



**The professional association for  
social work and social workers**

**The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) is the professional association for social work in the UK with offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. With over 22,000 members we exist to promote the best possible social work services for all people who may need them, while also securing the well-being of social workers working in all health and social care settings.**

BASW England welcomes the Department for Health and Social Care's [care workforce pathway call for evidence](#). After consultation with members and dialogue with service-users and relevant stakeholders, our full response is below.

### **General comments**

The development of a care workforce pathway for adult social care is seen as a positive development. However based on feedback from our members, it is the view of BASW England that in order to achieve the aims set out within the care pathway, this will require significant investment in the adult social care sector, including parity of pay, alignment of existing care roles across the sector and acknowledgement of the diversity of the workforce .

Having a care pathway for certain roles within the social care workforce may encourage more people to come into social care. However, if the achievements that can be attained by individuals working through the pathway are not reflected or valued in rates of pay, working conditions and terms and conditions, then there is a risk that the pathway will not be fully realised or implemented. Sufficient budgets to appropriately fund workforce roles are also critical and parity of pay with allied practitioners.

Routes into social work have to be an integral part of the social care pathway and the need to ensure close links with existing frameworks including the [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#) , CPD and the choice and opportunity to access professional qualifications.

*We will also consider how professional frameworks for social workers, nurses and other registered roles might interact with this pathway throughout the development period. We want to bring together existing skills, competency frameworks and pathways for social care specialisms, as well as acknowledging the variety of roles and career pathways across the wider adult social care system, such as commissioning, finance and senior management and leadership development.*

Developing a workforce strategy and pathway that can support adults to live at home and live fulfilling lives must embrace learning and CPD that focuses on social work ethics, values and specialist skills and knowledge. There needs to be a core foundation of values, ethics, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice and strengths-based approaches supporting meaningful co-production.

Funding and access pathways into higher level courses must form part of the new care workforce pathway. In order to promote this, bursaries and links to additional pathways that enable progression into social work and allied professions must be available including an expansion of 'grow your own' and apprenticeship schemes. Funding and training available to properly equip the workforce.

References to integration and greater parity between equivalent roles across health and social care is welcome, but in addition to the care workforce pathway itself, significant investment in the workforce will also be needed to demonstrate to the sector that this cross section of the workforce is valued.

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### **Will the care pathway be available and accessible to all?**

It is important the care pathway will create genuine opportunities. Ring-fenced funding is essential to ensure this is a given priority (grants or specific allocated funding from central government).

Clarity about how many people will have access to the pathway at any one time. Issues regarding backfill for those studying or engaging with the care pathway will be required along with support to progress through the care pathway.

### **Understanding my role**

**Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:**

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand where my role sits in the workforce, as well as where other roles sit.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the values required to work in adult social care.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the behaviours I need to demonstrate while doing my job.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the knowledge and skills I need to do my job and deliver high-quality care and support.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will have improved competence and will be confident in my ability to do my job in the way that is expected of me.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to identify what training is mandatory as part of my role.

*We **agree** with all of the above statements.*

### **Understanding the wider workforce**

**Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:**

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will know the values I can expect to see in my colleagues and managers.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will know the behaviours I can expect to see in my colleagues and managers.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the knowledge and skills needed in other roles in adult social care.

*We **agree** with all of the above statements.*

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### **Developing within my role and career progression**

Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to easily find out what skills and knowledge I can develop if I want to progress into another role in adult social care and how these will be assessed and recorded.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will know about learning and development opportunities that will help me to develop and progress or refresh my skills.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to see clear progression pathways into and through the sector.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to be aspirational in planning my own career and will be empowered to make my next career choice.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what learning and development is relevant to my current or future role, and I know my manager or future employer will also be able to understand this because of the pathway.

We **agree** with all of the above statements.

### **Understanding the expectations of my workforce**

Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the knowledge and skills that my employees should have to provide high-quality care and support.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the values my staff should have.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand the behaviours my staff must demonstrate while doing their job.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand where the roles in my organisation fit within the workforce and how they relate to roles in other organisations, and I can explain this to my employees.

We **agree** with all of the above statements.

### **Recruiting and developing my workforce**

Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:

- strongly agree
- **agree**

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- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand how to recruit and talk about roles.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to hire people with the right values which will improve the quality of recruitment in my organisation.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to better explain the career development opportunities available in my organisation to attract new recruits.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what learning and development, support, and opportunities my staff may need in their jobs, and I will be able to develop and support staff effectively because of this.

