



The care exchange – Series 5

Episode 5: We want colleagues to take ownership of their careers

Hosts

Pia Rathje-Burton and Wendy Adams

Guests

Nicola Airey, Head of Talent Development at the National Care Group and Justine Jones, Registered Manager at Oak House

Pia Rathje-Burton 00:08

Welcome to the care exchange, the Skills for Care podcast for managers in social care, I'm Pia Rathje-Burton and I'm Wendy Adams so today on the podcast, we have two guests for for a change, so we have Nicola Airey, who is the Head of Talent Development for the National Care Group. And the National Care Group is a national care provider that provides care and support for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and autism in supported living, residential and home care settings. And they operate well nationally, so across England, and they have one service in Wales and employ about 3,000 people. Nicola herself has worked for the National Care Group in in the learning and development team for about seven years, and the current role for three years, and she is responsible for onboarding new recruits and workforce ongoing learning and development.

Wendy Adams 01:05

So our other guest today is Justine. Justine Jones, who works at Oak House in Stoke on Trent which is also part of the National Care Group. The service is a residential service for eight people with learning disabilities. And Justine's the registered manager there, and it's a role that she's held for about eight years. She's worked in social care though for 23 years, which is a great achievement,

Pia Rathje-Burton 01:33

absolutely. So today, we're going to talk to Nicola and Justine about the care workforce pathway. If you haven't heard of the care workforce pathway, this is a Department Health and Social Care Initiative, and really it's, it's kind of a new career structure for adult social care workforce in England.

Wendy Adams 01:56

I think what it really does well is it sets out what the different roles in social care might be. So it clearly outlines the knowledge, the experience, the skills that people need in in different roles, whether that's a care worker, a senior care worker, a deputy manager. And I think what it does is it gives the opportunity for the social care workforce to think about, and it provides guidance about how people can develop those skills, how people can access learning and development and career progression, which is a great opportunity for staff within social care, and one that we know has, you know, been often been neglected

Pia Rathje-Burton 02:42

Absolutely. And it really sort of kind of be showing, I suppose, the learning and development, the values, the behavior for each of those roles. So if you're looking at it, you'll be able to see, you know, you have a, you know, new to care what what skills do they they need to have? What knowledge should I need to have? What behavior do they need to have? It's quite early development, so at the moment, there's just the four roles, but more, more will be added soon, and the plan is for all the different roles in social care to be to be on the care work pathway. The current four roles are new to care, care or support worker, supervisor and leadership and practice leader. But as I say, there will be more soon, including the register manager role.

Wendy Adams 03:29

So National Care Group were one of 30 employers that were the early adopters in some of their services, including Justine's service the Oak House, and that's why we thought it would be a fantastic opportunity to have them along on the podcast today to hear some more about the great work that they've been doing.

Pia Rathje-Burton 03:47

Yeah, so the work they will be talking to us about is about the career self assessment that some of their staff did, and then the they followed up with some career conversations all linked to the care workforce pathways and using some of those resources, they tested for us. So on with the show. So Justine and Nicola, welcome to the care exchange. Thank you. Thank you. So glad you could come and and spend a bit of time with us. We heard, then Nicola in the introduction, that a bit of a summary of the care workforce pathway. Do you think you can explain it to us? Because I think sometimes we have a way of explaining it. It might be very different from you. So could you explain it to us?

Nicola Airey 04:39

Yeah. So from our perspective, it's been quite a useful tool for managers and colleagues alike, but also for us as a learning and development team to understand where our colleagues currently are at, where they're looking to go, but what support and additional, maybe training,

mentoring, coaching, etc, they need? Yeah. Are ultimately to be the best they can at that particular role, and what they would need then to go to that next level.

Pia Rathje-Burton 05:07

Yeah, and why did you get involved? Why did the National Care Group get involved?

Nicola Airey 05:12

We were working on a project internally around our own development pathway, and when we saw the invite come out for the early adopters program. We thought, why do two things separately? We might as well get involved. So it came at a perfect time for us. And one of our big passions is promoting a career in care. And we thought the workforce pathway was a great opportunity to be able to do that. And if we could have some slight input or even just benefit from the testing of it, then we wanted to be involved.

Pia Rathje-Burton 05:43

Yeah, sounds really good. So what was your first steps? What did you do?

