

**RICHMOND AND WANDSWORTH
ADULT SOCIAL CARE
AND PUBLIC HEALTH
PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER
ANNUAL REPORT
2023 - 2024**



ADULT SOCIAL CARE ACADEMY
Growing, nurturing, supporting and inspiring

Richmond and Wandsworth Adult Social Care and Public Health
Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2023 - 2024

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1 What is the role of a Principal Social Worker (PSW)?

The PSW role ensures that there is professional practice oversight in place to lead, oversee, support, and develop excellent social work practice, and in turn lead the development of excellent Social Workers and social care practitioners.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead is in place. The Care Act 2014 states the PSW role includes:

- Being visible across the organisation.
- To lead, oversee, support and develop excellent social work practice.
- Lead on the development of excellent social workers and social care practitioners.
- Oversee quality assurance and improvement of social work practice.
- Having direct contact with the Senior Management team and front-line practice.
- Supporting recruitment and retention.
- Leading on learning from best practice.

The PSW for Richmond and Wandsworth Councils is Bambi Maxwell. The PSW role manages the Adults Social Care Academy (ASCA). This includes Workforce Development; Quality Assurance and the work in relation to the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment programme. This role reports to the Director of Commissioning and meets regularly with the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health.

2 Recruitment and Retention

The PSW has the important role of attracting, developing and retaining a regulated adult social care workforce. A significant proportion of registered social workers employed across Adult Social Care and Public Health in Richmond and Wandsworth have been supported by the Adult Social Care Academy to successfully pass their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

Successful graduates of the programme have gone on to take up roles within Richmond and Wandsworth Adult Social Care over the years and are now in roles such as Assistant Service Managers, Senior Social Workers, Practice Educators, Best Interest Assessors, Approved Mental Health Practitioners, Professional Standards Officers and an ASYE manager.

The ASYE managers continually evaluate the ASYE programme to ensure that it responds to the changing demands of the social worker role in Richmond and Wandsworth and supports retention of qualified social workers.

Our ASYE managers have worked closely with the Teaching Partnership at Kingston University to provide additional training to second year social work practitioners. In addition, recruitment and retention activity in 2023-24 includes: Overseeing new routes into Social Work and Occupational Therapy with the Social Work Degree and Occupational Therapy apprenticeship programme and the Open University Social Work Diploma. The first two successful apprentices graduated in summer 2023 from the Social Work Degree programme with first class honours and this was a highlight of the year for the organisation. We currently have 9 more apprentices on the programme.

The ASCA has grown the capacity to provide student placements through an increased offer to practice educators. The number of practice educators has grown, and we are delighted that current practice educators include practitioners who have joined the organisation as students or NQSWs on the ASYE programme and who have progressed into these roles.

3 Workforce Development

Continuing Professional Development and the Professional Practice Offer of the Adult Social Care Academy includes a core training programme delivering mandatory training e.g. safeguarding and legal courses; trauma informed practice and specialist courses for colleagues in our Learning Disability and Mental Health teams.

The wider CPD offer includes Safeguarding, Best Interest Assessor, Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP) and Practice Education training.

There has been an increase in the numbers of students on a range of training pathways into Social Work and Occupational Therapy. For example, Assessed and Supported Year in Employment, Think Ahead, Frontline, Kingston University Degree placements, Degree Apprenticeships and students learning with the Open University. This year a strategic approach to the allocation of Front-Line Contrasting learning placements for Children's was agreed with senior managers.

Every year, Richmond and Wandsworth Adult Social Care look to find a minimum of 8 placements of 30 days – a mandatory requirement for social work students undergoing the Frontline programme of training - to be placed in an Adult Social Care placement to successfully complete the Frontline programme. There is a reciprocal arrangement for our Think Ahead students in Children's services.