We **agree** with all of the above statements.

### **Efficiency and value for money**

**Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:**

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- **disagree**
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be confident that commissioners and regulators recognise and accept the content of the pathway.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be confident that the pathway will enable me to identify training solutions which are high quality, meet the development needs of my staff and provide me with value of money.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, there will be less need for me to pay for staff to re-take training because previous training will be more easily recognised, therefore saving costs.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will see improved retention rates in my organisation and a reduction in recruitment costs due to my ability to better attract and retain staff.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will see cost savings and better value for money through the simplification of the training landscape, helping me to become a more informed purchaser.

We **disagree** with the above statements – some of the statements are ambiguous and assume the individual has core stakeholder responsibilities/leadership relationship for commissioning, CPD, incentives to save on training /CPD cost, retention. External drivers may influence the above areas that the individual has not control over.

### **Quality of care**

**Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:**

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- **disagree**
- strongly disagree

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Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will have better quality care and support because of the increased levels of knowledge and skills in the sector.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will have better care and support because social care employers will be able to better recruit people with the right values and behaviours.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be supported by people who are competent and confident in their ability to deliver high-quality care and support.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to easily see and understand what skills and knowledge the people who support me should have.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to easily see and understand the values the people who support me should have, and the behaviours I should expect to see.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, my family and friends will also be able to see and understand the skills, knowledge, values and behaviours the people who support me should have.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will have a say in who is recruited to support me.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to co-develop and co-deliver development opportunities for the people who support me.

*We **disagree** - it is more complex than the care pathway being a universal solution. We cannot 'assume' any of the above as highlighted by human rights abuse inquiries at care homes, NHS Hospital Trusts and other provider settings.*

*Dependent on how publicised and the information shared with individuals and families. Also, how many people on the care pathway are eligible for it? Will there be funding and time out of work being considered and factored in? This could lead to an increase in cost of care from providers due to backfill.*

*Will there be a cap on the number of people that can access courses to develop values, knowledge and skills? Please consider the unit cost of training per person and to backfill their role.*

### **A streamlined market**

**Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:**

- strongly agree
- **agree (conditionally)**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, there will be a more streamlined training market for government investment, local authorities and integrated care systems (ICSs), reflecting the clarity that will bring to the training needs of the workforce.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what skills, knowledge, behaviours and values are needed within the workforce to provide high-quality care and support and meet the needs of citizens.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to identify which available learning and development solutions support the specific training needs of the workforce.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to identify where there are gaps in the available learning and development provision.

*We **agree** with the above as long as the funding and investment is appropriate.*

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## Efficiency and value for money

Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- **disagree**
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will see savings from more efficient services because of the reduced duplication of training.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will see savings from reduced turnover of staff.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will see savings from reduced backfill requirements.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be confident that I can identify learning and development solutions and provision that meets a quality standard.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to monitor the outputs and impact of investment on vacancies, turnover and learning and development spend efficiency.

*There are savings in theory, but this is dependent on a range of other factors including mandatory/non mandatory pathway requirements, size of organisation e.g., resources.*

We **disagree** at present with the above.

## Identifying policies

Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- **disagree**
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to identify priorities for national learning and development policy.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, as the needs of citizens changes, I will be confident that the pathway will be updated and refreshed and a collective understanding of the necessary skills, knowledge, behaviours and values will be maintained.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to see any gaps between the current skills, knowledge and behaviours of the workforce and what is needed to provide high-quality care and support and meet the needs of citizens.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what skills and knowledge care workers need and the behaviours they need to develop.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what learning and development solutions employers will want to buy.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to understand the skills and knowledge learning and development solutions that are being prioritised by government and other funders.

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Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what the expectations of quality training are.

We **disagree** at present with the above – significant assumptions.

### **Learning and development**

Looking at the statements that follow, please identify how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements relevant to you. Please select one of the following options:

- strongly agree
- agree
- **neither agree nor disagree**
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what skills and knowledge care workers need and the behaviours they need to develop.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what learning and development solutions employers will want to buy.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will be able to understand the skills and knowledge learning and development solutions that are being prioritised by government and other funders.

Because of the new care workforce pathway, I will understand what the expectations of quality training are.

