

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing
DATE: 22nd March 2022
REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director, Adults
PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care
SUBJECT: Annual Report Principal Social Worker Adults
WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an annual report from the Adults Principal Social Worker, (APSW), to discuss how the role of social work, which supports the, One Halton Place Based Partnership to meet its priorities and objectives.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted for information.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Adults Principal Social Worker, (APSW) is statutory requirement under The Care Act 2014. The national guidance on the role and responsibilities has evolved and been updated and clarified over recent years. The Principal Social Workers, has a key role in representing and promoting the social work profession. Principal Social Workers should in brief:

- Lead and oversee excellent social work practice
- 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.

3.1.2 Our Social Workers in ASC are skilled at working at place, alongside people, supporting their strengths and abilities, wishes, feelings, hopes and aspirations. We assess complex legally and ethically challenging areas of people's lives to do with their physical and mental health and wellbeing, relationships, mental capacity, risks, abuse and neglect. We find out about people's home circumstances, whether they can pay for heating, get their shopping, whether they have a community of friends who will rally around them, or whether they are lonely at home alone. Social Workers safeguard people's human rights, ensure that they have choice and control about decisions around their lives, and a meaningful quality of life. This is where social work really matters. Attached is "A spotlight on one of our Social

Workers” in Appendix One, to illustrate the nature of social work practice that at an operational level supports the One Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

3.1.3 Over the year, we are focusing on supporting the social care reform priorities and supporting ongoing recovery from the impact of the pandemic on staff and those individuals, families and communities we serve remains a key priority. Reinforcing improved integrated responses across social care and health will be essential in supporting people to have better lives.

3.2 The role of social Work

3.2.1 In that Social Work is Regulated profession with Social Work England, to qualify as a social worker requires an intensive programme of training at degree/masters level, followed by ongoing formal post qualification assessment and annual submissions to Social Work England to evidence their ongoing professional development.

3.2.2 It is the APSWs responsibility to promote social workers as, **lead professionals** who support **personalised, integrated** care and support. Social workers have the qualifications, knowledge and skills to support people, working with **complexity, risk and conflict**.

3.2.3 Social work *is* well placed to support the Health and Wellbeing Strategy four underlying themes, particularly to :

- *Support our community in Living Well*
- *Support our community in Ageing Well*

3.2.4 They support people through:

- **Work with individuals** & their families & communities
- **Prevention** – promoting independence and resilience
- **Strengths Based Assessment or review** of an individual or carer with complex social care needs – coproduce support arrangement
- **Supervising safeguarding enquiries – balance risk and autonomy- focus on outcomes**
- **Lead in supporting young people moving into** to adulthood
- **legal literacy and human rights**
- With **capacity** and **mental health** needs

3.2.5 The Care Act 2014 is the key legislative framework for Social Work and it is **built around people**. The focus for social work in line with this in Halton, is on:

- People’s well-being and the outcomes which matter to them, being at the heart of every decision that is made
- Focusing on preventing and delaying needs for care and support, rather than only intervening at crisis point
- Supporting use of Independent Advocacy

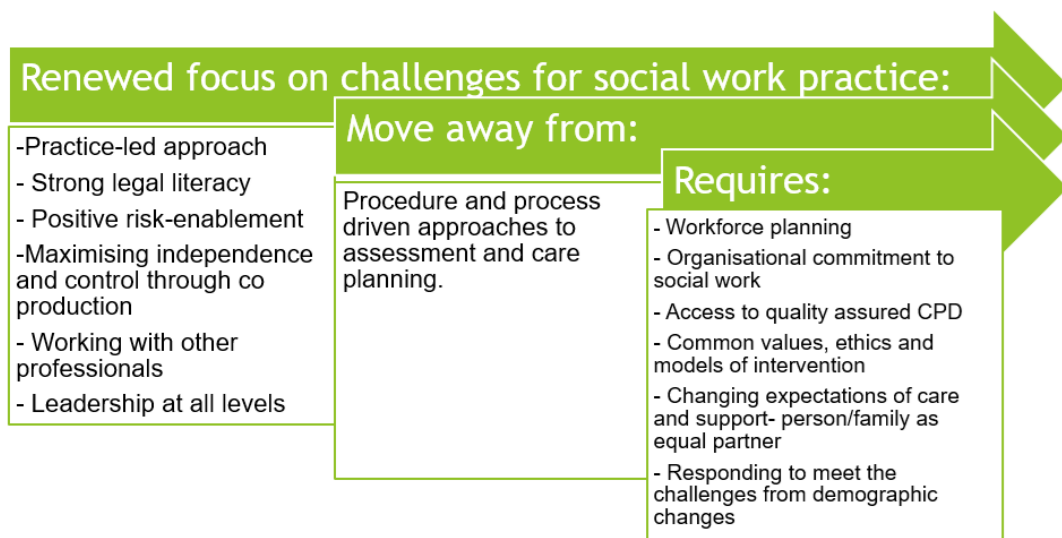
- Putting carers on the same footing as those they care for

