

Social Work Leaders in Northern Ireland



What makes a great leader –
insights from social work teams



At the 2024 Professional in Practice Awards, we were delighted to be joined by artist Beth McComish from Arts Care NI, who led a creative workshop exploring leadership through art.

Participants were invited to create miniature watercolours that reflected their personal leadership journeys. Beth then thoughtfully curated these individual pieces into a collective collage, symbolising the shared and diverse experiences of leadership.

The final composition was shaped by recurring themes found across many of the artworks, including pathways, supporting hands, sunlight, and elements of nature - each representing growth, guidance and resilience.

Beth further refined the collective artwork to create a bespoke icon representing leadership in social work. This visual will be used in future publications and communications to reflect the values, identity and impact of leadership within the profession.

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Foreword

It is my great privilege to introduce this publication, which celebrates and amplifies the voice of social work leadership in Northern Ireland. At a time of rising complexity, increasing demand and growing inequality, the need for courageous, compassionate and skilled social work leadership has never been greater.

This collection of reflections, quotes and testimonials from nominees in the 2025 Regional Social Work Awards provides a powerful insight into what good leadership looks like in practice today. These have come from the voices of social workers who lead every day - in homes, communities, hospitals, care settings and across our services. They remind us that leadership is not defined by role or title, but by values, purpose and action.

The Department of Health (DoH) Social Work Leadership Framework¹ recognises leadership across four essential domains: Leading Self, Leading with Others, Leading Practice and Leading the Profession. The lived experience shared here brings each domain to life. Whether supporting a family through crisis, championing human rights and social justice, mentoring colleagues, or shaping policy and systems - social workers in Northern Ireland are stepping forward to influence change and improve outcomes.

Leadership in social work is fundamentally about standing alongside people, walking with them through challenge, and enabling their strengths, voice and aspirations to shine. It is also about having the courage to speak up for those who are unheard or marginalised, and to work collaboratively with partners so that social work values and expertise help shape the services we deliver.

¹[Social Work Leadership Framework](#)

This publication is intended for everyone - those already in leadership roles and those building their leadership journey at the frontline. I firmly believe that social work needs leaders at every level: leaders working directly with children, adults and families; leaders enabling high-quality practice; and leaders influencing systems, policy and public understanding.

The reflections shared in these pages are a testament to the compassion, integrity and professionalism that define our workforce. They serve as both inspiration and encouragement to continue developing our collective leadership capacity, so that together we can deliver the best possible outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Northern Ireland.

I would like to congratulate and thank all those who contributed to this publication, and all social workers who demonstrate leadership every day. Your commitment to human rights, social justice and improving lives is deeply valued, and I am proud to stand with you.

Aine Morrison

Aine Morrison
Chief Social Work Officer





Our Why

Social work is a profession rooted in values of compassion, integrity, and leadership. In Northern Ireland, these principles are actively promoted through strategic initiatives such as the Social Work Leadership Framework and celebrated through events like the Regional Social Work Awards. This publication brings these two elements together to showcase how leadership is shaping the future of social work.

The Social Work Leadership Framework provides a clear roadmap for developing leadership at every level - from frontline practitioners to senior managers. Leadership in social work is not just about holding a title; it is about influencing positive change, advocating for service users, and driving innovation in practice. By producing this publication, we aim to highlight how the framework is being lived out in real-world contexts, offering practical examples and inspiring stories that demonstrate its impact.





The Leadership Award

The Regional Social Work Awards have introduced an exciting new category-the Leadership Award. Its creation reflects a growing recognition that leadership is demonstrated every day by practitioners who inspire, influence, and drive positive change, regardless of their role or position. Leadership is about vision, courage, and collaboration, and this award celebrates these qualities in action.

The individuals featured in this publication have been nominated for this prestigious award in recognition of their outstanding leadership and impact. Extracts from nominations have been used to show the leadership qualities that are most valued in social work today. These examples of leadership reflect the diversity of leadership across Northern Ireland, highlighting commitment, resilience and innovation.

Meet the nominees

In the following pages, you will meet these nominees and discover why they were nominated. You will read about their achievements, the impact they've made, and the qualities that set them apart as leaders in the profession. By sharing these stories, we aim to celebrate excellence, inspire others, and demonstrate how the Social Work Leadership Framework comes to life in practice.

