

Principal Social Worker Annual Report Adult Social Care – Bury Council

**Reporting Period:
November 2024 – October 2025**

**Emma Massey, Principal Social Worker
Date: 19 November 2025**



Bury
Council

I'm pleased to introduce Bury's Principal Social Worker Annual Report for November 2024 to October 2025, a reflection on the year in social work practice and impact across our communities. This report evidences how teams have continued to develop their strengths-based, rights-focused approach and continued to evolve assessments and support planning around what matters most to people.

We've strengthened our legal literacy and refreshed our offer on the Mental Capacity Act and Care Act, widening development opportunities through an expanded CPD programme including ASYE, a consolidation year, apprenticeships and the Think Ahead fast-track.

We renewed our commitment to reflective supervision and introduced InterVision, ensuring learning and wellbeing are at the heart of high-quality practice. Partnership and co-production have flourished—alongside a clear focus on Making Safeguarding Personal—keeping people firmly at the centre of decision-making.

We have also advanced equality, diversity and inclusion, joining WRES and empowering staff networks to ensure no one is left behind. Quality assurance has matured through audits, peer reviews and a new practice dashboard, bringing data and stories together to drive improvement and we did all of this whilst getting read for our CQC inspection.

Despite rising demand and a challenging financial position, vacancy rates remain low, and teams continue to deliver positive, life-changing outcomes with pride, compassion and creativity. As you read on, I want to thank every practitioner and manager whose commitment and professionalism shine through these pages and in the lives of the people we serve as we continue to ensure that the people of Bury have independent and fulfilling lives, involved and connected to their communities.



Adrian
DASS

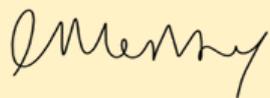


As my first year serving as Principal Social Worker draws to a close, I have taken time to reflect on the remarkable experience of being part of Bury's dedicated social work and social care community. Each day, I witness colleagues demonstrating commitment, professionalism, and integrity in their efforts to support individuals.

Our teams consistently prioritise the needs of those we serve, maintaining dignity, respect, and a steadfast belief in the strengths of individuals and communities.

It is a privilege to lead such a committed group of practitioners who remain focused on what truly matters: fostering human connection and making a meaningful difference. I am grateful for your unwavering dedication and hard work every day.

It's brilliant in Bury!



Emma Massey, Principal Social Worker, Adult Social Care – Bury Council



1. Introduction

This report reflects on another year of dedication, compassion, and resilience within Bury Council's Adult Social Care social work teams.

The role of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) is to champion the voice of social work across the Council — making sure practice remains grounded in our shared values: promoting dignity, independence, rights, and connection. This report aims to tell the story of our year — celebrating achievements, acknowledging the challenges, and setting our sights on what's next for us as a profession and as a community.

It has been a year of growth, innovation and perseverance. Our social work teams have continued to show incredible commitment to people in Bury — working creatively and compassionately in a climate that continues to test the wider health and care system.

Our Purpose and Context

Bury is renowned for its vibrant community spirit and collective ambition. As our population evolves and new challenges present themselves, it is crucial that we continue to adapt and enhance the way we provide care and support. Guided by the council's "Let's do it!" strategy (Local, Enterprising, Together, Strengths) Bury Council's borough-wide vision to 2030. It guides how Adult Social Care works and focuses on prevention, inclusion, and community-based support.

How Adult Social Care aligns with LETS

- Local: Support delivered through neighbourhood teams and community hubs.
- Together: Integrated working with health, housing, voluntary and community services.
- Strengths-based: Focus on what matters to the individual, building independence and using existing support networks.
- Prevention: Aim to prevent, reduce, and delay the need for long-term council care.

What this means in practice

- Person-centred assessments and support.
- Early intervention, advice, and community-based solutions before formal care.
- Partnership working to address wider needs (wellbeing, housing, isolation).
- Commitment to inclusive, accessible services for adults with disabilities, long-term conditions, or age-related needs.

This approach supports independence, reduces dependency on services, strengthens communities, and ties Adult Social Care into Bury's wider "Let's Do It!" priorities for healthier, more resilient neighbourhoods. Having a shared vision uniting people and services to create meaningful change — our approach in Adult Social Care is firmly rooted in enabling the people of Bury to lead independent, fulfilling lives, fully engaged and connected to their community.

Social work in Bury is about walking alongside people, listening deeply, and working together to find solutions that help them live full, meaningful lives. We work hard on our practice principles underpin this vision: we listen to people, act with openness and honesty, build on individual and community strengths, and work collaboratively with our partners. These principles guide us as we strive to support everyone in Bury to live well, independently, and with dignity. We work with our vision the heart of our work to deliver this.

'The people of Bury will have independent and fulfilling lives, involved and connected to their communities'

We continue to work within a national context of rising demand, growing independencies, CQC assurance and inspection and ongoing reform in Adult Social Care. Yet, the spirit of our teams remains strong, focused on the principles of the Care Act 2014: promoting wellbeing, preventing need, protecting people from harm, and ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and respected.

In Bury, we are proud to work within an integrated system that values partnership, co-production, and strengths-based practice. Social work's voice — rooted in human rights and social justice — continues to shape how we design and deliver care.

2. Highlights and Achievements

Strengths-Based and Person-Centred Practice.

This year, we deepened our strengths-based approach — focusing on what matters most to people, not just what challenges they are encountering.

