

Rt Hon Therese Coffey MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
Department of Health & Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0EU

20 September 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

### Social Care Leaders Scheme

We formally welcome your appointment as Secretary of State. Your early recognition of the priority of social care in your role, echoing the commitments pledged by the Prime Minister in her leadership campaign, is very much appreciated. We are writing this open letter to offer what we hope you will see as an important, positive opportunity to address a number of key issues in the social care sector, developed by the sector and with the commitment for significant funding by the sector.

You will be very aware of the pressures facing all parts of the social care workforce. These challenges are not new, but they are now at a level that is enormously worrying. You will also know that strong and effective leadership and management is key to high-quality care to which we want everyone to have access across the country. 12.5% of Registered Manager roles are vacant, 32% of current incumbents are over 55 years old and turnover is a worrying 25%. Recent research has cited how difficulties in recruiting to the critical role of Registered Manager is now leading directly to care providers closing and/or returning contracts.

When faced with these sorts of challenges in other sectors, there has been a recognised need to work differently and adopt transformational recruitment schemes such as Teach First in the education sector. Government support for these schemes has been essential and we are asking you to adopt this bold and disruptive approach to transform leadership in the social sector. Social care needs to attract bright, motivated and enthusiastic people who can think differently and innovate. Whilst we absolutely support all attempts to develop and nurture staff already employed in the sector, our research shows that the need to bring in additional capacity is essential and urgent.

Building on the success of Teach First and other similar graduate programmes, the Social Care Leaders Scheme aims to bring a whole new cadre of talent into social care. By targeting talented graduates and (and potentially also through a parallel Level 6 Apprentices) who share the passion and values that underpin social care, we are looking to recruit and develop a cadre who can initially be fast-tracked through their leadership development to become Registered Managers in two years. They will then be supported to develop their career into more senior roles, providing a pool of talent that can lead and shape a modern, vibrant care sector.

The Scheme proposed would be a charitable venture delivering a clear public benefit and would be run entirely on a not-for-profit basis. The enclosed Business Case sets out the powerful reasons why Government should support this Scheme. The detailed exercise was undertaken on a *pro bono* basis by PWC to develop the costs, which are comparable to similar schemes like Teach First, with the estimated full costs for the first five years of the Scheme amounting to some £115M. The average cost per participant would be just under £77,000, comprising some:

- £30,000 of programme costs to recruit, train and support participants; and,
- £47,000 of salary costs for participants for the two years of the Scheme.

Throughout the development of the Scheme, sector participants have accepted that the funding model should be shared by providers and the state. We are proposing that the social care sector meets 61% of the costs of the programme with the Government funding the remaining 39%, with a costs model based on a sliding scale of contribution for different provider sizes. This will ensure that the Scheme supports the whole sector and all different sizes of providers.

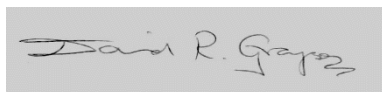
Following the collaborative design of this Scheme - involving those from across the social care sector, further and higher education, employers, graduate recruitment experts, and more - we have been heartened by the widespread support for the Scheme, including the recent report from Public Policy Projects under the chairmanship of Rt Hon Damian Green MP (*The Social Care Workforce: averting a crisis*).

We have the ability, with your Department's support, to bring much-needed new talent into social care to be fast-tracked to Registered Manager and similar roles, as a foundation for senior leadership careers in the sector. The Scheme would provide an injection of bright and motivated individuals who currently do not even consider the social care sector as offering career options. These individuals will bring creativity and innovation that will have an impact on the efficiency, quality and effectiveness of services provided across the sector, thereby supporting the Government's and the sector's shared ambitions for social care, and contribute significantly to the wider public perception of social care. That has certainly been the experience with Teach First.

The development work for the proposed Scheme has been funded by the sector as it is committed to seeking new ways to address this emergency. The Government's clear statements about reform and support for managers could be rapidly kick started by a decision to support the Scheme. With an early decision, there would just be time now to start recruitment this year to catch a new cadre of future leaders for the sector by the end of the current academic year.

We very much look forward to meeting with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor David Grayson CBE** (Chair of the Social Care Leaders Scheme Steering Group)  
Professor Emeritus of Corporate Responsibility at Cranfield School of Management and Chair of Leonard Cheshire.

*Signed on behalf of the following Steering Group members:*

**Nadra Ahmed DL OBE** Executive Chairman - National Care Association

**Dame Julia Cleverdon DCVO CBE** Vice Patron, Teach First

**James Darley** CEO, Transform Society

**Jonathan Freeman MBE** CEO, CareTech Foundation

**Professor Martin Green OBE** CEO, Care England

**Professor Vic Rayner OBE** CEO, National Care Forum

**Jon Wilks** CEO, Institute of Health and Social Care Management