A resource for learning and Inspiration

This publication is more than a record of recognition - it is a resource for learning and inspiration. It highlights what leadership looks like in real-world contexts and affirms the vital role social workers play in shaping services and improving lives. We invite you to explore these stories, reflect on your own leadership journey, and join us in celebrating the incredible individuals who make social work in Northern Ireland stronger every day.



The four domains in the Leadership Framework



The Leadership Framework shows the different dimensions of social work leadership and demonstrates that all social workers, including you, have a leadership role. It does this by looking at leadership from four different perspectives (referred to as 'domains' in the Leadership Framework):



Leading Self

Leadership is about leading self. This means taking opportunities to develop the ways you use self-disclosure, empathy and authenticity to enhance working relationships.



Leading with Others

Leadership is about leading with others. It's how you collaborate with social work colleagues, professionals in other fields, service users and communities to achieve better outcomes.



Leading Practice

Leadership is about leading practice. We all have a role to advance how social workers work by adapting to new research and knowledge, societal change, and the findings of inquiries.



Leading the Profession

Leadership is about leading the profession. Key to this is when you work in ways that instil trust to advance the reputation of social work, and influence how the profession evolves to meet new challenges.





LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Being a leader isn’t about having power or striving to be any better than anyone else and Paula-Ann has shown that time and time again she is willing to do anything that supports the team and isn’t afraid to get stuck in when needed most.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Having someone in your corner within a difficult role makes people stay in roles that can be challenging.”

*“ Paula-Ann has shown that time and time again she is willing to do **anything** that supports the team ”*

Paula-Ann Mc Ardle



Kate Harrison

“leading
from the front”



LEADING
SELF

“Getting the balance right between leadership and management, Kate has always held on to her social work value base, leading from the front, getting involved and not becoming aloof or unapproachable.”



LEADING
PRACTICE

“Her unquenchable search for her own knowledge and development reflects her value base and her approach to innovative solutions to help others is inspiring for her managers and staff.”





LEADING SELF

“Alannah knew to lead others she must start with self. Throughout the preparations for encompass she demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence, self-awareness and resilience. Alannah quickly earned trust and confidence from her colleagues, despite the resistance often associated with introducing new technology.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Social work values underpinned Alannah’s inclusive and collaborative leadership style, ensuring that social workers were active participants, not passive recipients of the change. She listened to concerns, incorporated feedback, and made the transformation feel like a collective effort, empowering social workers to champion the change.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Driven by service user safety as a priority Alannah wasn’t afraid to challenge providers when necessary, advocating for safeguards that ensured the system would not compromise care quality. This proactive stance is a hallmark of her leadership in practice-ensuring that the new system enhanced, rather than hindered, the care provided.”



“empowering social workers to challenge the change”

Alannah Brown





LEADING SELF

“Jayne has the ability to understand and reflect on her own behaviour and how this impacts on individuals and teams, being open and honest with herself and others where there may be an area for further development.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Jayne promotes innovation and new ways of thinking and working to improve working conditions for social workers and outcomes for service users and carers.

Jayne evaluates outcomes, ensuring learning is shared – promoting best practice and continuing to inspire others.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Jayne has been successful in her ability to lead with others to improve practice and outcomes for staff and service users and in her ability to create professional curiosity within the teams and their desire to want to engage and improve. Jayne has created a culture of ‘doing together’ as opposed to ‘being imposed onto them’, inspiring others.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Jayne has the ability to set the vision and direction, inspire shared purpose and engage staff to work together to activate and achieve.

Jayne leads the social work profession by standing beside staff, focusing together on the shared vision and goals ahead.”

*“promotes **innovation** and new ways of thinking”*

Jayne Adair



Donal McNicholl



LEADING PROFESSION

“He communicates consistently an ambitious, optimistic and inspiring future vision focussed on delivering high quality compassionate care aligned with organisational priorities and HSC values.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Donal promotes workplace coaching, and innovation where staff find new and improved ways of working with autonomy.”

*“Articulates ideas with
**respect
openness
and honesty**”*



LEADING SELF

“Donal displays transformational leadership attributes; self-reflection, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, self-discipline self-knowledge, resilience and determination. Donal exhibits behaviours of compassion, empathy, emotional intelligence and articulates ideas with respect, openness and honesty, encouraging debate, informing new ways of thinking which will support transformation of health & social care services.”



Leone Cox



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Leone’s leadership shines brightest in her ability to inspire and guide her team towards achieving meaningful outcomes.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Her leadership in the profession is also demonstrated by her advocacy for inclusive practices and her ability to engage with complex social issues. Leone is committed to ensuring that social work continues to evolve and adapt.”



