

Chief nurse for adult social care to provide clinical leadership during winter

- Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE has been appointed Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care in England
- Professor Sturdy will act as champion for the interests of social care nurses and work to ensure at risk adults are provided with high quality care
- Industry leaders welcome the appointment designed to promote great work and raise standards

Social care nurses in England will soon benefit from the leadership and advice of the first Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, who was appointed today.

Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE will take up the new role to represent social care nurses and provide clinical leadership to the workforce.

She will work closely with the Minister for Care and the Chief Nursing Officer in this important role to ensure the provision of high quality, personalised, joined up care.

The Chief Nurse will act as an inspiring leader for social care nursing and help develop social care policy and how it relates to the workforce.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

I'm delighted to welcome Deborah Sturdy as our first Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care.

This is a really important new role – supporting, leading and speaking up for social care and our fantastic care workers.

This year has shone a light on the commitment of carers across the country. Care staff and nurses have risen to the challenge of providing skilled, compassionate care in the face of the huge challenges of the pandemic.

The appointment of a Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care is another step towards giving carers the support and recognition they absolutely deserve.

The role is an interim appointment for up to 6 months, to further increase the professional support and expertise in the department over winter ahead of filling the post on a more permanent basis in 2021.

Professor Sturdy has had a long and successful career in nursing, including working with older people and people living with dementia. Since February 2020, Professor Sturdy has worked on secondment for one day a week to the Chief Nursing Officer as strategic adviser for social care nursing.

She has also provided nursing advice to the Gosport Independent Panel, set up to address concerns about the care of residents in Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Before this, Professor Sturdy was employed as professional nursing adviser at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) between 2000 and 2011.

Interim Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care Professor Deborah Sturdy said:

I am honoured to have been asked to help define a new narrative for social care nursing and support colleagues to find their voice, and contribute to the development of the workforce in the coming months and work together to deliver the best care possible.

The social care nursing and care workforce together are a powerful force to help shape and deliver the health and social care agenda. I hope that in this role I will be able to give a voice to those working in social care and develop the workforce, through the difficult months ahead and beyond.

Professor Sturdy has held a variety of roles across both health and social care, including clinical practice, management, policy and research and will continue her role as Director of Health and Wellbeing at Royal Hospital Chelsea in a part-time capacity.

One of her main tasks will be to engage with the frontline nursing workforce to listen to their views and act as a champion for their interests in government, and the sector. She will also be promoting and raising standards for the social care nursing and wider workforce and working with our national and regional partners to celebrate success.

Chief Social Workers for Adults Mark Harvey and Fran Leddra said:

We are so pleased to welcome Deborah as the Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care. We are looking forward to working with her to strengthen and support the adult social care nursing workforce and to help us provide a strong professional voice for the sector.

Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, said:

I am looking forward to working with Deborah as she takes up this vital role providing a bridge across health and social care as well as supporting the delivery of the winter plan for social care.

Most importantly, this means leadership and representation at the highest level for the many thousands of social care nursing colleagues who make a difference to millions of people every day.

Background information

The role will begin on 21 December and will sit with DHSC, reporting to the Director General of Adult Social Care with a professional line to the Chief Nursing Officer, Ruth May.

Further quotes:

Gary Lashko, CEO the Royal Hospital Chelsea, said:

On behalf of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, I would like to congratulate Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE, our Director of Health and Wellbeing, on this important secondment to the Department of Health and Social Care. We are all immensely proud that she will be representing nurses on a national level and when she takes up her new role, she may take with her some of the learning from the excellent work she has done here at the Royal Hospital whilst caring for the Chelsea Pensioners.

Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive of Care England, said:

Nurses play a vital role in social care and we are delighted that the Department of Health and Social Care has appointed Professor Deborah Sturdy OBE as the new chief nurse for social care. Deborah has extensive experience in social care, and the NHS, and will be a valuable asset to our sector at an incredibly challenging time.

Vic Rayner, Executive Director, National Care Forum, said:

I am delighted to hear about this long awaited appointment. Deborah will be an excellent champion and advocate of social care nursing, at a point when the nurses within social care are under more pressure than ever before.

Her appointment is exceptionally timely as we move forward to ensure that the most vulnerable members of all our communities, and the staff who work with them take part in a mass vaccination programme. Her ability to highlight the role that nurse clinicians can play in supporting the smooth roll out of vaccination will be vital, and in ensuring the voices of social care nurses are heard loud and clear as plans to develop and reward the whole nursing workforce ensue.

Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, Queens Nursing Institute Chief Executive, said:

I am absolutely delighted with the appointment of Professor Deborah Sturdy to the role of Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care in England.

Deborah is a superb champion for the sector with a unique career combining practice, research and policy in adult social care. Her deep knowledge and thoughtful insights into the needs of the sector and her outstanding ability to co-create solutions are personal qualities which will be drawn upon every day in this new role.

The QNI is immensely proud that Deborah, who was awarded QNI Fellowship for her achievements in adult social care, has been appointed to this role. I wish Deborah every success and very much look forward to the QNI supporting her in this critical new role.

David Foster, chairman of Foundation of Nursing Studies, said:

Professor Sturdy is exactly the right person for this role. She is highly experienced and credible in this sector and as an influential leader will make an impact in this pioneering new role.

Joanne Bosanquet, chief executive, Foundation of Nursing Studies, said:

As a enormously respected nurse, academic, leader and policy expert Professor Sturdy brings exactly the right skills to this job. Her energy and passion for people cared for in this sector will ensure she makes a real difference.