



*Best Practice Guidance on the  
role of the Director of Adult  
Social Services*

May 2006

## DH INFORMATION READER BOX

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<b>Description</b>	Best practice guidance on the role and responsibilities of Directors of Adult Social Services. This guidance supplements Guidance on the Statutory Chief Officer Post of Director of Adult Social Services.
<b>Cross ref</b>	Guidance on the Statutory Chief Officer Post of Director of Adult Social Services
<b>Superseded docs</b>	The Roles and Responsibilities of Directors of Social Services, A Letter to Directors of Social Services from Denise Platt, CBE, Chief Inspector of Social Services, Best Practice Guidance on the Role of Director of Adult Social Services, Consultation Document, March 2005
<b>Action required</b>	Councils with social services responsibilities are required to appoint a Director of Adult Social Services. Where a Director of Adult Social Services has been appointed ahead of the publication of this guidance the council should take any necessary steps to bring the roles and responsibilities of the postholder into line with this post.
<b>Timing</b>	Councils with social services responsibilities should ensure that a Director of Adult Social Services is appointed by 2008
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<b>For recipient's use</b>	

# Contents

<b>Foreword by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Guidance on the Organisational Structure for the Delivery of Adult Social Services</b>	<b>5</b>
Status of this Guidance	5
Context and Rationale	5
Role of the Director of Adult Social Services	7
Providing a Political Focus on Adult Social Services	18
<b>Annex A – Adult Social Care Client Groups</b>	<b>21</b>

# Foreword by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community

The creation of the Director of Adult Social Services post, alongside the new Director of Children's Services post, is central to our vision for modernising community services as set out in the White Paper 'Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services'.

In future, there will be a Director of Adult Social Services post in every council with social services responsibilities with responsibility for ensuring high quality, responsive adult social services, promoting wellbeing and ensuring better integration of adult social services with a range of partner agencies in the local community.

In March 2005 we consulted on draft best practice guidance on the role of the director of adult social services as part of the wider consultation on 'Independence, Wellbeing and Choice'. From the responses to consultation we received a clear message from stakeholders that the position of the new Director needed to be strengthened by issuing statutory guidance, but that a degree of local flexibility in the configuration of the post was also important. For that reason we have published statutory guidance on the role of the Director of Adult Social Services with supporting best practice guidance.

The Director of Adult Social Services will support the four key aims of 'Our health, our care, our say' by encouraging a shift in the emphasis of social services from crisis management to promotion of wellbeing, tackling inequalities and improving access to social care and the responsiveness of services to individual needs and community priorities. Working with partners in health and the voluntary sector, the Director of Adult Social Services will lead social services in improving support for adults with long-term needs.



Ivan Lewis MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Care Services

# Summary

1. This guidance has been produced following consultation on ‘Draft Best Practice Guidance on the Role of the Director of Adult Social Services’<sup>1</sup>. In response to that consultation we heard that there was broad support for our proposals, but the majority of respondents believed that there was a need to issue statutory guidance to ensure a firm foundation for the development of services for adults. Issuing statutory guidance places obligations on local authorities, failure to comply with which could result in judicial review. While some of the recommendations in the draft guidance clearly amounted to established good practice, or reconfirmed existing policy, others indicated a broad direction of travel that the Government wished to endorse. We have therefore taken the decision to issue two documents in response to consultation:
  - ‘Guidance on the Statutory Chief Officer Post of the Director of Adult Social Services’, which is addressed to local authorities, to ensure that there is a sound basis for the statutory function; and
  - ‘Best Practice Guidance on the Role of the Director of Adult Social Services’ which is intended to provide a tool to support development of the role.
2. Best practice Guidance on the Role of the Director of Adult Social Services contains no legislative requirements. It complements ‘Guidance on the Statutory Chief Officer Post of the Director of Adult Social Services’, published by the Department of Health in May 2006 and should be read in conjunction with that document.
3. This guidance is issued as best practice guidance. It sets out the context in which this document has been developed and provides further guidance on the roles and responsibilities for the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and is intended to provide a tool to inform senior managers with responsibility for adult social services and other partner organisations in the local authority area.

