefitted from hearing from people with lived experience of health and social care and support.

TLAP has:

- been able to shine a light on good practice within councils, keeping direct payment recipients and their workforce as safe as possible – in places such as Medway and Tower Hamlets.
- helped the sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 on people accessing care and support, through our work of the TLAP Insight Group, resulting in the publication of 3 Rolling Experiences
- helped people to connect in real time with government to help them stay grounded about how changes in policy and the rapid development of guidance were working in practice. This led to some excellent examples of co-production including guidance for care providers on how to support people living with dementia, guidance for local radio, task and finish groups concerned with PPE, commissioning guidance and the Social Care Task Force shaping their responses accordingly.
- gathered and shared examples of how communities and established social care providers have adapted their practices and continued to deliver care and support innovatively.

We will continue to support the Chief Social Workers – as an organisation we are committed to ensuring that the voice of people who use care and support is protected long before the pandemic took hold and we will work closely with them to champion social care reform.

5.6 Social Work England (SWE)

Thank you to Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director of Strategy, Policy and Engagement at SWE, for the following contribution.

On 2 December 2019, SWE formally became the new specialist regulator for all social workers in England, preventing an exciting opportunity for regulation to be combined on a national level with a focus on public protection. We are committed to ensuring that people who use social work services receive the best possible support wherever they might need it.

Our fitness to practice 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 continual 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 2 years will see a focus on establishing our organisation, learning from and with the sector, and developing our ambition for ourselves and for the social work profession.

5.7 Health Education England (HEE)

Thank you to Emma Wilson at HEE for the following contribution.

The Health Education England new roles task and finish group have recommended the inclusion of social workers as a core part of HEE's mental health workforce plan, as a result of the work of the Chief Social Worker for Adult Services, the Chief Social Worker Care Quality and Transforming Mental Health Social Work conferences in February 2020. The events were designed to bring together social work colleagues from around the country to promote the resources and toolkits to support health and social care, better recruit, retain and develop the mental health social worker workforce and also approved mental health professionals (AMHPs).

Following the conferences, an implementation report, Transforming Mental Health Social Work – Report of the Conferences, was published by the Chief Social Worker for Adults, capturing the key themes and learning from the four conferences. The report includes links to short videos with key speakers, who are senior leaders in health and social care in England.

We will continue to work with HEE over the next year to continue our work on supporting and strengthening the mental health workforce

5.8 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

Thank you to Charlotte Goulding, Social Care Policy and Practice Support Manager at NICE, for the following contribution.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), has developed a range of scenarios to demonstrate how social workers can use evidence to support their practice, using NICE guidance in social work and using NICE guidance in social work examples for principal social workers with pages.

NICE's field team has continued to offer support to PSW networks to increase awareness of evidence and NICE guidance that is important to social workers. Further to this, they contributed to an excellent roundtable event hosted by BASW and the MHRN which aimed to increase the use of evidence and research in social work practice.

In March 2020, we worked with NICE and other social leaders to develop a podcast about how to creatively approach CPD and demonstrate evidence informed practice in Social Work England CPD submissions.

NICE has also been working with BASW in relation to their "Homes not Hospitals" campaign, to provide information and evidence on the care of people living in their home communities. NICE has contributed key recommendations and guidance to support the evidence base for this campaign.

"[SD015] Assessed and Supported Year in Employment" (SAYIE), Blacks and Minority Ethnic "[SB4241] British Association of Social Workers "[CS36] "Chief Social Worker " [HE2] Health Education England "[SH21] National Institute for Health and Care Excellence "[SH24]" Newly Qualified Social Worker "[CP21] Principal Occupational Therapist "[SP4] Principal Social Worker "[CS37] Social Care Institute for Excellence "[SS812] Social Work Education "[TLAP] Think Local Act Personal "[SW815] Workforce Race Equality Standard

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