

integrated care services. And we're paused at the moment. We're not doing that at the moment, but we're still in design mode with it. Okay,

Pia Rathje-Burton 03:54

interesting. And you're also board member for skills for care. So what does that mean? And what's there being skills for care and CQC,

04:03

yeah, that's a really good question. Actually, my work on as a board member in skills for care precedes my work with the Care Quality Commission, actually. So when I was Adass in Norfolk, I've always been interested in the workforce issue and the skills issue in particular, and therefore I was really sort of pleased to be, you know, apply and get to be a board member of skills for care. So I'm on that board, and I just, I'm a regular kind of trustee in the way that I work. But what's really good is that both CQC and skills for care work really closely together. So we both produce an annual report, one about the state of care, the other about state social care workforce, where we cross check with each other and share intelligence and we work together on sort of key issues around the question of skill and how we interpret, how we interpret work around that, and how that impacts in the delivery of social care quality and most recently, and. And the brilliant work, really, that Oonagh Smith, Chief Exec and and the skills for care more broadly, have done in bringing us all together to write a sector led Workforce Strategy for social care. And I was in a meeting yesterday with the Minister for Social Care, with a group of people, Stephen Kinnock, MP, and he was really acknowledging, actually, skills for care, and the work that they've done on that sector strategy, and wanting us to sort of do more as a sector. So I love the fact that I can combine my two interests in my job and being on the board of skills for care.

Pia Rathje-Burton 05:34

Yeah, that's it's really important that we have that strategy. And you know, if you haven't checked that out, I would urge you to have a look at it. So people always kind of think, oh, you know, what is your background? Why? Why you're here? Do you have any experience of providing care yourself, or any direct experience of of receive of care?

James Bullion 05:57

Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Well, in many ways, I mean, we bring ourselves to work, don't we? So actually, I'm a Family carer myself. I help my help my sister support herself through her social care, actually, so, and I've been doing that ever since I was a child. So I was, I would, in these days, I might be called a young carer, but in those days, I was just a brother working with your sister, but so I've got a long history, actually, of that. And obviously, in my job, my previous various jobs, I've been responsible for provider services. So I've been the responsible person for, you know, whole series of learning disability services in the past. And we had 23 care

homes in Norfolk directly in the council's care company. So, yeah, I've got a lot of experience of going around services, being responsible for them, and being a user of social care as a carer. Yeah,

Pia Rathje-Burton 06:53

thank you for sharing that.

Wendy Adams 06:55

That's always interesting, isn't it? I'm always interested in how people get to the point in their career that they were so when you were when you were young, then did you always think that my career is going to be in social care? What did you want to be when you were a child?

07:12

Oh, definitely not. No. If I could have had another career, it would have been as a guitarist or a writer, or something like that. That was, those are my other passions. And I was working in our price records in Oxford Street in London, and I got the sack after about a year and a half. And I went to the Citizens Advice Bureau to say this is outrageous. They've sacked me. How can they sack me for not knowing that Frank Sinatra doesn't sing the blues, or whatever it was, whatever mistakes I was making, and I found out I had no rights. So I started volunteering, actually, at that point, when I was unemployed, to do I volunteered at a day center in Bromley, and I did some voluntary advice work. So I became a kind of rights worker and a community worker, quite by accident, really. But as soon as I was into it, I sort of loved it, and my Aunt Doreen was a social worker, so we and actually my stepdad was a prisoner, so we had probation services in the house as well. So I've kind of got an image of it, I suppose, through those sort of contacts. And it sounds awful to say I drifted into it, but I did. But when I was in it and hooked, I've, I've stayed ever since. Really, I find it fascinating the whole social dimension of life and how we how we support it. And I'm a fierce defender of social care, or social issues not becoming medical issues, and not being sort of overburdened by that, yeah, absolutely, almost categorization of it in that way. So I'm a bit of a drifter, but when I'm I'm curious about many things, and when I'm curious, I stay and sort of do more.

08:47

I suppose, absolutely,

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Yeah. So the interim dash report was a real, you know, it's a difficult moment for us in CQC, but it was telling us the truth, and it was also telling us things we were saying to ourselves actually about what we're doing isn't isn't working well enough. We've gone from a situation where we used to do many, many more inspections per year through to the pandemic, when

single role of inspector. Of course, she or he will do inspection and assessment as they used to do, but there'll be much more flexibility around who does what, when, and crucially, one person to deal with. We've also decided to re install and strengthen the relationship management role as well within CQC, so we began working in a different way with hospitals on the 16 of this month, and then we're, we're changing social care on the 28 of September, and we're rolling it out so you will see a small start before we roll it all around our four networks. So we're putting back relationship management, changing the assessor inspector role to be one role. We're making sure our teams are specialists to their sector. So you know you can, you should expect people to be experts in social care and experts in regulation that those two functions, and then you can, you can expect communication from us soon about some of the technical changes we want to make. We know that registrations, it's not working effectively on our new platform. We need to revert back to how we were previously working, but without losing anyone's applications that they've made, just to reassure people. But we but some things have worked well. So then the notifications of the cancellation system on our new platform, that's working broadly Okay, and cancellations are much quicker, taking minute minutes, rather than, you know, hours, to do. So we want to keep the bits that work, but the bits that don't work, we're going to go analog, and then we're going to come back to them