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1 Draft Best Practice Guidance on the Role of the Director of Adult Social Services, Department of Health, March 2005

4. The intention of this guidance is to create, within each council with social services responsibilities, a post with strategic responsibility for the planning, commissioning and delivery of social services for all adult client groups. The DASS will have a leading role in delivering the Government's wider vision for social care, including delivering better integration between a range of agencies responsible for supporting people with care needs and promoting wellbeing. The postholder should champion the wellbeing of adults in the community and in residential care, provide professional leadership (including delivering workforce planning) and deliver the cultural change necessary to implement person-centred services and to promote partnership working.
5. The guidance also sets out interim advice on arrangements for the appointment of a Lead Member for Adult Services. It is the Department of Health's intention to introduce legislation requiring the appointment of a Lead Member for Adult Services at the earliest opportunity.

# Guidance on the Organisational Structure for the Delivery of Adult Social Services

## Status of this Guidance

6. This guidance has been issued as best practice guidance and is intended to outline the rationale behind the creation of the DASS post, and provide a clear focus for local authority officers undertaking the function, by setting out the deliverables that they should be seeking to achieve. Where a local authority has appointed a DASS in advance of this guidance being issued, the authority should consider the contents of this guidance in the ongoing development of the role.

## Context And Rationale

7. The Children Act 2004 requires all local authorities with responsibility for educational and social services to appoint a Director of Children's Services with responsibility for co-ordinating and managing the provision of local children's services across education, health and social services. The creation of the new statutory post is necessary to ensure a co-ordinated approach to meeting the needs of all children and young people.
8. Directors of Children's Services will, amongst other things, take on the social services functions relating to children and children and young people leaving care that have been traditionally part of the remit of Directors of Social Services. Broader social services functions for over 18s are part of the statutory remit of the DASS. It is vitally important that the needs of adults from all disadvantaged groups and those needing support in society are given equal weight with the needs of children. The creation of the 'Director of Adult Social Services' post, alongside the Director of Children's Services, will ensure that all the social care needs of local communities are given equal emphasis and are managed in a co-ordinated way.
9. The development of the role of the DASS forms an integral part of the Government's strategy for adult social care that we consulted on in 'Independence, Wellbeing and Choice'<sup>2</sup> and our vision for the modernisation of community services that we set out in 'Our health, our care, our say'<sup>3</sup>. This will involve a key leadership role to deliver the local authority's part in:

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2 Independence, Well-being and Choice: Our vision for the future of social care for adults in England. Department of Health, March 2005.

3 Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services. Department of Health, January 2006.

- Improving preventative services and delivering earlier intervention;
  - Managing the necessary cultural change to give people greater choice and control over services;
  - Tackling inequalities and improving access to services; and
  - Increasing support for people with the highest levels of need.
10. A key objective of ‘Our health, our care, our say’ is to increase partnership working between providers of services for individuals needing support, their families and carers, in order to encourage services to be designed in a person-centred way, rather than dictated by organisational, or professional boundaries. The DASS role will be central to delivering the Government’s vision and championing the wider support needs of adults, including preventing social exclusion and promoting wellbeing as set out in the Social Exclusion Unit report ‘A Sure Start to Later Life’<sup>4</sup>.
11. As partnership working becomes embedded in organisational culture, the boundaries between social services and other organisations will be less clearly defined and it will be increasingly important for there to be a managerial focus on the needs of adults with social care needs and their carers. The DASS should provide a specific focus on adults and this should involve a role in championing the needs and aspirations of adults and promoting wellbeing that goes beyond the organisational boundaries of adult social care. The DASS should also provide strong leadership and coordination in ensuring that local providers of mainstream public services recognise and meet the needs of individual adults with care needs and their carers. He or she should work closely with the full range of providers of community services and benefits, including Supporting People / housing support, leisure services, adult education, community safety and the independent, voluntary and community sector as well as with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and other NHS organisations to take a whole systems approach to providing care and supporting wellbeing.
12. ‘The Future of Local Government’<sup>5</sup> sets out a strategy for redefining the relationship between local and central government. As a senior local government officer, the DASS will take a leading role in helping to deliver this strategy. It will mean working to achieve clear deliverables, but with increased scope for determining the processes and structures to achieve delivery. The DASS will be required to deliver outcomes

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4 A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities in Later Life. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, January 2006.