In addition, a revised and updated Practice Educator policy was agreed aimed at encouraging an increase in practice educators to support the development of the range

of social work and OT qualification pathways. The number of practice educators increased from 5 to 14 practice educators. The opportunities for social workers to act as educators, apprenticeship mentors and practice supervisors is growing and evolving and in turn this results in an increased opportunity to offer student social work placements across Richmond and Wandsworth. We are aware from our earlier research into retention, that in Richmond and Wandsworth over 80% of our student social workers seek to return to work with our councils following their positive experience of placements.

4 Quote from a recent student

I would like to share my feedback on my experience as an MA Student Social Worker. Honestly, I have never encountered such a supportive, positive, and professional environment as I did at (RMHSCT).

I truly enjoyed each day working with Wendy and Abi's team. The dedication, professionalism, and focused attitude I witnessed inspired me to seek an (ASYE) position within your team once I graduate next year. I learned various professional approaches and knowledge that further developed my existing skills. My Practice Educator, Abi, was exceptional. She was a great resource, supportive, and a well-skilled senior who treated her staff fairly and respectfully. With her lovely smile, Wendy is an outstanding manager who fosters a positive atmosphere within her team. The rest of the team is equally dedicated, professional, and focused on their tasks in a very unique quality of manner, which is something I have not encountered in my more than ten years of experience working in mental health.

I truly appreciated every piece of fantastic support I received from your team, including the amazing goodbye gathering that they arranged for me (the gifts, lovely card, and lunch). This meant so much to me and will always remain in my memory.

5 World Social Work Day March 2024

World Social Work day was celebrated across Richmond and Wandsworth councils in partnership with our Children's colleagues. Approximately 100 colleagues attended across the two councils.

This year's theme was Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change. The theme was rooted in the global agenda, emphasising the need for social workers to adopt innovative, community-led approaches that are grounded in indigenous wisdom and in harmonious co-existence with nature. In Wandsworth the PSW for Children's and Children's Executive Director joined colleagues from Adult Social Care and hosted refreshments with practitioners to celebrate, while in Richmond the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health and PSW Adults celebrated with practitioners including staff from Richmond Achieving for Children.

6 PSW and Workforce Development

Action Learning, Coaching and Mentoring Offer – The Adult Social Care Academy offered practitioners and managers coaching and mentoring during 2023-24. In addition, several action learning sets were delivered for both Newly Qualified Social workers and Service Managers.

Action learning set members stated the benefits of action learning:

“Wider understanding of allowing myself grace and knowing my strengths and weaknesses”.

“Social work is so hectic; sometimes buffeted from one priority to another and it is constant and all a priority. This gives me permission to pause and critically reflect on what I am doing and able to be challenged in a safe space and go back and try something different and it works”.

“Offers ability to question own work – taking time out to take a step back. It is important. It is people’s lives”.

“Not learning on own - can feel we are on own, and we are not”.

Humanitarian Assistance Lead officer training has been undertaken by the majority of our senior leadership team including the PSW. The PSW in partnership with Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health are committed to undertaking the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Social worker in Disaster training and subsequently the Academy has led on the roll out of the BASW programme to a cohort of practitioners. The BASW four module training started in March with the ASC Academy supporting the learning with regular webinar sessions.

Our Primary Teaching Partnership with Developing Together at Kingston University has grown our CPD offer to include a consolidation module for NQSWs on completion of their ASYE programme. Oliver Magowan training Tier 1 e-Learning module has been developed and is available for practitioners. Corporate Induction training – Workforce development team managed a new approach to delivery of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Induction, and this worked very well. Evaluations and informal feedback were very positive, including the new table-top speed dating style to meet colleagues e.g. from Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), Safeguarding, Finance, Digital Technology, Commissioning teams.

We worked with our Complaints team to review the revised Adult Social Care complaints policy in 2023. Working in partnership with complaints team we triangulated the feedback from complaints ensuring learning summaries are shared widely through relevant forum with managers.