- Teams have a strong strengths-based assessments - we've focused on "what's strong, not what's wrong" within support planning, and we continue to develop our holistic, person centre strengths-based support planning journey. This learning will be incorporated into our strengths-based implementation in the coming year.
- CQC preparation has supported our understanding of quality of our work, especially through the feedback from our people. We have used this feedback to develop our quality improvements, for example the Mental Capacity Assessment refresh and training, the training programmes delivered and the Money Matters project.
- We really focused on our legal literacy in terms of training, our mandatory training programme, developing and building a Legal Gateway process and developing regular legal briefings.
- We've renewed our commitment to reflective practice through our new supervision policy, supporting us to look at how we balance professional judgement with human empathy, wellbeing and our personal development.
- Connection, identity and inclusion have been a driving force within all our work to ensure inclusion and inclusive practice is at the heart of everything we do in our department. We have committed to the Workforce Race Equality Standards, developing our data to ensure no-one is left behind and have our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Staff steering group and Neurodiversity group staff set up.

Professional Development and Learning

- We supported our newly qualified social workers through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme, ensuring they felt supported and confident as they began their careers.
- Introduced a Consolidation year for everyone in year 2 of social work practice, continuing to support development and reflection.
- Reviewed and refined our Apprenticeship programme, introduced a Post Graduate programme and the Think Ahead for better mental health fast track programme.
- We have embedded a regular practitioner forum
- Social work conferences have been brilliant - full of energy, developed and reflection – having time to build our practice principals, reflection on inclusion and 'complexity' whilst celebrating your achievements.

Our CPD offer expanded to include:

- Legal literacy growth and development opportunities on the Mental Capacity Act, Care Act and developing our internal Best Interest Assessor programme.
- Monday Master classes focussed on themes identified by practitioners and through audit
- Full mandatory training programme developed for all practitioners.
- Peer learning networks that bring social workers together to share insight and learning.

We're also nurturing future talent — strengthening partnerships with universities to offer more placements and inspire the next generation of Bury social workers.

Quality, Learning and Reflection

We've worked hard to build a culture where learning and assurance are everyone's business.

- Regular audits and peer reviews have celebrated good practice and highlighted where we can grow.
- Themes from safeguarding reviews have been shared supporting continuous improvement.
- A new workforce dashboard is helping us see trends in practice, we're listening to stories and experiences behind the data.
- Supervision is a cornerstone of high-quality practice within Bury Adult Social Care. We are committed to providing robust, effective supervision for all practitioners, recognising it as a vital tool for achieving the best outcomes for those we serve. Effective supervision in social work is a shared responsibility, fostering professional growth, managing workloads, and supporting emotional well-being.
- Introduction of InterVision to develop peer support and learning within teams
- Every safeguarding decision we are working hard to understand what making safeguarding Personal for everyone demonstrating strengths-based work and focus of compassion and professionalism of our workforce.

Partnership and Co-Production

This year we've deepened collaboration with health, housing, and community partners.

- Social workers continue to be integral to neighbourhood teams offering holistic perspectives that keep people at the centre of interventions.
- We've co-produced learning sessions with carers and people who use services grounding our work in real experience.
- We've continued to advocate for community-based, preventative approaches that promote inclusion and wellbeing.

Reflections

No report would be complete without acknowledging the realities we face.

Demand remains high and is growing especially within our older adult population. The needs of some in our people are becoming more compounded and we are working to ensure best value in our service delivery given the financial pressures in our local and national system, but we continue to deliver positive, even life changing outcomes for our people.

We continue to support people with Advice Guidance and Information, through Connect and Direct services, Staying Well and Active Case Management approaches. We will be building our prevention action plan to ensure we offer the right support, at the right time to enable people's independence, choice and control.

The job is demanding, but our vacancy rates remain low with a low staff turnover as a department. The pride and commitment of our social care workforce was evident in both our LGA Peer Review and CQC Inspection visits this year as staff told their stories and evidenced the difference their interventions are making to the citizens of Bury.

Our staff have shown resilience working with kindness, professionalism and creativity. I have seen countless examples of how staff have worked together, supported each other and work as a team. We need to do more to celebrate our work and achievements in the year ahead.

Looking Ahead: Priorities for the Year Ahead

Deepen our strengths-based, rights-based practice

- Embed reflection and peer learning into every team.
- Continue to evolve our assessments and support planning embedding strengths based, relational conversations that focus on choice and autonomy not just in our practice but also in our documentation.

Invest in our people

- Developing a new Workforce Strategy, to ensure Bury is a great place to work
- Continue to develop progression and leadership pathways.

Enhance quality and learning

- Build on the Quality Assurance Framework and audit findings ensuring learning translates into better experiences for people.
- Use data and stories together to shape service improvement.

Champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Actively challenge inequality and discrimination.
- Embed inclusive practice and co-production at every level.

Conclusions.

This year has reminded me of what truly matters — relationships, trust, and the power of human connection.

I am incredibly proud of every social worker, manager and colleague in Bury Adult Social Care. Together, you bring empathy, creativity, and integrity to the lives of those we serve.

As Principal Social Worker, I am grateful to work alongside such compassionate professionals — people who hold hope, protect rights, and make a difference every single day.

The year ahead will no doubt bring more change, but we will meet it with the same values that define us: courage, compassion, and belief in people's potential.

Emma Massey
Principal Social Worker