Speaker 1 05:49

Joined the group meetings to get as much information as possible, asked lots of questions, tried not to get too excited, to do everything at once, and started by looking at where is going to have the biggest benefit for our colleagues, and we looked at where some of our local services might be able to support and that's where Justine kindly volunteered and supported with us. So we tested it out with a small cohort to start with, to see how it would work for us, and if it worked the way that we we thought it would from those initial meetings with the early adopters group,

Wendy Adams 06:24

and what were the benefits? What? What? What's your experience? So far,

Nicola Airey 06:29

we've had a great uptake on professional qualifications. So we've had the ability to see what colleagues career aspirations are. We've had examples where colleagues have used the self assessment and identified that actually, that they're performing really well, and maybe a higher level qualification would stretch them further and help them with development. And we've got one colleague that is now on a development path to leadership and management as a result of the self assessment and the support that we can now give through identifying the development through that self assessment.

Wendy Adams 07:03

And that's really interesting here, because I think that there will be some managers listening to the podcast who are thinking, well, what's the benefit in doing this? What what's it going to mean for my organisation and and my staff? So it's great to hear that that's a positive experience. Have there been any challenges?

Speaker 1 07:23

Yes. So what we have done a challenge, but we've made it into a positive the good, the tools that we were given are fully flexible. So I know from the early adopters meetings, we were asked to test them as they were set out, but we could tailor them to to meet sort of our needs as well. So I think for us, because it's quite a generic tool, what I would say is not to be afraid to adapt it to your your workplace. So if we're supporting individuals specifically with mental health or learning disabilities, we might just tweak the training and development section at the bottom to match that person's particular workplace. And we've had good uptake from colleagues in terms of the ones that have volunteered. We would just love for it to be used wider across our organisation and for more people to see the benefit

Pia Rathje-Burton 08:11

of it. Sounds really good. So Justine, when Nicola said, Oh, I've signed you up to this. What was your What was your what was your initial reaction? What was the first step you took as well? Also

Justine Jones 08:25

the first steps we took was we spoke to some staff, asked them if they'd be willing to take part of this new project. What we were doing about learning and developing, quite a lot of staff what wanted to take part in it. So it showed that there was a lot of staff that did want to grow and develop. Yeah, they were happy to discuss this with me and and they have got goals for the future. So that was really positive. So we did the meetings with the staff. We We gave them the the tools to go and do the self assessment on themselves, see what areas they wanted to improve in, and see what they wanted to develop in. And then we had the individual meetings, which was was really positive on my side, to have just the one to one discussions with the staff. Sometimes you don't as a manager, you don't get to sit and discuss things with your staff every day. So it was nice to have some one to one meetings with them, and then it was nice to get to actually see that they wanted to develop. So then we kind of put some plans into place then of what we could do to support them, which was really beneficial, really, and we've had some like, good outcomes, yeah,

Pia Rathje-Burton 09:52

so how did it just going back to those initial conversations? So you had the conversation first, and then you did a self assessed. Did the self assessment? Was the self assessment something they did on their own? Or do they do? Would you I gave

Speaker 2 10:04

them the self assessment, yeah, because it was for them to Yeah, identify areas, what they wanted to develop in. But then we had a scheduled meeting then, and they bought the self assessment forms back to me, which we worked through with together then and come up with some goals and some actions, what we could do to develop them,

Wendy Adams 10:29

and was the self assessment easy for staff to do?

Speaker 2 10:33

Not at first, no, right in what way I think, like, as Nicola said, at first, some of the form was maybe tailored to different sectors, maybe than ours. So when we sat there was a lot what they felt they couldn't fill in. But when we sat together and worked through it together, we can't, like Nicola said, We adapted it. We we kind of adapted it to suit what, what our area was,

Wendy Adams 11:02

yeah, did you feel that people were quite happy to go away and fill it in? Because I know, certainly as a manager in the past, you ask staff, when you come along to your one to one or your supervision, have you got anything that you want to talk about, or anything to put on the agenda? And very often, people, nope, no, or, you know, you ask them, before their appraisal, to complete their documentation about, you know, what they've they've achieved, and people don't do it or find it really hard to do. Did you find some of that with this? And if so, how did you overcome that? We

Justine Jones 11:34

didn't really, because it was something the staff wanted to participate in, right? Because it was a select few. It was, I think there was five of them, what we did it with, okay? Because they wanted to take part. They were quite happy to go away and and do the work. Yeah, yeah. They did struggle with they did because we had the meeting scheduled in. I told them I needed this back by certain time frame, and what they did struggle with, what they left blank, because they just weren't sure where it fitted with their role. We just sat and worked for that together then, yeah, but because it was something they wanted to do it, yeah.

