

Must haves for moving forward



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“We have an opportunity for serious social change, so decide on what society should mean and aim to achieve it.”

Must have

1: Value and invest in Social Care

It's a mindset - don't undervalue Social Care or see it as the poor relation to the NHS. Millions of citizens in the UK need support to live their lives. As one Support Worker sharply observed.

“Support social care. You may not need it now, but the day will come when you or somebody you love will. The health of a nation can be measured by its level of support offered to ... [those in need]. Let's be the best we can be..”

With such severe cuts to funding for over a decade, Social Care is on its knees. Many families who are supporting their loved ones are also exhausted. At its worst, Social Care has become little more than a threadbare safety net.

“In all kinds of ways, we have a system that doesn't work, that doesn't look after the people who need it well, that doesn't look after the people providing the care well.” (Sir Andrew Dilnot. PoliticsHome.com 14th July 2020). The incredible response we have seen during the pandemic is simply not sustainable unless more investment is made.

Must have

2: Ensure people have a place to live which really means 'home' - as you and we experience our homes

Governments (working alongside regulators) must value the fundamental differences between care homes, residential care homes and supported living. The more choice and autonomy people have the better! We must all commit to ensuring a future where people with a learning disability and/or autism are supported to live in small shared houses or on their own, rather than in large residential settings. This pandemic has highlighted that people are safer when they live in their own home or share their home with just a few other people of their choice (with a consistent supporting team).

Must have

3: Support people to regain and experience flourishing lives*

At a time when many people with a learning disability and/or autism have had to 'pause' aspects of their lives, Support Workers are aware that some people may need focused support to regain these skills that are essential for their independence. Fundamental things like being able to shop, cook, meet up with friends and travel independently, create possibilities and a sense of pride of self and value in life.

We must commit to people moving forward as equal citizens. *'If we do not stay strong, questioning and determined to do this, people will be denied their human rights. It is a dangerously slippery slope.'* (Warren, S. Giles, J. *A Practical Guide to the Reach Standards*, 2019)



“Having to work remotely at very short notice and never having done this before, it would have been great to get some more guidance on software packages instead of just being thrown in at the deep end - 9 weeks in and I am still learning how they work. I have been left feeling very inadequate in terms of my knowledge - there was an assumption everyone knew all about these things already.”

Bridging the translation gap between learning disability policy and practice in search of flourishing lives. NIHR School for Social Care Research. (PI) Dr Sara Ryan (Current research project).

Must have

4: Increase the pay of Support Workers!

The pay of Support Workers must increase to reflect their highly skilled, complex and diverse roles. Lack of Local Authority funding has driven down salaries, to the point where other sectors out-compete social care as a career choice when looking at pay alone. Social Care is fundamentally about relationships, trust, spending time alongside people, being motivated and making a difference – Support Workers must be recognised and rewarded as principle, key workers. A national Support Worker scale which pays people a salary which reflects their training and expertise is needed, now.



“[we’ll] look back and see the response of front-line workers stepping up and doing what they always do... this should be recognised and acknowledged.”

Must have

5: Harness that natural creativity!

Regulators and organisations need to work with Support Workers to minimise the restrictions that limit creativity. During lockdown many Support Workers reconnected with the soul of their work – to be in relationships with individuals and figure out together how to make the best of life. This creativity must continue.



“We should remember that we CAN DO things differently and we should continue to be as creative as we are being now.”

Must have

6: Lift the voice of Support Workers

Shout it from the roof tops – the profile of Support Workers must be understood and broadcast across society to ensure that their role is seen and valued. This must include Support Workers being fully involved in shaping support and services (alongside families, self-advocates and management).



“It has taken a pandemic for the general public to realise the contribution we are making on a daily basis, caring for vulnerable adults. before during and after the pandemic. It’s a privilege to work in health and social care.”