5 The Future of Local Government: Developing a 10 Year Vision. Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, July 2004.



and influence partners beyond the traditional boundaries of local government departments, particularly by working through Local Strategic Partnerships and as part of Local Area Agreements where these exist. A focus on both internal performance management and the management of performance in partnership arrangements such as Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements will be important in ensuring the effective delivery of services.

13. The aim is to move to a position where there is clear accountability and a strategy that is integrated across health and social care, for adult social care, both locally and nationally and a holistic focus on the needs of adults. The DASS should be responsible for ensuring the quality of adult social care services across the local authority area in all sectors, irrespective of whether or not services are provided directly by the local authority. This includes ensuring that professional and occupational standards are maintained.

## **Role of the Director of Adult Social Services**

14. There are seven key aspects to be included in the DASS's remit (as set out in the section 7(1) Guidance):
  - Accountability for assessing local needs and ensuring availability and delivery of a full range of local authority services;
  - Professional leadership, including workforce planning;
  - Leading the implementation of standards;
  - Managing cultural change;
  - Promoting local access and ownership and driving partnership working;
  - Delivering an integrated whole systems approach to supporting communities; and
  - Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing.

Each of these aspects is considered below:

## Accountability

### Outcomes to be achieved

- There are clear and appropriate accountability arrangements in place to scrutinise the work of the DASS;
- The DASS is able to demonstrate to senior officers and Members of the council that:
  - the needs of all adults with social care needs in the authority's area have been assessed (including the specific needs of carers, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people living in rural communities);
  - services are being appropriately targeted on delivering improved outcomes;
  - the potential contribution of the private sector, and the community and voluntary sector has been effectively and appropriately harnessed; and
  - Services that are provided or commissioned are effective, efficient and represent value for money.

15. The DASS should take an active role in ensuring that there are robust arrangements for supervising contracts, where services have been outsourced, and in monitoring those services in respect of quality standards and timely delivery. The DASS should ensure that all people with social care needs are assessed by the local authority, that all people who meet eligibility criteria are provided with suitable services and that there is appropriate provision of low-level and preventative services. The DASS should also ensure that targeted case-finding takes place to identify people at risk from social exclusion, who are often among the least likely to approach social services themselves.
16. The DASS should support the health scrutiny and adult social care scrutiny functions of elected Members. The DASS should also ensure that procedures for handling complaints from users of social care, their families and carers are working effectively.
17. The DASS should ensure that amongst those of his/her staff, who are responsible for assessing and meeting the needs of people with a range of long-term conditions and disabilities in their area, there is clarity about the remit of each individual. This is to ensure that individuals do not fall between services. The DASS should ensure that a named manager is responsible for assessing and (where appropriate) meeting the needs of individuals from the client groups listed at Annex A, in addition to other groups

that he or she considers to be at risk of falling between services. It is also important to recognise that service users are individuals and that services should be provided on the basis of individual need, rather than on the basis of assumptions about the general needs of clients with specific conditions or disabilities.

18. In the case of low-incidence conditions and disabilities there may not always be capacity to meet these needs locally and the DASS should ensure that his or her staff work with neighbouring local authorities and relevant specialist national service providers to meet such specialist, low-incidence need.
19. Where services are commissioned from another agency (whether that agency is in the public, private, voluntary or community sector), it is essential that that the contract sets out clearly the outcomes to be achieved for people receiving services, provides for clear performance management, review mechanisms and accountability structures. These should provide for the DASS to be able to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the service, to require improvements to be made where the service falls short of the performance standards, quality or efficiency specified and to be provided with such monitoring and improvement information as he or she may require.