LEADING SELF

“Leone is continuously modelling behaviours that prioritise resilience, clarity, and compassion, she has built a team culture that thrives on open communication and trust. She creates an environment where everyone feels heard and valued.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Leone is deeply invested in fostering a culture of continuous learning and evaluation, always seeking ways to improve service delivery. She encourages her team to reflect on their practices, embrace innovation, and prioritise the needs of their patients.”

“Leone is committed to ensuring that social work continues to evolve and adapt”



Anna Kirkpatrick



“Empowering individuals to be the best practitioner they can be”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Anna is extremely approachable and as a team we feel listened to and valued. She displays empathy and sensitivity when responding to the families trying their best to support their loved ones. As a team leader she listens to staff concerns, creating opportunities to develop and reinforces a sense of team identity while empowering individuals to be the best practitioner they can be.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Anna has always been so kind and supportive to me personally and helped me achieve my goals/progression. She is an inspiration to the team and is always so positive in driving the team forward.”



LEADING SELF

“Anna empowers the team to strive for excellence and to deliver a compassionate, person-centred service. These are values that she herself embodies.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Even with her busy schedule, she still makes time for us to discuss important matters which can be either personal, work related, individual or team specific. Anna encompasses social work values by taking an holistic approach.”



David Hamilton



LEADING SELF

“David’s leadership is rooted in his authenticity - he leads with compassion, resilience, and a determination to make a meaningful impact on the lives of young people.”

“inspired us to strive for excellence”



LEADING PRACTICE

“David maintains an absolute focus on the question: ‘What is the best thing for our young person?’ followed by, ‘What is the best thing for our staff?’”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“David continually inspires us to reach our full potential. His consistent guidance, support, and unwavering belief in us make a significant difference.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“He has led with compassion, promoted openness and honesty, encouraged partnership working, and inspired us to strive for excellence.”



Maria Emilsson



“approaches challenges with a reflective and systemic mind-set”



LEADING SELF

“Maria is highly self-disciplined, ensuring that she is a role model to all those around her. She approaches challenges with a reflective and systemic mind-set, always seeking ways to grow and adapt. In addition, her strong sense of self-care allows her to maintain the energy and resilience needed for leadership.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“She has led on the development and facilitation of a unique leadership program for social workers across the organisation.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Maria plays a vital role in shaping the future of social work in Northern Ireland and on the international stage with her contribution to the GAPS network. One of her most notable achievements is leading the development of a new supervision policy for social workers in Northern Ireland.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Maria’s leadership extends beyond herself - she harnesses the intelligence and resourcefulness of those around her to achieve positive change. She has a unique ability to foster an environment where colleagues feel empowered to speak up, contribute, collaborate, and grow.”





“ Encourages her team to be **creative** ”

Angelina McCann



LEADING PRACTICE

“She demonstrates this by making herself available to help and support outside of her team championing social work in multidisciplinary settings.”



LEADING SELF

“Angelina’s leadership style and approach reflects the Trust’s ethos of ‘caring together, committed to better.’”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Angelina also encourages her team to be creative in the development of new ideas on service improvement and motivating others to work differently so as to achieve positive change.”



Paula McCann

“ Paula is constantly striving for a way to enable new leaders ”



LEADING PROFESSION

“She strives to build a diverse team, by promoting an inclusive and positive organisational culture.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Paula is constantly striving for a way to enable new leaders and is passionate about advocating on behalf of the profession to promote and enable a workforce of equally skilled leaders.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Paula is exceptionally good at providing protected time to self-reflect and debrief, acknowledging that whilst we are professionals, we are also individuals and need time to process the experiences we are exposed to.”





LEADING SELF

“Charlene sets high standards for her own social work practice and that of her workforce ensuring we hold true to the core social work values and codes of conduct.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Her role in the development and implementation of case management standardised operating procedures has placed the social work role front and centre of the case management process, ensuring a seamless approach to adult care effectively merging the medical and social model of community care, to improve the service.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Charlene has inspired social work leaders at all levels to continuously strive for excellence and compassionate care by cultivating an environment where all staff feel seen, heard and valued.”



