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Annual PSW Report

Stockport ASC 2024

Julia Newton



Ambitious Stockport, creating opportunities *for everyone*

Foreword

I am delighted to share my annual Principal Social Worker Report for Stockport Adult Social Care Services during 2024/2025.

The PSW annual report is an opportunity to reflect on the last 12 months, celebrate achievements, identify learning and look to the future.

As PSW, I recognise the importance of supporting our workforce in striving for the highest standards of practice when working with individuals, their families and carers. In the last twelve months we have done a lot as a service to ensure that our focus is on what matters to the people of Stockport with our commitment to 'Working in Partnership' and the development of our Adult Social Care Charter.

As PSW, I have been privileged to work in partnership with people with lived experience, colleagues across social care, as well as in close collaboration with the regional and national PSW Network. I continue to be impressed by the compassion, creativity, and responsiveness of our teams – who continue to rise to the challenges of these difficult times. I want to start by thanking everyone.





What is my role as Principal Social Worker?

Principal Social Workers take a professional leadership role across the organisation and act as a bridge for better communication and understanding between Senior Management and Social Workers.

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (update May 2016) provided further clarification about the Principal Social Worker role for adults. The Guidance states that the Principal Social Worker should be visible across the organisation, from Elected Members and Senior Management, through to Social Workers and people who draw on care and support and their carers. Principal Social Workers should also have a broad knowledge base on safeguarding and 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. It also states that local authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place to:

- Lead and oversee excellent social work practice
- Support and develop arrangements for excellent practice
- Lead the development of excellent Social Workers
- Support effective social work supervision and decision making
- Oversee quality assurance and improvement of social work practice
- Advise the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and/or wider Council in complex or controversial cases and on case or other law relating to social work practice
- Function at the strategic level of the Professional Capabilities Framework

I have held the Principal Social Worker position in Stockport since 2018 and for much of that time I have had lead responsibility in relation to Safeguarding. Within the Stockport Safeguarding Adult Partnership, I chair the Quality Assurance Partnership, co-chair The Complex Safeguarding Partnership and chair the SAR Consideration Panels. In recent months this responsibility has extended to having line management of the Safeguarding Partnership Manager to ensure that Adult Social Care is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities as the lead agency in Safeguarding Adults at Risk. I have also improved our internal safeguarding governance arrangements with the introduction of a monthly Safeguarding and DoLS Assurance Meeting.

I am part of the ASC Senior Management Team and am supervised by the DASS which ensures strong links between practice and leadership. I meet regularly with the PSW in Children's to ensure that we are working closely together and supporting a think family approach in practice.

To date in Stockport, we have not had a Principal OT position in our structure and therefore I have been mindful to ensure that I have linked in and included our therapy staff who play an invaluable role in the delivery of Adult Social Care.

Mission, Vision & Values

One Stockport One Future is the next phase of our borough plan. It sets out how we will work together to tackle the challenges we face, so Stockport can be the best place to live happy and healthy lives, a place where anything is possible, a place that everyone, right across the Borough can be proud of. It is embedded into our [Council Plan](#) and will be delivered through our organisational and partnership strategies.

No one thing or organisation can address these challenges alone. One Stockport: One Future is a collective call to action to work together to deliver the '5 big things' we believe will transform our borough over the next 15 years to help us achieve our shared vision. In Adult Social Care we are helping to deliver Thriving Neighbourhoods and Best Health and Care.

Best Health and Care – We need to make it easier for everyone to live happy, healthy and independent lives. Where people can access the care and support, they need as close to home as possible and ensuring people can remain connected with the people and places that are important to them.

Thriving Neighbourhoods – Our vision for 2040 is for everyone to benefit from thriving neighbourhoods which are clean, green and safe places to live and visit.

Our ONE Stockport approach enables us to work in a collaborative and integrated way to improve outcomes for people. The [One Health and Care Plan](#) is our locality plan for health and care in Stockport as part of the Greater Manchester Integrated Care System.

The integrated plan encompasses the strategy for Adult Social Care, describing how we will promote prevention and early intervention, enable people to maximise their independence and when formal care and support is required ensure that they have access to a wide range of high-quality services.

[Our Council Plan](#) 2024-27 describes the key role we play in supporting the borough. We do this through the provision and delivery of efficient and effective services that are essential to everyday life. The plan also outlines our four big ambitions for the next three years. As well as delivering efficient and effective services, Adult Social Care supports the delivery of **Wellbeing in Neighbourhoods** and **Delivering for those who need it most**.



It is my role to work with other professionals across Stockport to develop and implement policies and practices that help people to live as happily, healthily and independent as possible. I work with colleagues across our locality to ensure that our workforce has the right knowledge, skills and training to do their job well. I recognise the importance of working with our partners to deliver services that are joined up, wrapped around the person and delivered in our Neighbourhoods. I am committed to driving forward 'Working in Partnership' within our locality so that people with lived experience can influence the design and delivery of services.