## Professional Leadership

### Outcomes to be achieved

- The DASS provides a clear leadership focus, both within the local authority and amongst partner agencies in providing a real and sustainable focus on adult social care;
- The DASS ensures that occupational and professional standards are maintained across social services and within wider social care services commissioned by the local authority;
- Staff are supported and developed so that they have the required competencies to deliver services to both national and local standards;
- A strategic assessment of the wider social care needs of adults in the local community has been commissioned by the DASS and effective arrangements are in place to meet the assessed needs of the population and to review the assessment in future; and
- There is a strategic workforce development plan in place and arrangements for reviewing the workforce plan.

20. The DASS will provide leadership, create the conditions for others to perform and to innovate and will be responsible for creating the framework for the effective delivery of adult social services. This leadership role may involve taking decisions about priorities for spending in the context of the resources available for social care and the need to balance both national and local priorities. The role of Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships will be a key issue in terms of setting priorities and allocating resources.
21. The DASS should ensure that nationally recognised professional codes of conduct and practice are observed by staff delivering care services in the community, including the General Social Care Council's 'Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers and Employers'.
22. Services may be delivered directly by staff employed by the authority, or by other agencies or contractors under arrangements made by the authority. Where local authority officers are engaged in the delivery of adult social services they should report to the DASS. In some cases local authority officers may provide services in respect of both adults and children and there should be clear reporting arrangements to the relevant chief officer in place. In other cases the DASS may retain responsibility for the performance of staff seconded to partner organisations (e.g. staff in care trusts carrying out social care functions).
23. Strategic needs assessment should be undertaken on a routine basis to consider the social care needs of adults with social care needs, their carers and their families. The precise timing of the strategic needs assessment is for local authorities to determine, but it is recommended that such exercises should be repeated every three years or so. The strategic needs assessment should form the basis for planning service development (possibly over a subsequent 5 to 10 year period as a guideline).
24. Strategic needs assessment involves rationalising and synchronising the various planning exercises that already exist and using these to plan service development in an integrated way. It is not our intention to increase the administrative burden on local authorities and we intend to issue further guidance to support strategic needs assessment in future.

25. Strategic needs assessment should reflect local priorities as defined by local service users, their families and carers and feed in to a delivery plan, which may form part of the local commissioning strategy for adults, the Community Strategy and, where in place, the Local Area Agreement, with clear arrangements in place for responsibilities and for reviewing progress in delivery. Strategic needs assessment and an associated delivery plan should be developed in partnership with the Director of Children's Services, the Director of Public Health and representatives of the private, independent and voluntary sectors and in partnership with other statutory organisations in the local authority area, including health (in particular, local NHS Primary Care Trusts), housing, Supporting People, transport, leisure and other services for adults. NHS bodies are expected to contribute to this process which will be led by the Local Authority. PCTs should reflect action they plan to take as a result of the strategic needs assessment within their Local Delivery planning.
26. Market management is a key aspect of the DASS role and the DASS should work to ensure that there is a healthy range of providers offering diversity and good quality services in order to make individual choice a reality.
27. The DASS should ensure that strategic workforce planning is addressed within the wider strategic needs assessment exercise and in partnership with the Director of Children's Services to ensure that there is effective planning to deliver sufficient human resources with the competencies to meet the social care needs of individuals and families in the local community. In conjunction with the NHS Primary Care Trust, a strategic workforce development plan should be developed from the strategic needs assessment exercise and form an integral part of local delivery plans. Workforce planning should not be limited to social services staff and consideration should be given to the contribution of the private, independent and voluntary sectors and to potential capacity to contribute to delivery in partner organisations which includes NHS Primary Care Trusts and any locally agreed arrangements under section 31 of the Health Act 1999.
28. While the DASS cannot be held responsible for staff employed independently of the local authority, he or she should give consideration to the quality and competencies of the social care workforce as a whole. This should include ensuring that the General Social Care Council's Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements are adhered to. Workforce planning may also influence future commissioning arrangements.

