

**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)  
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# An overview for Human Resource leads



- 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.

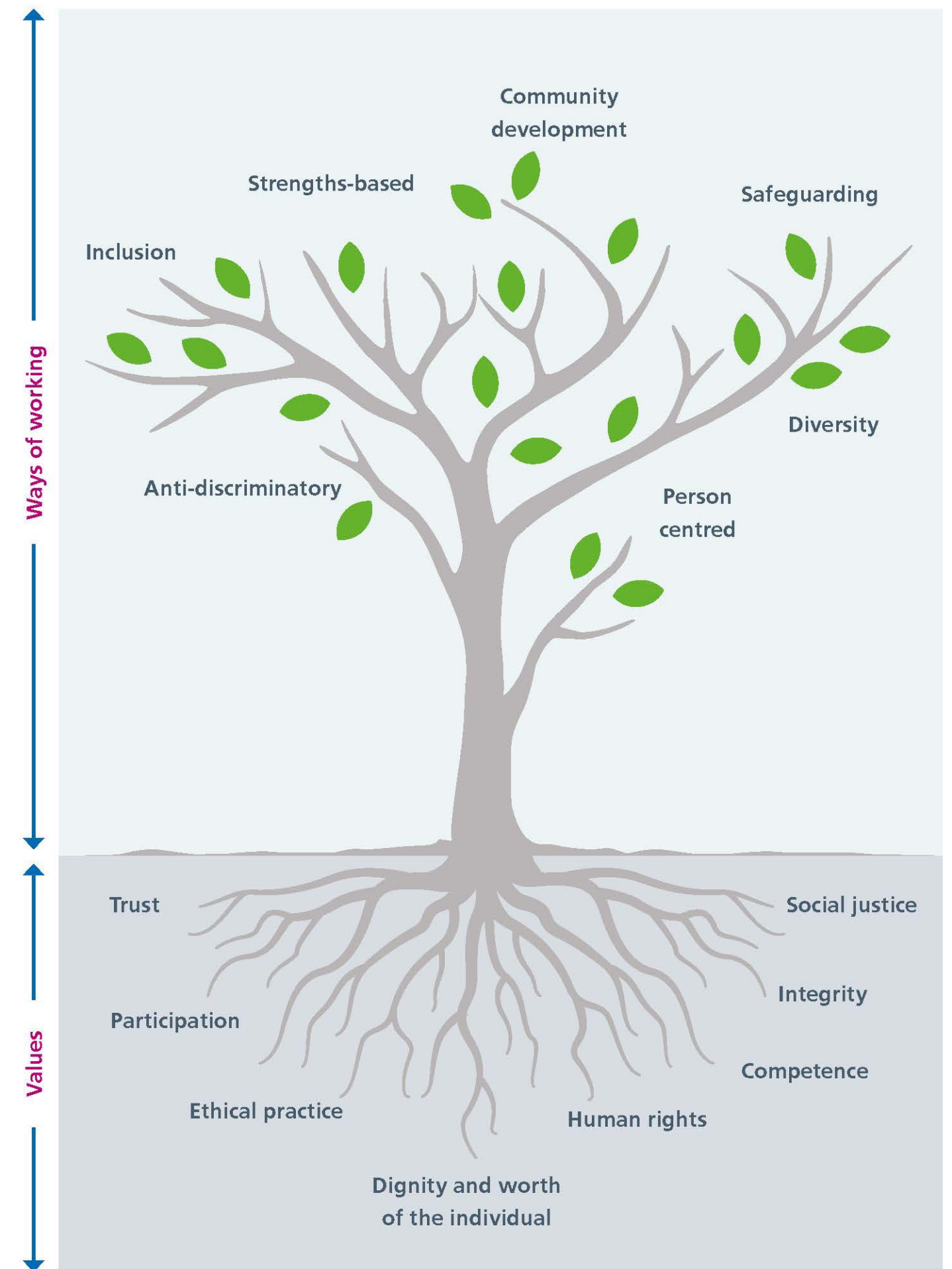
# Purpose of the guidance



- **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.

