

**Guidance on the support  
of Mental Health Social  
Workers and Approved  
Mental Health  
Professionals (AMHPs)  
working in NHS,  
independent or  
integrated services**



Guidance  
on the support of Mental  
Health Social Workers and  
Approved Mental Health  
Professionals (AMHPs)  
working in NHS, independent  
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# An overview for commissioners



- Why the Guidance is refreshed and updated
- Purpose of the Guidance
- Overview of unique role of mental health social work
- Outline of responsibilities of commissioners developing new services or redesigning systems

# Guidance refreshed and updated

- In 2019-20 developed in partnership with Skills for Care and through wide consultation with organisations, professionals and system leaders across health and social care services
- Because of the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic HEE decided to refresh, update and relaunch it to key audiences in 2022-23
- Designed to support the NHS, the independent sector and other health and social care agencies who employ social workers
- Recognition that social work has been well established in local authorities for many years so not the focus of this Guidance.

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# Purpose of the guidance



The guidance complements the LGA Employers' Standards for Social Work and Adult Social Work Health Check Survey 2018,

- **Support and enhance** the role of social work in health and social care organisations.
- **Advise NHS trusts** and other organisations how to successfully employ and support social workers in a variety of partnerships.
- **Highlight the role of the AMHP**, and its added value to an NHS organisation
- **Help the NHS and other agencies** to embed social workers as a key staff group, and to support registered social workers already employed in generic teams

# Purpose of the guidance



- **Develop and transform** the social work role across mental health services
- **Offer timely support** for organisations to recruit, retain and support mental health social workers including AMHPs and ensure they can contribute their vital skills to holistic care for patients and service users
- **Help expand, develop and support** the role of social work in the NHS
- **Help achieve** NHS Long Term Plan ambitions and alleviate workforce pressure.

