



Sports, leisure and social care

Moving towards a joint workforce development programme

Executive summary

October 2013

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Published by Skills for Care

Executive Summary

Introduction

Consilium Research and Consultancy (Consilium) was commissioned in January 2013 by Skills for Care (SfC), in partnership with SkillsActive, to undertake a scoping study to assess the potential for establishing a shared workforce development programme to support employers within the sport, fitness and outdoors sectors to provide services to people in receipt of social care. The purpose of the scoping study was to explore the levels of understanding of employers within the sport, fitness and outdoors sectors (SkillsActive) of the role of social care employers (Skills for Care).

This report presents a summary of the key themes emerging from a review of research or evidence of shared workforce development between the two sectors and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders from across the adult social care and sport and fitness sectors.

A review of literature conducted as part of this research highlights the limited published evidence base of shared workforce development between the adult social care sector and the sport and physical activity sector. Related literature was identified relating to market shaping, guidance on approaches to risk and personalisation alongside guidance from the respective National Skills Academies but these do not currently include evidence of investment in shared workforce development between adult social care and the sport and physical activity sectors.

Policy Context

There are an increasing number of adults likely to be in receipt of social care and a drive to transform people's experience (and expectations) of care and support. Consequently there is considerable potential for sport and physical activity to play a stronger role in enabling people in care to participate in activities which provide them both social interaction and enjoyment but also support the re-ablement and prevention agenda.

A lack of focus on effective preventative services will lead to unsustainable demands on adult social care budgets and a considerable reduction in funding available for other services. Sport and physical activity should form part of the package of interventions which support people to remain independent and healthy and contribute to the achievement of their care outcomes. Local authorities are in a key position to mobilise services such as sport and physical activity and engage the wider social care sector to strengthen the promotion of good health and active ageing.

Realising Potential

Consultations with a wide range of strategic and operational stakeholders from both the adult social care and sport and physical activity sectors have overwhelmingly recognised the considerable opportunities that may present themselves through closer partnership working. However, many stakeholders reported a lack of understanding of how to realise these opportunities. Employers and providers within the sport and physical activity sectors often have a limited understanding of the composition of the adult care sector. Conversely, within the adult care sector there is a lack of awareness of what sport and physical activity opportunities are available or could be developed and provided for adults in receipt of social care support.

A lack of effective cross-sector dialogue and shared understanding has reportedly served to limit the number of adults in receipt of social care from accessing sport and physical activities as part of their care plan. This has been interpreted as a lack of demand by some employers and providers within the sport and physical activity sectors which has resulted in a degree of unease towards investing in workforce development and programmes specifically designed to facilitate participation for adults in receipt of social care support.

Raising Demand

The lack of appreciation of the size and composition of the adult care sector by many employers and providers has resulted in ad hoc and often ineffective efforts to develop an appropriate sports and physical activity offer. More coordinated approaches are needed that adequately reflect the composition of the adult social care sector and establish an appropriate and accessible offer for adults with different care needs and interests. For employers and providers that have previously focused their work on attracting investment to work specifically with adults in residential care this represents a step-change of approach. Supporting employers and providers to understand how the adult social care sector is structured can help to open up a wider range of opportunities for professional interaction.

In order to increase demand effectively sport and physical activity providers need to have a greater understanding of the key stakeholders within the adult social care sector. The process of raising demand does however need to do more than simply presenting service users and key stakeholders with lists of activities. Effective marketing can help to encourage service users to discuss new sport and physical activity opportunities as part of their care assessment and ultimately, where appropriate, ensure that this forms part of their agreed care plan. This could include opportunities to participate in activities but also volunteering and coaching to support the participation of others.

Facilitating Participation

Coordinated efforts to increase demand for participation in sport and physical activity have to be matched by considered planning and investment in order to facilitate participation. This includes assessing the effectiveness of local brokerage systems in enabling service users to identify local sport and physical activity opportunities as well as reviewing the delivery models of providers to ensure that they are inclusive and fit for purpose.

Online brokerage systems are not currently used across all local authorities although many are understood to be exploring the use of similar systems. They present an opportunity for providers of sport and physical activity services to promote their offer for adult social care clients as well as assisting support brokers to identify suitable suppliers of services that clients wish to purchase. Effective brokerage has the potential to increase demand for sport and physical activity and thus encourage providers to invest in new services and associated workforce development.

Whilst the use of online marketplace systems can improve the efficiency of local brokerage systems this shouldn't be regarded as the only method by which adults in receipt of social care support can be made aware of local sport and physical activity opportunities. Closer working between relevant professionals from the sport and fitness, social care and health sectors can aid the development of more effective referral and signposting systems.

It is important that providers recognise the need to build confidence and motivation when establishing approaches for engaging and facilitating the participation of adults in receipt of social care support. The use of 'taster' sessions is one approach adopted by a number of providers whereby service users can participate in range of activities for free. This can be effective in demonstrating to service users (also to carers and social care staff) that they are able to participate in sessions and be supported by sports and trained fitness professionals that have experience of adapting sessions so ensure that they are inclusive and accessible for all levels.

