



SOMERSET
County Council

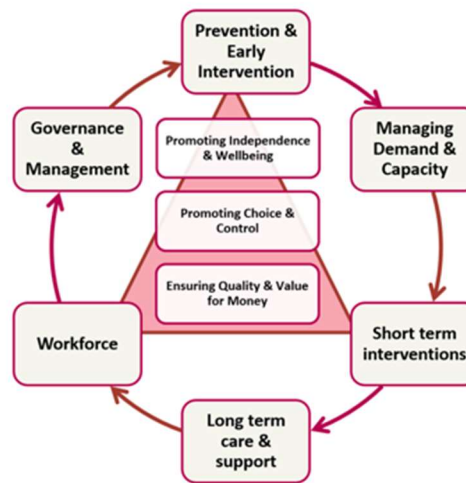
Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

2022-2024



Introduction

Our Adult Social Care (ASC) Workforce Strategy sets out our ambitions for our internal workforce over the next two years, 2022-2024. It underpins our Promoting Independence Strategy and Service Plans, and directly supports the overarching objectives of the ICS Somerset People Plan. It also links to the expectations set out in our [Practice Quality Framework](#).



This Strategy acknowledges and addresses our current workforce risks and challenges, and sets out how we intend to recruit, retain, support and develop our operational and commissioning staff, and address our future workforce needs.

Our Strategy is underpinned by a detailed action plan to enable us to hold ourselves to account for delivering our ambitions. We will routinely review the areas that we have identified as priorities, maintaining the action plan as a live working document and adding to it as things develop over the coming two-year period. 10 specific thematic strands of work have been identified through consultation with our staff, each of which will have an identified 'owner' responsible for monitoring and delivering progress. Monitoring will take place via our Adult Social Care Workforce Board which will ensure we understand progress and impact, celebrate success and address any challenges to implementation.

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1) Who are we?

We are a broad and wide-ranging service with just over 400 staff. The diagram overleaf shows the areas that we cover, but we don't just work in isolation. We are proud to work alongside and are supported by a wide range of colleagues with Somerset County Council and with our external and voluntary partners. Adult Social Care in Somerset is about working together with passion and pride in order to support individuals to live their lives as successfully, safely and independently as possible.

We want our service to be an exciting place to work, where staff have opportunities to thrive and to support the people we work alongside to do the same.



Our vision: In Somerset, we want people to live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities, with timely and easy access to high quality and efficient care and support when they need it

Adult Social Care - Who are we?

ASC Operations

- Community Locality Teams
- Safeguarding Adults
- Mental Health Social Care
- Health Interface
- Mental Capacity Act & DoLS
- Transitions
- Sensory Loss
- Learning & Development
- FAB / Client Finance
- Proud to Care Somerset

ASC Commissioning

- Commissioning (Community, Learning Disabilities, Mental Health, Older People)
- Sourcing Care
- Provider Quality Assurance
- Contract Management
- Policy, Performance and Assurance

Key Stakeholders

- Service Users
- Service User Relatives/Carers
- District Councils / New Somerset Council
- Adult Social Care Providers
- Micro-providers
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Local Community Networks
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Social Work England
- Royal College of Occupational Therapists
- Skills for Care
- Housing providers
- Contractors
- ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Care)
- Corporate colleagues and services
- Avon & Somerset Constabulary
- Advocacy Services
- NHS
- Education providers and universities
- Trade Unions
- Healthwatch Somerset
- Community Safety Partnership
- Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board
- Integrated Care System
- Residential and Nursing Care
- Domiciliary Care
- Supported Living
- Extra Day Housing
- Day Services

2) Where are we now?

