



Delivering Better Care

Creating an adult social care workforce strategy for Cornwall

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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce the Adult Social Care Independent Sector Workforce Strategy for Cornwall.

The strategy sets out an ambitious vision for our future and a route map to its achievement, based on a solid foundation of collaboration and commitment. It has been developed with the support of academic colleagues from Manchester Metropolitan University through engagement with stakeholders from across the sector. It reflects their views on how to create an environment in which excellent, high-quality care can continue to be provided.

Our workforce is our greatest strength and at the heart of all we do, working hard to provide the care needed by service users. We recognise the significant pressures faced by those delivering adult care services in our county and the necessity to change the model of care to meet the current and future needs of the Cornish population. This will require a sustainable, confident, skilled workforce who feel valued and are well supported both in respect of their own career development aspirations, their mental and physical health, and pay, terms and conditions. Building digital capability and the ability to embrace new technologies is also essential.

This workforce strategy outlines a number of actions which, when implemented, will support our people to experience good work and deliver excellent social care, with the right people with the right skills in the right place who are recognised and valued for their contribution within the wider health and care sector.

We are committed to developing and supporting our care workers and to attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects the community we serve.

Ass on ni lowen dhe gomendya an Strateji Gweythlu Rannfylgh Anserghek Gwith Socyal Tevesik rag Kernow.

An strateji a ragworr gwel ughelhwanssek rag agan termyn a dheu ha mappa hyns dh'y gowlwrians, selys war fondyans soled a gesoberyans hag a omrians. Displegys veu gans skoodhyans kowethysi akademek dhyworth Pennskol a'n Worcita Manchester dre geskolm gans kevrenogyon dhyworth a-dreus an rannfylgh. Ev a dhastewyn aga gwel ow tochya an fordh dhe wruthyl kerghynnedh le may hyll pesya bos gwith kooth hag ughel y gwalita proviys ynno.

Agan gweythlu yw agan moyha nerth ha dhe gres a oll a wren, owth oberi yn tynn dhe brovia an gwith hwensys gans usyoryon a'n gonis. Ni a aswon an posow bras enebys gans an re a dhelirv gonisyow gwith tevesik y'gan konteth ha'n edhom dhe janjya an patron a with dhe gewera an edhommow a'n poblans a Gernow lemmyn hag y'n termyn a dheu. Hemma a wra erghi gweythlu konnyk, kyfyanssek ha sostenadow a omglew talvesys ha bos skoodhys yn ta ow tochya gorvynnow displegyans aga resegra, aga yagh ha brysel ha fysygel, ha gober, termys ha studhyow. Drehevel gallos besyel ha'n gallos dhe vyrla teknegethow nowydh yw essensek ynwedh.

An strateji gweythlu ma a linen niver a weythresow hag a wra, pan vons kowlwrys, skoodhya agan tus dhe brevi ober da ha delivra gwith socyal splann, gans an tus ewn gans an sleyneth ewn y'n le ewn neb yw aswonys ha talvesys rag aga hevro yn mysk an rannfylgh gwith ha yeghes ledanna.

Omres on dhe dhisplegya ha skoodhya agan oberoryon with ha dhe denna ha gwitha gweythlu a dhastewyn an kemeneth a wonedhyn.