As PSW I actively support the embedding and delivery of the Council Vision, Mission and Team Values across Adult Social Care. Our values define how we work, we always think about Stockport first, achieve as a team, work with ambition and show everyone respect. These values underpin everything we do in ASC in Stockport and is why we have developed an emblem of one of the values – **People at the heart of what we do.**



Our Values



In the last 12 months we have developed our Adult Social Care Plan on a Page to articulate our priorities and actions to our workforce, our partners and to the people of Stockport.

Our ASC Plan on Page articulates our priorities and actions.



Regional and National Networks

I am an active member of the GM, Regional and National PSW Networks. These networks are focused on improving social work practice and championing the voice of social workers delivering excellent outcomes with people to improve lives. Being involved with these networks has ensured that Stockport has had the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the various developmental workstreams and projects they support.



Work at a GM level has been of particular importance to ensure that social work has been recognised and understood within the GM Health and Social Care Partnership. The GM PSW Network reports through to the GM DASS group and ensures that there is a connection to frontline practice which influences decision making at a strategic level.

We aim to:

- Share best practice across GM to support practice quality
- Support, maintain and grow our Social Work Academy

- Provide social work leadership within the GM Health and Social Care Programme
- Ensure a GM voice at a regional and national level
- Provide peer support, supervision and challenge across the GM Network
- Focus on adherence to the statutory obligations enshrined in legislation for local authorities and support each other when responding to national policy and legislative changes.
- Support each other to prepare for CQC assurance.



2024/2025 Priorities



In 2024/2025 the Network priorities have been agreed as:

1. Workforce Delivery Plan/ GMSWA
2. Mental Health Programme
3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
4. Quality Assurance / Prep CQC

In 2024 the GMPSW Network produced an **Adult Social Work Quality Assurance Audit Tool** to provide a good practice framework against which PSWs and senior ASC leaders can self-evaluate their progress towards quality auditing and assurance, and action plan areas for improvement.

Quality assurance and audit in Adult Social Care

Purpose

Quality assurance can have multiple aims and benefits within ASC, but the primary goals are likely to include:

- Achieving continuous improvement and consistency of practice
- Improving experiences and outcomes for adults in receipt of social care
- Supporting good self-awareness and effective evaluation of strengths and improvements needed
- Helping to manage risk and providing reassurance to the public, senior leaders and Councillors
- Promoting high standards and supporting the professional development of front-line social care practitioners

Success factors

- Create a shared sense of responsibility for continuous improvement and high-quality practice
- Involve all ASC staff – senior leaders, managers and practitioners - in the process of designing, delivering and evaluating local quality assurance processes
- Think about how to involve adults who draw on services and carers - understanding what excellence means for people who use care and support can help services to be more effective and improve people's experiences and outcomes
- Develop partnerships and alliances around common goals or interests e.g. with HealthWatch, the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), other quality assurance teams/practitioners

Examples of good practice from Adult Social Care across Greater Manchester

- 'Voice of Our People' is an approach to proactively seeking feedback from people with lived experience (including their carers, friends, & family) on their recent interaction with Adults Services. The feedback gathered is collated and shared within the 'Making it Real' group to identify areas of positive practice, as well as areas that require development. The aim is to support a continuous cycle of learning and ongoing improvement
- A 'voice of the user' week runs every quarter, where the senior leadership team visit frontline services and speak directly to people in receipt of services to see and hear about their experiences and observe practice
- Case file audits that include a discussion with the person and/or their main carer or advocate
- Social care practitioners at all levels have one hour a week protected learning time to use for training, case reflection, research, self-directed learning, additional supervision etc as the practitioner sees fit. This promotes a culture of continuous professional development and learning
- A Quality Delivery Group has been established that has representation from across the service including frontline practitioners and support services. This group reviews feedback from people, the workforce and practice reviews. All practice and system changes are considered by this group to ensure consistency and whole service oversight
- Learning from Quality Assurance processes is systematically shared in a variety of ways via Manager Forums, 7-minute briefings, quarterly reports etc
- Supervision policy and good practice has been developed, including annual direct observations of practice
- Engaging in external peer reviews or challenge processes, including external case file audit by independent PSWs
- Using group moderation to ensure that judgements about practice quality are consistent across teams
- Developing a risk register which informs local improvement priorities

The GM PSW Network has worked hard over the last 12 months to support and further develop the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy.

The partnership is employer led and works collaboratively with the local universities, strengthening the relationship between them to raise standards of social work practice, through attracting high quality students and ensuring that they and qualified social workers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to best support the people of Greater Manchester.



Further information in relation the GMSWA can be found [here](#) on their website. Below are some of the examples of the work we are undertaking together.

