

A black and white photograph of a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a dark uniform, smiling and assisting an elderly man with glasses. The man is seated in a chair, looking up at the woman with an open-mouthed expression. The background shows a blurred indoor setting, possibly a care home or office.

Skills for Care five-year business plan

April 2019 – March 2024

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Introduction

In an operating context that is both volatile and uncertain, Skills for Care has recognised the need for a longer term strategic plan to help us successfully plot our course over the coming years. While our [annual business plan](#) sets out our key objectives, deliverables and impacts for each year, this document sets out at a strategic level, our likely focus over the next five years.

Some of the current ‘unknowns’ include the **Green Paper** on the funding of adult social care and the issues of funding and pay; the developing **Workforce Strategy** that we understand will form a chapter in the Green Paper; the full impact of the **Brexit negotiations** on the social care and health sectors and the implications of the next **general election** (currently scheduled for May 2022). However we can still make assumptions about the future, based on our workforce data (ASC-WDS*), our knowledge and our insight gained from our extensive employer engagement.

*ASC-WDS (Adult Social Care – Workforce Data Set) (formerly known as the National Minimum Dataset for Social Care), an online data collection service which collects information on the adult social care workforce in England. It's the leading source of workforce information for the whole adult social care sector in England.



Between now and 2024 we intend to fully exploit our independent status and the authoritative voice this gives us, to make **leadership and management** the key priority for our sector by 2024. Supporting the creation of excellent, caring workplaces, roles and settings will be core to our work.

Registered managers will remain a vital community to be nurtured by us (see Improvement section). We must also back calls for greater parity of esteem between adult social care and health in the longer term as part of this work, and continue supporting **individual employers** as a fast-expanding part of the care and support landscape. The various, complex and ambiguous challenges facing us and the adult social care sector as a whole, demand that we are able to continually respond to change and opportunity in an agile and effective way.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Allen".

Sharon Allen
CEO, Skills for Care

Workforce for integration



At its best, integration can transform local care and health systems through building on existing **relationships between care and health professionals** at every level. In the next five years we will re-examine our understanding of the barriers to our engagement and explore how to improve the manner and frequency of how employers engage with us and each other. We will likely investigate the possibility of engaging directly with the social care workforce and explore ways to enhance the impact of engagement teams.

We will continue to work at a local level to ensure that the social care voice is heard, understood, valued and taken account of in integrated workforce planning at local regional and national levels through the newly evolved **integrated care systems (ICS)** across the country. Alongside this we will work with others to focus specifically on nursing and the realisation of new **nursing associate roles** as well as ensuring social care's person-centred approach is part of learning for all health colleagues.

We will continue to explore ways of expanding our reach to the children's workforce building on the success of the child and family Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme with the Department for Education (DfE).

Prevention and well-being



The 2019 announcement on the importance of **prevention** from Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock MP, could signal a shift in commissioning across social care and health in the years ahead. This may mean reprioritisation of agreed plans. We are likely to have a major role to play in, for example, supporting registered managers to improve skills to meet the changing legislation in the **mental health landscape**; and we will need to develop our role as the first point of contact for the learning and skills related to incoming Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) and with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) regarding workforce issues around mental health. We will remain the expert voice supporting commissioners as models of care change.





Recruitment and retention

A perfect storm of circumstances has confronted sector employers for many years, yet the truth is that many employers have successfully overcome it and tools such as **values-based recruitment** (VBR) are available to help the majority do the same. By 2024 we want to have seen a shift away from recruitment and retention being the main issue of concern to employers, replaced by a consensus on the importance of strong leadership and management cultures.

We will also focus our efforts on helping the sector achieve **parity of value and esteem** with the NHS, by helping change public perception of the social care workforce.

We will also work to enhance support for **social workers, occupational therapists and other regulated professionals** with a focus on best practice and retention and multi-disciplinary working, and support **individual employers** to exercise choice and control to lead the lives they want to.

Improvement



We will work towards achieving the ambition of the creation of a professional body to support **registered managers** and alongside this introduce qualifications, curriculum, and registration so it is recognised as a valid profession equivalent to nurses, social workers and occupational therapists. This will help address the lack parity of esteem that afflicts the sector.

We must lead the debate about having a body of knowledge and regulate a career pathway for social care employers and their workforce. Alongside this work we will build on our ability to support innovation in the sector and ensure we are aware of and effectively share examples of best practice.



Our operations

Throughout 2019-2024 we will continue to underpin everything we do with an evidenced-based approach and further develop systems and tools to measure impact. We want to develop our ability to become **a more agile organisation** which optimises the use of technology and enables the sector to harness digital technology.

We will therefore be open to consider the potential benefits of offering shared services with others, either online (for example via **digital solutions**, and/or by extending the use of private sector online sales portals) and through exploring new ways to develop new and existing sources of income through mergers, acquisition or collaboration.

We must practice what we preach regarding the promotion of **diversity** and inclusion. Our focus will remain on recruiting for potential, values and behaviours. **A note of our people plan is at Appendix 1.**

We want to improve Skills for Care's brand recognition further and improve employers' understanding of the wide range of services we offer; this means we will need to focus our communications efforts to further simplify our messaging to the sector.

Managing our resources

We will continue to ensure our cost-base is appropriate and relative to our income, and assess our corporate resources model to ensure it remains fit for purpose in supporting our group structure.

Appendix 1:

Skills for Care people plan 18-19/19-20/20-21 (three year plan)

Skills for Care's purpose is to....

'Achieve a caring, skilled, confident and well led social care workforce valued by everyone'.

Our Human Resources team will contribute to our purpose by supporting our people to work to their full potential. Our people plan identifies our ambitions in achieving our purpose through a number of high level aims. **Our aims are driven by our values** and aligned with our priorities for the sector: we aim to be:

Collaborative

1. Creating roles and teams which are agile and responsive to the changing demands of our business plan priorities.
2. Working together to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive workplace.
3. Enhancing a shared understanding of how we collectively contribute to the achievement of our purpose.
4. Supporting colleagues to work in a way which is consistent with our values.

Innovative

1. Supporting people to develop and enhance the skills to keep up with our evolving operating and business environment.
2. Improving employee experience through digital HR.
3. Ensuring that our policies and procedures are robust, effective and are reflective of global developments and best practice.

Responsible

1. Enabling positive employee engagement through proactive sharing of information and open channels of communication.
2. Collaborating with people managers to recruit and retain the best talent.
3. Developing and enhancing initiatives to enable a progressive approach to recognition and reward.
4. Being proactive in supporting health and wellbeing.

Dedicated

1. Supporting our people managers to be great leaders and managers.
2. Using evaluation data, research and people analytics to identify areas of potential improvement and ongoing development.
3. Maximising opportunities for personal development and growth to support a skilled and competent workforce.

Operational delivery information to support practical implementation of our objectives can be found in our operational policies and plans which include our:

- annual learning and development plan
- health and safety plan
- equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) plan
- health and wellbeing strategy (three year).



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linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care

Skills for Care
West Gate
6 Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP

T: 0113 245 1716
E: info@skillsforcare.org.uk

Free fortnightly enews to your inbox via
skillsforcare.org.uk/getting-involved