

THE SOCIAL CARE LEADERS SCHEME

Business Case Summary

Introduction

The social care sector urgently needs to attract high-calibre talent to tackle both the recruitment and retention challenges of the sector as well as, importantly, to enhance leadership skills to instil long-term change. There is a very real risk that, without such investment in management and leadership roles, recruitment campaigns will simply be exercises in pouring more water into an increasingly leaky bucket. This requires a bold new initiative to make the social care sector a career of choice for the brightest and best – be that at graduate level or beyond.

The approach of Teach First, Frontline, Police Now and related schemes offer powerful examples that can be tailored to deliver a game-changing talent recruitment and leadership development approach for the social care sector. Alumni from these programmes, now totalling over 23,000+ collectively, are steadily and impressively moving into leadership positions, whether still in the sector or not (and around 70%+ stay forever), still caring and driving change towards the charitable vision underpinning these organisations.

As well as helping bring much-needed talent into social care at Registered Manager and similar roles, the injection of bright and motivated individuals who currently do not even consider the social care sector as offering career options will bring creativity and innovation that will have an impact on the efficiency, quality and effectiveness of services provided across the sector, support 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 proposals fit well with the Government's January 2024 proposals to create career paths and qualifications in the care system to support the social care workforce. The Scheme also chimes with the recognition of the importance of leadership in the development of a workforce strategy for adult social care, and representatives of the Scheme's developers are pleased to have been invited to join the Leadership Expert Working Group convened by Skills for Care.

Further work to develop and validate the Scheme was undertaken at the end of 2023, with additional support provided by the Rayne Foundation alongside continued support from the CareTech Foundation. This review exercise confirmed the continued support for the Scheme, in particular highlighting the lack of systematic and quality-assured training, especially for Registered Managers and in smaller providers, and strong agreement on the requirement for a recognised qualification pathway for social care.

The Scheme has been developed with and commands the support of the social care sector and key leaders closely involved with other public sector graduate programmes. Steering Group members including Care England, the National Care Association, the National Care Forum, the Institute for Health and Social Care Management. We have also worked closely with colleagues at Skills for Care. The Scheme's development has been funded by CareTech Foundation, Anchor Hanover, Hallmark Care Homes Foundation, Kent County Council and the Rayne Foundation.

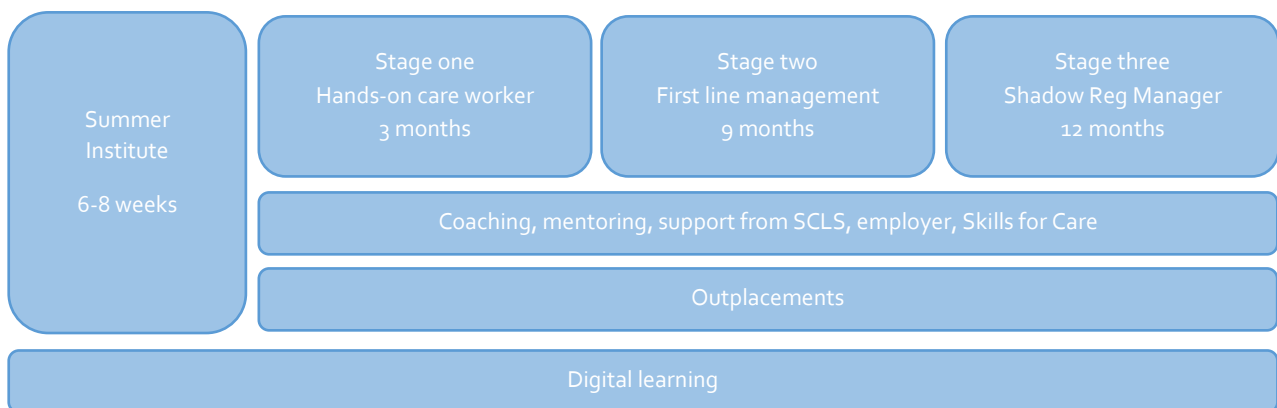
The Concept

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. The Scheme proposed would be a charitable venture delivering a clear public benefit and would be run entirely on a not-for-profit basis. By targeting talented graduates and 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 help lead and shape the sector. Social care faces many challenges and we need to attract bright and enthusiastic people who can think differently and innovate.