Utilising existing leisure centres as shared space for service users that have traditionally attended day centre provision has the potential to provide a range of benefits in terms including increasing participation and providing efficiency savings. This approach can also address one of the barriers highlighted by social care staff, namely the disproportionate cost and effort that can be required to transport a service user to access a one-hour activity, which is sometimes all that is currently offered or perceived to be available.

There is interest amongst a number of providers in exploring the use of volunteers to facilitate the participation of adults in receipt of social care in a range of sport and physical activities. Whilst volunteers could be recruited through a number of routes providers were particularly interested in models that offer volunteering opportunities for adult social care users, carers and family members.

Promoting Quality

Overly cautious attitudes to risk were reported in many consultations as a strong influencing factor when care providers and care managers are exploring suitable activities to incorporate as part of an individual's care plan.

Work is required to raise awareness within the adult care sector of existing quality standards currently used within the sport and physical activity sectors such as Quest, the Inclusive Fitness Initiative and the Registers of both Exercise and Aquatic Professionals as well as the work of the National Disability Sport Organisations. This would help to provide reassurance regarding the quality of provision and importantly ensure that social care professionals have greater confidence that the activities would support the achievement of the health and social care outcomes included within an individual's care plan.

These quality standards could also be integrated within existing or new brokerage systems to ensure that professionals, carers and service users are able to select a provider that can demonstrate the necessary skills and experience to support the effective and safe participation of adults in receipt of social care. Consideration may also be given to establishing a voluntary kitemark to recognise employers and providers within the SkillsActive footprint that are committed to delivering excellence and quality services to adult social care service users. This has the potential to drive up quality standards and encourage more service users to engage in activities that have been specifically designed and quality assured to meet their needs.

Workforce Development Opportunities

This scoping study has provided an overview of a number of development areas that would need to be supported through training and workforce development across both sectors.

Senior Managers and Commissioners

A key requirement evidenced through the scoping consultations was a need for senior managers from both sectors and commissioners to come together to learn more about how the opportunities for greater joint planning and investment that can be taken

forward. Directors of Adult Social Services, Chief Leisure Officers, social care employers and leisure providers should also consider delivering joint training and information sharing days to their respective workforces. This would provide opportunities for professionals from both sectors to share ideas and build networks, thus facilitating a greater understanding of the needs and challenges facing each other in supporting adults in receipt of social care.

SkillsActive workforce

Scoping consultations revealed a mixed picture with regards to the uptake of workforce development opportunities relevant for supporting adults within the social care sector. The production of a simple guidance document which outlines the range of training and professional development opportunities relevant for working with adults in receipt of social care would help leisure managers and individual fitness instructors to address identified workforce development needs.

This could include information on exercise based qualifications for instructors (i.e. low impact activities) as well as awareness training related to specific conditions (i.e. supporting people with dementia or working with people with mental health difficulties) that would be relevant for both instructors and front of house leisure centre staff. Providers could consider approaching local service user groups who may welcome the opportunity to deliver awareness training to staff from sport and leisure. This approach can deliver a number of benefits including potentially reducing the cost of training for providers as well as enabling them to establish links with local service user groups who at the same time can learn more about the range of sport and physical activity opportunities available in their area.

Social Care workforce

The social care workforce is not a homogenous group. As such any coordinated approach to meeting workforce development needs to identify the specific needs of different groups within the workforce.

The inclusion of information on the benefits of participation in sport and physical activity as part of training for registered care managers, within local authority social care induction training and through existing social care team meetings provides a sensible starting point. Care Managers could also ensure that sport and physical activity is incorporated as a mandatory question/discussion as part of care assessments and care plans. This will help to ensure that service users are advised on the benefits of participation and the availability of local opportunities.

The majority of Activity Coordinators would welcome support from sports and exercise professionals to increase participation amongst service users under their care. Consultations identified specific calls for guidance in encouraging participation amongst service users with specific care needs alongside calls for taster sessions to inform both activities and training needs.

In light of the increasing number of service users electing to employ a Personal Assistant (PA), consideration may be given to assessing the practicality of delivering training for PAs on the availability of local sport and physical activity opportunities and their potential role in facilitating participation. This may be provided as part of their induction training and could also include information on what training is available for PAs wishing to learn new skills that can be promoted to clients. This can help to move PAs away from a task-based approach that employs 'core care skills' to working in new, creative and person-centred ways which empowers clients to participate in a range of activities and potentially improve their health, quality of life and meet their personal aspirations.

Carers are integral in efforts to encourage and facilitate adults in receipt of social care to participate in sport and physical activity. Simple guidance could be provided for carers on how they can support people in their care to participate in sport and physical activity. This could include examples of the range of opportunities available for people with different interests and differing ability levels. The guidance could also include information on opportunities to volunteer and to receive training to lead and/or support sessions in the community.

Recommendations

A summary of the key recommendations for consideration by Skills for Care and SkillsActive, categorised across the broad headings of Strategic & Operational Development, Advice and Guidance and Research and Development, is provided below. Recommendations that the research team consider should be afforded priority are presented in bold:

STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Realising Potential

1. Deliver workshop sessions with key strategic partners to consider the themes emerging from this scoping research and reach consensus as to a way forward.