GM Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Programme

The GMSWA coordinates the ASYE programme for Adults Social Work across Greater Manchester. Together with all local authority partners and training collaborator Griffin Care, we have developed a blended learning programme for all our Newly Qualified Social Workers, making us one of the early adopters of the ASYE Skills Programme.

We in Stockport also have our own offer for our AYSEs but have contributed to the creation of the above programme, this has been a supportive development, and we have received positive feedback from those staff who have attended. There is a GM Regional Memorandum of Collaboration and moderation process that we are signed up to as well as our own internal moderation process.

Over the last 12 months we have had 4 ASYEs successfully completing the programme 21 ASYEs have started/restarted the programme; this gives a total of 25 ASYEs on the programme and progressing; 3 of these will hopefully complete within the next couple of months.

Jane Porter's Story one of our current ASYEs

Having worked in social care for 35 years mainly in the provider side for Stockport ASC, an opportunity came up to apply to complete a social work degree via an apprenticeship. I had never had the opportunity previously to complete a degree due to my family commitments and expectations growing up. I applied and was amazed when I was accepted onto the course as I had left school with no qualifications. Due to this, in addition to the degree, I also needed to complete and pass Level 2 English and Maths. Juggling the studying; family carer responsibilities and working was demanding at times. However, I managed to pass the apprenticeship and to my amazement achieved a 1st class honours degree. I started my role as a mental health social worker in November last year, I am currently on the ASYE.

Every day is a learning day, it is never boring. One of the most difficult challenges is to prioritise all the different demands and timescales expected from you, something that is not taught at university.

I feel privileged to have had this opportunity and to work with people at such vulnerable times in their lives with supporting them to achieve their “best lives”. It is a demanding role, however the team I have around me is incredibly supportive; committed; hard working and most importantly compassionate about the people who we work with.

GM Practice Education Support

We are active participants in the GMSWA Practice Learning and Practice Educator (PE) Professional Standards (PEPS) Steering Groups and moderation programmes. We have collaboratively developed a blended training programme for social workers wishing to become practice educators. The programme has been designed to fit around the learner providing flexibility, to enable them to learn at their own pace. There is a mixture of online modules, videos, activities, quizzes supported by a workbook and a face-to-face workshop.

During the last academic year, we supported 11 social work students across the service. During the current academic year, we are supporting 6 this is therefore an area of focus for us in the coming year led by our Practice Lead and one of our Senior Social Workers.

GM Continued Professional Development Offer

Over the past 12 months our staff have benefitted from several CPD offers delivered by the GMSWA, and we as Principal Social Workers have been able to directly influence the offer to tailor it to the presenting needs of our workforce.

Some examples are detailed below:

- **World Social Work Week**— where a selection of training sessions and workshops were held over the week delivered by local authorities, researchers and the universities on a variety of topics. We in Stockport supported the event by leading a couple of sessions on our work in relation to Working in Partnership.
- **Safeguarding Practice Research Week**— this was an opportunity for researchers / academics to come together with social workers, sharing research which informs practice.
- **Adult Relational Leadership Programme** - supporting managers to embed relational approaches, developing positive relationships with teams, working through change, uncertainty, and complexity.

Apprenticeships

We are currently supporting 9 SW apprentices across the service, 4 have successfully completed the apprenticeship, with another 2 awaiting confirmation of their results. This has proved to be a great way to develop our workforce and in 2024 we expanded the offer to recruit to apprentice social worker positions having exhausted internal candidates.



Ellis Gregory My Apprenticeship Story

I started the social work degree apprenticeship in September 2021 at Manchester Metropolitan University alongside my fellow Stockport colleagues Hannah, Bernie and Jane. I was both nervous and excited at the prospect of going back to university. As the first ASC colleagues from Stockport on the apprenticeship we had nobody from past cohorts for reference, we really didn't know what to expect but were ready for all the challenges ahead! We had every Monday at University, and I really enjoyed being on campus and soaking in the student atmosphere. All the lecturers were really engaging and I dived into my university experience, getting books out from the library and learning about the history of social work, the theories that inform our practice and the law and legalisation.

The first year was challenging as this was compressed into 6 months and it was a bit of a shock at first as those deadlines loomed over you whilst still having your full time Social Care Officer role. However, as the years went on, I was able to plan and structure my time better to meet the demands of my role as well as my university assignments. I believe that my Social Care Officer role really started me in good stead, and I was able to use my experience I already had to relate to the theory I was learning at university to inform and improve my practice.

I finished my Apprenticeship at the end of February 2024 and was in a paid Social Work job at Stockport Council in March 2024.

I graduated in July 2024 and what a day it was! The sun was shining over the beautiful Bridgewater Hall, what a stunning building to graduate in. Manchester Metropolitan hosted an apprenticeship reception afterwards at the business school which included free alcohol and food, it was a great way to reflect and celebrate our achievements.