Wendy Adams 12:17

And I think that's a really positive message for me that the care workforce pathway is something that you're doing with your staff, not something that you're doing to your staff. It's not a case of, you must all fill in this self assessment. And you know, it's about, you know, do you want these opportunities? And if so, use these tools to help us work out what the best routes are for you.

Pia Rathje-Burton 12:42

And I suppose the other thing is to sort of say that those tools were kind of the early, early versions. Weren't they, which is why they probably weren't quite as user friendly as they are. And obviously that's the whole point of being an early adopter is that you kind of, you're testing things, and then, you know, we will then kind of update those and make sure that they're really user friendly. So I'm sure that when they are released shortly, then they will be much more user friendly and and ask questions following your feedback. So just going back to those career conversations that you had afterwards, how did you find them having to do having to do them as a manager yourself,

Speaker 2 13:24

I think it was pretty easy to do with the staff, really, because they were comfortable, yeah, with me. They were comfortable telling me what the goals were and what they wanted to achieve. And I think I do have quite a close working relationship with them anyways so it I didn't find it difficult, and I don't think they found it difficult to sit and talk to me about what they wanted to do. I think they felt it was nice that the manager was actually listening to them, that that were listening, and we are there to help them to to develop. Yeah.

Pia Rathje-Burton 14:01

And do you think you would have had that kind of conversations anyway?

Speaker 2 14:06

Possibly not, no, because don't have the time to to sit. And do you have everyday conversations? How are you? How's that going? Are you doing really well at this is that, personally, no, I don't think I would have sat with these staff to have these one to one conversations. For me, it was a good opportunity to actually engage with them.

Pia Rathje-Burton 14:31

Yeah, and you might have missed opportunities, and people feel, you know, nobody's really interested in what I what I want to do. So it sounds like a really positive thing to actually have, have the care workforce pathway to kind of shape those conversations around, what are the skills and knowledge, and what's your career aspirations, and what's happened to those people? And I don't know if you who want to answer other questions, obviously, those five people, you had the career conversations. Obviously, lots of people were were really enthusiastic and were talking about their careers well, so what's happened to them? I know you mentioned a few at the beginning. Nicola,

Justine Jones 15:09

yeah, well, I do have four of them now, because I've already got one. We've got four of them now. We've enrolled onto that. Um, they've just had an assessor come along, so they're just starting with that which they're all really, really grateful for the opportunity. Some of them have wanted to just develop in their everyday role. So they've wanted to develop to be like a medication leads and taking part in the audit process. So that's something what we've worked with as well, just to develop so develop the skills in the everyday role as well as the conversations. And I

Wendy Adams 15:53

think that's a really important message, isn't it? Is that sometimes development isn't always about getting a promotion or moving to a different job. It might be enhancing the skills in the job that you're in. And you know, for lots of people, that's what they want to do. They don't want that other job. They want to just do the best job that they possibly can in the role that they're in. So it's good to hear that the care workforce pathway offered that opportunity, really,

Speaker 2 16:19

yeah, I mean, I do have one colleague who he's asked for more specific training, and he actually wants to support with about delivering training. We have had conversations about him maybe go and do some shadowing with some trainers, and then he also has taken part in doing some training with the team, yeah, so he's delivered some in house training, yeah, staff team, so we've tried to put some of it in place.

Pia Rathje-Burton 16:53

Yes, that sounds really good. So obviously he's looking you probably wouldn't have had those conversation. He, you know, obviously can't predict the time, but predict the future. But you, you know, it may have been that he was had those ideas in his head, and he's for, oh, there's no opportunity for me to do this now I'm going to leave. So, in fact, you actually by having that honest conversation about, well, what is your future? He's kind of, you know, you're starting to kind of provide some of those, even if it's not qualifications, opportunities, because, as Wendy said, career progression doesn't necessarily or having or improving yourself doesn't necessarily always have to be qualifications. It can just be opportunities to try something new and see and test it. You know, might find that actually that's not, I think I'm going to like it, but in fact, it's, it's not for me that sounds really good. Just going back to you, Nicola, so you also utilize the care work force pathway to sort of kind of support performance improvement and performance management. So tell me a bit about that. Yeah,