7 Adult Social Care Academy Newsletter

The Adult Social Care Academy launched the monthly newsletter in 2023-24 to raise awareness of key learning and development opportunities for staff.

8 New Training System and Compliance on Mandatory Training

The new training system providing e-Learning modules for Adult Social Care and Public Health staff was introduced at the end of the summer 2023. This involved setting up and familiarising staff with the new system as well as establishing reporting requirements and more effective compliance monitoring on key mandatory training. Reporting is now six monthly to Departmental Management Team on mandatory training compliance.

The service specification for the new training system which replaced TPD Online, includes system functionality for tracking and reporting against mandatory training requirements as an essential requirement.

9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

An Anti-Racist Practice conference was held in partnership with Wandsworth Children's Services for practitioners and managers in November 2023. The day aimed to provide an increased understanding of the impact of systemic racism and how it impacts our practice with Children, Families, and the communities we serve. We brought together staff and colleagues from the wider community to address issues of racial justice and anti-racist practice and to look at the trauma-informed systemic and culturally responsive approaches we can offer children and their families.

The Social Care –Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES) work continued in 2023-24 embedding the SC-WRES data collection and action plan into the ongoing work of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Board.

The Adult Social Care Academy continues to promote and stock a range of literature for staff to borrow to support learning and increase awareness around EDI issues. Race Equality Week was celebrated in February 2024 and the PSW disseminated the Race Equality Matters 5-day challenge materials to managers to support them in exploring themselves and with their teams some of the key and daily issues that are so hurtful, damaging, and excluding to our ethnically diverse colleagues, community friends and families and to ourselves and with ideas about how to take action.

10 Strengths Based Practice Events

Strengths-based practice sessions held for Adult Social Care and Public Health staff in February and March 2024. Over 200 practitioners attended the Adult Social Care Academy Strengths-based sessions including colleagues from Commissioning, Public Health teams and the voluntary sector. Our Expert by Experience spoke about the role of unpaid carers and staff were encouraged to engage in a presentation on co-production with the aim of identifying residents who may wish to get involved in co-production groups. The event was highly rated with participants rating the event. Below are some comments received:

“All the talks from all the presenters were informative and very insightful”

“The discussion and presentation of co-production was very useful, and beneficial. The discussion on digital technology was particular interesting and useful”

“Always good to hear from Research in Practice colleagues and the journey of Strengths Based approaches”

“Co-production was interesting, I have come across clients who I think would be happy to be involved”

11 Quality Assurance

Our internal Quality Assurance (QA) process focuses on providing a continuing learning experience to our practitioners, so we carry out this QA jointly, with practitioner being an active participant in the process. This provides both the practitioner, the person reviewing and Professional Standards with greater context for our quality assurance and helps us to embed learning across all the teams. Our practitioners report that they welcome the outside perspective and that “the process is really good for self-reflection and continuous learning” and “builds on professional practice”.

Overall our QA process indicates that we are successfully embedding a strengths-based approach across the organisation and key strengths are in risk awareness and management and in the co-production of interventions with people who use our services.

We are working towards improving our application of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and our approach to incorporating equality, diversity and inclusion conversations within our assessments. Our internal QA process in 2023-24 examined the quality of supervision; the care and support plans for carers; safeguarding intervention and mental capacity assessment work as well as Care Act assessments, care and support plans. We introduced a revised Practice Standards and Learning Framework which we are working to embed through our Assistant Service Manager and Senior Social Work Forums which we began delivering in July 2023. These take place bi-monthly and all Team Managers,

Assistant Service Managers and Senior Social Workers from across the front-line teams are invited to attend sessions delivered in person in both Richmond and Wandsworth.

Five practice topics were explored in 2023-24 including induction; reflective supervision; conducting mental capacity assessments and safeguarding with a variety of exercises and group work to identify areas of excellent practice and share best practice thereby supporting development and consistency across the management group. The purpose of the sessions was to provide a space for managers to come together, share best practice and tips and ideas, as well as to provide time to reflect on work to support their own development and wellbeing and to standardise practice across the teams.

