

Video transcript: WM ADASS Plans and Priorities 2022/23

Pete Fahy: I'm Pete Fahy, I'm Director of Adult Social Care and Housing at Coventry Council and vice chair of the regional network. This is draft, and these are that five key points that [we're] really interested in comments [on].

We've got LGA on the phone, NHS, West Midlands Care Association, and experts by experience. What, within those big five, might be an area of focus where you think through working together we could really, really, lever some improvement?

We have got some major things to look forward to. Whether we are actually looking forward to CQC assurance or not, it's a challenge we've got. As is a coordinated and effective approach to reform, making our programme more participatory - which picks up on some of the comments all already said.

Then some of the others around essentially extending our team and extending our network. So, the introduction of three new social care research champions would only be possible with support through University of Birmingham.

Our appointment of a social care workforce lead. Our work on digital. It's a growing set resource which I think gives us opportunity to really do things.

Keiron Broadbent: If we're looking at some priorities for the coming year it's got to be workforce. We've got probably the worst staffing crisis I've ever seen. You have a ticking time bomb and that's because the workforce at the moment are completely burnt out.

I think nationally it's something like 50,000 vacancies in adult social care and that's probably going to double at least. We're recruiting from overseas, that seems to be the only option at the moment.

I'm not even sure if we could find, like a huge pot of money, and say we can increase everyone's pay overnight and 'I'll stay in the sector'. That might be enough for some, but...

When you talk about workforce, the family carers and unpaid carers are probably the biggest workforce out there. I'm from Mobilise, we've been working with Pete from the ADASS group, and also about five different local authorities.

We hope that the pilot can show you can reach many more people. If we can provide support to them and provide them in a light touch approach that can help them, I think that can be a real, real improvement over the next year.

Paul Johnston: The relationship with the West Midlands Care Association providers - for things like workforce - [are] very much on the agenda. Keiron was asking the question earlier about what success would look like.

We know that there's falling numbers in the workforce. We know that particularly domicilliary care are struggling to recruit and retain staff. So maybe a success criteria will be

finding a way to stabilise that. So the change in the staffing numbers, finding ways to add capacity and capability to the workforce so that we can make sure that we meet people's needs in the right way and hopefully we can do some of that through the network that we have built.

David Crosby: Clearly, the work that local authorities are going to have to do between now and September on 'Fair Cost of Care' and market sustainability planning is absolutely critical.

It's about making sure that that exercise is done as robustly and objectively as we possibly can in partnership, and then making the case back up the line to central government because that's the underlying system issue: there isn't enough money coming out to local authorities to fund care, and we've got to address them.

Robin Miller: Thoughts from me: one is in the improvement. The peer challenge process is a really important part of that. I think there's also something we can do in terms of the skills of improvement, near the frontline in service teams et cetera.

One of the findings we got from the recent survey we did on strength based practice was probably only about 20% of people either frontline or managers said that they were able to engage with the findings of the practice review/peer challenge process.

So I think there's something we can do about trying to bring in that improvement mentality and bring skills a bit closer to the frontline.

Richard James: I think we need more research, and I think it needs to play a more prominent role. We are usually so focused on doing, on action, and that's because we need to be.

David made a point about using evidence to make strong cases to government. That's very powerful point, that's what research will help us do.

Paul Johnson was talking about how we need to better evidence outcomes, and there are too many questions that we just don't have good answers to or can't prove. If we don't get those fundamentals right I think we will always be held back and we will always be responding with 'I think', 'I suggest', 'I guess'. That does not put us in on a strong footing.

Clenton Farquharson: I'm trying to understand how the region (I'm saying this nationally as well) how you are addressing inequalities? Inequalities of unmet need, inequality of experience and quality of care and support.

How are you capturing that, but also, the intention or actions? You say you are going to promote social justice. Promoting social justice means viewing things through the lens of equity. So how is equity going to play out to address the five objectives and the ten things that you outlined that you are going to deliver? That doesn't come through for me.

Pete Jackson: I was partly going to answer Clenton's question – well not answer but acknowledge it really. I think about the work we've been doing around people with learning

disabilities and autism this year. The seminar last week which we did online about Gipsies, Travellers and Romany people.

The broader question about the black and minority ethnic people, communities, is massive. And actually we're trying to think about how we can do practical things. We can't solve the issue but actually we want to talk about it and we want Clenton, another other people in this call to help us think about what can we do together, which isn't tokenistic, which is actually building on some other research that Robin mentioned earlier on, and actually presenting an evidence base for why that needs investment.

At the start of last year, we asked the Better Care Fund national team to do a piece of work with us around looking at the impact of Better Care funding on black and minority ethnic communities across England.

The answer is we don't know, and I think that's the sort of thing where the approach that Richard just described... it's not just about research for research's sake, its research for impact and research for action.

I think that's what we've learnt certainly working with Robin, certainly working with Andrea, certainly working with Peter Spilsbury in the Strategy Unit around better using data, is that we've got to be better as social care about evidencing what we do, of being proud of what we do, and actually being confident about what we do, and I think that's the theme that I'd pick up from our Regional Account this year, is that we want to bolder. We know there's lots to do but actually we want to be bolder about how we do that together with all of the people on this call today.