Speaker 1 17:56

we found that it was a really good template to understand sort of the base requirements of each level of role, and what we've started to do as a little bit of a test is with a group of colleagues, is to use that as like a performance measurement tool, as it were, so to

understand, with a group of colleagues that are at the in the same role, how are they all performing against that criteria. Where have we got gaps? Is there a common theme that we need to address as a sort of support? Is it that somebody just needs specific support with somewhere? And one of the things that we're hoping to get out of the tool is, is it identifying a particular area that somebody may be struggling with that they're not forthcoming to say, actually, I really don't understand this, or this is a bit that I'm struggling with, so that we can give support that is identified, but not necessarily something that somebody is aware of. Yeah,

Pia Rathje-Burton 18:53

and how do you think that benefits the workforce? So those people who are involved with that, I

Nicola Airey 18:58

think it makes it fair, I think it makes it clear, and it's also useful for them to say, Okay, this is what is expected of me, and equally, am I being given the tools and the support to be able to do that fully? So it works both ways. It's not just us saying, You must do this. This is what we must enable you to do. And I think again, yeah, it just makes it nice and clear, it's fair and it's equal for everybody, and it's not one person's interpretation of this is what you should be doing compared to what somebody else should be doing.

Pia Rathje-Burton 19:29

Yeah, absolutely.

Wendy Adams 19:31

Do you find it's been easier? I mean, in theory, people's job descriptions should always have set out what the requirements of their role is or was, but I know from my own experience that in most of the jobs that I've had, my job description actually has not necessarily reflected the roles that that I do. Do you feel that using the care workforce pathway has been a better representation when you're doing that measurement of people's performance than the roles of job descriptions have been historically.

Nicola Airey 20:11

Yeah, absolutely. I think what we really like about the care pathway, care workforce pathway and the job roles, is that it breaks it down specifically. So rather than saying you must have good communication skills, it will give you specific examples that when our colleagues are looking at, they can relate to. So if I want to be outstanding at communication at this particular level, this is what it looks like, or this is what I should be demonstrating. So I think it gets rid of the genericness, if that's the word. And I think it helps to give people practical examples that they can relate to, to help them understand it. Yeah,

Wendy Adams 20:47

that's really helpful, isn't it? Because I think you know, you're right. Good communication skills could mean very different things to me. It could mean very different things to Pia it could mean very different things to you. So that that additional guidance about, well actually, what does that look like, and what does that look like in this role? Seems to be to be something that would be really helpful. And I'm guessing that that's really helpful when you look at people moving roles as well, because one of the things that I think is difficult for people is sometimes when you move from being a care worker to a senior care worker or into a more senior position, you know that your communication needs to be better, but in what way does it need to be better? Do you find does the care workforce pathway break that down? And do you find that that's been helpful?

Nicola Airey 21:39

Yeah, I found it helpful. And what we've done is when we've got colleagues that are a bit unsure about so apologies for going back to qualifications, but this is how it's helped me, is when they're unsure whether they want to do a particular qualification, we've actually shared the workforce pathway roles for those particular sort of levels. So if you're looking at progressing to become a senior or a team leader. These are the expectations. So here's your current role, here's what the next role would look like. And have a look and think of, oh, actually, is that? Is that the right move for me? Is that the role for me? Am I ready for it yet, or is the things I can be doing in the background to support me to get there? But what I have found where I have shared that with people is it's been quite a useful tool, where we've got people going, Oh, actually, if you'd asked me what qualification I wanted to go to, I might have asked to go on the level two. But now I've looked at this, I think I would really benefit from the level three, because it's going to help me refine those skills ready for the next step.

Pia Rathje-Burton 22:33

Yeah. So really, kind of not just with those career conversations and the assessment by actually using it to kind of really look at the difference between the different roles. Because I think sometimes if you're if you're doing the job and you're seeing somebody else in a more senior role, you think, Oh, that looks quite easy. I can do that. But actually, when you break it down and look at what the difference between these two roles are, and this is the bit I need to improve on to and develop in order to for me to be able to do that, that role effectively. And what? What's next? So what are your other plans? Are you using for anything else? Yeah,

