



**Wendy Adams 01:56**

I think what it really does well is it sets out what the different roles in social care might be. So it clearly outlines the knowledge, the experience, the skills that people need in in different roles, whether that's a care worker, a senior care worker, a deputy manager. And I think what it does is it gives the opportunity for the social care workforce to think about, and it provides guidance about how people can develop those skills, how people can access learning and development and career progression, which is a great opportunity for staff within social care, and one that we know has, you know, been often been neglected

**Pia Rathje-Burton 02:42**

Absolutely. And it really sort of kind of be showing, I suppose, the learning and development, the values, the behavior for each of those roles. So if you're looking at it, you'll be able to see, you know, you have a, you know, new to care what what skills do they they need to have? What knowledge should I need to have? What behavior do they need to have? It's quite early development, so at the moment, there's just the four roles, but more, more will be added soon, and the plan is for all the different roles in social care to be to be on the care work pathway. The current four roles are new to care, care or support worker, supervisor and leadership and practice leader. But as I say, there will be more soon, including the register manager role.

**Wendy Adams 03:29**

So National Care Group were one of 30 employers that were the early adopters in some of their services, including Justine's service the Oak House, and that's why we thought it would be a fantastic opportunity to have them along on the podcast today to hear some more about the great work that they've been doing.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 03:47**

Yeah, so the work they will be talking to us about is about the career self assessment that some of their staff did, and then the they followed up with some career conversations all linked to the care workforce pathways and using some of those resources, they tested for us. So on with the show. So Justine and Nicola, welcome to the care exchange. Thank you. Thank you. So glad you could come and and spend a bit of time with us. We heard, then Nicola in the introduction, that a bit of a summary of the care workforce pathway. Do you think you can explain it to us? Because I think sometimes we have a way of explaining it. It might be very different from you. So could you explain it to us?

**Nicola Airey 04:39**

Yeah. So from our perspective, it's been quite a useful tool for managers and colleagues alike, but also for us as a learning and development team to understand where our colleagues currently are at, where they're looking to go, but what support and additional, maybe training,



And that's really interesting here, because I think that there will be some managers listening to the podcast who are thinking, well, what's the benefit in doing this? What what's it going to



**Pia Rathje-Burton** 12:42

And I suppose the other thing is to sort of say that those tools were kind of the early, early versions. Weren't they, which is why they probably weren't quite as user friendly as they are. And obviously that's the whole point of being an early adopter is that you kind of, you're testing things, and then, you know, we will then kind of update those and make sure that they're really user friendly. So I'm sure that when they are released shortly, then they will be much more user friendly and and ask questions following your feedback. So just going back to those career conversations that you had afterwards, how did you find them having to do having to do them as a manager yourself,

**Speaker 2** 13:24

I think it was pretty easy to do with the staff, really, because they were comfortable, yeah, with me. They were comfortable telling me what the goals were and what they wanted to achieve. And I think I do have quite a close working relationship with them anyways so it I didn't find it difficult, and I don't think they found it difficult to sit and talk to me about what they wanted to do. I think they felt it was nice that the manager was actually listening to them, that that were listening, and we are there to help them to to develop. Yeah.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 14:01

And do you think you would have had that kind of conversations anyway?

**Speaker 2** 14:06

Possibly not, no, because don't have the time to to sit. And do you have everyday conversations? How are you? How's that going? Are you doing really well at this is that, personally, no, I don't think I would have sat with these staff to have these one to one conversations. For me, it was a good opportunity to actually engage with them.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 14:31

Yeah, and you might have missed opportunities, and people feel, you know, nobody's re.09 Tmi1ooF1 12

yeah, well, I do have four of them now, because I've already got one. We've got four of them now. We've enrolled onto that. Um, they've just had an assessor come along, so they're just starting with that which they're all really, really grateful for the opportunity. Some of them have wanted to just develop in their everyday role. So they've wanted to develop to be like a medication leads and taking part in the audit process. So that's something what we've worked with as well, just to develop so develop the skills in the everyday role as well as the conversations. And I