As it approaches 1 year of being qualified and making my way through my ASYE year, I really do think the degree apprenticeship is an amazing way to become a qualified social worker. A perfect balance of theoretical study at university whilst developing practical skills within my job role. I highly recommend it to anyone.

Practice Observation and Progression Programme (POPP)

This programme aims to provide an opportunity for social workers to demonstrate that they have met a range of required standards for practice as an experienced social worker within the Professional Capabilities Framework and met the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services. Over the past 12 months 4 practitioners have successfully completed the POPP programme.

I always enjoy reviewing the evidence portfolios and chairing the progression panel, observing how the social worker's practice has developed and the positive impact that their interventions have had on people's lives. Below is an example of the work we hear about.

All names and identifiable information has been changed to protect the person's identity

Stockport Stories



About the person



Name: Ian
Age: 70 – 80
Service area: Neighbourhood Social Work Team

About:

Ian is an only child, who was born in Stockport and has lived in the same family home (which he inherited from his parents) throughout his whole life. Ian is in touch with his cousin who he visits and regularly speaks with over the phone. Ian prefers to keep himself to himself but has friendly neighbours who he occasionally talk to on his street. Ian is very intelligent; enjoys using the computers and reading books at the library. Ian previously studied languages at university. Ian has worked as a cashier for a number of years and reports that his work is incredibly important to him as it provides routine and financial stability. Ian enjoys listening to music, watching sports and movies.

Circumstance: Ian contacted the voluntary sector for help with home maintenance. They referred him to ASC after they found him to be living in highly unsanitary conditions at risk to his physical and mental health.

How did we work together?

The Social Worker visited Ian and owing to the severity of the situation, involved Mental Health Services and other services. Services worked with Ian for around a year, but the situation continued to deteriorate and Ian was found not to have mental capacity in relation to the risks of his living conditions so to protect him in the immediacy he was detained under the Mental Health Act. Following discharge from Hospital, the Community Mental Health Support Worker and Social Worker have been working very closely and intensely with Ian in preparation for moving him back into his home in the next few weeks.

The Social Worker worked alongside Ian's GP, colleagues from the fire service, Age UK, Housing Standards, CPN, Consultant Psychiatrist, Nurses and Doctors from the Hospital as well as staff from the extra housing scheme. There were several Team Around the Adult meetings held and multiple risk assessments completed.

"At first, I was reluctant to accept any support; Social Care Services had tried to help previously and I felt that they were too forceful."

I worked closely with my assigned Social Worker and Mental Health Support Worker who both took care to take a gentle and supportive approach when assessing my needs and helped me re-gain the trust I had previously lost in Social Care. I was kept involved in the decision making around my home being de-cluttered and it was important to me that I could do this at my own pace. I have always been very independent so it was vital to me that I still felt in control of my life."

The Social Worker took appropriate action with regards to my falls risk at home by making the essential referral to Carecall. She also included me in the conversations and kept me up to date with the enquiries she was making with other professionals such as: hoarding specialists, Age UK, the Mental Health team and consultants in the community / ward."



The difference this has made



Working in partnership with my Social Worker and Mental Health Support Worker, I have been able to get back to work at the local supermarket which allows me to maintain my independence.

I am also now attending peer groups to talk about hoarding and the impact it has had on my life, sharing my own experiences and learning from others. I have also been able to benefit from Psychology support from a specialist in this field. I went through a reablement phase that taught me how to improve my home environment. I recognise that this is an ongoing journey, and I still require support in this area.



The wellbeing principle and strength-based practice is central to all that we do. It runs through our ASC Vision and Plan on a Page, and through our procedures, practice guidance and training. In the last 12 months we have refreshed our practice model, aligning it to [Gloriously Ordinary Lives](#), so that we are continually promoting practice excellence in the context of what people with lived experience have said they want for their lives. This training was co-delivered with people with lived experience

“The Gloriously Ordinary Lives training, delivered by those with direct lived experience, brought the training to life and made it relevant to social care practice”

Feedback from a social work practitioner participant

and brought practitioners and people with lived experience together to reflect on practice and where we can improve the experience of people and carers.

Social work assessment teams follow our [Support Planning Model](#) and our quality assurance processes provide *high support high challenge* to ensure we are building on peoples' strengths and assets and helping them to live gloriously ordinary lives.

It is important to us to recognise the impact of great practice, and this hasn't always been the case. We have therefore made several changes which gives us the tools and vehicles to shout proudly about what we do well. These include:

- A monthly ASC Newsletter which includes regular features such as compliments, themes from feedback from people, useful links, guidance and training, things we are proud of, stories from people about the impact of ASC, successes to celebrate.
- We have also influenced content in the All-Council Colleague Newsletter and now have a regular 'Spotlight on Adult Social Care' to shine a light on the impact of what we do.
- We have created videos to share the great work that we do, and these are included in local bulletins.
- We have developed 'Stockport Stories' where practitioners and people contribute to a case study which focuses on the intervention and how it supported the person to achieve their outcomes.
- At the Safeguarding Board we have launched 'Stockport Partnership Stories' to promote locally relevant safeguarding messages, all of which are well established means of sharing important learning across the system.
- This year we launched our new annual Adult Social Care Awards where we celebrate all the great work and commitment amongst our workforce.
- Quality Assurance Officer to support Teams to recognise their successes as well as their learning areas and take a proactive approach to supporting teams.