Cllr Dr Andy Virr
Portfolio holder for Adult Social Care and Health



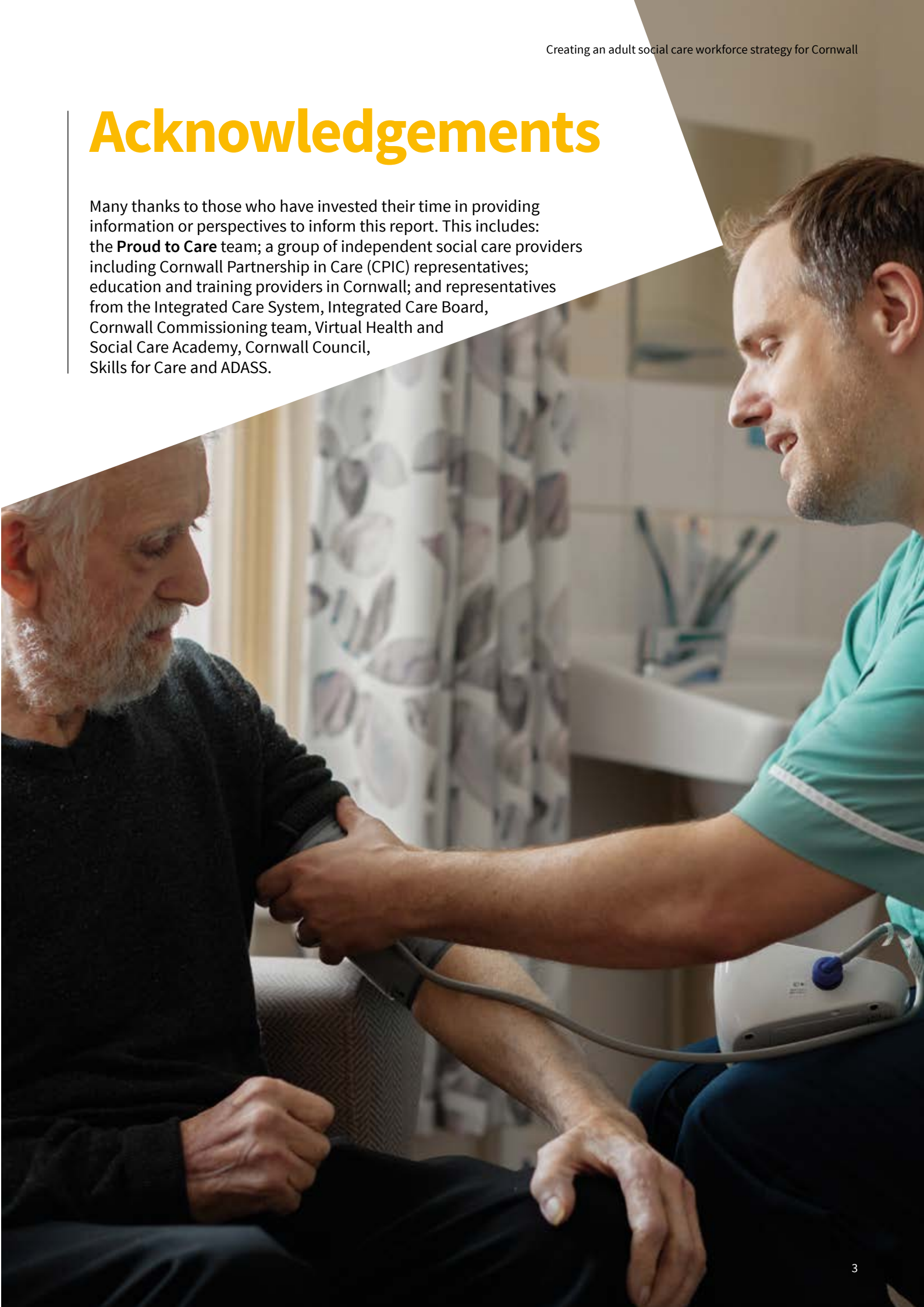
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Executive summary

‘Creating an adult social care strategy for Cornwall’ presents a rapid evidence review of relevant policy and academic evidence, together with analyses of Cornwall’s current adult social care workforce to inform an adult social care workforce strategy for the independent sector.

Adult social care makes a vital social and economic contribution in Cornwall. In social terms, the sector supports a large number of older or vulnerable people. In economic terms, in 2022-23, the sector contributed £606 million GVA to Cornwall’s economy, an increase of 5.9% on 2021-2 and is one of the largest employers in the county. It experiences, however, similar workforce challenges to the rest of England, with the addition of some regionally specific challenges, including a high cost of living, expensive accommodation, lack of reliable public transport and hard to reach rural areas, and poor digital connectivity. These factors make recruitment into a low-paid sector difficult, especially against

a backdrop of significant competition from other sectors and in particular seasonal demand in tourism and hospitality. Yet significant growth is required. Forecasts demonstrate that, to match the growing demand for adult social care in Cornwall, the independent sector workforce will need to grow in the region of 30-35% by 2035.

The underlying premise of the report is the need to create good work in the sector. This includes the offer of fair pay, secure employment, training, qualifications and career progression opportunities, worker recognition and involvement in decision making. Parity with the NHS for similar roles is essential, as are place-based solutions to the particular labour market challenges that Cornwall experiences. Good work will both attract workers to and retain them in the adult social care sector, but the scale of the task in achieving this should not be under-estimated.

