

# A People Plan for Social Care Summary

The People Plan whitepaper, prepared by the Institute of Health and Social Care Management's Social Care Innovators People Plan Subcommittee. At Radar Healthcare we have highlighted some of the key recommendations, taken from the original whitepaper.

## Response from the Sector

It's easy to forget that, although as a sector social care employs more people than the NHS and supports more individuals than the NHS, it's actually a very fragmented sector with 80% of the sector made up of SMEs, of which 80% of care providers only own one care home or 70% operate a home care service out of only one office. The big names may get all the headlines, but they're only representative of 20% of the sector.

## The People Plan Contents

The People Plan examines the following five topics: Access to Care, Mental Health and Wellbeing of People Using Care, Policies, Guidance and Regulations, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Greener Care

## Funding

More funding needed seems to be the common theme whenever you talk to someone in social care, whether they are a part of the workforce, receiving care themselves, an advocate, or a third-party supplier. For social care to really maximise its potential to provide the best care and support possible in the short, medium and long-term, targeted funding initiatives (beyond fee rates) should look at more nuanced and holistic innovation. Joined up thinking and working in collaboration across multiple stakeholders can help achieve a variety of goals.

## Prevent commissioning at crisis point

Develop clear and concise pathways of care that are available to everyone. Develop a care journey planner – utilising the experts in social care, people who use care, and other stakeholders, we recommend that a care planner be developed and free for use to enable people to plan for future care needs. This should build upon work already done regarding advanced care planning, advanced decisions, and preferred paces of care/death. Improve transfer of individuals from inappropriate care settings. There needs to be a finite deadline for commissioners and social workers to support in the transfer of people from inappropriate care settings (i.e. if they are unable to meet their care needs) to appropriate care settings. Care needs should be funded at their correct rate, i.e., increasing in line with the complexity of their needs, during that finite period to ensure adequate care prior to transfer so that care providers are not left out of pocket. Improve support post dementia diagnosis – more support, information and signposting is required for people post diagnosis of dementia. Introduce a 24-hour social care triage to the 111 service. Review how data from Capacity Tracker is used to conclude whether to maximise its potential or stop its use. The tracker is a time consuming, legally enforced requirement exercise for providers. Multiple NHS Trusts have reported that the data is not useful to help with discharge. Adult social care to have parity with NHS regarding peoples pay and terms and conditions based on positions of responsibility. The vital work of adult social care needs to have parity with the NHS.

## Invest in Understanding and Learning

Review the use of direct payments as a holistic commissioning model. This review should include the knowledge of commissioners, social workers or those in similar fields, as well as identifying the percentage uptake of the direct payments model based on how often it is offered as a viable funding option to people using care. Conduct a review on the duration between referral to receiving of mental health support for people using social care services. Retain centrally funded wellbeing hubs across health and social care to provide free counselling and mental health signposting for the workforce and people drawing on care. The Department of Health and Social Care should publish analysis and an impact assessment on the proposed Bill of Rights and how it will impact the mental health and wellbeing of people using care / living in care settings to aid the debate before voting on legislation.

## Improve transparency and access to policies

Conduct a transparent review of ICBs to ascertain the level of involvement of independent social care providers within their structure as well as reviewing the experience and relevance of all ICB members. Improved transparency and impact reporting of social care funding - Any future funding provided to social care to be done so with thorough action and spending plans. Transparency on division of funds and consultation groups with providers and people who use care as well as commissioners, regulators to devise best plan for spending to maximise impact. Reduce the number of central national data sets that social care providers input in to a centralised data set could be accessed by relevant stakeholders whilst reducing administrative time on providers. Care Quality Commission to provide nationally consistent transparent Service Level Agreements to all providers to define what services they receive for their fees and how often. Commissioners and regulators to provide consistent practical support based on recommendations or to signpost to available free resources during regulatory exercises. Ensure local authorities cannot veto or confuse national guidance for care providers - uniformity and parity of care delivery is required. Uniform systems to be in place for restricting guidance/policies and these restrictions should be made available alongside all policies. Reduce internal policies and procedures requirements for social care providers – replace with practical and easy to follow plans. Government Policies and guidance should be made accessible, including the use of accessible language. Too many policies are written in a bureaucratic tone.

## Develop robust strategies, increase knowledge and awareness

Provide funding support for paid internship placements for people from diverse backgrounds into senior management or leadership positions. Develop and produce holistic support for international recruits and for organisations using the international recruitment Fund. Develop culturally appropriate support networks in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care. Support the development of Diversity and Inclusion strategies for Health and Social Care. Include data capture questions about the LGBTQIA+ workforce within the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC WDS). Conduct a review independent from Skills for Care of the engagement and awareness of the ASC WDS in the social care workforce. Fund a national campaign about supporting people who develop physical health conditions, e.g., musculoskeletal ones, as a result of working in social care. Department of Health and Social care to conduct or commission a report into the levels of discrimination against protected characteristics within the social care workforce. Invest in Leadership and management training focusing on developing internal strategies and approaches to improving and supporting organisation diversity.

## Understand the current situation and support to make change

Conduct an environmental sustainability audit of social care providers and the sector as a whole to understand the current landscape of how and where social care is contributing to the climate crisis (similar to how this was calculated for the NHS), whether it's calculating the sector's carbon emissions or impacts on local and national waterways. As part of the ICB's legislative responsibilities to develop a 'Green Plan' with a responsible Board-level lead to detail how they will reduce emissions by the planned net zero date<sup>14</sup>, ICBs to coordinate and organise the sector-wide environmental sustainability audits. Undertake and provide national training to those running care businesses on greener and more sustainable approaches, including templates on building the business case for becoming more sustainable. Undertake a national consultation with social care providers to determine how environmental sustainability initiatives could be affordably adopted. Department of Health and Social Care to Develop action plans/contingency plan templates for all types of care services to help with developing and adopting greener care strategies. Develop and deliver government funded/commissioned training and development to support organisation with their understanding of sustainable approaches. Provide funding initiatives that work alongside other stakeholders in the solution to help the sector achieve a more sustainable future.

## What happens next

Some of the wider public will believe that social care has now been fixed because of the Social Care Levy. Others will believe that the biggest issue facing the NHS and social care is the inability to effectively discharge people from hospitals back to their homes or care settings with appropriate care packages in place. In reality, social care's issues are a long way from being resolved, and although pithy headlines or social media sound bites may give the illusion of change, they need to be backed up with nuanced and well-thought-out strategies which centre both the people receiving care and the wider workforce. The next election in 2024 will likely see all of the political parties claiming only they have a valid plan to reform social care. What is actually needed is cross-party collaboration and work to create a joined-up strategy which will be effective regardless of which political party is in power or not. The 2021 and 2022 People Plans have provided not only the building blocks for a long-term sustainable strategy, but have also proved the value of how collaboration and engagement with multiple stakeholders across social care can help create innovative and impactful recommendations.