

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Re: Investment in Continuing Professional Development for Social Workers employed in the NHS

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing on behalf of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) England and our Mental Health and Social Work in Health membership thematic groups to raise an important issue affecting social workers employed within the NHS.

In February 2025 Social Work England advised that over 5,000 registered social workers listed the NHS as their employer, the majority in mental health services, but with growing numbers employed within other services such as prevention roles in GP practices, palliative care, and rehab to name just a few.¹ Social workers play a vital role in multidisciplinary teams, supporting individuals, families and communities with a rights and relationship-based preventative approach that complements clinical care.

Despite this, social workers employed by the NHS remain excluded from the national Continuing Professional Development (CPD) budget set out in NHS England's National CPD Guidance 2024–25. This funding is available to other regulated professions, such as allied health professionals, but not to social workers. The omission creates an uneven playing field for professional development and undermines efforts to build an integrated, confident, and skilled workforce across the NHS and social care system.²

We have had helpful discussions with Professor Mark Radford to explore alternative funding routes; however, it is evident that there are criteria process driven obstacles that prevents NHS employed 'social workers' from accessing the same opportunities as their counterparts due to role title. We also raised this issue with the Chief Social Worker for Adults, however, there remains historical and process exclusion barriers, and it remains unclear what levers we can unlock to address the issue.

We are committed to the NHS 10-year plan, collaboration and overcoming process barriers to ensure equity and transformation of universal and essential services.

The new government's commitment to long-term NHS workforce planning and integrated neighbourhood-based care creates a timely opportunity to remove historic barriers and ensure all staff employed by the NHS have equal access to CPD opportunities. We would welcome

¹ [Benchmarking of social workers and social care workforce in mental health | NHS England | Workforce, training and education](#)

² NHS England, *National CPD Guidance 2024–25: Guidance supporting CPD requirements for nursing associates, nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals* (excluding social workers). Available at: [NHS England National CPD Guidance 2024–25](#)



social workers being added to the revised version of the long-term workforce plan, so their professional development is recognised alongside other regulated professions.

We recognise that social workers employed by the NHS are not the only professional group facing CPD funding challenges, however as the largest UK social work membership Association we want to highlight the positive case for ensuring that social workers in the NHS are fully supported to develop and grow in their roles and the short and long benefits of learning and development for individuals, the profession, citizens and communities.

Restoring parity with other professional groups would allow employers to plan robust CPD pathways and invest in the capability of their social work workforce and ensure professional regulatory professional standards are adhered to.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or other relevant colleagues across various government departments to discuss this matter further and explore solutions. We are confident that resolving this issue will contribute positively to the NHS's future workforce and the delivery of integrated care.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Maris Stratulis

National Director, BASW England