

# Adult Social Care



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**Slough**  
Borough Council

Provider bulletin

October 2024

**Message from Lynn Johnson Interim Head of Market Management, Slough Borough Council.**

## **SBC Adult Social Care CQC Assessment**

The Health and Care Act 2022 gives the Care Quality Commission (CQC) new powers to provide independent assessment of care at a local authority and integrated care system level.

On 7 October 2024 we received our CQC Assessment notification; the CQC has not yet confirmed when they will start their onsite inspection but we do know that during their visit they will carry out face to face contact or online meetings with:

- Council leaders and staff
- Partner agencies
- People who use SBC's care and support services
- Representative groups

Our self-assessment is an important part of preparing us for CQC's visit as it provides us with an opportunity to show CQC and everyone else how well we understand our strengths and the areas where we need to improve.

Further information will be shared with providers following submission.

### **Training**

#### **The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) – The new Learning and Development Support Scheme**

The DHSC has recently published a new guidance document below on the funding available for learning and development for the adult social care workforce. This new fund is called the Learning and Development Support Scheme.

- [check out new guidance on funding for learning and development for adult social care workforce](#)

The Learning and Development Support Scheme is administered via a new digital online claims service that allows adult social care employers to claim funding for certain training courses and qualifications on behalf of eligible care staff. Funding is

available for eligible courses and qualifications that have been both paid for and started between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 (inclusive).

In order to manage the roll-out, for the first few months access to the service will be via invite only but providers can complete the expression of interest form below to be onboarded onto the new system.

[expression of interest form](#)

If you have questions about the Learning and Development Support Scheme you can get in touch with the team by emailing [ascreimbursement@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:ascreimbursement@dhsc.gov.uk)

### **Skills for Care - New nursing recruitment and retention resources**

Skills for Care, in partnership with key stakeholders, has developed a range of new resources to support employers recruit and retain nurses in their workforce. These resources have been designed to share best practices and expertise that explore the introduction and development of nursing roles across different care settings.

The resources cover professional practice from pre-registration right through the nursing career span.

[Check out the nursing recruitment and retention resources](#)

## **Local resources**

### **Meet new Members of the Market Management Team**

**Phyllis Maynard** joined the Quality Assurance team as manager of the service, having worked with numerous councils within and outside of London with roles across both Quality Assurance and Learning Disability commissioning.

Phyllis is a Registered Learning Disability nurse with over 30 years' experience within health and social care. She brings operational experience from previously working with a variety of care providers. She is also a non-executive director for an LD advocacy service and is an approved NHS England Tier 2 Oliver McGowan trainer.

Phyllis is passionate about person centred working and readdressing issues of health inequalities for people with a learning disability and or autism

**Abiodun Ojo** recently joined Slough Borough Council as an interim Principal Quality Assurance Officer, having worked with a number of other councils in both Quality Assurance and Commissioning roles.

Abiodun has extensive experience across different care services with experience as a registered manager as well as a turnaround project manager improving CQC ratings for services.

Abiodun is committed to a multidisciplinary, multi-agency approach to system change to meet the challenges of delivering safe, quality and sustainable services for the people of Slough.

**Chan Ahluwalia** is a Principal Contracts Officer with a lead for the Supported Living contracts. Chan recently joined Slough Borough having worked in local authorities for over 18 years, in various roles, most recently as a Social Care and Contracts Manager at the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Chan is passionate about building positive working relationships and looking forward to working with our local Supported Living market to ensure positive outcomes are delivered for residents.

**Maryam Hassan** joined Slough Borough Council in October 2023, as a broker and has a good understanding of our local markets and built strong relationships with providers.

In September 2024, Maryam secured a permanent post in the Contracts Management team, as a Contracts Officer and is eager to leverage her skills and experiences in this new role.

Maryam is deeply committed to the well-being of vulnerable individuals, aligning her work with the core values of Slough Borough Council. She is focused on assuring the delivery of safe, high-quality care services in the context of value-for-money.

### **Free Data Security Toolkit support**

The Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) helps adult social care providers in England to check and improve how they keep people's information safe. It is the official self-assessment tool for the care sector and is widely recognised by CQC, local authorities and the NHS.

Please take a moment to [watch the short animation about the DSPT](#).

The DSPT for social care is specifically designed for adult care providers and is nationally recognised as the official tool to evaluate compliance with legal requirements, data security standards and good practice.

If you have services funded by the NHS, for example under continuing healthcare, there is a contractual requirement to complete the DSPT every year.

For further information

Contact the Berkshire Care Association

[DSPT – Data Security and Protection Toolkit | Berkshire Care Association](#)

***Reminder, Please ensure your current insurance documents are up to date and provided to the Contracts Management Team***

It is an important part of your contractual obligations to Slough Borough Council, and a legal requirement, to ensure you have valid insurance at all times. It is important

that when you renew your insurance documents you remember to provide a copy to the Contracts Management Team by emailing us on [ASC.ContractsManagement@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ASC.ContractsManagement@slough.gov.uk).