Nicola Airey 23:10

so we use it for quite a few things. I like to say that we've gone a little bit rogue with it, but in a positive way. So we've got the performance I like to call it performance measurement, and sort of setting expectations. We use it a lot. We have quite a lot of sponsored colleagues throughout national care groups. We've been using the tool to identify sort of the correct

development that they want to do, whether it's something we can do internally, whether it is a professional qualification. We are doing quite a bit more work around matching our job descriptions to the descriptions within the workforce pathway as well, so that it is aligned and there is that consistent sort of language, and our future plans with it also include using it for succession planning. So we've mentioned around the self assessment element of it, but also a tool that a manager could use to identify, Okay, Nicola is a really good support worker. It doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to be a really good team leader. What work can you do with me in the background, to support, to help retention as well? I think, like the example Justine gave before, there might be scenarios that come up that isn't an instant fix, or, Oh, here's a particular training course that you can go on. But I think by understanding those conversations and understanding what what people want out of their career, we can help to shape that and support that. And I suppose the final sort of thought on it is that we want it to be a big self, self assessment tool, where colleagues take ownership of their career in care, and that we kind of facilitate and guide, but it's something that colleagues are proud of and something that colleagues use to help further themselves.

Pia Rathje-Burton 24:49

Yeah, sounds really good. Not every organization is going to have a head of talent development. I know, we know, with people listening to this, there'll be small organisation, they will just kind of be the register manager, maybe an owner. So are there any things that you think, even if you are not big and have lots of time to or team to kind of look and explore how we use this better or well within organisation, what are the other sort of kind of tips you would suggest that somebody would even if they just sort of kind of start small.

Nicola Airey 25:23

Yeah, I think that would be my biggest tip, to start small, and it's quite it is an amazing tool, and there's lots that you can do with it. And I think it's focusing your priority on, okay, do I want to focus on a particular role? Or, like Justine did with the pilot, of picking a mixture, so that you've got a good representation of it. Try not to do everything at once, but maybe identify. Are you looking for your next senior support worker, or are you looking for your next team leader? And maybe use the tool to help guide you through that. And then, once you've used it, once you know then how to use it, and then you can apply it to different, different scenarios and situations.

Pia Rathje-Burton 26:03

Yeah, absolutely. And Justine, from your point of view, are there things that, you know, top tips you will give to another manager who are kind of looking at this and thinking, oh, you know, well, where do I start? What the things I need to think about?

Speaker 2 26:16

Just think, as Nicola said, identify in your team who actually wants to learn and develop, but don't ignore everybody, because there might be somebody there who who actually is a shining star, but they're just happy to sit in the background. Yeah, and then, I think just put it out to your staff and make, make yourself time. Make a quiet area. Give give them the time to speak to you, and give them the opportunity to talk to you, and give them the opportunity to say what they would like to do. And as we say, it might not just be another role. It could just be something in the role, what they've really got an interest in and they just want to develop with, yeah, it's just taking the time with the staff.

Pia Rathje-Burton 27:06

Every registered manager I talk to always have CQC in the back of their minds. Are there, are there any of this you've been using or have been creating evidence around?

Speaker 2 27:16

Yeah, it's in my evidence file that what we've been doing, because I have, like, a bit of an improvement file. Yeah, it's in there. What we've actually been doing with the staff to support them, as you say, it's always something very good to go towards your inspection. And yeah, to CQC. And I suppose,

Pia Rathje-Burton 27:34

really linking to that quality statement on learning Improvement and Innovation, you know, really sort of think, and this really is a new piece of work, so really good evidence for innovation, isn't it? Yeah. Nicola, just, have you seen sort of any change in terms of, I don't know, nationally, or those areas where you've been, been kind of part of this about retention of staff. Have you sort of kind of seen that?

Speaker 1 28:00

Yeah, so we've got, we've had quite a good uptake on professional qualifications as a result of the discussions that we've had. And I've had some of those colleagues speak to me and say, I'm really, really grateful for this, this opportunity, or this particular project that we've been working on, because they didn't know how to go about getting support and extra development, and potentially they may have considered moving roles or moving organisations to get that support. So I think it's helped them understand what is out there, and it's given us an opportunity to sort of showcase what we can do to support. We have got quite a few colleagues that are registered on different qualifications as a result of this, including the new care certificate pathway all the way up to team leaders and level fours. So it has been really helpful for us to be able to provide that support to people where we might not necessarily have known about their their goals and their ambitions had we not done this project. Yeah,

Pia Rathje-Burton 29:01

yeah. So sounds like you're really sort of kind of seeing the benefits. And I suppose it's about having that long term plan in terms of saying, Well, we're going to do this, and we're going to this is part of our retention strategy, I suppose, to really kind of make sure that people understand that there's a there's a real opportunity to have a career in social care. Yeah. Thank you. Really helpful.