## Leading the Implementation of Standards

### Deliverables to be achieved

- A strategy for improving adult social services, influenced by local people, is in place and that benchmarks for service development and customer service have been established and progress against these has been effectively monitored;
- The DASS acts as principal point of contact for the conduct of adult social services' business with national organisations (including the Commission for Social Care Inspection), and ensures that information is provided as required by national agencies; and
- There is a clear organisational focus on safeguarding adults in vulnerable situations and relevant standards are met.

29. The DASS should lead the implementation of both national and local standards, targets for service improvement and applicable national policy initiatives such as National Service Frameworks. He or she should ensure that services are regularly monitored and remedial action is taken where necessary. The DASS should also ensure that high quality information about adult social services and progress against targets is provided to Government and regulatory bodies as and when required. The postholder should also be responsible for supporting the performance assessment process run by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and for taking forward the commission's findings/recommendations.
30. The DASS is responsible for ensuring that there is a clear organisational focus on safeguarding adults in vulnerable situations. He or she should also ensure that clear protocols are in place for dealing with adults identified as being at risk and that all staff are aware of these protocols. He or she should ensure that the local Adult Protection Committee (where one exists) or similar arrangements are working effectively and that the POVA requirements are met. The DASS is also responsible for ensuring that staff providing care services exercise a duty of care and that the personal dignity of service users is upheld.

## Managing Cultural Change

### Deliverables to be achieved

- All adults with social care needs, who are entitled to a service provided or commissioned by the authority and its strategic partners, receive a service which meets their needs in an individualised and culturally sensitive way; and
- Services are provided coherently, orientated towards the individual choices of adults with social care needs and the needs of the wider community and directed towards achieving shared outcomes across agencies.

31. The DASS should be responsible for managing a process of cultural change to ensure that the scope for personal choice is maximised and that services move towards a model that promotes the wellbeing of individuals, is person centred, and supports independent living and social inclusion. This includes changes to the culture and composition of the workforce. Personalisation of services should be promoted by encouraging individual choice and consideration of individuals' holistic needs, including their physical, cultural, emotional, cognitive and behavioural needs, as well as those of their carers. Direct Payments and, subject to the outcome of pilots, Individual Budgets enable service users to have greater control over the way that resources which are provided to meet their needs are used and these should be encouraged. The DASS should also seek to promote a person-centred approach to assessment for services and delivery of services by other statutory service providers in the community in line with national guidance.
32. It is the Government's intention to promote a shift towards more pro-active services. In implementing this cultural shift, the DASS should ensure that there is an appropriate balance between low-level and preventative services and services designed to meet the needs of people at the higher needs end of the care spectrum and that this is reflected in the organisation's values.
33. The DASS should ensure that the cultural needs of communities within the local authority area are taken into account in strategic planning exercises and in associated delivery plans. The DASS should also work with providers of universal services to ensure that awareness is raised about discrimination against older and disabled people and the effects of this discrimination on opportunities for participation in community life.

## Promoting Local Access and Ownership and Driving Partnership Working

### Deliverables to be achieved

- Information about the services available in the local authority area have been effectively communicated to service users, including young people with long-term care needs and other potential users of adult social services, their families and carers in the most appropriate format;
- Service users, their families, carers and the wider community are involved in the planning, design and provision of adult social care services and the access needs of service users and their carers have been considered; and
- There are clear and effective arrangements in place to support the joint planning, monitoring and delivery of services between different service providers in the health and social care sectors and other local partner organisations in the wider community.

34. The DASS should be responsible for promoting local access and ownership of services for adults and, in doing so, ensure that information about services and entitlement to services is communicated to users and potential users of adult services as well as their families, carers and the wider community. Information should be provided in a range of accessible formats and include information about and/or signpost individuals to other sources of information about housing, benefits, leisure services and other opportunities in the community. This should also include working with the Director of Children's Services to ensure that information about adult services is provided to young people approaching the age where they will make the transition from childhood to adult life, in order to facilitate their involvement in decisions about service provision.
35. The DASS should ensure that a bottom up approach to the planning and delivery of services is taken so that services are planned in a consultative way, responsive to individual needs and that service users, carers and the wider community are involved. This includes considering the specific needs of rural communities, as well as urban communities and being sensitive to the needs of different cultural groups. The DASS should also take responsibility for ensuring that adult social services are compliant with current legislation and guidance in respect of providing equality of opportunity. When considering community engagement the DASS should refer to the 'Together We Can' action plan<sup>6</sup> – a cross-Government approach to involving communities in the decisions and processes which affect them.