Recruitment and Retention

- We have a dedicated and committed workforce who are incredibly experienced and highly proficient at what they do, our main workforce focus centres on our ability to **retain, attract and recruit sufficient skilled employees**, as service demands increase.
- Within ASC Operations, we face national skills shortages in Social Worker and Occupational Therapist roles. The recent appointment of an **HR Engagement Officer to help support the recruitment and retention processes** across ASC teams focusing on skills shortage roles, has resulted in some improvement, with an action plan in place we will build on this progress.
- Within ASC Commissioning, securing suitably experienced Commissioners and data analysts and performance officers is a recruitment challenge, at a time of growing need for their skills, knowledge and expertise. However, we have benefitted from attracting a range of experienced new recruits into our Provider Quality, Contracts and Sourcing Care service, including from the wider care sector and commercial and procurement backgrounds.
- We have had **success in our grow your own schemes**, setting up and supporting a Social Work degree programme in the County (based in Yeovil and via the University of Gloucester). We are reviewing our recruitment and engagement approach to ensure we are more targeted and creative in promoting the Council as an employer, alongside increasing our uptake of local grow our own schemes we are now looking at international recruitment.
- We recognise the need to focus on **retaining our existing employees**. Turnover rates are high for some roles and there is evidence to suggest we are increasingly competing with neighbouring authorities and the NHS with reward packages and career progression influencing factors. We are developing plans to address these challenges.

Workforce Development

- **We want everyone in our workforce to feel invested in** whether they have worked for us for 3 months or 30 years!
- We have a **well-established, dedicated Learning and Development Team** providing excellent support particularly to the ASC Operations Service with career pathways, social work degree programmes, social work degree apprenticeships, ASYE, Practice Educator Professional Standards and a host of other social care development opportunities and training. However, we need to ensure we continue to encourage and develop our support roles including Adult Social Care

Practitioners (ASCPs) to consider training to be social workers or occupational therapists, and our social workers to become Advanced Practitioners, AMHPs, and/or Practice Educators – we need to **grow more of our own**.

- **We have a clear Practice Quality Framework** which has been developed by our Principal Practice leads in collaboration with our workforce.
- **We require more Social Work Practice Educators** within the Service to sustain the number of placement requests we receive (both internally through the apprenticeship programme and externally through university partners). By recognising Practice Education as a career progression pathway, this will allow the Service to properly succession plan into these specialist roles.
- To support our newly qualified staff **we need to build capacity**; we are currently piloting this through a test and learn approach.
- We want to **invest in a clear career pathway for all our staff within the service**. A recent proposal has been written to develop a career pathway for occupational therapists to move towards this ambition and funding has been secured to pilot a new OT role.
- There is an opportunity to focus on **broadening our learning and development, and career pathway offer** to staff within Commissioning & Quality, from apprenticeship level up. We also want to **enhance our induction**, so there is a **better understanding of what Commissioning is**, right down to the nuances of how it works within the organisation.
- More can be done to **enhance succession planning** across the service; this will prove vital going forward - not only for the development of the workforce but also the development of individuals.

New Ways of Working

- We recognise our Locality Lead role is no longer supporting our service needs linked to changes in demand and geographical neighbourhoods. We are working on **redefining the role** to make it **more aligned to specialist functions and increase team capacity**.
- We need a more service focussed **development programme for our first line managers and leaders, balancing practice knowledge with management skills**.
- As part of the Local Government Review, we need to **explore new ways of resourcing our performance function**, especially in relation to the growing demand for this work and additional expectations emerging into the future. Our **performance function is under-resourced**. Whilst we are well supported by staff within the Council's Business

Intelligence unit, mainly in relation to statutory/national reporting requirements, demands and expectations for more performance reports, analysis and assurance have grown significantly, with additional expectations emerging into the future.

3) Where do we need to get to?

Our Service is facing a significant period of transformation and demand; it is imperative we have the right workforce, in the right place, doing the right things, to ensure we prepare adequately for the future and can respond accordingly

- **National Social Care Reform:** the reform of social care will bring a number of operational and commissioning challenges, funding arrangements for care and the increased requirement to support those who may previously have made arrangements for care without contact with the Local Authority. When this happens, we think the workforce will need to work in a different way and change in size and structure in order to deliver the expected outcomes.
- **Integrated Care System and the Integrated Care Board:** bringing expectations and opportunities for far greater system integration and collaboration to support wider health and social care system developments.
- **New Somerset Council from April 2023:** implications from the development of a single unitary authority for Somerset and in particular with regards housing and employment services. Although the detail is still being worked through, this should provide a more joined up approach and have a positive impact on both service users and professionals. We will also want to be engaged with the Local Community Networks and this may have an additional impact on the workforce.
- **Local Authority and ICS Assurance and Inspection from April 2023:** The development of additional governance and implementation arrangements required to comply with new assurance processes. There is also a need for some dedicated additional resource to support inspection readiness, policy development and reform activity. As part of this work, the following will be particularly key in relation to workforce:
 - **Capable, compassionate and inclusive leaders**
 - **Learning, improvement and innovation**

