



Local Authority Improvement Advisors and Commissioners

Information pack for applicants

Closing date: the advert will remain open until at least 31 August 2024, with applications being considered approximately every 6 weeks.

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Section 1 - the role

1.1 organisation description

The Department of Health and Social Care supports ministers in leading the nation's health and social care to help people live more independent, healthier lives for longer.

It is responsible for:

- supporting and advising our ministers: we help them shape and deliver policy that delivers the government's objectives
- setting direction: we anticipate the future and lead debate ensuring we protect and improve global and domestic health
- accountability: we make sure the department and our arm's length bodies deliver on our agreed plans and commitments
- acting as guardians of the health and care framework: we make sure the legislative, financial, administrative and policy frameworks are fit for purpose and work together
- troubleshooting: in the last resort, the public and Parliament expect us to take the action needed to resolve crucial and complex issues

1.2 role description and person specification

The government is seeking to recruit individuals with extensive experience of leadership in settings relevant to adult social care, who are interested and would be committed to acting on behalf of the Secretary of State and Department of Health and Social Care to support local authorities to identify and address any failings in the delivery of their adult social care duties.

In August 2023, the government published its [Adult social care intervention framework](#), which provides information to local authorities in England on the government's approach to intervention in adult social care.

New powers of intervention were introduced through the [Health and Care Act 2022](#). These powers enable the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to intervene where they are satisfied that local authorities have failed or are failing to discharge [Care Act 2014](#) functions to an acceptable standard.

The Secretary of State may use a variety of information and evidence to assess failure, although, in practice, we expect CQC local authority assessment reports will be the main

source of independent evidence. Other sources of information that may be considered could include any:

- ongoing engagement with local authority leadership and DHSC
- publicly published data and documents (for instance, local authority, council and cabinet papers)
- information from the sector and other government departments - particularly the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Where evidence highlights failures, the department and/or the Secretary of State may appoint an individual into one of 3 potential roles, depending on the type of intervention required, to support the local authority to improve.

Improvement advisor

This is a non-statutory role and will be part-time, approximately 1 to 2 days a week. The length of posting will be dependent on the circumstances of the local authority requiring support.

The improvement adviser will provide support, guidance and challenge to the authority to develop and deliver a robust improvement plan. We expect improvement advisers will have a broad remit that could:

- provide effective oversight to ensure the pace of improvement is appropriate and that improvements to adults' social care are sustainable
- provide support and advice as necessary when assessing and driving progress, taking account of the weaknesses and challenges identified by CQC, as well as elements of good practice
- apply their expertise and experience to support the Director of Adult Social Services and service management team in addressing areas of weakness; this may also include working with practitioners of different levels to develop competence and improve performance; and to help foster a culture of reflection, challenge and support
- make use of wider contacts to support and advise the council on potential solutions to issues and signpost examples of good practice where possible
- if relevant, work closely with the independent chair of the Improvement Board to provide oversight of and advise on the Improvement plan, attend Improvement Boards, and engage with the wider partnership
- work closely with any other local authority improvement partners to maximise impact of work and avoid unnecessary duplication
- participate in DHSC's formal reviews of the council's progress and make a recommendation to DHSC on whether progress has been sufficient
- provide regular written reports on the council's progress to DHSC ministers

Non-executive commissioner

This is a statutory role and could be part-time or full-time depending on the nature of failings and support requirements. The length of appointment is likely to be around 12 months.

Where the issue is service management or poor social care practice, a non-executive commissioner, expert in adult social care, would be appointed to work with the local authority. They would not carry authority over services and would report into existing accountability structures.

- Issue any necessary instructions to the local authority for the purpose of securing immediate improvement in the authority's delivery of adult social care; identify ongoing improvement requirements; and recommend any additional support required to deliver those improvements.
- Bring together evidence to assess the council's capacity and capability to improve itself, in a reasonable timeframe, and recommend whether this evidence is sufficiently strong to suggest that long term sustainable improvement to adult's social care can be achieved if the ASC functions are to remain with the council at this time.
- Provide effective oversight to ensure the pace of improvement is appropriate and that improvements to adults' social care are sustainable.
- Apply their expertise and experience to support the Director of Adult Social Services and service management team in addressing areas of weakness; this may also include working with practitioners of different levels to develop competence and improve performance; and to help foster a culture of reflection, challenge and support.
- Make use of wider contacts to support and advise the council on potential solutions to issues and signpost examples of good practice where possible.
- Work closely with any other local authority improvement partners to maximise impact of work and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Meet with local partners to review their leadership and progress against implementation of agreed actions.
- Ensure, if relevant, an effective Improvement Board oversees and drives improvements in adult's social care with a single coherent plan for the improvement of adults' services. To provide direction and challenge where necessary.
- To review and improve senior management and social work, capacity and capability at the council.
- To ensure that the council improves recording systems and processes, both internally and with local partners.
- To ensure that the council builds ongoing independent review and challenge into all of its systems for delivery it's Care Act functions.
- Participate in DHSC's formal reviews of the council's progress and make a recommendation to DHSC on whether progress has been sufficient.
- Provide regular written reports on the council's progress to DHSC ministers

Executive commissioner

This is a statutory role and would likely be full-time for at least 12 months.

