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PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

ADULTS

AMARDEEP GREWAL

PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER

Telford & Wrekin Council

FOREWORD

“Working together with key partners and communities to enable people to Live Well and Independently in Telford and Wrekin”

Adult Social Care Vision

Telford & Wrekin Council’s Adult Social Care services strive to deliver a modern, influential, outward facing service that brings social care, health organisations and key partners together to provide a joined up offer for Telford and Wrekin residents with care and support needs. The service continues to embody the Council’s four year programme to ‘Protect, Care and Invest to create a better borough’. The role of Principal Social Worker supports staff across the service to deliver the strategy and vision.

As Principal Social Worker, I do not underestimate the importance of supporting our front line workers in upholding the highest standards of practice when working with individuals, their families and Carers. We are privileged to work with individuals at some of the most challenging times in their lives. We have a duty in ensuring we support their individual and collective strengths while promoting their independence and their right to dignity and respect.

This has been even more significant during 2020 while responding to Covid. I feel extremely proud of the Adult Social Care workforce; they adapted quickly to changes and continued to work with individuals ensuring their needs were met in a person centred holistic way with a focus on the person’s strengths.

2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges but throughout it the staff within Adult Social Care have continued to deliver quality services to support our residents. Some of the key achievements this year to enable this have been:

- ✓ Supporting the delivery of Care Act, Mental Capacity and Mental Health Assessments, Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) duties during Covid lockdown.
- ✓ Implementing a revised Quality Assurance Framework
- ✓ Implementing Integrated Covid response strategy across organisations
- ✓ Care Act Easement Flexibilities (stage 2)
- ✓ Supporting the Principal Social Work regional practice review

We have continued to develop and have already identified key priority areas for developing over the next year. These include:

- Implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).
- Implementation of BASW capabilities framework for Learning Disability and Autism.
- Specialist Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Flexible Contract framework.
- Embedding Supervision Standards for practice supervisors.

Amardeep Grewal
Principal Social Worker



PURPOSE

To provide a progress report on the work during 2020 of the Principal Social Worker (Adults) to promote and improve the quality of social work practice, highlight the achievements for this year and identify priorities for the coming year.

CONTEXT

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

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance update in May 2016 provided 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.

The guidance also states that local authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place to:

- 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, and
- Function at the strategic level of the Professional Capabilities Framework.

Within Telford & Wrekin Council, the Principal Social Worker is supported to deliver the above by the other Service Delivery Managers within Adult Social Care. In particular Victoria Worthington who supports Adult Social Care with 'Making Safeguarding Personal' ethos, across locality teams and specialist Safeguarding Team.

CARE ACT EASEMENTS

The Care Act easements decision making within Adult Social Care relating to the implementation of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (which allows easement of some Care Act 2014 duties). The government issued guidance relating to the Coronavirus Act 2020. Telford & Wrekin Council are operating flexibilities under the pre-amendment Care Act and therefore remain at Stage 2 as set out within the guidance.

Stage 2 flexibilities under the pre-amendment Care Act are required due to the impact on service types and usual duties that have been changed, delayed or cancelled short term. It outlines decisions made for individuals, families, carers who ordinarily use the service or duties to be advised.

This flexibility supports social distancing measures for all front line workers when carrying out visits. It provides the option of Care Act assessment/reviews to be completed on various platforms including remote assessments. The temporarily pause of day services impacting on individuals and families and Carers were supported through individual reviews to amend care in the short, medium and long term as appropriate and necessary.

No amendments were required to our legislative duties.

This is monitored by the Principal Social Worker (PSW) and reviewed with the Director of Adult Social Services, Sarah Dillon.

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENTS DURING 2020

During 2020 the PSW has supported Adult Social Care with:

- ✓ Developing and implementing a newly formed Learning Disability and Autism Team
- ✓ Implementing a joint Carers Peer Review
- ✓ Revised Best Practice guidance on Community DoLs
- ✓ Continued training on online platforms
- ✓ Specialist training as a response to flexibilities to Covid
- ✓ Development and implementation of ASYE Handbook
- ✓ Equality and Diversity practitioners forum

These practice developments have all influenced our practice to ensure we continue to adapt and develop while responding to national changes in policy, law and local priorities.

We have already seen the benefits of the Specialist learning Disability and Autism team with improved joint working with health and positive feedback from families and Carers.

QUALITY ASSURANCE DEVELOPMENTS

Quality Assurance is key to supporting practice developments, during 2020 we have:

- ✓ Launch of the revised Quality Assurance Framework
- ✓ Revised Supervision Policy
- ✓ Social Work England and HCPC policy implementation
- ✓ Continued monthly case file audit
- ✓ Mental capacity case file audit
- ✓ Covid lockdown case file audit
- ✓ Revised Care Act review guidance
- ✓ National Research and recommendations influencing local practice

There has been a particular focus on the quality of our practice with our Quality Assurance Framework setting out clear expectations of roles within adult social Care and the influence each role has on the delivery of services.

Case File audits have ensured we continue to challenge our own practices and influence the support with provide to teams and individual workers in improving practice, developing individual training and development plans and providing reflection.

We continue to use recommendations from Safeguarding Adults Reviews and LeDeR reports to influence local change. For example, LeDeR recommendation of supporting hospital discharges for people with Learning Disabilities. SAR recommendations to carry out formal Care Act review for all individuals that wish to cancel their care.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENTS DURING 2020

Supporting the workforce to develop, as well as recruiting new social workers and developing the workforce of the future has continued to be a priority during the year. The PSW has supported:

- ✓ Service wide recruitment campaign for Social Workers across all levels
- ✓ 4 Senior Social Workers through Practice Educator Programme
- ✓ 1 Adult Practitioner successful in Social Work Apprentice Programme at Chester University
- ✓ 3 Social Work Apprentice places secured for 2020/2021 at Chester University
- ✓ 4 second year successful Student Social Work placements supported through Covid lockdown
- ✓ 2 Social Workers successful to complete AHMP course

As well as the above the PSW has also undertaken the following:

- ✓ Health Check completed across all practitioners
- ✓ Updated Training and Development Plan
- ✓ Developed Student and ASYE Handbook

Supporting our workforce with academic programmes to support career progression has been a priority over the last 2 years. This commitment to having a highly skilled workforce continues to ensure we meet our demands for retention and recruitment in the future.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL WORK

Keeping up to date with changes in practice and learning and sharing good practice through regional and national work has continued throughout this challenging year. The PSW has:

- ✓ Participated in regional Principal Social Worker network
- ✓ Led on the regional Supervision framework
- ✓ Represented PSWs on the ADASS workforce Network
- ✓ Been involved in the Shropshire Pause and Reflect Peer Challenge
- ✓ Undertaken PSW Practice Reviews
- ✓ Been involved in the West Midlands Teaching Partnership
- ✓ Represented PSWs on the BASW Homes not Hospital round table national working group.

This work leads to sharing of best practice across regional local authorities to bring into Telford to improve existing practices. This also provides opportunity for joint approaches in implementing changes to share resources across local authorities.

PRIORITIES FOR 2021

As we look forward to 2021 we continue work to developing and improving Adult Social Care to provide a modern, aspirational service which thinks beyond the obvious for the people of Telford.

We will continue to adapt to the challenges of Covid to ensure we continue to meet our legislative duty for people in Telford.

- Implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).
- Implementation of BASW capabilities framework for Learning Disability and Autism.
- Specialist Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Flexible Contract framework for commissioning.
- Embedding Supervision Standards for practice supervisors.