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6 [www.togetherwecan.info](http://www.togetherwecan.info)



36. The post-holder should take a leading role in coordinating partnership working and the joint commissioning of services with the full range of partners across the statutory and independent sector. He or she should also seek to maximise the contribution made to the planning of adult social services and representation of the needs of communities by other partner agencies (including agencies responsible for children's services, housing, transport, leisure and health) and the voluntary, community and independent sector. The DASS should lead on making arrangements to bring together public, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop a shared programme for change, so that outcomes are improved and adults with social care needs are at the centre of service provision, rather than provision being built around organisational boundaries and professional disciplines.
37. In order to effectively deliver partnership working the DASS should ensure that the flexibilities to integrate social services and NHS services (provided for by the Health Act), and partnership arrangements (provided for by the Local Government Act 2000), are used where considered appropriate by the council. The potential to improve the delivery of services through Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships should also be utilised. 'Pooling resources across sectors'<sup>7</sup> provides useful guidance to support Local Strategic Partnerships in making use of flexibilities around resources.
38. In relation to other partner organisations, the DASS should ensure that staff are made aware of their shared responsibility for improving outcomes and sharing information about the extent to which those responsibilities are being met. Clear protocols should be agreed between adults and children's services for managing the needs of families. It is particularly important that effective procedures for joint working are in place in respect of adults with social care needs and with child care responsibilities. In some cases their needs might be best met by providing services to their dependents.

## Delivering an Integrated Whole Systems Approach to Supporting Communities

### Deliverables to be achieved

- All young people with eligible long-term social care needs have been assessed and receive a service which meets their needs throughout their transition to becoming adults; and
- All adult services, and adult mental health services, remain child protection focused.

<sup>7</sup> Pooling resources across sectors: a report for local strategic partnerships. Health Development Agency, 2004.

39. The Director of Children's Services and the DASS should work together as far as possible and appropriate to ensure that a whole systems approach is taken to meeting the needs of communities and, in particular, that individuals with care needs within those communities, are supported.
40. The DASS should be responsible for the arrangements to support the transition of service users between different service providers, and between children's and adult's services. He or she should cooperate with the Director of Children's Services to ensure a collaborative approach to the interface between social services for children and social services for adults on the range of issues. In particular, this should include developing an integrated approach to disabled children and their families, child protection, learning disabilities, mental health services and drug and alcohol misuse services.
41. The DASS should work closely with the Director of Children's Services to assess and meet the needs of children who are entering the transition phase from childhood to becoming adults. He or she should ensure that adult services are sufficiently aware of the needs of children and their relationships to adults requiring services, and work with the DCS to deliver the local authority's corporate parenting responsibilities (e.g. ensuring that staff contribute to reviews of looked after children). The DASS should also work with the Director of Children's Services to ensure that adult services remain sufficiently child-protection focused.

## Promoting Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

### Deliverables to be achieved

- The needs of adults with social care needs, their families and carers are taken into consideration in the planning and delivery of the full range of services provided by the local authority; and
  - Every effort has been made to encourage partners within the local authority area, including voluntary, independent and private sector organisations to take account of the needs of adults with social care needs, their families and carers.
42. In implementing cultural change, the DASS should also seek to develop models of care that support the wellbeing of individuals and promote healthy lifestyles and self-care. This means promoting active lifestyles and preventing social exclusion for adults with social care needs (including those with mental health needs, learning difficulties and cognitive or behavioural difficulties, for example, resulting from long-term neurological conditions) and their carers. Social care also has a key role to play in

the wider local government agenda, including building sustainable communities and preventing poverty as set out in ‘Opportunity Age’<sup>8</sup> and ‘Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People’<sup>9</sup>. The DASS should ensure that the council’s policies for social care reflect this wider agenda. In addition, the DASS should provide a specific focus on the wellbeing of adults and this should involve a role in championing the needs of adults that goes beyond the organisational boundaries of adult social care.