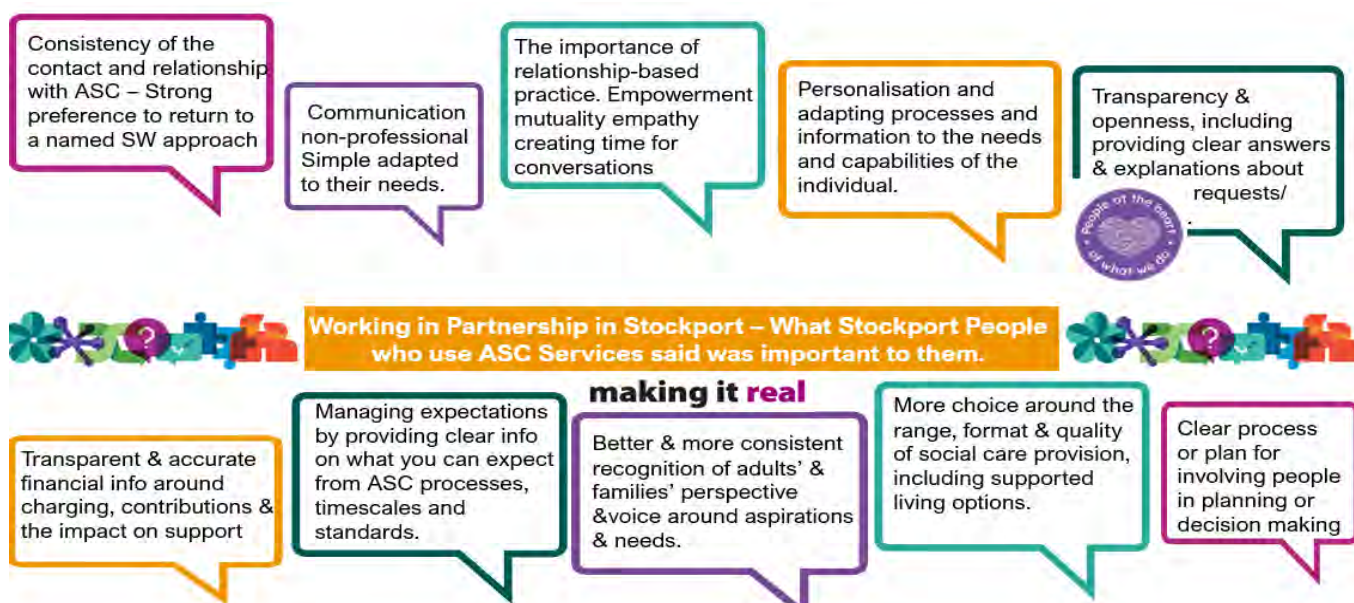


WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Over the past year, Stockport has embarked on a journey to improve the design and delivery of Adult Social Care by working in partnership with residents. The initiative, centred around the principles of Making it Real particularly the I and We statements alongside projects such as Gloriously Ordinary Lives and Social Care Futures aims to make social care more person-centred.



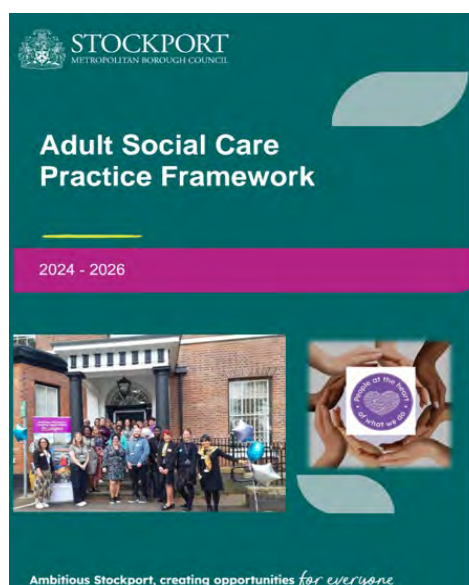
We commissioned Strategy for Change to consult with the people who use Adult Social Care in Stockport, and this is the feedback they gave us in relation to what matters to them.



Examples of the work we have done include simplifying language, improving information sharing through the introduction of the case summary note, and ensuring services are appropriate for individuals and their loved ones. The Making it Real Board has played a crucial role in fostering positive relationships between social care professionals and residents, enabling constructive conversations and practical changes.