3.2.6 The role of Social Work within the One Halton Partnership is important, Social Workers take a co-production approach to working with people and their families, often acting as the conduit between health and social care and other partners. They support changing practice culture in integrated systems, they work well with change. They support system quality improvements working with care homes and providers.

3.3 Challenges

3.3.1 There are lots of challenges ahead for Social work, as described in Diagram 1 below. At the same time, there is increased national and local demand for social workers, with the majority of Councils reporting challenges in recruitment and retention. The year ahead we are specifically focusing on the areas outlined below and our recruitment and retention offer. Our social work, workforce, is well placed to respond to those challenges and to make a vital contribution to helping people to live happier, healthier lives for longer in their communities.

Diagram 1



3.4 Culture and Practice

3.4.1 In working across the One Halton Partnership, as being part of one culture and how do we do things round here? It's important for social work to work with our partners on the basis:

- Kindness- authenticity and the ability to connect
- Relationships, relationships, relationships
- Communication and collaboration
- Focus on individuals, their carers and communities
- Holistic rights and strengths based approaches, what's happened, what matters and what's possible

➤ Leadership- role modelling

3.5 Workforce

- 3.5.1 In supporting our social work staff, we are using “The Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England”, which states, *“Good social work can transform people’s lives and protect them from harm”*
- 3.5.2 The Standards for Employers of Social Workers, published by the Local Government Association (LGA), set out the shared core expectations of employers which will enable social workers in all employment settings to work effectively and safely. Under the umbrella of the standards, there is a range of work taking place locally to ensure that the social work profession is supported, including:
- Social Work Employer Standards Working Group
 - Participation in the annual Organisational Health Check survey
 - Publication of a Social Work Accountability & Assurance Framework
- 3.5.3 Each standard has a detailed list of the things that employers should do in order to meet the standards – full details can be found at [The Standards for employers of social workers in England 2020 | Local Government Association](#).
- 3.5.4 In Halton there is a dedicated **Social Work Employer Standards Working Group** led by the Principal Social Worker and comprised of Principal Managers from across the Social Work Teams. The role of the group is to monitor local performance against the standards and to ensure that the results from the health check surveys are reviewed with areas for improvement being identified and actioned as appropriate.
- 3.6 This year has seen the successful appointment of a new Practice Manager for Training & Social Work Professional Development, back in February 2022. Since coming into post they have supported the APSW supporting overall training and development and recruitment and retention of Social Work Staff and students in a number of areas:
- Forging a positive working relationship with the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP),
 - The Social Work Degree Apprenticeship Programme continues
 - A relationship with Riverside 6th form college has been strengthened and a presentation on Social Work as a career choice has taken place with more to follow. It is hoped that this work will strengthen the pipeline of Social Work training, development and recruitment in Halton over the longer term.
 - Regular monthly support sessions have been set up for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs).
 - The Continued Professional Development (CPD) of Social Workers has continued to be supported by the Social Work Matters (SWM) forums. Particular themes that have been covered are Human Rights, Prevention (related to the winter fuel crisis) and Domestic Abuse.

- A monthly Social Work Matters newsletter goes out, highlighting, new Government guidance, Legislation updates, and articles of interest from Social Work England, British Association of Social Work (BASW), SCIE, NICE etc., CPD opportunities are promoted through a Training Opportunities newsletter that goes out on a fortnightly basis. Training for Social Workers and Adult Social Care staff has been commissioned, monitored and managed.
- Staff Action Learning sets, Journal clubs and dedicated time to uphold their CPD requirements to uphold their registration for social work England.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None at this time.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None at this time

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None at this time

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

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

None under the meaning of the Act.