**Wendy Adams 15:53**

think that's a really important message, isn't it? Is that sometimes development isn't always about getting a promotion or moving to a different job. It might be enhancing the skills in the job that you're in. And you know, for lots of people, that's what they want to do. They don't want that other job. They want to just do the best job that they possibly can in the role that they're in. So it's m2g)3hT 19cd0 G 0 1366e)3(yd9m[hy

understand, with a group of colleagues that are at the in the same role, how are they all



**Wendy Adams 20:47**

that's really helpful, isn't it? Because I think you know, you're right. Good communication skills could mean very different things to me. It could mean very different things to Pia it could mean very different things to you. So that that additional guidance about, well actually, what does that look like, and what does that look like in this role? Seems to be to be something that would be be really helpful. And I'm guessing that that's really helpful when you look at people moving roles as well, because one of the things that I think is difficult for people is sometimes when you move from being a care worker to a senior care worker or into a more senior position, you know that your communication needs to be better, but in what way does it need to be better? Do you find does the care workforce pathway break that down? And do you find that that's been helpful?

**Nicola Airey 21:39**

Yeah, I found it helpful. And what we've done is when we've got colleagues that are a bit unsure about so apologies for going back to qualifications, but this is how it's helped me, is when they're unsure whether they want to do a particular qualification, we've actually shared the workforce pathway roles for those particular sort of levels. So if you're looking at progressing to become a senior or a team leader. These are the expectations. So here's your current role, here's what the next role would look like. And have a look and think of, oh, actually, is that? Is that the right move for me? Is that the role for me? Am I ready for it yet, or is the things I can be doing in the background to support me to get there? But what I have found where I have shared that with people is it's been quite a useful tool, where we've got people going, Oh, actually, if you'd asked me what qualification I wanted to go to, I might have asked to go on the level two. But now I've looked at this, I think I would really benefit from the level three, because it's going to help me refine those skills ready for the next step.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 22:33**

Yeah. So really, kind of not just with those career conversations and the assessment by actually using it to kind of really look at the difference between the different roles. Because I think sometimes if you're if you're doing the job and you're seeing somebody else in a more senior role, you think, Oh, that looks quite easy. I can do that. But actually, when you break it down and look at what the difference between these two roles are, and this is the bit I need to improve on to and develop in order to for me to be able to do that, that role effectively. And what? What's next? So what are your other plans? Are you using for anything else? Yeah,

**Nicola Airey 23:10**

so we use it for quite a few things. I like to say that we've gone a little bit rogue with it, but in a positive way. So we've got the performance I like to call it performance measurement, and sort of setting expectations. We use it a lot. We have quite a lot of sponsored colleagues throughout national care groups. We've been using the tool to identify sort of the correct

development that they want to do, whether it's something we can do internally, whether it is a professional qualification. We are doing quite a bit more work around matching our job descriptions to the descriptions within the workforce pathway as well, so that it is aligned and there is that consistent sort of language, and our future plans with it also include using it for succession planning. So we've mentioned around the self assessment element of it, but also a tool that a manager could use to identify, Okay, Nicola is a really good support worker. It doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to be a really good team leader. What work can you do with me in the background, to support, to help retention as well? I think, like the example Justine gave before, there might be scenarios that come up that isn't an instant fix, or, Oh, here's a particular training course that you can go on. But I think by understanding those conversations and understanding what what people want out of their career, we can help to shape that and support that. And I suppose the final sort of thought on it is that we want it to be a big self, self assessment tool, where colleagues take ownership of their career in care, and that we kind of facilitate and guide, but it's something that colleagues are proud of and something that colleagues use to help further themselves.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 24:49**

Yeah, sounds really good. Not every organization is going to have a head of talent development. I know, we know, with people listening to this, there'll be small organisation, they will just kind of be the register manager, maybe an owner. So are there any things that you think, even if you are not big and have lots of time to or team to kind of look and explore how we use this better or well within organisation, what are the other sort of kind of tips you would suggest that somebody would even if they just sort of kind of start small.