Providers are finding the cost of insurance has risen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and as such it is important you allow enough time for finding an alternative insurance provider, if needed, before your current insurance expires.

It is important that you inform Contracts Management if you are having difficulty arranging future cover before the expiry of your current insurance.

## Other updates

### Care Quality Commission (CQC) - Re-building a trusted approach to their regulation

The CQC have set out how they will drive the improvements needed to re-build trust in their regulation.

This involves making immediate changes to support their response to the recommendations in the interim report from Dr Penny Nash (see link below) and to improve ways of working ahead of the publication of the final report. These changes will help them to deliver:

- a clear and transparent programme of assessment and ratings
- quicker and more effective registration and assessments of providers
- simpler and clearer reports.

[interim report from Dr Penny Dash](#)

**For further information visit:**

[Re-building a trusted approach to our regulation - Care Quality Commission](#)

Adult Social Care Winter Letter 2024/25

Letter from Stephen Kinnock, Minister of State for Care, setting out the priorities for adult social care this winter.

[Adult social care winter letter 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

The letter sets out the critical actions needed across the adult social care sector to protect individuals and their carers and deliver operational resilience in winter 2024 to 2025.

It is aimed at:

- Chief Executives of local authorities
- Directors of adult social services
- Integrated care boards and partnerships
- Adult social care provider representative organisations
- Adult social care providers

- Local authority adult social care staff including social workers and occupational therapists

The UK Health Security Agency, Department for Health and Social Care, and NHS England have announced the launch of the Get Winter Strong campaign on 7 October, to help reduce the impact of winter viruses on those most at risk, as well as ease NHS winter pressures.

The campaign will urge those eligible to get their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations when invited, ahead of winter, targeting those at greatest risk and for the first time will encourage pregnant women to also get their respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and whooping cough vaccination.

As of the 23rd of September, eligible people in England can now book their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations through the NHS, with appointments starting from 3 October. For their RSV jab, pregnant women and older adults should speak to their maternity service or GP practice to arrange it.

The campaign will run for 10 weeks and will appear on broadcast TV, on demand and community TV, as well as radio channels, outdoor poster sites in England and on social media channels.

### **Care Quality Commission (CQC) – Medicines support in adult social care**

Earlier this year the CQC commissioned Ipsos to undertake research with adult social care providers. The project was to understand what support providers are receiving to ensure medicines are managed safely, how the support impacts the quality of care that providers are able to deliver, and future support needs.

The research shows that adult social care services have access to a wide range of different types of medicines support from a variety of sources, including community pharmacy and a range of healthcare professionals. However, just under half of those accessing support from community pharmacies say it fully meets their needs, with contacting pharmacies a key issue where support didn't meet their needs.

Follow the link to find out more:

[Provider survey: Medicines support in adult social care - Care Quality Commission](#)

### **Care Quality Commission (CQC) – Claiming research and development (R&D) tax relief**

Claims from the care sector are highly unlikely to be eligible for research and development (R&D) relief. However, colleagues at HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have advised that the care sector is being targeted by some agents who are persuading businesses to make ineligible claims. These agents often promise a '100% success rate' and guarantee 'no HMRC investigation'. Once the claim is paid, they take their fee and often become unreachable once HMRC begins investigating.

If you are contacted by an agent offering to make an R&D claim, please think carefully. Don't give them your HMRC log\_in details. Read the guidance below:

[R&D tax relief guidance](#)

[R&D Guidelines for Compliance.](#)

Anyone who has a concern about an R&D claim they have made, or may have been made on their behalf, should email: [rd.incentivesreliefs@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:rd.incentivesreliefs@hmrc.gov.uk) and title the email 'For the attention of the R&D Anti Abuse Unit'.

### **Preventing sexual harassment at work**

Under equality law from the 26 October 2024 **employers must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment** of workers.

If employers do not comply with it, they are **breaking the law**. This preventative duty is designed to improve workplace cultures by requiring employers to **anticipate how sexual harassment might happen** in their workplace and take proactive reasonable steps to prevent it happening.

### **Employment Rights Bill**

The Government is introducing new **workplace rights** to end unfair employment practices and help deliver economic growth.

Make sure you understand how the new Employment Rights Bill will make **changes to management**.

## Contact us

### **Contact Details**

Are your contact details up to date? We encourage providers to update their contact details (especially email addresses) by emailing us on [ASC.ContractsManagement@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ASC.ContractsManagement@slough.gov.uk).

We use these details to communicate with providers. It is very important that we reach the correct person in your organisation to receive appropriate referrals and timely updates from SBC, and that you do not miss out on any opportunities.

**Please ensure we have your most recent email address.**

If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter by writing about a topic of your choice, perhaps something that is particularly important to you, please contact us at [ASC.ContractsManagement@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ASC.ContractsManagement@slough.gov.uk)