“ Charlene has inspired social work leaders at all levels ”

Charlene McGuigan



David Wylie



LEADING SELF

“A hallmark of David’s approach has been his capacity to keep a cool head.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“David’s ability to articulate a clear vision, rally support, and create a shared sense of purpose has been pivotal in achieving the goal”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“David has shown remarkable tenacity, perseverance and ability to bring others on board, all important leadership qualities.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“David’s leadership extends beyond operational concerns to the ethical dimensions of social work. David has reinforced the profession’s commitment to serving the public good.”

“David’s leadership extends beyond operational concerns to the ethical dimensions of social work”



Jacintah McCaffrey



LEADING
PRACTICE

“She maintains an improvement focus on all aspects of her work and her enthusiasm for improving services and the lives of service users and carers enables her staff to work in creative, innovative ways to effect change.”

“Maintains an improvement
focus on all
aspects of her work”



LEADING
WITH
OTHERS

“Jacintah has created an environment where teamwork, collaboration, and co-production have thrived. Her ability to lead others through difficult conversations and circumstances can be highlighted by her leadership and her ability to provide psychologically safe environments for her staff, who work with complexity daily.”



LEADING
PROFESSION

“She has stabilised Community Social Work and built an environment where staff stay and are excited about opportunities and improvements embedded in the service. She shares good practice and learning regionally to support the social work profession as a whole.”



Jessica Wylie



LEADING
SELF

“Jessica leads by example and never asks us to do anything that she is not prepared to do herself. An example of this is how she jumps in and delivers workshops in school if someone is off work. I genuinely feel blessed to have Jessica as my line manager – she is caring, reliable, resilient, helpful, honest, hard-working and has a warm, down to earth personality.”



LEADING
PRACTICE

“Jessica is instrumental in engaging young people in co-production, particularly hard-to-reach youth, utilizing transferable social work skills developed in her role as a 14-plus team social worker.”

“ Jessica makes a significant **contribution** towards designing and developing early intervention supports ”



LEADING
PROFESSION

“The effectiveness of Emotional Wellbeing Teams for Schools has been highlighted by the Public Accounts Committee at the Northern Ireland Assembly, and Jessica has played a leading role in its development and implementation.”

“Jessica makes a significant contribution towards designing and developing early intervention supports to reduce the likelihood of young people developing longer-term mental health difficulties.”



Louise McVeigh

“Staff wellbeing is an area Louise promotes throughout her daily practice”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Louise works to ensure she has knowledge of each member of the team, their strengths, and areas for improvement. Louise endeavours to develop each team member’s individual strengths and skills, enhancing their practice to further develop their career. Louise continuously encourages staff to work on their initiatives and will support any ideas brought forward.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Louise’s passion for the Social Work role always shines through, which in turn boosts staff morale. Staff feel appreciated through Louise’s small but invaluable gestures; such as acknowledging good practice. Staff wellbeing is an area Louise promotes throughout her daily practice whether it’s encouraging staff to take their lunch breaks, to go for a walk, regular check-ins to see how everyone’s week is going or through organising of Team Development Days.”



Gemma Armstrong



LEADING SELF

“Gemma exemplifies the highest standards of professional practice, demonstrating exceptional leadership and an unwavering commitment to improving both the social work profession and the quality of services offered to our most vulnerable.

Her approach to leadership is grounded in empathy, vision, and a strong commitment to social justice.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Gemma played a crucial role in the implementation and roll-out of the Encompass computer system, a transformative project aimed at integrating health and social care data to improve outcomes for patients and service users.

She encourages innovation and leads by example, ensuring that others are inspired to provide the best possible service to vulnerable individuals and families.”

“She encourages innovation and leads by example, ensuring that others are inspired to provide the best possible service”





LEADING SELF

“Marian exemplifies the qualities of self-leadership, embodying the importance of personal growth and professional development.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Marian’s skill in building consensus and gaining collaborative advantage is a reflection of her deep understanding of people and her ability to harness their intelligence and resourcefulness to achieve positive change.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Marian is known for her transparency, authenticity, and a steadfast commitment to creating an environment where change can thrive.”



Marian O'Rourke



“A steadfast commitment to creating an environment where **Change can thrive**”



Karleen Taylor



LEADING PRACTICE

“Karleen went above and beyond to help me develop the skills, knowledge, and values needed to be a children’s disability social worker.”



LEADING SELF

“Karleen is open, honest and fair even when she is under immense pressure. She trusts her team and when in crisis, personally or professionally, she is always there.”