**Nicola Airey 25:23**

Yeah, I think that would be my biggest tip, to start small, and it's quite it is an amazing tool, and there's lots that you can do with it. And I think it's focusing your priority on, okay, do I want to focus on a particular role? Or, like Justine did with the pilot, of picking a mixture, so that you've

Just think, as Nicola said, identify in your team who actually wants to learn and develop, but don't ignore everybody, because there might be somebody there who who actually os a shining star, but they're just happy to sit in the background. Yeah, and then, I think just put it out to your staff and make, make yourself time. Make a quiet area. Give give them the time to speak to you, and give them the opportunity to talk to you, and give them the opportunity to say what they would like to to do. And as we say, it might not just be another role. It could just be something in the role, what they've really got an interest in and they just want to develop with, yeah, it's just taking the time with the staff.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 27:06

Every registered manager I talk to always have CQC in the back of their minds. Are there, are there any of this you've been using or have been creating evidence around?

**Speaker 2** 27:16

Yeah, it's in my evidence file that what we've been doing, because I have, like, a bit of an improvement file. Yeah, it's in there. What we've actually been doing with the staff to support

yeah. So sounds like you're really sort of kind of seeing the benefits. And I suppose it's about having that long term plan in terms of saying, Well, we're going to do this, and we're going to

sorts of ways. You know, you're the last one to think about your own well being because you're busy thinking about the well being of your staff. You're the last one to think about your own professional development, because actually, you're focusing on the development and learning opportunities that might be available for your staff and meeting their needs. So I think registered managers often are the, the worst offenders for sort of neglecting, you know, neglecting themselves. So, you know, it'd be, it'll be interesting to think about how this might support the development for registered managers as well, and about people recognising that, you know, actually, my learning and development is, is just as important, because things change, don't they? And, you know, people can be registered managers for many, many years, and it's not the job that it was when you, you know, when you started. Yeah, I don't

**Pia Rathje-Burton 32:13**

know if you see that Nicola particularly in your role, because obviously, you're, you're dealing with the kind of the learning and development of lots of different types of roles, isn't it? If you kind of see that trend that Wendy and I was actually seen nationally, that when we're talking to red as a manager, they're very focused on their staff and ensuring that their staff are well trained and have lots of opportunities, but they don't even think about themselves so much as terms of prioritising their learning and development? Yeah,

**Nicola Airey 32:41**

I think one of my favorite phrases that I can hear from a registered manager is, what about me? What is What can I do? And I think it's something that internally we would love to push as well as I like to use them at all be selfish in that don't forget to think about yourself. It's great all the support and the guidance and everything that we provide to everybody else, but think about yourself as well. And it could be that you're a registered manager that doesn't want to do a different role or anything like that. But how can you be supported to be the best that you can be in the role that you're in? It doesn't have to be a move somewhere. It doesn't have to be a change to anything. It could just be simple tools and simple guidance that can really help to make your role much more enjoyable, make your role much easier. Yeah,

**Wendy Adams 33:25**

absolutely, slightly. Okay, so we're coming to the last part of our session, um, our podcast, so we always have our time to care slot in every episode. So I'm going to ask you the the same question that we ask our other podcast guests, which is, you, you both sound very busy people. What is your most time saving tip?

**Nicola Airey 33:53**

So for me, it is that preparation at the start, so investing that extra bit of time at the beginning to plan will help you sort of stay on track and stay focused, but also start small. Don't think you've got to take on the whole thing all in one go. Yeah,





plan and how this, and we've managed to incorporate this into the new developing managers and deputies guide, which has been published at the end of at the end of March 2025 so this guide is really well aligned to the manager level aspect of the care workforce pathway, and this