If the issue is the local authority is not sufficiently championing social care, or a broken officer/member relationship is holding back the required improvements, an Executive Commissioner with authority over services may be appointed. In the first instance, they would look to work within existing accountability structures, but would have authority to issue instructions to officers and overrule elected members.

Alongside the requirements set out under the non-executive commissioner you will:

- be responsible for driving improvement at an authority where ASC intervention is in place
- be the public face of the intervention and may be required to lead a team of commissioners to provide direction and leadership to the authority throughout its improvement journey. In practice, we expect that in most cases this will involve working collaboratively with the authority and providing challenge and advice to support effective decision making
- ensure that progress is made at pace and will provide regular assurance through progress reports to the Secretary of State. These reports must set out any recommendations to change the scope of the intervention, including any appointment of additional commissioners.

Person specification

We are recruiting to a pool of candidates that could be deployed into the roles described above. Successful candidates will not automatically be appointed but can be considered for deployment from the pool in the event failings have been identified in a local authority.

To be considered for appointment, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the qualities, skills and experience to meet all of the essential criteria.

Essential criteria

- Experience of successfully leading improvement activity in an organisation.
- Proven ability to shape and champion good governance and approaches to risk management.
- Ability to identify reasons for service failure and instigate the measures necessary to stabilise service delivery and implement improvement.
- Experience working in a comparable role such as people director or director of adult services.
- Experience of working in difficult political environments and a thorough respect for democratic accountability.
- An in depth understanding of local government and the significant issues facing it.
- Demonstrable evidence of leading transformational change in the context of growing demand and increasingly constrained resources, whilst ensuring that the adult social care needs of the population are met.

- Proven track-record of consistent and demonstrable leadership at a senior level within an organisation of comparable scope and complexity.
- Ability to build, develop, negotiate and influence strategic relationships and partnerships, by demonstrating highly visible and inspirational leadership skills to achieve outcomes.
- Demonstrable track record of leading, motivating and managing teams to achieve high performing, significant and sustainable service improvements and outstanding results through internal and external partnerships.
- Expert knowledge and understanding of relevant legislative frameworks, policy and governance requirements appropriate to adult social care.
- Demonstrable evidence of working within a complex political/policy environment, including of successful work with people holding elected office.
- Experience of working in complex contexts, leading diverse activities across multiple service areas meeting agreed targets and strategic objectives within budget.

1.3 remuneration

Remuneration will be agreed prior to deployment as an Improvement Advisor or Commissioner. Successful appointment to a pool of candidates does not guarantee deployment as an Improvement Advisor or Commissioner.

You will not become a member of the Civil Service. You will not be subject to the provisions of employment law.

These roles do not attract any benefits under any Civil Service Pension Scheme. You will not be eligible for redundancy pay as you are not an employee. No other arrangements have been made for compensation upon termination because an office holder who is appointed for a limited duration would have no expectation of serving beyond that period.

1.4 accountability

If you are deployed as an Improvement Advisor or Commissioner, you will be accountable to the Department of Health and Social Care and/or the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

1.5 time commitment and tenure

Time commitment for an Improvement Advisor or Commissioner will be subject to requirements. Please see section 1.2 for further details. Deployment to any of the 3 roles set out could be up to 12 months with a possibility of extending by 12 months.

1.6 location

The post holder should be UK based and able to travel to in person commitments where helpful and required but will also be able to work remotely/from their usual working location.

1.7 code of conduct

Anyone deployed as and improvement advisor or commissioner will be expected to adhere to the [Civil Service Code](#), including guidance on the appropriate use of social media.

Section 2 - the recruitment

2.1 how to apply

Thank you for your interest in the improvement advisor and commissioner roles. The Department of Health and Social Care is managing this recruitment.

If you wish to express your interest in the role, please email your CV and a supporting Letter in one document to ascimprovement@dhsc.gov.uk – please put “Improvement Advisor and Commissioner Application: Your full name” in the subject line of your email application.

The advert will remain open until at least 31 August 2024, with applications being considered approximately every 6 weeks.

In making an application, please note the following:

CV

Please ensure your CV includes:

Your full name, title, home address, personal contact telephone numbers (mobile and, if applicable, a land line), personal email address and details of any social media accounts and LinkedIn accounts, including your Twitter, Instagram handle and/or username.

Brief details of your employment and other experience (for example, voluntary roles) and details of any past or present ministerial appointments.

Contact details for 2 referees who will support your application. One referee should be the person to who you are or were accountable in your current or most recent appointment or position of employment. Please indicate the relationship of each referee to you. Referees would be approached prior to formally offering you the role.

Please limit your CV to 2 sides of A4 in size 12 font.

Supporting letter

The supporting letter is your opportunity to demonstrate how you meet each of the essential criteria set out in the person specification, what you will bring to the role and your ambition for the role.

We recommend that you are clear which specific evidence you provide relates to which criterion. Providing separate paragraphs in relation to each criterion is common practice. Please ensure your full name and the role you are applying to are clearly noted at the top of your letter. Please write all acronyms in full first and limit your letter to 1000 words.