The initiative has also focused on empowering residents to share their lived experiences, which has influenced policy and practice in areas like the supported housing strategy, commissioning and safeguarding. Monthly meetings of the Making it Real Board allow residents to set the agenda and discuss issues that matter to them, leading to tangible improvements in social care delivery. The collaboration between residents and professionals, including myself as the Principal Social Worker and the Director of Adult Social Care, ensures that feedback is acted upon, and services are continuously improved.

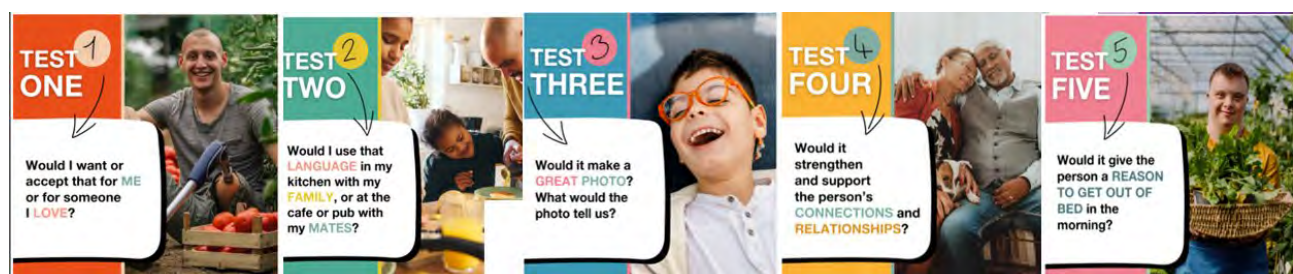
This work has influenced our Adult Social Care Practice Framework that we launched in 2024 that sets out to our workforce our approach to practice in Stockport.



- **Gloriously Ordinary Lives**
- **Relational Practice**
- **Strength Based**
- **PEOP Model**
- **Includes workforce support**



Ambitious Stockport, creating opportunities *for everyone*



Staff Engagement

In 2024 we held a Practice Day event with all practitioner colleagues from across ASC attending. This was supported by people with lived experience informing the agenda. We shared our Practice Framework and how this brings together our ethos, values, and tools in an accessible way to support practice and how this should drive and underpin the way

we work with the people of Stockport. We heard about what matters to people through our analysis of our compliments and complaints and the recent work commissioned for us to understand people's experience of using social care in Stockport. One of our Assistant Team Managers shared with attendees her reflections of attending The Court of Protection as a witness. The session was well attended and received and sparked some good conversations about the way we work.



We also celebrated World Social Workday in conjunction with Stockport Family bringing the services together and acknowledging our shared values and commitment to our community. The Chair of our Making it Real Board Hannah and her social worker shared their experience of working together and Hannah was able to contrast it with a previous experience where she hadn't felt included and listened to. This was impactful bringing home to the workforce the importance of relational practice empowering the person to lead their assessment.

We asked attendees what's the best thing about social work here some of the responses we received:



Working with different people every day & providing support for them to live the life they choose.

Always learning new things no matter how long you have been qualified.

Opportunities to make a difference each day.

Being around like-minded colleagues and supporting one another on difficult days.

Safeguarding Partnership Events Supported by Our Workforce

Safeguarding Adults Week 2024

- The theme for this year's week was **working in partnership**
- The week focused on information sharing and awareness raising
- Messages from our 3 statutory safeguarding partners were shared
- The week closed with a message from our Independent Chair
- We launched learning circles for Josie during the week
- New e-learning for risk matrix and safeguarding thresholds was launched
- Daily information briefings shared – including a *meet the team*



Trauma Conference 2024

- Joint conference with the Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Included guest speakers to share research and learning
- Made possible through funding from Trauma Responsive Greater Manchester
- Included "lads like us" who shared their lived experience
- Also included lived experience from a mum from New Beginnings
- Attended by over 185 professionals from across both Partnerships
- Directly met our shared priority around *trauma and risk*
- Information stalls from a range of community and safeguarding services

Our Staff attended A SAR Learning Circle for:

Josie



- Josie was 76 years old when she died.
- She lived in a residential care home.
- Diagnosed with Mixed Alzheimers and Vascular Dementia.
- Josie developed a moisture lesion which developed into an ungradable pressure ulcer.
- Josie's needs were being met by both residential care home staff and District Nursing Team.
- Josie's deteriorating condition raised concern amongst all professionals involved.

They also took part in a self-neglect audit day here are some of their comments from the event

I hadn't realised about all the different offers available to help adults with self-neglect

Great opportunity to take time away from my desk and reflect on practice and learning

Helpful to come together, share, and learn

I didn't know about all the training and different services in the Partnership

ies for everyone

Workforce

We currently have 183 qualified social workers in Stockport ASC in both frontline and management roles. We have a process in place to provide assurance regarding their registration with Social Work England. We are also supported by our therapy staff and unregistered colleagues who support us to deliver our service. During the year we have done a lot of work to embed the Adult Social Care Charter which is supporting our workforce to deliver on what matters to the people of Stockport.