You can read the full report [here](#)

Recruitment

Recruitment issues identified centre on increasing labour supply, establishing an optimal level of international recruitment and ensuring cross-local authority strategic collaboration.

Increasing labour supply

In Cornwall, vacancy rates exceeded 11% in 2022-23, which is problematic given the required growth in labour supply and an ageing workforce which means a large proportion of the social care workforce could retire in the next 10 years. It will be particularly important to attract young people into the sector and engagement with the education sector and improving the image of adult social care are central to this. It will also be important to identify other sources of labour. Engagement is needed with providers to address reluctance on the part of some to employ young people and/or non-traditional sources of labour. Supply of registered managers is also a concern, with a high proportion potentially due to retire in the next 10 years. Development programmes to support promotion

into these roles are needed. **Proud to Care** will lead on addressing these issues.

International recruitment

International recruitment has had less uptake in Cornwall than in England, filling only 7.5% of posts, and consequently vacancy rates have not reduced to the same extent. Nevertheless, given the political volatility that surrounds international recruitment, together with well-documented ethical concerns, it should be used as only a short-term solution to building required workforce levels.

Cross-local authority working

Accommodation shortages and transport difficulties are critical issues in recruitment in Cornwall. Cross-local authority strategies are required and **Proud to Care** will work with the departments responsible for housing and transport to develop strategies to alleviate accommodation and transport difficulties for the adult social care workforce.

Training, qualifications and career progression

Robust induction focused on socialisation is critical to ensuring new workers have the required skills and confidence and improving retention. Completion of the Care Certificate, proportions of the workforce holding Level 2 and 3 qualifications and uptake of apprenticeships are all low, and growth here is needed. There is also an increasing need for specialist training provision in, for example, working with dementia. Career progression is lacking and implementing the DHSC's career pathways, and drawing on associated funding, both to be announced in early 2024 is vital. Importantly, this will establish not only adult social care pathways, but also integrated pathways across health and social care, for example, children's social care, nursing and

Allied Health Professionals. **Proud to Care** will lead on addressing these issues.

There are various funding concerns. First, over funding distribution mechanisms; second, over funding sources as ESF monies disappear amidst lack of clarity over access to Shared Prosperity Fund monies; and third, over the extent to which transfer of apprenticeship levy monies to smaller providers will continue to be possible. Additionally, to support greater uptake of training and qualifications, fee levels must be high enough to allow care workers to be paid for their time when doing training. Fair Cost of Care exercises offer the opportunity to address this.

Professionalisation

Professionalisation, based on mandatory registration and regulation of care workers, offers a mechanism to increase the status of care work and address recruitment and retention challenges. The DHSC's anticipated career pathways offer an important starting point, but to be effective must be accompanied by improved pay and other terms and conditions. A co-ordinated package that creates parity with the NHS is needed. While registration must be actioned at national level, a care charter in Cornwall is an option, requiring training

and development, alongside particular levels of terms and conditions of employment as a means to improve job quality and address workforce shortages. **Proud to Care** will facilitate exploration of establishing this.



Digital skills

Digital skills provision is currently somewhat uncoordinated, and training is needed for both registered managers, in for example analysis skills, and care workers in use of technologies. The DHSC's digital leadership qualification will also be an important development, as is support for its digital skills passport when launched in 2024. Various curricula, for example, the Care Certificate and Level 2-3 qualifications require

review to ensure they adequately address digital matters. In Cornwall, a technology-enabled care strategy is in development and consideration of its workforce implications will be needed. **Proud to Care** will support with digital skills co-ordination, implementation of digital skills passports and digital leadership qualifications and the building of digital support networks.

Retention

Similar to elsewhere in England, Cornwall experiences high labour turnover rates and these stood at 27.4% in 2022-23. **Proud to Care** will offer provider/registered manager programmes on developing a strong workplace culture,

understanding costs/benefits of reducing turnover and workforce planning to reduce turnover. Actions from elsewhere in this report will address other important causes of turnover e.g., low pay and limited career progression opportunities.

Pay, terms and conditions and contracted hours

Cornwall's current pay rates are competitive in the social care sector. However, recent increases to both the National Living Wage and Real Living Wage will require substantial increases to current rates and are likely to reduce/remove this competitive edge. Care worker/senior care worker pay differentials have significantly reduced in recent years and salary progression opportunities have thus worsened. Creating parity with the NHS is essential to building a skilled and stable adult social care workforce in Cornwall. Investment in pay is required as part of the government's reform agenda for social care and the benefits of this will include a more diverse workforce (particularly the recruitment of more men into the sector), reduced turnover and improved care quality.