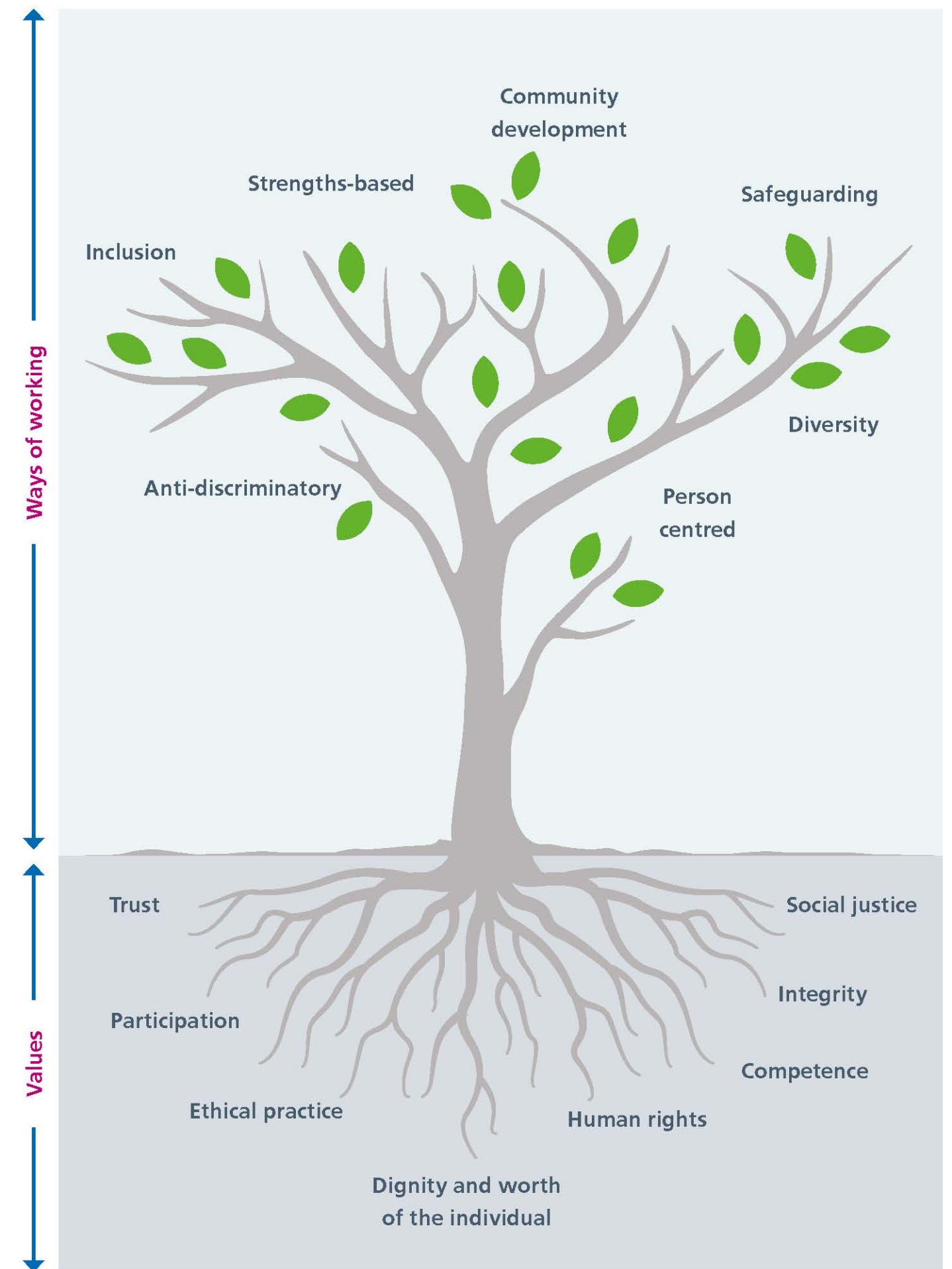
# Purpose of the guidance



- **Support** the NHS and other parts of the health and care system in recruiting, retaining and developing mental health social workers
- **identify** how to strengthen social work's role in mental healthcare
- **outline** eight organisational considerations for effective support of the social work profession in mental health services wherever they may work
- **demonstrate** how the social worker/ AMHP role makes a difference in the NHS.

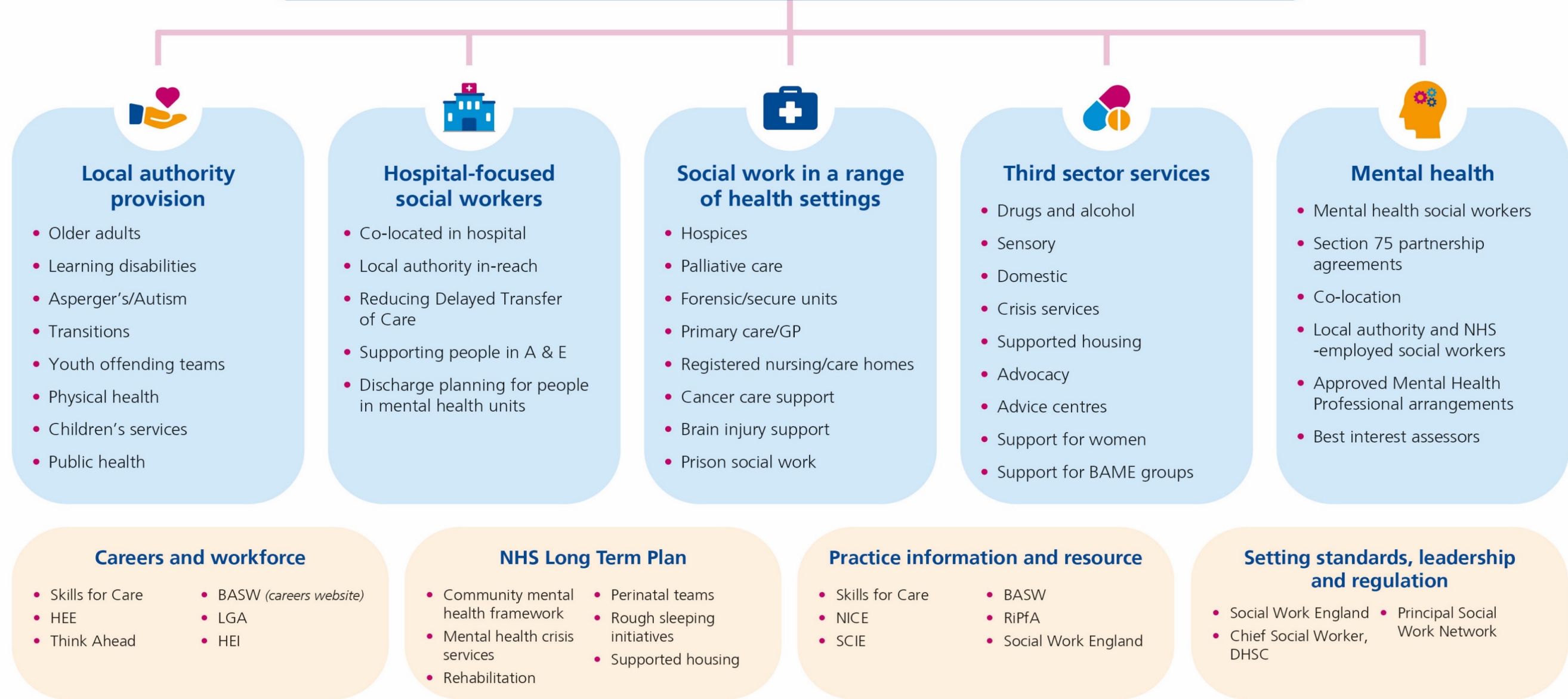
Social workers are an essential part of health and social care for both adults and children.