We have continued to embed our workforce strategy for our directorate and have invested in the training and development offer available to all colleagues. With the national challenges facing social care workforce, we have developed a workforce recruitment and retention plan.

We also recognise importance of engagement with our workforce. Therefore, working closely with the DASS and senior management team, we have developed some great internal networks:

- **Practitioners Forum**
- **Staff Council**
- **ASC Race Equality Group**
- **Safeguarding & A BIA Forums**
- **Leadership Forum**
- **Monthly Let's Talk Sessions**
- **SMT attending Team Meetings**
- **Team away days**
- **Front line visits**

Adult Social Care Charter



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Together we have developed several bespoke wellbeing activities across our teams as we recognise the importance of investing in our workforce.

ASC Race Equality Group

Following the Let's talk sessions on the 4th and 5th of December 2023 and the creation of the Race Equality Group in February 2024, we have made positive strides in having meaningful, constructive and sometimes challenging discussions around racism, to support our leadership team as well as the practitioners.

We have had guest speakers who have also contributed to the conversations which most people found useful. Our guest speakers included Millie Kerr (Brighton & Hove, Anti-Racist Practice Lead), Jade (Joanne McLoughlin's daughter), Lindsey Martin (Advisor, Workforce, Partners in Care and Health (PCH), Local Government Association (LGA) and others.

We have also participated in Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standards (SC-WRES) and have had Impact sessions with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) which some of our leadership attended.

In our quest to working towards being an anti-racist local authority, we have also made positive gains as our ambition to become an anti-racist organisation was made at full council and we should have an update in October this year. After we get the update, we will start working with our community leaders. Some of the work has already started.

Purple Fusion have been commissioned to deliver Global Majority Leadership Development training which started on 22/05/2025. 20 participants from the Global Majority, from across the council and Stockport Homes are taking part in this programme that will run for 6 months covering a range of topics

We are hosting the NW Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Anti-Racist Network workshop on the 4th of July and the topic for discussion will be Allyship.

Ongoing work influenced by our anti-racist discussions include new templates for anti-racist supervision, Dignity at work zero tolerance policy & report and support which is almost ready to launch.

We should be proud of where we are now and where we are going and to achieve this, we will need our allies more than before.

We acknowledge that change is not easy and changing mindsets and attitudes is even harder, but we will keep pushing for our Global Majority workforce and the people we serve to feel safe in work and in the community.

Digital Tools

We have introduced new digital tools to support our practitioners. In a survey they told us that they had to spend a lot of time recording assessments, reviews and other interactions that they have with people. Our practitioners told us that they wanted to focus on having good conversations with people.

In late 2024 we entered into a trial of some software which utilises Artificial Intelligence to capture the conversation and record it on a persons assessment. A group of practitioners from across Adult Social Care used this software during the trial period, the results were fantastic. We had great feedback from our practitioners and the people who had an assessment in this way. Here is some of what they told us:

"I have found this technology simple to use, smart and helpful. It captures details I might have missed and produces a quality assessment at the end"

Marie - Practitioner

"Taking manual notes at times can be disconcerting for people. I have found that the software means its not as obvious and forgotten about due to the **focus on the conversation**, thereby increasing the quality of the interaction"

Vicky - Practitioner

We are now rolling this out across our teams.

Workforce Stories



My name is Dina O'Brien and I have been employed by Stockport Council for 30 years.

In 1994 Aged 24yrs, I started working as a Care Assistant in a Stockport Council care home for older people. Up until this point I had been working for the AA Automobile Association in car insurance.

I absolutely loved working as a Care Assistant and have many very fond and funny memories which I still reflect on to this day!

I learnt the importance of compassion, caring, empathy and dignity when helping someone with their personal care and at the end stages of their life.

In 1997 I was fortunate to gain a position as a Social Services Officer working alongside front line social workers in the community. Again, I

absolutely loved this role and began meeting the wonderful people of Stockport in their own homes which was to me a privilege. I also worked with some fabulous role models, social workers and social work managers who gave me confidence and encouragement in my role.

Between 2003 and 2005 I completed the Diploma in Social Work alongside working as an SCO and took extended maternity leave to finalise my studies. I felt extremely fortunate to have a line manager who believed in me and encouraged and supported me, and I will be forever grateful to her.

Gaining the formal qualification at aged 35yrs with 3 young children under 9yrs was one of the proudest days of my life and having them with me when I graduated at Stockport Town Hall and having my photo with them on the famous staircase.

I worked as a Social Worker across most of the Neighbourhoods and have been proud to serve the community.

In 2013 I progressed my career into management, and I am currently the Team Lead for the West Neighbourhood (Heatons & Victoria).