- **Placed Based Care:** developing care around the individual and where they live.
- **Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS):** the introduction of LPS is likely to fundamentally change the workforce requirement due to the changing mechanism by which evidence to support LPS may be required. The exact requirements are uncertain at present, but government consultation is now underway and we need to look at how this could impact on the ASC workforce.
- **Developing Care Market:** ensuring we support and respond to a changing social care market, so it is better placed to meet the emerging and changing needs of our population.

4) Our ambition for our future workforce

Our ambition for Somerset Adult Social Care is to recruit, develop and maintain a highly skilled, professional workforce, that are proud to work for Somerset and are dedicated to working with system partners to support the provision of a highly functioning health and social care system which delivers real positive outcomes for people. We know that staff are hugely driven to make a difference and therefore the focus must be about delivering positive change and having a positive impact on people's lives. Our aim is to achieve the following:

1. **Recruitment** – We will attract and recruit sufficient talented employees who want to improve lives in Somerset. By engaging and recruiting people with the right skills, values and behaviours from a variety of diverse backgrounds, we will have a workforce with the confidence to deliver the service's ambition to improve outcomes for those who require adult social care support.
2. **Retention** – We will retain and value our existing employees, so they can continue to deliver services to those in need.
3. **Pay and Conditions** – We will have a better understanding of pay for hard to recruit to occupations across other local authorities and the private sector, so we know where our workforce roles stand within the marketplace.
4. **Succession Planning and Talent Management** – In the face of skill shortages, we will identify and grow talented internal employees so they can fill leadership, business critical and statutory roles in the future. We will provide a platform for employees to have the opportunity to fulfil their career ambitions, to help us retain our talented employees.
5. **New Ways of Working** – We will support new ways of working, to reflect changing demands on the Adult Social Care Service.
6. **Young People's Strategy** – We will have increased opportunities for younger people (under 25) within the service.

7. **Learning and Development** – Our staff are our most important asset. We value them and want to invest in them, so that they have the right skills, values and behaviours to do their jobs well.
8. **Leadership and Management** – We will develop good leadership and management skills across all staff levels. We know that great Leadership in public services improves and saves lives.
9. **Partnership Working** – We recognise the importance of partnership working at all levels, within and outside our organisation to learn, share and grow in order to improve outcomes.
10. **Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the ASC Workforce Strategy** – We will be open and transparent about the progress being made, so that employees feel included, that they are being listened to and that they have a voice.

5) Key risks and challenges

- **Ensure there is sufficient capacity** within our ASC internal operational and commissioning workforce to meet growing / changing demand for social care support
- **Ensure practice meets service/expected standards**
- **Ensure there is sufficient staffing resource and capacity** to contribute to/deliver transformational change and development projects, and support COVID response and recovery work, alongside core business as usual activity
- **Ensure operational teams are able to meet demand**/existing commitments to social work/OT students and newly qualified workers in short and medium term due to insufficient numbers of trained Practice Educators and Locality Lead vacancies
- **Ensure maintenance of staff morale**, wellbeing and stability within the workforce at a time of considerable change and pressure
- **Ensure we understand competition in the marketplace** – we need to keep an eye on employee retention. Staff may leave for similar roles (e.g., NHS) at higher rates of pay.
- **Integrated Care System poses a risk and challenge**, alongside an opportunity. We are seeing the loss of many CCG staff which will create opportunities for our own staff. One of our risks is what the system roles look like in the future and whether these will draw more staff away from the Local Authority.
- **Ensure there is long-term funding**: Although there is an £18M increase to the 2022/23 budget (£1M for workforce), there will still be budgetary pressures that will need to be managed carefully.

6) Our Workforce Plan – How do we get there?

We have identified the current status and the ambition within our services to where we want to move to during the life of this strategy.

In order to measure our success and hold us to account we have created a Workforce Action Plan (the “How do we get there” part of our strategy). This will be governed and monitored via our ASC Workforce Board Meetings.