Conflicts of interest

If you or a party related to you have any interests which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your supporting letter. This can be in addition to the limits specified above.

Conflicts of interest may include (without limitation), any personal or business interests (including direct and indirect financial interests), positions of employment, other appointments or other positions of authority, that you or any party related to you have and which may influence your judgement in performing your appointment or may be perceived by a reasonable member of the public as having scope to do so.

A 'party related to you' could include for example (but without limitation) a spouse/partner, a business partner, a close family member or a person living in the same household as you or a close family member.

Failure to declare a potential conflict of interest may become grounds for withdrawing an offer of appointment. If offered the role, you will also be required to make a declaration of Interests and to keep the declaration up to date throughout the tenure of your appointment. The requirement to declare interests will also be included in your terms and conditions of appointment. Failure to disclose an interest may, subject to the interest and the circumstances, become grounds for suspension or termination of your appointment.

Standards in public life and ensuring public confidence

If there are any issues in your personal or professional history (including any convictions or bankruptcy) that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to Ministers or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to our attention and provide details of the issues in your supporting letter.

In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media and blogs. Due diligence may be carried out on any publicly available information.

Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment offer being withdrawn or the appointment being terminated, as the person appointed to this role will be expected

to demonstrate the highest standards of corporate and personal conduct and in line with principles set out in the [Civil Service Code of Conduct](#).

Security clearance

An offer of deployment as an Improvement advisor or commissioner will be conditional until relevant security checks have been completed. This process is referred to as BPSS (Baseline Personnel Security Standard) and is undertaken by HR and the Government Recruitment Service as part of the onboarding process.

In addition, additional checks may be required in order to access restricted systems, information or sites. These checks form the national security vetting (NSV) process and provide an individual with an additional clearance level. However, where this applies, candidates will be notified during the appointment process. [Further information on national security vetting](#).

Eligibility criteria

In general, you should have the right to work in the UK to be eligible to apply. There are a small number of specialist roles that are not open to non-British citizens. Any nationality requirements will be specified in the vacancy details.

The government expects all appointees to work to the highest personal and professional standards.

You cannot be considered for appointment if:

- you are disqualified from acting as a company director (under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986)
- have an unspent conviction on your criminal record
- your estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors.

When you apply, you should declare if:

- you are, or have been, bankrupt or you have made an arrangement with a creditor at any point, including the dates of this
- you are subject to a current police investigation.

You must inform the sponsor department if, during the application process, your circumstances change in respect of any of the above points.

When you apply you should also declare any relevant interests, highlighting any that you think may call into question your ability to properly discharge the responsibilities of the role you are applying for. You should also declare any other matters which may mean you may not be able to meet the requirements of the code of conduct of board members.

2.2 application process

We will deal with your application as quickly as possible and will advise you of the likely timetable at each stage.

Planned timetable:

We are seeking to recruit suitable candidates to a pool of individuals that can be deployed as and when required. This advert will remain open until at least 31 August 2024, and applications will be reviewed approximately every 6 weeks.

All applications will be assessed against the essential criteria in the published person specification in this document. The applications will be sifted, and successful candidates will be invited to interview. The assessment panel for the interviews are yet to be confirmed but will be likely to include at least a senior representative from DHSC, DfE or DLUHC and an external panel member. Information on shortlisted candidates may be provided to Ministers.

We will notify you of the status of your application. We regret that due to the volume of applications received, we are only able to offer feedback to candidates who have been unsuccessful at the interview stage.

2.3. how we will manage your personal information

Your personal information will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail because of sending DHSC any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes.

When we ask you for personal information, we promise we will:

- only ask for what we need, and not collect too much or irrelevant information
- ensure you know why we need it

- protect it and insofar as is possible, make sure nobody has access to it who shouldn't
- ensure you know what choice you have about giving us information
- make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised

We ask that you:

- provide us with accurate information
- inform us as soon as possible of any changes or if you notice mistakes in the information we hold about you

DHSC may commission support from a third party to help assess applications.

2.4. diversity

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our leadership and bringing in talent, regardless of its origins. We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. We particularly welcome applications from people with ethnicity, gender and disability characteristics currently underrepresented.

We are a member of the government's Disability Confident scheme. We use the Disability Confident scheme symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability. The scheme helps recruit and retain disabled people.

As part of implementing the scheme, we guarantee an interview for anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role and who has asked that their application is considered under the scheme. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application. By 'minimum criteria,' we mean that you must provide evidence which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence required under each of the essential criteria, as set out in the job-advert. When you apply you should indicate if you would like your application considered under this scheme.

Adjustments: All candidates are entitled to request reasonable adjustments at any stage of the application process. If you would like to discuss reasonable adjustments prior to submitting your application, please contact ascimprovement@dhsc.gov.uk

2.5. contact details

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy.

If there is anything further you would like to discuss or if you require further assistance when making this application, please email ascimprovement@dhsc.gov.uk

If you would like to make a complaint regarding your application, please ascimprovement@dhsc.gov.uk. They will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.

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