Moving into management was very hard for me as I absolutely loved the direct work with people and their families, however over time I feel I have found that my purpose and role now is to inspire and support my team to be the best that they can be and support people with passion, care and empathy and I now find this equally rewarding seeing my team members grow and develop into amazing workers.

As I reflect on my 30years, I can honestly say I still feel very proud and privileged to be working in such a wonderful career where you can really make the difference.!!!



My name is Sarah Kerr and here is a summary of my career progression in Stockport. When at college completing the advanced diploma in health and social care, I completed a placement with the Stockport Learning Disability Team for 2 weeks and this was the beginning of me wanting to become a social worker and understand more about the values of adult social care.

I went to university to complete a health and social care degree and then a master's in social work at the University of Manchester and I returned to Stockport ASC on placement with the Safeguarding Team, where I was welcomed and learned a lot around the role of a social worker, leading me to qualify and obtain a degree in social work. A year after qualifying as a social worker in 2017, I was successfully recruited to the role of social care officer in an integrated neighbourhood team.

I was soon recruited into the role of a social worker in the same team and completed the assessed and supported year of employment programme (ASYE) which was a great way to start my career with supportive methods of review of my progress as a social worker.

I moved within Stockport to the Working Age Mental Health Team as a social worker and gained extensive knowledge and experience, completing care act assessments and commissioning support with people with severe and enduring mental health conditions.

I have completed practice educator training and had a student who successfully passed his placement, and I completed my level 1 practice educator PEPS qualification portfolio. I then went on to complete the POPP program successfully and I became the assistant team manager of the team, initially as a secondment, but then as a permanent role. This then allowed me to support several social workers who were newly qualified through the ASYE programme and then completed the PEPS stage 2 portfolio as a practice educator. I was in the role of the assistant team manager for around 2 years, gaining a wealth of experience in leadership and have recently been successfully appointed to Team Leader on the same team.

I have more recently successfully completed the Best Interest Assessor (BIA) training through Teesside University, funded by SMBC. I have been provided with several opportunities by Stockport ASC and I hope to continue to progress my career with SMBC and to be supported to reach my potential.



GROW AND THRIVE

Everyone thrives, has access to learning and development and can reach their potential.



STOCKPORT LIVE WELL

In 2024 we introduced Stockport Live Well

appointments as part of our early help and prevention services for adults. We offer face-to-face appointments in community venues like libraries, community centres, and council offices and provide information, advice, and initial

assessments to identify support needs. Making it quicker for people and carers to access social care support and community services. The team also help people connect with their community and learn about Library and Leisure Services. Short term support focuses on enablement, providing suitable equipment and home adaptations, with support for carers' wellbeing. Stockport Local is part of One Stockport Local, aimed at delivering community-level help and support. A service user recently said, **"My Social Care Officer was supportive, and I felt listened to throughout our time working together."**



I just want to thank you for your time, professionalism, care, patience and empathy for Mum yesterday afternoon. Whilst I always try to advocate for Mum, it is so important for her to have ownership of the decisions about her future, and for her to retain as much independence as she can.

The meeting left Mum and I feeling very positive about a way forward to her feeling more settled & less anxious in her home: wherever that will end up being. Hopefully, she will be able to have a trial fortnight in an extra care housing flat in Marple. The shower stool in the interim will be a great help.

We have also offered bespoke Stockport Live Well appointments with our therapy teams and for people with autism or a learning disability.



Our Therapy staff play a key role in the delivery of Adult Social Care and particularly in respect of prevention and ensuring that people are supported to remain as independent as possible. We therefore have therapists supporting our ASC Front Door and over the past year we have introduced link therapist to our social work teams supporting Peer Review to encourage a multi-disciplinary approach.

We currently have two Equipment Officers progressing through their OT Apprenticeship.

We also have the first Equipment and Adaptations Officer in Stockport, doing their Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment Apprenticeship. This is a workforce we are committed to investing in their development and supporting them to have opportunities to progress in their careers.

Priorities in practice for the next 12 months

Five Big Things



We know that over the last 12 months we have made significant changes across the service. This next year is about embedding and supporting our workforce to deliver on our commitments to people. We will do this by:

1. **Staff Engagement and Feedback:** Continuing to engage with staff and act on their feedback to improve service delivery.
2. **Clear Practice Standards:** Ensuring that staff understand the practice standards and expectations.
3. **Quality Supervision:** Providing regular, reflective, and developmental supervision that also focuses on individual wellbeing.
4. **Training and CPD:** Refining and strengthening training and continuous professional development (CPD) to support workforce priorities.
5. **Inclusion of Experts by Experience:** Including experts by experience in staff training to amplify the voice and experience of people served.
6. **Managing Recruitment Challenges Within Social Work:** Proposing to appoint only experienced practitioners and pausing the apprenticeship program to manage the high number of learners and allow for further workforce planning.