The Social Care Leaders Scheme seeks to provide a national scheme to attract, train, develop and retain graduates into the social care sector. Its initial focus will be to help address the shortage of talent at Registered Manager level, a post which has been identified as crucial for attracting and retaining quality staff. This will directly improve the quality of care and support provided. But the longer-term aim is to recruit and support individuals capable of achieving the most senior leadership roles across the sector. The Social Care Leaders Scheme's purpose is to attract and develop 1,500 talented and inspirational new leaders from outside the sector over its first five years of operation.

The diagram below provides an overview of the proposed Scheme. We recognise the need for a simple and universal programme that can be supported by all providers of social care, however big or small, and whether residential, day centres or care at home.



The key elements of the proposed Scheme are:

- Participants will undergo a rigorous selection process
- They will be provided with an initial, intense residential training programme
- All those on the programme will be recruited to entry-level front-line care roles
- Further training, mentorship and support will be provided over the following three years
- Participants will provide care in a range of settings to broaden their experience
- They will be expected to be supported through an accelerated progression to a Registered Manager, or similar level post
- They will also be expected to achieve a Level 5 qualification in social care and a Master's qualification will be available
- At the end of their two years, and subject to CQC approval, the expectation will be that participants will be ready to secure a position as Registered Manager
- A third year of light touch support will (a) provide additional time for more participants to secure Registered Manager posts, (b) enable the scheme to support and influence the performance of Registered Managers in role and (c) help support and plan their future career opportunities and longer-term commitments to the alumni network that would develop over time.

With the requirement to achieve a Level 5 qualification (or a new Level 6 qualification), the Scheme could enable providers to use their Apprenticeship funds to support eligible individuals through the Scheme. The social care competencies included in the Apprenticeship scheme appear compatible with the aims of the Scheme. Feedback from Department for Education colleagues is that there

should be read across between the two schemes, enabling Apprenticeship levy funding to be used without any significant barriers, but this would require formal confirmation from their policy advisers.

Piloting the Scheme

We believe that a combination of the challenges inherent in the Registered Manager role and the complexity of the social care sector means that we should run an extensive pilot of the Scheme to ensure it delivers the benefits we foresee. A pilot will enable us to test fully the assumptions in this paper and would enable all key stakeholders, and particularly social care providers and the government who would be jointly funding the Scheme, to ensure that it delivers outstanding value for money as well as brilliant new leadership for the sector. Furthermore, a well-targeted pilot will enable us to establish how best to ensure that the very many different types of provider – and therefore the maximum number and variety of those who are cared for – can benefit.

A pilot would run for two intake cohorts, with 150 participants in the first year and 150 in the second year. Although the ambition for the Scheme in the longer term is for up to 500 participants a year, recruiting 300 talented graduates recruited into a sector that has historically found it very difficult to attract at graduate level would in itself be transformational and mean that the pilot would provide a very strong evidence-base for the likely success of the Scheme as well as important learning about the best approaches to attraction, recruitment, development and, crucially, retention of talent.

Costings and funding

A detailed exercise was undertaken on a *pro bono* basis by PWC to develop the costs, which are comparable to similar schemes like Teach First, in the original development of the Scheme. We have reviewed these costs and, in light of feedback, proposed a piloting of the Scheme initially. Scheme costs have been calculated on a per participant basis over an initial set up and an initial three-year pilot, recruiting and supporting 300 participants. As set out in detail in the full Business Case, the estimated full costs for this period come to some £34.6M. The average cost per participant would be some £115,000, comprising:

- £42,000 of programme costs to recruit, train and support each participant; and,
- £73,000 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. The Business Case sets out the powerful reasons why Government support for this Scheme are as valid as they have been for the other schemes on which it is modelled. We are proposing that the social care sector meets 62% of the costs of the programme with the Government funding the remaining 38%, with a costs model based on a sliding scale of contribution for different provider sizes. The table below sets out the annual costs for the three tiers of provider per participant:

Annual Costs	Large Provider	Medium Provider	Small Provider
Total provider costs	£43,429/year	£32,676/year	£20,378/year
Total Govt subsidy	£14,197/year	£24,949/year	£37,247/year

We believe that there are strong benefits to be gained from a total investment by Government over this initial pilot scheme of £13.2million. The spread of these costs for Government is set out below:

Set up	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Exit	Total
£696,982	£3,645,740	£5,662,693	£2,981,737	£232,312	£13,219,465