

14 May 2008

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## **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**

1. 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 second report further advises members about the Sector Skills Agreement process relating to the adult social care workforce. LGA have been invited to sign an agreement with Skills for Care and in response the Board has raised a series of comments and queries. The Chief Executive of Skills for Care, Andrea Rowe, has accepted an invitation to attend to assist member's deliberations. Additionally the report provides information on the Skills Academy.

### Background

2. The Community Well-being Board of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008 considered the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) in the adult social care sector as the agreed approach to workforce development for the next 3 years. Members were advised that:
  - a. The SSA will be used to reach agreement for collective action on workforce development at national, regional and local levels.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.
  - d. 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.
  - e. The proposed agreement with LGA considers 5 key priority areas:
    - i. Leadership and management and human resource practice
    - ii. Attracting and retaining a quality workforce
    - iii. Workforce intelligence, skills and support systems
    - iv. Developing new types of working
    - v. Improving the roles and skills of commissioners
3. The 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

### **Comments and Queries from the Board**

4. Whilst welcoming the work that had gone into the SSA and the approach the Board did not feel they were in a position to enter agreement on the SSA at this point in time. It was agreed that the approach should include IDeA and LGE as well as LGA.

5. Officers were authorised to enter into discussions with Skills for Care with a view to identifying a series of mutual points that could be put to a future meeting of members.
6. Board members variously requested more clarification about:
  - a. the Skills Academy and what this might mean for local governments own leadership centre
  - b. the implication of the Skills Pledge
  - c. the impact of the 3% of payroll target investment in learning on local government as a commissioner
  - d. how the proposals put to them joined up with children's services and specifically asked about the transitions issues
  - e. how the NMDS-SC can be supported
7. On a general level LGA members found the items contained in the Skills for Care letter 'too geared to the top end' – by this they felt the proposed agreement was too much about leaders, managers and social workers not enough about hands on social carers. In a similar vein they said there was a 'lack of reach' into the preventative agenda facing the workforce, into the personalisation agenda or in respect of Diplomas .
8. The Chief Executive of Skills for Care will be in attendance at the meeting to assist member's address the queries in the SSA agreement as proposed. Information on the Skills Academy is provided below.

### **Social Care Skills Academy**

9. The proposal to establish a Skills Academy (SCSA) was announced by the minister for care services in April 2007. It builds on the recommendations of the Platt Report on raising the status of social care. The Department of Health is supporting the social care sector in developing a proposal. A Steering Group of Stakeholders has been established to take this forward and is chaired by David Sherlock. Andrew Cozens of IDeA is a member of that group.
10. The first stage is to be clear about what the skills academy will do and how it will fit with the existing architecture of social care. It will need to take account of any similar proposals in relation to children's social care and developments in the NHS such as World Class Commissioning. The SCSA will focus on commissioning, leadership and management. It will focus on adult social care in England. Current thinking is that the SCSA would be a commissioner of training and work with providers of training to offer revised curricula and qualifications. The intention is to bid for National Skills Academy (NSA) status to the Learning and Skills Council in the next round.

11. The second stage will be to develop a full business case for the academy, and the third stage to develop operating arrangements, including funding, governance and programme construction.
12. The Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Learning and Skills Council have not formally announced a fourth round of bidding for NSA status it is expected that the Prospectus will be issued in April 2008. The assumption is that an expression of interest will need to be submitted in June/July 2008. The Learning and Skills Council will require about a month to approve the expressions of interest to continue into business planning. The timetable will be set out in the Prospectus.

## **Implications for Wales**

7. This report relates to England only

## **Financial/Resource Implications**

8. There are implications in the SSA process for member and officer time and resources for the LGA, LGE and IDeA. 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.
9. 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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