

## Sector Skills Agreement - Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

### Decisions

1. Determine whether the process of entering agreement on the SSA with Skills for Care should involve LGA, LGE and IDeA and how this might be facilitated as far as members are concerned.
2. Decide whether at this stage only a statement of intent to work towards an agreement is feasible.
3. Consider and comment on the proposals in the draft agreement (reproduced in italics in the report) and on the issues itemised in paragraph 9 of the report.

### Actions Required

4. Officers to provide further reports after discussions with Skills for Care based on members decisions in respect of process and content.

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## Sector Skills Agreement - Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

### Summary

1. This report advises members about the Sector Skills Agreement process relating to the adult social care workforce. LGA are being invited to sign an agreement with Skills for Care. The report also makes reference to the Department of Health preparing an adult social care workforce strategy.

### Sector Skills Agreement

#### Background

2. The Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) provides the adult social care sector agreed approach to workforce development for the next 3 years. This will be used to reach agreement for collective action on workforce development at national, regional and local levels.
3. Skills for Care (the Sector Skills Council) are using the SSA outcomes to inform the Department of Health's forthcoming workforce strategy and to develop its own accessible workforce development strategy.
4. The SSA involved a major assessment of need being undertaken with skills gaps identified and consultations taking place with employers across England. The Sector Skills Agreement is in effect a national workforce plan for adult social care services. The agreement is important as it is the key to public funding for training from, among others, the Learning and Skills Council.
5. Skills for Care are seeking an agreement with LGA regarding the skills needs of employers and how they will be met. This is a process that is overseen by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and is a requirement across all work sectors. The final stages of the process involve action planning and bilateral agreements with all partners to secure delivery.
6. The proposed agreement with LGA considers 5 key priority areas:
  - Leadership and management and human resource practice
  - Attracting and retaining a quality workforce
  - Workforce intelligence, skills and support systems
  - Developing new types of working
  - Improving the roles and skills of commissionersThe following are the areas where Skills for Care is seeking agreement with LGA

***Leadership, management and human resource practice***

- *Work in partnership to contribute to and promote the development of leadership skills at all levels throughout the social care workforce, including the identification of the skills, knowledge and attributes required by directors of social care, the development of the Skills Academy for Care, led by the Department of Health and the dissemination of good practice in people management and leading and managing change and the Skills for Care leadership and management strategy and tools and SCIE Human Resource tools.*
- *Work with partners to identify the learning and development in management, Human Resource practice and being a good employer, which meets the needs of employers who employ their own support staff.*

***Attracting and retaining a quality workforce - ensuring employability and progression skills***

- *Work with partners and employers to develop good recruitment practices, which include the use of the Social Care code of practice for international recruitment, the implementation of the GSCC codes of practice, targeted recruitment campaigns in underrepresented groups, promotion of the care ambassador scheme and good practice in working to support people who use services.*
- *Work in partnership to raise public awareness of the sector and promote working in the sector, through distribution of promotional material and actively promoting the annual Skills for Care Accolades*

***Workforce intelligence, workforce skills and support systems – developing the skills of the social care workforce of the future***

- *Work in partnership to support and encourage workforce development and planning with contracted and in-house providers through promoting learning and development linked to the Sector Qualification Strategy and the Skills for Care career framework, promoting good practice and encouraging the use of the National Minimum Data Set-Social Care (NMDS-SC).*
- *Work in partnership to actively support the development of ‘Expert Carers’ learning and development*
- *Work with partners to support the development and the professionalisation of the workforce through contributing to the development of fit for purpose qualifications and knowledge sets and supporting the registration of the social care workforce*
- *Work with partners to encourage employers to support the development of their workforce through, developing training, induction and support for all staff, including overseas workers, at all levels, adopting the Skills for Care continuous professional development (CPD) strategy, apprenticeships and developing as learning organisations*
- *Work in partnership to contribute to the smooth flow of quality learning and development and the maintenance of high quality provision, including actively encouraging an increase in the number of active assessors.*
- *Work with partners to develop needs driven learning, which promotes the involvement of people who use services and carers in development and delivery of training and embeds Skills for Life and the common core principles of self-care.*

- *Work with partners to assist employers in identifying and accessing appropriate learning and funding for their staff, including encouraging employers to sign up to The Skills Pledge and direct 3% of their workforce budget to learning and development*
- *Work in partnership to maximise efficient use of funding streams for workforce development, across all employers within the private, voluntary and statutory sectors, including self directed support.*

#### ***Developing new types of working***

- *Work with partners in the development of the newly qualified Social Worker project, to include looking at the new roles and more flexible working to optimise the time of all qualified social workers, the development of a strategy to support Social Work education and training, ensure that there are sufficient practice learning opportunities.*
- *Work with partners to share and promote good practice in developing new types of working which cut across boundaries, follow the common care principles of self care, put people who use services at the centre of service delivery and promote the use of assistive technology.*

#### ***Improving the skills and enhancing the roles of commissioners***

- *Work in partnership for the continued development of commissioning for services and workforce through the development and implementation of a commissioning strategy, to include commissioning protocols, identifying the commissioning workforce of the future and the development of commissioners through NOS and a careers framework.*
- *Work with partners and employers to encourage quality workforce planning, including identifying good practice in linking business development with workforce reform and stimulating, supporting and encouraging service development within the Third Sector*

## **Some Issues for Discussion**

7. It is suggested that the Sector Skills Agreement is the subject of a single agreement across the relevant family of local government central organisations. It impacts on and seeks commitments from local government as an employer (LGE), in terms of policy and commissioning (LGA) and related to leadership, skills and talent (IDeA)
8. It is understood that the signing of agreements stage is part of a process. The timescales from the SSDA are too short for members to give this the thorough attention they would wish. There have been extensive consultations in the field and the proposals put forward have wide consensus however there are implications that need detailed consideration within local government. Officers have discussed this with Skills for Care and a statement of intent to enter discussions and move towards an agreement will suffice to meet the SSDA requirements at this point in time. If members are minded to accept this as a direction of travel they may wish to receive a future report about how and when they wish to have further engagement in the process.

9. On the proposed items in the draft agreement member's attention is drawn to:
- The Skills Academy – how might this relate to local governments own leadership and management initiatives nationally and regionally
  - The Employers Skills Pledge and the commitment of 3% of payroll to workforce development
  - The need for the agreement to indicate what local government is to get in return for the commitments it is potentially entering into – from Skills for Care and the Learning and Skills Council
  - The need for the agreement to be less open-ended and more incremental in style

## **Implications for Wales**

10. This report relates to England only

## **Financial/Resource Implications**

11. There are implications in the SSA process for member and officer time and resources for the LGA, LGE and IDeA. Even working towards a statement of intent to reach an agreement over a period of time will have implications if the work is to be meaningful.
12. Workforce Development itself is resource intensive and local authorities have a good track record in this respect in adult social care. If this process coordinates the deployment of public funding to a single strategic approach and system then all employers across all sectors will be satisfied that the best use is being made of resources available.

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