We have been supporting the Post Qualifying Standards for Social Work Practice Supervisors, by commissioning supervision training and as an organisation we have a well-resourced library and have purchased reflective theory practice cards for supervisors to use as well as access to Research in Practice and Institute of Leadership and Management resources. Our practitioners were supported and prepared for the renewal process with the Social Work Regulator, Social Work England via team briefings and workshops. Development of Best Practice resources have been further consolidated. They include a range of resources and cover topics such as carrying out a Mental Capacity Assessment, undertaking care and support plans for carers and Care Act 2014 assessments and reviews.

12 People in Position of Trust (PiPOT) Role of PSW

The Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance requires that employers should have a clear procedure in place setting out how concerns about a Person in a Position of Trust can be raised safely/anonymously (including by people who use care and support services). A PiPOT can be a person who works with adults with care and support needs in a position of trust, whether an employee, or student (paid or unpaid); and, where those concerns or allegations indicate the person in a position of trust poses a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs. The PiPOT panel consists of Head of Professional Standards, Principal Social Worker and Assistant Director who enable the council to conduct an effective risk assessment if a concern is raised.

13 Social Work England: Fitness to Practice Single Point of Contact (SPOC) PSW

Role All social workers registered in England are expected to meet and uphold our professional standards throughout their registration. As part of the Social Work England (SWE) role, SWE investigate concerns about the conduct, character, competence and health of social workers. This is known as a person's fitness to practise. Having a point of contact within our organisation to turn to at any point in the fitness to practise process helps to progress cases more efficiently. Having the support of the PSW as a SPOC at an early stage means that SWE can understand more about the context of the concerns that have been raised and information about the quality of the social worker's current practice.

14 2023/24 Local Government Association (LGA) Employer Standards Annual Health Check for Registered Social Workers and Occupational Therapists

The annual National health check was conducted in January 2024 and results have been collated. At a headline level, if we look at the scores for all the standards, Richmond and Wandsworth secured a 'good' result (top of range) in all of the standards which is a very positive achievement.

15 PSW National and London Regional Networks and Peer Reviews

The PSW attends the London Regional PSW network and the fortnightly National PSW network meetings - the key focus currently is Care Quality Commission (CQC) preparation and assurance visits as well as sharing best practice and development work on themes and feedback from peer reviews including work related to client level data requests from Department of Health and Social Care. The PSW meets regularly with Achieving for Children and Wandsworth Children's PSWs to share information

and expertise in particular regarding learning around the CQC inspection process and progressing Equalities Diversity and Inclusion work in relation to Preparing for Adulthood (Transitions).

16 Future Work Planned for 2024-2025

- Workforce Development - ongoing partnership work with Public Health around Making Every Contact Count specifically in relation to modules around unpaid Carers, falls prevention and winter warmth as well as ongoing collaboration around raising awareness in relation to diabetes and looking at developing a suicide prevention module.
- Oliver Magowan training Tier 2 training module developed and available for staff.
- Quality Assurance work to include work with external scrutiny in relation to our Occupational Therapy practice and our current practice and disseminate more widely the best practice and develop the service as a whole.
- Ongoing CQC preparation in partnership with all practitioners and managers across Richmond and Wandsworth Adult Social Care service.
- Borough wide Mental Capacity assessment events with Alex Ruck-Keene - delivery of bespoke events for practitioners across the councils together with our health partners.
- Focus on Wellbeing of practitioners and managers through bespoke sessions and materials for practitioners and managers to engage with and to support wellbeing.
- Expand and review ASYE programme including to incorporate complaints and new Skills for Care reporting requirements.
- Digital technology further embedded as we envisage huge shift in how we work and how we embrace digital technology at the front door and our practitioners adapt to new ways of working.
- Kings College Fund university grant to support research pilot into Family Group Conferencing in Adult Social Care.



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