Workforce Development

Cross-Sector

2. Adult social care commissioners to host facilitated workshops involving employers/providers within the SkillsActive footprint, local authority social care teams, social care employers and service user groups to discuss approaches to joint investment and shared planning to increase the number of adults in receipt of social care participating in sport and physical activities.

SkillsActive footprint

3. Liaise with County Sport Partnerships / Chief Leisure Officers to cluster training opportunities for employers and providers in order to reduce costs per organisation/individual.

Social Care

Care Managers/Area Teams

4. Ensure that sport and physical is incorporated as a mandatory question/discussion as part of care assessments and care plans.

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Raising Demand

5. **Produce a guidance paper for employers and providers within the SkillsActive footprint that provides an overview of the structure of the social care sector and approaches to increasing demand for participation from adults in receipt of social care.**
6. **Produce a series of briefing papers which outline the benefits of participating in sport and physical activity including the contribution to adult social care outcomes. These should be tailored for each audience which could include local authority social care teams, social care providers, carers, personal assistants and service users.**

Facilitating Participation

7. Produce guidance on different approaches used by employers and providers within the SkillsActive footprint to facilitate participation of adult social care recipients in sport and physical activities. This should include universal, customised and targeted services for both group sessions and one-to-one support. The guidance could also cover funding, transport and outreach provision.
8. **Produce guidance for adult social care brokerage managers/support brokers on how to identify what sport and physical activity opportunities are available in order to guide service users. This should take into account existing and emerging examples of social care e-marketplaces.**
9. **Disseminate a briefing paper to Chief Leisure Officers and Directors of Adult Social Services that highlights the potential shared benefits of using existing leisure centres as a base for adults that have previously attended local authority daycentres.**

Promoting Quality

10. Work towards strengthening the presence of sports and physical activity values and messages within the quality guidance issued by local authorities and through the inspection regime led by the Care Quality Commission.
11. Raise the profile of REPs and NDSOs within adult social care in order to highlight the benefits of using a REPs instructor or accredited coach and to enable social care commissioners and service users to clearly differentiate professional competency.

Workforce Development

SkillsActive footprint

12. Produce guidance in accessible formats (e.g. YouTube, DVDs etc.) for REP Instructors on working with Personal Assistants and/or carers to facilitate service user participation.
13. Provide a guidance document for employers/providers within the SkillsActive footprint on relevant training opportunities for supporting the participation of adults in receipt of social care. This should include training and professional development for instructors, front of house staff, managers and volunteers. Where appropriate this should also consider approaching local service user groups to provide training and professional development input.

Social Care

Care Managers/Area Teams

14. Include information on the benefits of participation in sport and physical activity as part of training for registered care managers, local authority social care induction training and through existing social care team meetings.

Activity Coordinators

15. Build on evaluation and good practice emanating from existing pilots / workforce development activities aimed at upskilling Activity Coordinators in acknowledging the benefits of sports and physical activity and identifying suitable/available options (e.g. QCF (NVQ) Level 3 Certificate in Activity Provision in Social Care).

Carers

16. Provide guidance for carers on how they can support people in their care to participate in sport and physical activity. This should include information on opportunities to volunteer and receive training to lead and/or support sessions.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Raising Demand

17. Commission a small number of pilots which focus on raising levels of participation for adults in receipt of social care. The pilots should cover different service user groups (e.g. mental health, physical disability, learning difficulty, dementia) across a number of settings (residential, day, community care, domiciliary).

Facilitating Participation

18. Commission a research study to assess the current use of volunteers (including carers) by employers and providers within the SkillsActive footprint to facilitate participation of adults in receipt of social care. The research should inform the production of a guidance document to support the effective use of volunteers as well as different models of using volunteers to work alongside sport and fitness professionals.

Promoting Quality

19. Assess the feasibility of establishing a voluntary kitemark for employers and providers within the SkillsActive footprint to demonstrate their commitment to delivering excellence and quality services to adult social care service users. The use of the kitemark would assist social care commissioners, care managers/brokers and service users in selecting providers that adhere to agreed quality standards.

Workforce Development

SkillsActive footprint

20. Review the existing REPs and RAPs Continual Professional Development opportunities and consider including additional modules for working with specific service user groups (both on a one-to-one basis and as part of group sessions).

21. Consider amending the REPs and RAPs Directory to include information as to whether REP members would be willing to mentor or coach other members in order to transfer learning and professional experience around working with adults in receipt of social care.

Social Care

Care Managers/Area Teams

22. Assess the feasibility of developing a specific module with social care apprenticeship frameworks which will development knowledge of the benefits of 'non-traditional / non-mainstream' activities including sports and physical activity and promote the longer term acceptance of such activities within social care.

Personal Assistants

23. Assess the practicality of delivering training for PAs on the availability of local sport and physical activity opportunities and their potential role in facilitating participation. This should also include what training is available for PAs wishing to learn new skills that can be promoted to clients.

24. Assess the feasibility of incorporating knowledge of the value/complementarity of and access to sports and physical activities to complement the 'core care skills' which form the bulk of the workload at the moment.

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