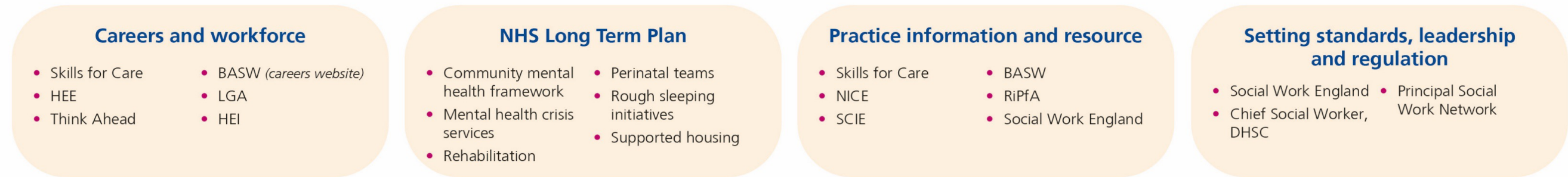
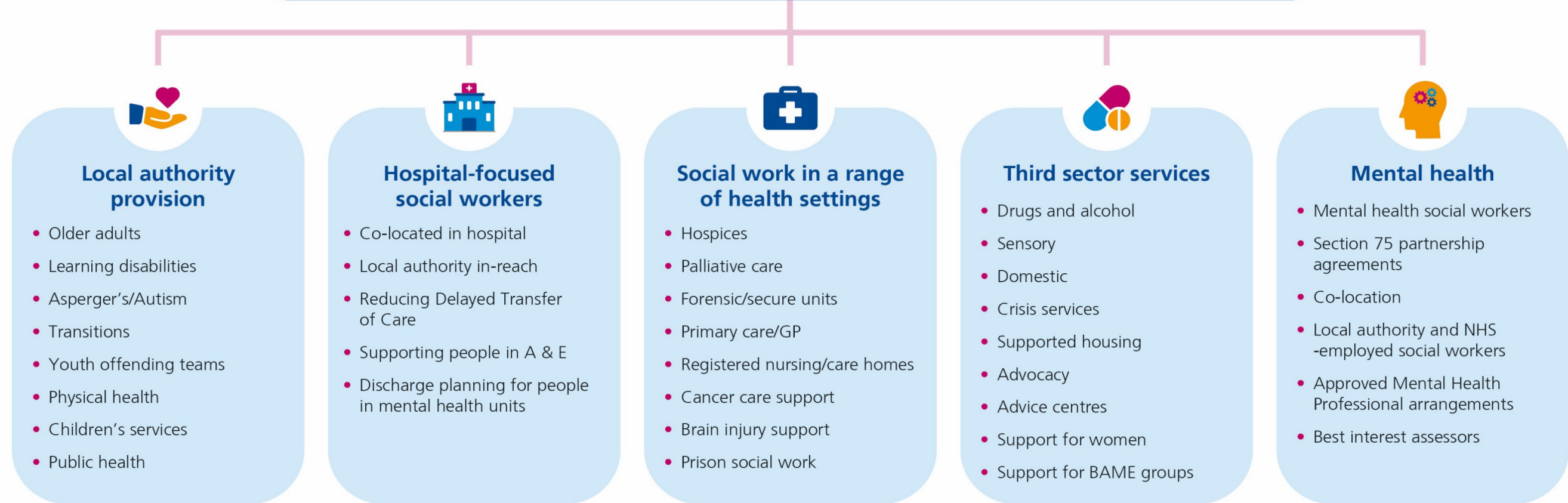
# Social workers are an essential part of health and social care for both adults and children.

- 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





# Human Resources

## Staff health and well being

- Gather data on social workers' wellbeing to help identify systemic patterns on absence, job satisfaction, stress at work opportunities and discrimination.  
See NICE [Healthy workplaces: improving employee mental and physical health and wellbeing](#) and [Bath Spa University study of social worker working conditions](#)
- Check that the work environment is safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. [Use the LGA employer standards health check](#)
- Ensure social workers are informed about resources and support services. See NHS Employers' [Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) and [NICE guidance on workplace health management practices](#)
- Include group supervision, peer support and forums where social workers can articulate health and wellbeing concerns



# Human Resources

## Staff health and well being

- Ensure that induction processes
  - cover a multi-professional context
  - welcome diverse professions, ethnicities and backgrounds
  - recognise the issues posed for cultural visibility by smaller professions and new roles
- Have systems for social workers to report inadequate resources or difficulties;
- Have systems to raise issues about inappropriate or unsafe working practices, dealing with complaints, councillor and MP enquiries and Ombudsman investigations, including the behaviour of colleagues
- Have clear policies and procedures for lone working, reducing the risk of violence and managing violent incidents.  
See NICE social care guideline [Violence and aggression: short-term management in mental health, health and community settings](#); and quick guide [Reducing the risk of violent and aggressive behaviours](#),



# Human Resources Performance management systems



- Simplify, align and integrate service performance metrics across health and social care.
- Treat social and community outcomes, wellbeing, human rights, inclusion and social value on a par with clinical ones and as core business.
- Foster a collaborative approach to performance management.
- Have clear agreements/policies on who will take the lead in disciplinary and fitness to practise issues in integrated arrangements

# Human Resources Workforce planning



- Establish information on safe levels of staffing in different settings and agree systems for accountability and alerting to risks
- Include the social work workforce in organisational workforce intelligence and planning.
- Consider with LA partners directly recruiting social workers into the NHS and set aspirational goals for a percentage increase in recruitment.
- Undertake integrated workforce planning through integrated care systems. See [Skills for Care on workforce integration](#) and NICE resources .
- Assess implications of the COVID emergency for workforce capacity in partnership with stakeholders.

## Further resources

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

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