Terms and conditions of employment such as sick pay and pension provision are also typically at statutory minimum levels. Parity with NHS terms and conditions is again required to address workforce shortages. Additionally, around 20%

of the home care workforce in Cornwall is on zero hours contracts. While Cornwall's 2024 recommissioning of home care will encourage providers to consider different employment patterns including offering shift work, it does not address the fundamental need for a cohesive reform agenda that addresses the availability of capacity across the sector. and some pilots are in progress.

These issues are significant national policy questions and need to form a key part of the discussion around the next steps to reform the adult social care system. However, in the meantime local commissioning needs to ensure that it paying fees which are fair locally as well as seeking to influence the national policy agenda around fair pay and recognition for care workers.

Health and well-being

The adult social care workforce is under significant pressure, key factors being post pandemic burnout and the work intensification created by high vacancy rates and turnover. These are reflected in higher-than-average sickness absence rates. While many of the actions in this report will serve to improve this situation, direct forms of

support are also required. Counselling is available for free, but perhaps not well known about. For many, there is limited access to occupational health services. Innovative working practices are also needed. **Proud to Care** will take action to address these issues.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The adult social care workforce is female dominated and has an ageing profile. The recruitment section above offers some ways to address this and pay and career pathways are also important factors. While the workforce in Cornwall is not particularly diverse in terms of ethnicity and nationality, it is broadly reflective of its wider population. Neurodiversity and disability

are increasingly prominent in the workforce. At local authority level, Cornwall is part of a pilot to improve workforce equality, diversity and inclusion, but this does not yet include the independent sector. Cornwall will roll out this assessment and action planning process to the independent sector.

Workforce strategy, planning and integration

Cornwall's Integrated Care System (ICS) will consider producing an integrated health and social care workforce plan that supports its adult social care workforce strategy. This should again work towards parity between the NHS and adult social care. Not all the data needed for workforce planning is currently available. Neither have the implications for increased use of digital technologies and technology enabled care or adoption of shift working for staffing ratios been identified. All are needed for detailed workforce modelling and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) will prioritise producing this data.

Workforce planning will also support capacity optimisation, promoting, for example, place-based strategies that create provider alliances for more efficient care delivery and developing

skills so that workers can operate flexibly across different services. Integrated planning will also serve to support developments such as delegated health care. The ICP will drive these initiatives.

The need for increased funding has already been flagged. The ICP will explore an interim solution to funding challenges by driving greater budgetary integration, offering cross institutional leadership and investment in improvements for the adult social care workforce. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) also offers an opportunity for improved within and cross-sector communication and **Proud to Care**, the VCSE and providers will have representation on it. This offers a voice to social care and supports improved communications with independent providers to help them to understand their role in the ICS.

Commissioning and funding

Under-funding of the adult social care sector across England is widely acknowledged and implicated in issues already discussed such as low pay, poor uptake of training and use of zero hours contracts. While additional funding is regularly made available, it is fragmented and short-term in nature, making it difficult for providers to plan. Under-funding also underpins practices such as payment of fees to providers that do not fully cover the costs of care and the commissioning of care on a package-by package basis that creates income instability for providers.

While constrained by funding settlements and meeting statutory need within available resources, commissioners nevertheless have some capacity to influence terms and conditions in the sector.

The 2024 re-commissioning of home care provides such an opportunity. Contracts could require particular pay levels, training days, shift working and so on and thus enhance job quality. Commissioning is also currently highly fragmented across a large number of small providers. Re-commissioning across fewer, larger providers to create improved career structures will be explored. To enable the effectiveness of this workforce strategy, Cornwall will on an ongoing basis review funding levels and commissioning practices.



Delivering the strategy

Based on this report, Cornwall has created an ambitious adult social care workforce strategy. Central to its achievement will be collaboration, both within the local authority and more widely. Within the local authority, **Proud to Care** will require support from local partners, the ICB/ICP and other departments including those responsible for commissioning, housing and transport. Independent sector providers are also fundamental to the achievement of the strategy, and a strong communication and consultation programme will be launched to gain their commitment. SW ADASS will be an important partner, given the recent launch of its own strategy and streams of work that can support Cornwall in achieving its aims. Finally, partnerships with other local authorities will provide learning around workforce innovation.



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