Wendy Adams 29:22

And have you focused mostly on the care workers moving or sort of the care worker role? Or have you done, have you had those similar conversations involve people in the pilots from maybe more senior roles within the organization? Nicola at

Speaker 1 29:40

the moment we've we've included up to team leaders, and then potentially team leaders that are looking to progress to sort of the next role up in our organisation, which I think generally would be known as a deputy manager. We refer to them as service managers. So those have been the levels that we focused on more, because that's where we've got the greatest number and. Of roles, and we wanted to give something back to our colleagues and make sure that they're not the forgotten colleague or the forgotten workforce. And really, like we said, promote that career in care. It's not just somebody coming to work as a support worker or a care worker. They can absolutely make a difference, but there's all this opportunity to develop and grow them as well, yeah.

Pia Rathje-Burton 30:22

And whether you have long term plans, sort of, kind of for above that, you know, so, so kind of the register manager, but above that, because I think sometimes people sort of see the the register manager being sort of a ceiling. They can't go any further. But in fact, there's lots of opportunities, and if you want, if you want it,

Nicola Airey 30:38

yeah, absolutely. That's part of our next sort of plans, with the pathway of making sure that we're promoting that full journey, including whether you want to move into a more support function role, or it's like Justine's example with the gentleman that wants to move into training. So highlighting that there's lots of different things that you can do in the care sector that make a difference, and focusing on all those ways that you can get there and the tools that are available,

Wendy Adams 31:02

okay? And I think that, I think the care workforce pathway will be a really powerful tool at that registered manager level. Because I think what what we see, and what Pia and I both have experienced ourselves, is that as registered managers, you often neglect yourselves in all

sorts of ways. You know, you're the last one to think about your own well being because you're busy thinking about the well being of your staff. You're the last one to think about your own professional development, because actually, you're focusing on the development and learning opportunities that might be available for your staff and meeting their needs. So I think registered managers often are the, the worst offenders for sort of neglecting, you know, neglecting themselves. So, you know, it'd be, it'll be interesting to think about how this might support the development for registered managers as well, and about people recognising that, you know, actually, my learning and development is, is just as important, because things change, don't they? And, you know, people can be registered managers for many, many years, and it's not the job that it was when you, you know, when you started. Yeah, I don't

Pia Rathje-Burton 32:13

know if you see that Nicola particularly in your role, because obviously, you're, you're dealing with the kind of the learning and development of lots of different types of roles, isn't it? If you kind of see that trend that Wendy and I was actually seen nationally, that when we're talking to red as a manager, they're very focused on their staff and ensuring that their staff are well trained and have lots of opportunities, but they don't even think about themselves so much as terms of prioritising their learning and development? Yeah,

Nicola Airey 32:41

I think one of my favorite phrases that I can hear from a registered manager is, what about me? What is What can I do? And I think it's something that internally we would love to push as well as I like to use them at all be selfish in that don't forget to think about yourself. It's great all the support and the guidance and everything that we provide to everybody else, but think about yourself as well. And it could be that you're a registered manager that doesn't want to do a different role or anything like that. But how can you be supported to be the best that you can be in the role that you're in? It doesn't have to be a move somewhere. It doesn't have to be a change to anything. It could just be simple tools and simple guidance that can really help to make your role much more enjoyable, make your role much easier. Yeah,

Wendy Adams 33:25

absolutely, slightly. Okay, so we're coming to the last part of our session, um, our podcast, so we always have our time to care slot in every episode. So I'm going to ask you the the same question that we ask our other podcast guests, which is, you, you both sound very busy people. What is your most time saving tip?

Nicola Airey 33:53

So for me, it is that preparation at the start, so investing that extra bit of time at the beginning to plan will help you sort of stay on track and stay focused, but also start small. Don't think you've got to take on the whole thing all in one go. Yeah,

Wendy Adams 34:10

absolutely. And Justine, do you have a time saving saving tip as a manager generally? I think

Speaker 2 34:17

that was my I was going to say as well that preparation is always the key. But I think as well, don't be afraid to empower your team and delegate tasks. I think that's very important. That'll save you time. Don't think, as a registered manager, that you're the only person there who can do and you have to do everything. Remember, you've got a big team, and I think you know, you can delegate and and get task done that way. Yeah,

Wendy Adams 34:47

really important. And I think we could have an entire other podcast on why delegation is difficult for managers. It's a subject that comes up a lot. Yeah, absolutely. And our final question, um. And again, I'm going to give you both a chance to answer if you'd like to. So our final question is, imagine 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 you think is the most important key message that you want to leave them with, what would that be? Nicola,

Nicola Airey 35:24

for me, it would be, it doesn't have to be expensive to be valuable.