- transformative, relational and rights-based principles
- anti-discriminatory focus
- promoting diversity and inclusion
- working with communities, families and individuals



## The social work contribution to health settings

- Strength-based practice
- A human rights-based approach
- A community and family-led approach
- Understanding the social determinants of health
- Personalised care planning
- Legal knowledge



**Acronyms** • BASW: British Association of Social Workers • DHSC: Department of Health and Social Care • HEE: Health Education England  
 • HEI: Higher Education Institutes • LGA: Local Government Association • NICE: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence  
 • PSW: Principal Social Worker • RiPFA: Research in Practice for Adults • SCIE: Social Care Institute for Excellence

Health Education England:  
New roles in mental health



Skills for Care: Mental health social work leadership





# Local authorities working in integrated partnerships with other agencies

## The Standards for employers of social workers in England 2020

Good social work can transform people's lives and protect them from harm.



### Why do we need the standards for employers?

Good social work can transform people's lives and protect them from harm. In order to achieve consistently high-quality outcomes for service users and their carers, social workers must have and maintain the skills and knowledge to establish effective relationships with children, adults, families, and professionals in a range of agencies and settings, and be the

**Standard 1 - Strong and clear social work framework**

- Ensure a clear description of the social work role in a social work workforce strategy based upon a nationally-endorsed definition.
- Self assess social work employment standards using the LGA standards for employers
- Ensure mechanisms and resources to support social workers to play a full part in multi-disciplinary teams and embed the skill set in workforce and CPD.
- Support the conditions for continuing registration
- Ensure that professional supervision and appropriate forms of CPD are available for all registered social workers (irrespective of who employs them)

# Local authorities working in integrated partnerships with other agencies

- Ensure managers are aware of the quality indicators of good supervision for social work and its role in professional regulation. See Research in Practice
- Ensure managers identify development needs using appropriate professional and core skills frameworks.
  - Post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practitioners
  - Knowledge and skills framework for social workers in adult services.
- Establish role clarity between line managers and professional leaders. Have a three-way supervision agreement between line managers and professional supervisors to establish clear boundaries.
- Develop effective links with local universities and social work training initiatives to support trainees and early career social workers



# Local authorities working in integrated partnerships with other agencies



- Ensure protected supervision for other social worker roles, such as AMHPs, who require specific supervision.
- Identify in the workforce plan the number of AMHPs required and ensure this reflected in succession planning.
- Adopt best practice in recruitment and retention of AMHPs and embed the service standards for AMHPs.  
See [The AMHP Service Standards and Evaluation and Mapping Tool](#)
- The LGA and the Social Care Institute for Excellence have produced an [accessible and practical resource](#) that supports local systems in fulfilling their ambition of integration.

## Further resources

Full playlist of short films made with and about mental health social workers

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrVQaAxyJE3fn52TDaw3hXueDiWWXSHdP>