

## **Case examples**

### **Complexities being experienced in Adult Social care**

#### **The role of social care**

Adult Social Care plays a crucial role in supporting adults with care and support needs including chronic health conditions, by providing a range of services that aim to enhance their overall well-being, independence, and quality of life. Some of the ways in which social care supports individuals with care and support needs including chronic health conditions are:

1. **Assessment and Care Planning:** Social care professionals assess the strengths, capabilities and needs of individuals with chronic health conditions to develop personalised care plans. These plans consider the specific challenges posed by the condition and outline the support required, such as assistance with personal care, mobility, medication management, and emotional support.
2. **Personal Care:** Social care providers offer assistance with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, meal preparation, and managing medication. This support helps individuals with chronic health conditions maintain their personal hygiene, nutrition, and medication adherence.
3. **Coordination of Care:** Social care professionals communicate and collaborate with healthcare providers, community third sector organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to care. They help individuals navigate the healthcare system, manage appointments, and coordinate different aspects of their care to promote continuity and effectiveness.
4. **Emotional and Psychological Support:** Living with a chronic health condition can be emotionally challenging. Social care workers provide emotional support, counselling, and personal empathy to help individuals cope with the psychological impact of their condition.
5. **Socialisation and Community Integration:** Social isolation is a common issue for individuals with chronic health conditions. Social care services offer a range of day opportunity activities and support groups to encourage socialisation and combat loneliness. They may also help individuals connect with local community resources and organisations that cater to their specific needs.
6. **Support for Carers and Family Members:** Social care recognises the important role of unpaid carers and family members in supporting individuals with chronic health conditions. They assess individual need and provide guidance, respite care, and training for unpaid carers to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide effective care while also addressing their own well-being.

7. **Advocacy, Information and Advice:** Social care professionals can act as advocates for individuals with chronic health conditions, helping them access appropriate healthcare services, benefits, and support systems. They provide information and guidance on available resources, rights and entitlements, empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their care.
8. **Housing and Accommodation Support:** Social care services can work collaboratively with colleagues in other local authority departments, to assist individuals in finding suitable housing options that accommodate their specific needs, such as accessible housing or supported living arrangements. They may also provide support with home modifications or assistive technology to promote independent living.

All these elements focus on enabling people to live and, in some circumstances, die well, with their care and support needs. Adult social care is now supporting individuals in the community that present with a range of care and support needs, including physical health, frailty, emotional wellbeing, mental health and mental wellbeing, social isolation, cost of living, environmental issues, relationship and family dynamics, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

People are presenting to the service with several areas that require our support as described in points 1 – 8 above and in many situations, we are working with people in all 8 areas.

Chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and metabolic syndrome (hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidaemia) have been on the increase in the UK over recent decades and result in a substantial economic and social burden. The cost of individual chronic diseases to the public purse increases exponentially in people with two or more comorbid chronic diseases.

Added to this is the exponential rise of people with chronic mental ill-health or poor mental well-being. This has been exacerbated following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For adults, particularly older adults, we are seeing higher levels of substance use disorders, from the impact of the abuse of alcohol, as well as a wide range of social and prescription drugs.

These factors not only directly contribute to additional demand in the system, which has been considerably outstripping the supply of health and care support that can be provided, but they also provide health and social care professionals with complex scenarios that need to be overcome with resolutions broader than just lifestyle advice and signposting.

To execute our statutory function in partnership with the individual and the family, our more experienced staff are working increasingly to undertake complex, high risk cases, which will include Court attendance; they undertake sensitive, acute and complex adult cases which require preparation and presentation of robust evidence in respect of capacity and risk, in readiness for Court of Protection, The High Court, Mental Health tribunals, Section 117 multi-disciplinary discussions, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and Coroners Court. In addition, they routinely represent and advocate on behalf of vulnerable individuals, families and carers ensuring their

rights are upheld at various forums and representing the Council within multi-agency and inter-disciplinary settings; they do all this whilst ensuring that they implement the national Wales Safeguarding Procedures by fulfilling the roles and responsibilities to ensure that adults are safeguarded who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

It is widely accepted that key areas of social service functions are experiencing challenges in a system that is facing unprecedented levels of complexity and demand. This, combined with fundamental workforce shortages, has exposed an already fragile situation. The reasons for this include:

- Pent up demand suppressed during the COVID-19 pandemic and periods of Lockdown as predicted in the Welsh Government '*Rehabilitation framework*'.
- Increased complexity and frailty in older people from reduced prevention, medical care, increased waiting lists and a greater level of community isolation.
- Pressures in the primary care system restricting access to key healthcare professionals and timely diagnostics that can reduce the escalation of healthcare need through early intervention.
- A cycle of delay and deconditioning/decompensation in hospital because of delays and shortages to ensure timely discharge.

We have seen not just an increased demand for services but the sheer complexity of those support needs, particularly in mental health and emotional well-being, is vast. These issues are now being further exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, which is placing extreme pressure on individual and family finances.

In society we are already seeing the associated increases in poverty, unemployment, isolation, domestic abuse, family breakdown, anti-social behaviour, and homelessness. These issues make it very difficult to effectively support and manage the needs of people with care and support needs and/or with chronic conditions. The consequence is that more people will require more services across the spectrum of need.

A number of actual case studies have been provided to demonstrate the types of individuals our staff are working with on a day to day basis.