

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 10 July 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Adult Social Services

PORTFOLIO: Children, Education and Social Care

SUBJECT: Chief Social Worker for Adults Annual Report: 2018 to 2019 – social work leadership in changing times

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide an overview of the Chief Social Worker for Adults Annual Report: 2018 to 2019, titled, “Social Work Leadership in Changing Times”, Department of Health, published March 2019.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- 1) note Chief Social Worker’s annual report; and**
- 2) recognise the role of Principal Social Worker Adults and the progress to date.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Role of Principal Social Worker (PSW)

3.1.1 The Care Act 2014 states that local authorities should make arrangements to have a Principal Social Worker in place who is a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead who will oversee excellent social work practice. The Care Act provides additional statutory Guidance updated in May 2016 offering further clarification about the Principal Social Worker role for adults. The Guidance states that the Principal Social Worker should be visible across the organisation, from Elected Members and Senior Management, through to frontline Social workers and people who use services and their carers.

3.1.2 It is the Principal Social Workers role to take a professional leadership role across the organisation and act as a bridge for better communication and understanding between Senior Management and Social Workers.

3.1.3 The role requires the Principal Social Worker to:-

- Function at the strategic level of the Professional Capabilities

Framework

- Lead and oversee excellent social work practice
- Support and develop arrangements for excellent practice
- Lead the development of excellent Social Workers
- Support effective social work supervision and decision making
- Oversee quality assurance and improvement of social work practice
- Advise the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and/or wider Council in complex or controversial cases and on case or other law relating to social work practice.

3.2 Areas of Progress

3.2.1 The principal social worker in Halton attends the National Principal Social Work Forum on a quarterly basis, and chairs the Northwest region Principal Social Worker (PSW) Network Forum.

The network works closely with Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS), North West, and are identifying ways to contribute to the ADASS Northwest branch, 2018/19 work plan. In addition the principal social worker for Halton chairs the Liverpool City Region, Strength based Assessment task group, which provides a local subset for Principal Social Workers.

3.2.2 Locally the Principal Social Worker, has established the 'Social Work Matters Forum', a quarterly event involving Social Work professionals across all services within Halton Borough Council. It is a vibrant, well attended forum for social workers. All agendas are set in collaboration with them to focus on best practice, sharing information and link local activity to national agendas and create a culture of communication and engagement. I encourage social workers to have a voice, sharing and present best practice, as well as discuss complex or controversial cases.

3.2.3 Other areas of progress include:-

- 1) Developing a social work progression policy, offering clear routes of progression, training, supporting successful recruitment and retention.
- 2) A supervision policy and procedure, including a caseload weighting process.
- 3) A Risk Assessment policy to support social workers managing risk.
- 4) A File Audits policy and chairing file audits to ensure quality and good practice.

3.3 The Role of the Chief Social Worker

3.3.1 The Chief Social Worker for Adults, Lyn Romeo, works from Government Office to:

- Provide an expert voice for social work in government, providing advice and guidance on social work and social work matters in relation to policy and legislation.
- Continue the reform of social work education, training and practice.
- Improve the wider public's perceptions and understanding of the role and value of social work in improving people's lives.

Her role was established in 2013 as part of the Social Work Reform Board's recommendations.

3.4 Chief Social Worker Annual Report

3.4.1 As Chief Social Worker, Lyn sets out in her fifth annual report progress themed around "social work leadership in changing times".

The report sets out:

- how social workers are taking a practice leadership role in delivering safe and best outcomes for people with health and care needs
- priorities over the coming year to further raise the quality and profile of adult social work across an integrated system.

3.4.2 It offers examples of social workers demonstrating leadership, professional oversight and co-operation with individuals, families and the wider health and care sector.

3.4.3 The report also looks at the way organisations, collaborate across health, community and voluntary sectors to maintain people's quality of life and independence.

3.4.4 For a fuller review and coverage of the report follow the link :-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-social-worker-for-adults-annual-report-2018-to-2019>

3.5 Halton's National Profile

3.5.1 The report contains a Ministerial foreword by Caroline Dinenage MP. Her comments are significant for Halton when she says, "As we contemplate the role of modern, progressive social work within the

broader context of social care, there has never been a better time for adult social workers to show leadership, professional oversight and cooperation with individuals and families – and the wider health and care sector.”

3.5.2 Of note she states “This has been most recently demonstrated with the success of the named social worker pilot schemes, where trusted professional relationships have been built with other health and care services to better support individuals with learning disabilities and their families. These pilots epitomise the kind of leadership, Lyn espouses for the social work profession. This is not leadership in the command and control sense; this is the demonstration of respectful and focused collaboration across services, all the while keeping the person needing support at the heart of decisions about their care.”

3.5.3 Halton has been instrumental in the development of the named social worker pilots with national acclaim for the work they have achieved, with many aspects of this work being rolled out to be become nationalised, leading the way as a demonstration of good social work practice. Halton’s work was illustrated in a prominent article in the Guardian Newspaper.