Pia Rathje-Burton 15:47

so good. So, and that handbook, if people wanted to be involved with that, so you mentioned that's going to be CO produced. How do people do that? How you know what? And why is that important? I suppose, yeah,

15:58

well, I think it's important because, actually, if you're a registered manager or if you're a business, you know for your own certainty, if you've got if you've got time to go by between an inspection, for example, or you're facing enforcement or whatever, then the more you know about our expectations and how to measure yourself against that, then the better you're going to feel, the more in control you're going to feel. So it's really important that we have something that sets out how our system works. Any new system takes time to embed and time to be understood. And we are formally reviewing the single assessment framework to make sure we pick up the Early Learning after you know six, six to seven months of it. And we're using Professor Vic Rayner from the National Care Forum is helping us do this. So a strong social

So the learning is you can't rely on the sort of just the technical people. It's got to be the operational people who understand the work. And we've not sufficiently done that well enough. And then we didn't test it. We didn't properly test it and in CO production with providers about how does this work for you? If we'd have done that, we'd have spotted that portal problem much earlier. So that's that's an obvious point of learning, I suppose. The second is that at the core of our assessment process, we try to put people in their voices really, really strongly through the I and the we statements. And I think the learning is that that works. That is working in the way that we're assessing local authorities, in the way that we're doing inspections. That bit is really valuable, but it is the noise of everything else around it has almost lost it. And so you, you really got to, when you're trying to learn and improve things, keep, try and preserve what is good, and not forget there will be some good in this, even in failure. There is, there is sort of the beauty of things that are going right. And so don't, you know, don't, as it were, throw up your arms and everything. Every. Thing out with a kind of the baby in the bathwater thing, because actually, there is some good that's happened. And the Thirdly is staff resilience. I mean, I am heartbroken by some of the feelings that our our staff have expressed to us about how frustrating this has been, and if only we in senior management had listened earlier, you know, we would have avoided some of these things. And so the learning is, the straws in the wind are really crucial, the stuff you see in the corner of your eye. As a leader, you've got to pay attention to it and not discount it, even if it's irritable. And you know, it's the point is, it's meant to be irritable because it's where the learning is. So those will be my three things. Don't, don't rely on computers, humans is the thing, and relationships are the thing. I think that's

Wendy Adams 20:45

really interesting, isn't it, because this notion of digital is a real challenge for many of the social care services at the moment, because many services now do have digital records, or are transferring over to having digital records. What support and training are CQC inspectors receiving to be able to navigate the different types of technology and software that's being used in social care.

James Bullion 21:08

Yeah, we have a very structured approach to that. So we are obviously, we train ourselves generically on stuff that, you know, general levels of using digital products, but specifically on our own system, with a very structured program of getting to grips with, you know, how it works, how to interpret it, and also how to interpret data and evidence, because that's the other the crucial thing that we do, in a way, is go and talk to people or look at data and information and then Try and then try and interpret that as evidence for the purposes of regulation. So we put a lot of emphasis on sort of regulatory skills and understanding training on how to deal with information of concern and how to categorize that and what to respond to. But when you think of that, at the heart of it is not really digital. Isn't really the point. I mean digital just the mechanism for how so you need those generic skills. But actually the trade, the core of the

training is about professional understanding of information and risk and making a decision and

James Bullion 27:55

series of questions, actually. So we are 53 councils into 153 so we're just and we've got two years of baselining, creating a rating score for each local authority. So it's going to take us two years to go through. That's the first thing. And when we're looking at basically, we're looking at is the Care Act being implemented, well in that area. And so that includes prevention, provision of care, the commissioning of the care, their standard of their of the sort of response that people get and the outcomes for them. To do that, we've got to collect information from the council and collect information that we know about an area and a place. So people and providers giving us feedback on care is really important, because that forms the background, to our intelligence. Second, as part of the process with the Councils themselves, we are in a structured way. We are talking to groups of people, so with providers. Specifically within those inspections, we are talking to providers directly and organizing provider groups to meet with us. And often we're doing that through the trade association, if there is one in your area. So there's something about making the connections there and making sure they're aware of your feedback, but also feeding directly back to the Commission about what your experiences, I suppose, particularly around quality assurance and how your relationship is with the Council on that and around how you're commissioned, and what the expectations are around quality and and the impact of of all of that, and also to the other crucial thing is to enable people that we are serving their voice to come through and of course, sometimes forget that providers have a much, much better understanding of people's experience and what they're thinking. They don't want, they don't want, they don't want to speak for them, but they can really enable their voice to come through. So that's the other really crucial