43. The DASS should participate in the planning of the full range of council services that contribute to promoting wellbeing and seek to influence the design of other council services to ensure that they enable adults with social care needs to participate fully in the community. He or she should work with Supporting People teams and NHS Primary Care Trusts to develop joint strategies and services (particularly for the client groups listed in Annex A). The DASS should, in particular, and in partnership with the Director of Children’s Services, be closely involved in planning systems to support people with long-term care needs during the transition from childhood to becoming adults. He or she should take a lead in encouraging providers of adult services to take account of the needs of young people moving from children’s services into their care.
44. Local authorities should ensure that the DASS is made responsible for promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination in respect of adult social care services.

### **Discretion to Combine the DASS Function with Additional Functions**

45. An officer, known as the DASS must be appointed with responsibility for the local authority’s statutory functions in respect of adults. However, the nature of the individual’s job description is a matter for local authorities to determine and they have the flexibility to expand the remit of the officer responsible for the DASS function to other aspects of local authority business if they so choose and, indeed, they are encouraged to do so, in so far as this contributes to his or her capacity to deliver the local authority’s statutory obligations and to deliver the Government’s vision for social care and public services. In certain circumstances functions or responsibility for partner organisations, for example NHS organisations, might also be combined with the DASS function, where this is likely to lead to added value.
46. Local authorities may, for example, choose to allocate local education authority functions that relate to further education, higher education and adult education, or any other local authority functions such as leisure, housing, and community services

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8 Opportunity Age: Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century, Department for Work and Pensions, March 2005

9 Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People. Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, January 2005

to the officer responsible for the DASS function. In broadening the officers remit beyond the DASS function it is essential that the role retains sufficient personal focus on adult social care.

47. It is recommended that local authorities give consideration to the most effective configuration of services in order to ensure a coherent approach to planning and delivery. Increasingly, multi-agency approaches will be needed to support the wellbeing of communities and expanding the remit of the officer responsible for the DASS function may provide for a more holistic approach to meeting the needs of people in the local community. While we are not prescribing the need to integrate all local authority services for adults under a single statutory chief officer post (including responsibility for the DASS function), it is our intention to move towards a single line of accountability for adult services. The Government will keep the need for more prescriptive guidance under review.

## **Providing a Political Focus on Adult Social Services**

48. Local authorities must ensure effective political accountability arrangements for adult social services at Member level.
49. It is the Department of Health's intention to introduce legislation, at the earliest opportunity, to require all local authorities in England to appoint an Executive Member with responsibility for the local authority's functions in respect of adults.
50. We envisage that this new role will ensure parity between adults' and children's services and enable strategic oversight of key issues for communities including promoting wellbeing, preventing social exclusion and protecting vulnerable adults. We envisage that a single line of accountability for a range of services, at a political level would provide a key lever for ensuring delivery on a range of issues that cut across the boundaries between services and would make a significant contribution to delivering the principles of 'A Sure Start to Later Life'.
51. Until such time as any further guidance on responsibility, at Member level, for adult services is issued, we recommend that local authorities should ensure that the DASS's responsibilities are included in the portfolio of an executive Member of the authority. This Member should also be made responsible, at political level, for all other services that the local authority provides in respect of adults, including adult social services, housing, leisure, community safety, welfare, adult learning, environmental health, transportation and neighbourhood renewal functions.