Wendy Adams 35:29

Fabulous. Wow, yeah. Really, really good. Thank you very much. And Justine,

Speaker 2 35:35

I think, for me, I think just remember why you're in the role. Remember why you're there. You're there to support these individuals, to have the best day ever and the best life ever. So I think you know, as a registered manager, you can have lots of stress, but just remember why you do as a job in the first place. Yeah.

Wendy Adams 35:55

What a fabulous note to end on, because yeah, we do get so caught up in everything that needs to happen and forget about the the reason why we all came into this role and in the first place. So that's a great a great note to end on

Pia Rathje-Burton 36:12

exactly. And I love the best day ever. We all want to have the best day ever, every day. Yeah, thank you so much for your time today. Thank you. Thank you for having us. So that was a very interesting conversation, wasn't it Wendy,

Wendy Adams 36:37

oh, it was great, wasn't it, to hear about all the work that they're doing around developing their staff,

Pia Rathje-Burton 36:43

yeah, and just really interesting to you know that care workforce pathway and how they really utilise that within the organization, really, sort of kind of had those really interesting conversations. They also had the performance indicators, and they were sort of kind of looking at the different roles for career progression, just so many things that you think, you know, you've got this, this, this, you know, information, their care workforce pathway, and then starting to kind of think, well, what? What can I use it for? Just what's really interesting to hear how they started that work, and clearly still work to be

Wendy Adams 37:19

done, yeah, and how it was such a useful tool for for as a manager as well. Because I think as a manager, you're often really keen to have these conversations with people about progression, but not really have a format or a way to start that conversation. So it sounded like it had been really useful for them,

Pia Rathje-Burton 37:37

yeah, and really interested to hear about some of those early signs of retention, you know, making sure that people feel like there's a there's a career for them in social care, that those opportunities and and and as you they were talking about that person that you know, suddenly kind of start to talk about wanting to work in in in training and learning and development, that perhaps that conversation wouldn't have happened. And they, you know, may, may have, may have left and gone somewhere else to get that opportunity. So thought was really useful. Resources are still being developed. There will be out later in the spring. There will be some guides and templates that people can use to have those conversations, to start using the care workforce pathway within within their organisation. I know as well that there are some discussions happening about the next step with the pathway to make sure you sign up to Enews and really hear about what's what's happening next. So it's the very much of the developing picture.

Wendy Adams 38:35

She also talked about the development up to that manager, Deputy type, role and Skills for Care have also recently been speaking to employers, haven't they, about how they succession

plan and how this, and we've managed to incorporate this into the new developing managers and deputies guide, which has been published at the end of at the end of March 2025 so this guide is really well aligned to the manager level aspect of the care workforce pathway, and this is going to be available to managers as a free PDF, which is great news.

Pia Rathje-Burton 39:14

Yeah, absolutely. And I think really trying to make sure everything is fitting together, isn't it? Really as well. And then we'll talk about the the level two, social care, care certificate, qualification as well, that that's all linked as well. You know that that's, you know, when you're having those conversation, and particularly with new to care staff, overseas recruit staff, you know, really looking at, well, what, how, how is this all fitting in together? There's this almost like this massive jigsaw, isn't it happening the with the care workforce pathway, it

Wendy Adams 39:45

really felt like it was coming across as exactly what it says it is on the tin, a pathway right from that very early start, that early start in care, right the way through somebody's journey, which is, is fabulous.

Pia Rathje-Burton 39:59

Yes, yeah, exactly. And I thought was really interesting what Nicola said right at the beginning. We were already starting to, you, you know, do this, and I suspect that's the case for many organisations, they already starting to think about, well, how do we make assure that adult social care is seen as career? How do we make sure that we think about our staff and how how they will develop in the future. So this is already made for you. You don't need to just go off and develop it, because they will be there and you can utilise all the resources that's going to that's coming out. So that's it for this episode. Thank you so much for joining us today and remembering that there will be links in the show notes and on the website on all the resources that we're going to be talking to, and we will be updating that as more and more of those resources will come out.

40:51

Bye for now. Bye,