Pia Rathje-Burton 29:45

feedback again, isn't it? And

James Bullion 29:49

in terms of finding out on our website, you'll see where we're, where we're sort of going next, as it were, okay, we've been so please, so please do sort of interface in in that way. And I'd love to hear people's feedback. We're finding things you'd expect us to find, waiting lists, some some worries about staffing levels, some worries about a lack of prevention, some worries about how things are commissioned, not enough support for carers, people with dementia, getting a bit of a raw deal in the integrated space, and we're feeding all that back to the Councils themselves for an improvement plan, and then to government to say, Oi as part of reform. You know, these are the things that we're finding that need to get addressed collectively. But in my experience, of the of the council's providers have been a really constructive partner to it. And I get the sense that people might not feel they've got a seat around the table. My point of view, people do need to feel what they do have, and to muscle in

if you're not getting, you know, if you're not being heard, then muscle in and say, oh, I want to be heard, please.

Pia Rathje-Burton 30:47

So if your local authority is on that list of local authorities going to be inspected soon, and so it is on the website, and we will try and put a link in the show notes to that. Yes,

31:00

I would say, I would say, though, just sorry to but in Pia. Also, I would say every local authority is preparing for this. They don't know where they are on the list out and we logistics help us determine where where to go, sort of thing. So actually, every council is in the same place where they are preparing, other than those that have been done. So everyone should be receptive at this moment to a conversation from I0 g0 Gp)3 reW*nBTF1 12 Tf1 0 0 1 54 534.07 Tm0 g0 G

that's really good advice. Yeah, definitely. And our final question, I want you to imagine that we're in a lift on the 10th floor going down with a group of registered managers, and before everyone gets out, you want to tell them what is your most important, your key message to leave them with. So what would be your key message for registered managers? So

Pia Rathje-Burton 33:12

you're going down that lift.

James Bullion 33:16

Here's a quick one. Well, I would say you are the thing. You are the most important thing we know the only correlation between really quality and people's good outcomes is the quality of the management. So you are the thing, and it's the relationships that matter, never mind all the other sort of processy stuff that we ask as regulators, whatever, that's just the quality of the

Pia Rathje-Burton 35:10

And I think you know you you know when you are thinking about things going wrong, and things go wrong in in every workplace, you know that those sort of steps, you know, thinking about, well, what are, what are the things there's, it's not all bad. Are they some bits from it that's worked really well that we can still use? So I think that's a really important, really important as well. Yeah. So we're basically linked to a social care resource in terms of how that conversation has gone. So what would be your your top pick? Wendy,

Wendy Adams 35:39

I think my top pick would be the good and outstanding inspection toolkit. We've got so many resources on the website around CQC, both for services that are new, services that are preparing for inspection, but the good and outstanding toolkit, I think, is fabulous. People can look at any of the five key areas that can get tips, they can get recommendations, they can filter it on the type of service they are to look for really relevant stuff. So I definitely think that's that's such a great resource for social care providers who maybe have had an inspection but want to improve on particular areas, or feel like that they've got an inspection that could be pending. Yeah,

Pia Rathje-Burton 36:30

absolutely. And I suppose linking with that and just thinking about making improvements, your guide to improvement might be another one to kind of have a look at, to a link with the inspection toolkit, particularly thinking about things, not you know if yo

for podcasts. So if you have one of those things, search for the care exchange, and you will see us come up, follow us. And when you follow us, that means you can then have a look at or listen to all those previous episodes. The thing with podcast is that it's so good you can do it while you're on the go. So I was talking to a manager yesterday. Was saying, Well, I always listen to something on my way to work. Or you can do it while you're, you know, I always listen when I go for, for, for dog walk, or do, you know, gardening, or something along those lines. So you can, you can really have a good listen while you're doing something else. And, and then, you know, maybe take a few few points and think, Oh, I'm going to take that way. And obviously, there's lots of podcasts out there, but particularly the care exchange, I would highly recommend. Thanks very much for joining us today, really, really helpful and lots of useful information there. Thank you, Wendy,

39:28

thank you very much,

Pia Rathje-Burton