52. Local authorities are advised to ensure that the Lead Member has:
- the necessary leadership to engage with local communities and ensure that adult services are effective in promoting wellbeing, preventing social exclusion and meeting the support needs of adults, their families and carers; and
  - a focus on safeguarding vulnerable adults and promoting a high standard of services for adults with support needs across all agencies.
53. Local authorities should ensure that the DASS works together with the Lead Member for Adult Services to establish a framework of accountabilities for the effective discharge of functions, and the delivery of services within this framework. In particular, they should ensure that clear protocols are agreed with the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services (designated under section 19 of the Children Act 2004) to support joint working and a collaborative approach to meeting the life-long needs of all people supported by social services. The DASS and Lead Member should, in order to discharge their functions to the highest possible standard, forge effective links with local NHS partners.
54. It will be important for the DASS and the Lead Member for Adult Services to have a close working relationship in order to exchange information and views so that they fulfil their responsibilities for adult social services effectively.

### **The Responsibilities of The Lead Member For Adult Services**

55. The Lead Member for Adult Services should have a strategic and, in the context of the council's constitutional arrangements, a decision-making function in respect of services for adults in the local authority area, in the same way as other functions are exercised by Members of the executive. In particular, the Lead Member should have a role in ensuring that the various Department's within a local authority work together to promote wellbeing, prevent social exclusion and protect vulnerable adults from abuse.
56. Arrangements could be made for the Lead Member to delegate the operational aspects of functions to other Members of the executive or other Members provided that he or she should maintain effective overview and overall political accountability for the full range of adult services.

## Leadership and Accountability

57. The Lead Member should provide leadership across the range of local adult services, and champion the cause of effective integration, so that responsibilities are clearly defined and needs appropriately addressed. The Lead Member's role would differ from those of officers of the local authority, including the DASS, insofar as the Lead Member's leadership responsibility should be political rather than professional, and in the context of his or her role as an elected Member of the council, the Lead Member should develop the strategic direction of adult services and bring leaders of partner organisations together in a shared vision. The relevant officers of the local authority, including the DASS, will lead partners in embedding the strategy and in delivering the vision.
58. The Lead Member should also exercise his or her leadership function by ensuring that officers of the local authority are effective in meeting their responsibilities. The Lead Member should also have a role, at a political level, in championing the interests and wellbeing of adults with support needs in the local authority area, in ensuring that they are included in the life of the community. The Lead Member should also work to ensure that there is an awareness of the nature of abuse and the risk factors that can leave vulnerable adults at risk of abuse across the range of agencies involved in supporting adults.

## Partnerships and Governance

59. The Lead Member should, on behalf of the executive, have direct accountability for adult services in the local authority area and for ensuring that they meet the required standards. In relation to other partners, the Lead Member should ensure that their governing or executive bodies or boards are aware of their shared responsibility for improving outcomes, that information about the extent to which those responsibilities are being met is available, and for ensuring that officers of the local authority exercise these functions, particularly where the Lead Member is not directly involved in governance arrangements. The Lead Member should be accountable to the mayor, or leader of the Council.
60. Working closely with the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Lead Member for Adult Services should take a particular interest in ensuring that there is effective partnership working between providers of children's social services and adult social services and an effective policy continuum between the two phases so that young people with support needs have their needs addressed effectively during the transition from children's services to adult services, and other links are appropriately addressed. This should include ensuring that young people who may be at risk of abuse in later life are identified at an early stage and that appropriate action is taken to protect them.

# Annex A – Adult Social Care Client Groups

The DASS should ensure that it is clear which team, or manager, within his or her staff, has responsibility for assessing and meeting the eligible needs of a range of named client groups. A list of groups of individuals who are likely to be users of social care services, and who should be included is given below (NB this list is not exhaustive and may be added to in future). In addition, clear arrangements should be in place for other client groups, particularly where the DASS believes that there is the risk of an individual falling between services.

- People with physical frailty due to ageing;
- People with physical disabilities;
- People with sensory impairment;
- People with learning disabilities;
- People with mental health needs (including mental frailty due to old age);
- People with long term medical conditions requiring social care in addition to health care;
- People with autism spectrum disorder;
- Deafblind people;
- Older people with mental health problems, or learning disabilities;
- People who misuse substances;
- People who have experienced domestic violence;
- People living with HIV;
- Offenders;
- People with no fixed abode;
- Homeless households; and
- Asylum seekers.













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