3.6 Annual Report: Social work leadership in changing times

3.6.1 In her report Lyn highlights the following areas :-

- The culture and learning environment led by Principal Social Workers (PSWs) is the most influential lever to achieving the very best for the people with whom we work. The leadership development programme is now in its third year, supporting Principal Social Workers to lead strengths-based practice, co-designed approaches which are led by peoples lived experience, helping promote independence and quality of life. The Principal Social Worker for Halton will be completing this programme.
- Good social work is about a commitment to protecting and promoting people’s human rights, striving for social justice, treating people with respect and valuing their dignity and uniqueness. Alongside this, making sure that social workers and other social care practitioners are valued, supported and have access to supervision and opportunities for continuous professional development is vital if we are to value, retain and support our social work and social care workforce.
- Social work practice is about trying to redress the obstacles that can be in the way for people to have the lives they want for themselves, to achieve inclusive lives as full citizens. Strengths based conversations, together with working with people and their carers to ensure that the right care and support options are

available, involving people and communities in designing and commissioning support, is part of what social workers should be influencing – either as practitioners working directly with individuals, through involvement in community development projects or as commissioners of services.

3.7 Chief Social Worker Priorities for 2019/20

3.7.1 Delivering better outcomes for people through improving leadership in the profession at all levels will remain at the heart of my priorities for 2019/20: Key areas are:-

1. **Embed strengths based social work practice:**
 - Publishing and promoting Strengths based practice framework and handbook.
2. **Support the quality of social work practice and leadership:**
 - Sustaining the leadership development programme for Principal Social Workers
 - Implementing capabilities and development pathway for social work with older people, learning disabilities and for people with autism
 - With the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, improving practice for children with autism preparing for adulthood
3. **Improve knowledge and application of what works and what is the right approach to supporting people to have better lives:**
 - Promoting the Top 10 questions for social work research for development and funding with continued oversight through my Research Advisory Group
 - Working with the Social Work Teaching Partnerships to deliver improvements to: practice placement quality.
4. **Promote the value and contribution that social work and social workers bring to the health and social care system:**
 - Ensuring social work's role is reflected in the Social Care and Prevention Green Papers; review Autism Strategy and disaster/emergency response planning.

3.8 World Social Work Day

3.8.1 World Social Work Day was promoted by Lyn Romeo, Chief Social Worker as the key day in the year, March 19th 2019, that social workers worldwide stand together to celebrate the achievements of the profession and take the theme message into their communities, workplaces and to their governments to raise awareness of the social work contributions and need for further action. This year's theme focused on human relationships between people's essential relationships with each other, their environments and their futures.

3.8.2 The Social Work Matters Forum In Halton planned the day and agreed a key theme was the need to enhance Social Workers relationship with the local community and the people we support. This year we aimed to celebrate, by spending more time getting to know and build relationships in our local community. The Aims in Halton were for:-

- Social Workers to experience community activities and chat to those in the community who utilise the vital groups.
- An opportunity to make connections to local resources and see what is available in the community that can make a real difference to people we support.

3.8.3 Please see attached (Appendix 1) a presentation used at the Social Work Matters Forum reflecting on the events of the day which was well received. A plan is in place to roll out this type of approach.

3.9 Implications for Halton

3.9.1 With regards to Chief Social Worker, Lyn Romeo's report, Halton is well placed to address many areas highlighted in her report. In terms of "leadership" Halton has a high profile with the Principal Social Worker role having chairing responsibilities and presence at national and regional meetings. The work we have undertaken in Halton around the Named Social Worker project is discussed and again given high profile in the Chief Social worker report, it is held as a shining example of good leadership and has achieved national acclaim with aspects of the work from Halton now being rolled out nationally.

3.9.2 A strengths-based approach to care, support and inclusion says let's look first at what people can do with their skills and their resources and what can the people around them do in their relationships and their communities. Consider the person's own strengths and capabilities, and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help' in considering 'what else other than the provision of care and support might assist the person in meeting the outcomes they want to achieve'. In terms of strength based practice this will require a significant culture

change in social work practice, not just for Halton, but for all councils. However the work illustrated from World Social Work Day makes a good start and we intend to build on this. But there will be more dedicated work to unfold in the coming year to develop our strengths based approaches within social work practice. There is development of a new national “Strengths based approach Practice Framework” and Practice Handbook, we are already in discussion to see how we can be involved in this work at the earlier stages in Halton.

3.9.3 We have close involvement with the Teaching Partnerships. We are currently reviewing our Assisted supported Year in Employment for Newly Qualified Workers and updating our Progression policy with workshops involving social workers. We encourage social workers to undertake practice educator training, this enables them to supervise social work students which has a positive impact on our recruitment and retention.

3.9.4 Of importance, a lot of work has gone into the establishment of the new regulator Social Work England, to replace Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This new body will also bang the drum for leadership, high professional standards and the constant renewal, enhancement and expansion of social workers’ knowledge and skills. Halton did get involved in the recent consultation of Social Work England’s proposals for new regulations.

3.9.5 The development of a new model for care management services will demonstrate working with an integrated approach with Health colleagues is a priority and promoting the role of social work in multi-disciplinary work.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None at present

5.0 FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None at present

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None at present

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 None at present

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.