We **neither agree nor disagree** with the above statements.

**Are there any other benefits, not included in the previous question, that the pathway would provide you with?**

No, it's about how the care pathway will be implemented – it is about giving roles within the caring profession status and value through investment in key areas.

Career progression directly within the social care workforce.

Structured format and agreed framework of learning and development hopefully this will have a positive impact.

Good foundation for career progression in social care – a pipeline system.

Many workers in the care sector who demonstrate the initial capabilities that suggest that they are likely to be successful social workers may move on to social work careers, others may be better suited to other professional roles within a range of caring professions, such as occupational therapy, counselling, community psychiatric nursing etc. It is important to safeguard social work, so it is not seen as an automatic route, which anyone can undertake. There is more to doing social work and being a social worker than having an access qualification, including life experience, communication skills and resilience - not just the relevant values and ethics.

### **The 4 categories of role**

**If the workforce was to be structured differently, does the pathway describe the right structure for care and support roles in the adult social care sector in the future?**

**For example, does it include the correct number of workforce stages and role categories?**

- strongly agree.
- agree

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- **neither agree nor disagree**
- disagree
- strongly disagree.

We **neither agree nor disagree**. In theory yes, but the reality is very different – culture of organisations, size, budgets, mobility of staff, variation of pay grades and diverse job titles. The pathway does not incorporate the diversity of social care and allied health roles within the provider workforce. Appropriate funding and bursaries could act as a springboard to other opportunities.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the role categories for care and support and the description of the categories included in the care workforce pathway match how you would like the workforce to be structured?**

- strongly agree.
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree.

We **agree** with the above statement.

**Do the role categories for care and support and the description of the categories included in the new care workforce pathway match how you would like the workforce to be structured?**

- yes
- no

*It is far more complex than a yes/ no response. Where does this fit with integration? Has a mapping exercise been undertaken of existing roles across the sector?*

**Do the information categories provided in the care workforce pathway for adult social care outlined provide all the information you want the pathway to have?**

**For example, knowledge and skills, values, and behaviours, learning and development.**

- yes
- **no**

*In reference to the above, we believe the baseline awareness of social work values and ethics e.g., non-judgemental approach, awareness of discrimination and impact and social justice should be included. Here is a weblink to the [BASW Code of Ethics](#).*

**Is there anything that is included in the pathway that you would remove?**

No, but the conditions to enable the care pathway to be implemented and embedded need to be properly cultivated – supported by investment, funding and understanding the impact on the existing workforce. Also, the timescales for implementation and transition for the national framework could be a challenge in practice. How will the currency of new roles be recognised and what will the passport to mobility be? The National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services needs to be considered in view of changes to terms and conditions and job evaluation. Job evaluation will provide consistency and a correlation to pay.

Also, we believe that developing prescriptive/institutional roles, which are not specific about purpose should be actively avoided.

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**What would you change about the information that is included in the pathway?**

The conditions to enable the care pathway to be implemented and embedded need to be properly cultivated – supported by investment, funding and understanding of the impact on the existing workforce.

It would help to have clearer links with how the care pathway intersects with existing Department for Education frameworks.

There is fragmentation across statutory, independent, private sector in the sector in terms of job titles and career pathways. The care pathway could map and address these discrepancies.

**Do you have any examples of good practice in how competency, knowledge and skills, or values and behaviours are currently defined within the adult social care workforce?**

Yes, include reference to the [PCF](#) at the entry to studying social work level.

**What would encourage your organisation to use and implement the new care workforce pathway for adult social care?**

Appropriate financial resources.

**What would stop the new care workforce pathway for adult social care being widely used across your workforce and organisation?**

Lack of financial support and inadequate training for the workforce.

Is it realistic to introduce such a pathway outside of a regulatory framework, especially within a context of economic restriction and uncertainty?

**What materials and resources do you think would be useful to support you to use the new care workforce pathway for adult social care?**

**Select all that apply-**

Agree with all, but we would like to see in-person training being made available alongside the listed options. Learning and development opportunities will need to be in place to support all of this work.

**How would you most like to access the care workforce pathway for adult social care?**

Agree with all options stated and all should be made available.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the title ‘care workforce pathway’ reflects the content of the pathway?**

We agree.

We hope this feedback is helpful and received in the constructive spirit with which it is intended.

For further information please contact:

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