“Karleen is open, honest and fair”



Clare Joudeh



LEADING SELF

“Clare has strong social work values, setting clear expectations that keep service users at the heart of practice.”



LEADING OTHERS

“Clare leads with care, her staff feel safe and supported at a time when there are limited resources and risk in the service remains high.

Clare has identified the strengths within the team and supported staff to facilitate areas of expertise, such as narrative work, which has been very beneficial for service users.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Clare has the ability to not only adapt her own behaviour and communication to new ways of working, she has also brought her team with her on the journey, which is no easy task.

Clare has great integrity, and her open and honest conversation style means staff feel confident to challenge how or why things are done, which is essential to creative and innovative practice.”

*“Clare leads with care, her staff feel **safe and supported** at a time when there are limited resources”*



Mairead Quinn



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Mairead is a strong collaborator, always seeking to bring people together to find solutions to complex challenges. Her inclusive leadership style encourages open dialogue, and creates a sense of shared ownership whereby she understands that the best outcomes are achieved when people work together and feel valued within their roles.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Her ability to lead by example, listen to the needs of frontline staff, and implement meaningful change has not only improved service delivery but also created a culture of excellence within the organisation.”



LEADING SELF

“Mairead is actively invested in her professional growth. Her self-discipline is evident in her attention to detail and commitment to excellence, which inspires me and others to strive for the same high standards in our own work.”

“Mairead sets high standards for herself and others in the team.

Her commitment to quality and continuous improvement has had a profound impact on the services she oversees and has contributed to better outcomes for service users.”

“Seeking to bring people together to find solutions to complex challenges”



Norma Cairns



“She truly values the joy of sharing a laugh and organizes fun activities that **foster connection and team spirit**”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Norma has led several initiatives, including co-produced training on alcohol and substance misuse, a support model for AYE social workers, and the development of a domestic abuse training framework. Her belief in discussing and being transparent about errors fosters a safer environment, embracing the lessons learned from mistakes.”



LEADING SELF

“Norma serves as a true inspiration to her team and colleagues, exemplifying self-leadership and embodying the core social work values of empathy and compassion.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Norma was instrumental in creating a mandatory training framework for all service directorates, ensuring high-quality services that address both current and future challenges.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Norma creates an environment where her team members and colleagues feel comfortable sharing their challenges, She truly values the joy of sharing a laugh and organises fun activities that foster connection and team spirit. Norma sets high standards for her colleagues and team members, fostering excellence by appreciating their contributions and providing support when necessary.”



Sharon McCaughey

“ Supporting excellent practice and developing excellent practitioners through fostering

innovation,
learning and evaluation
on a daily basis ”



LEADING
WITH
OTHERS

“Sharon has leadership capabilities which means that she intentionally behaves and communicates in ways that facilitate change... she treats people with a great respect, genuine positive regard and empathy and this applies to all sorts of people in different roles and life circumstances, work colleagues or disadvantaged vulnerable service users.”



LEADING
SELF

“Sharon has a strong work ethic and leads by example, A natural people person, warm and enthusiastic. She has a great sense of humour which she uses for building positive connections within the team, so that everyone can feel valued and appreciated.”



LEADING
PRACTICE

“She encourages teams to be creative... One of her ideas was a play area and sensory space for children and families to enhance the quality of family time. Supporting excellent practice and developing excellent practitioners through fostering innovation, learning and evaluation on a daily basis. She talks to the teams regularly about professional development based on her own experience.”





“She leads by example and lives the social work values”

Allison Cooke



LEADING SELF

“Allison is a compassionate leader who exemplifies the social work values in her day to day work. She is a strong advocate for the individuals and families she works with, as she believes firmly in the right of people with a learning disability to live their best life. She is courageous in challenging those in authority to deliver on this. She leads by example and lives the social work values.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Allison has time for all the staff and will always offer guidance and support. She has been a role model for staff who have benefitted from her support and mentoring and who have now moved into more senior roles themselves. She provides advice and support to her colleagues both social work, nursing and Allied Health Professionals.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“She ensures that her staff challenge providers to deliver a service which meets the needs of the service users and that they provide support where required.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“She is described as being courageous in her decision making and her vision for services.

She has shown leadership through the development of Think Family across the Mental Health Division and other interface Divisions across the Trust.”



Lesley McKenna



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Lesley strives to ensure that a child’s voice is heard at every juncture; including young people and families in all aspects of care planning.”

“Lesley has always placed her staff’s wellbeing at the forefront of her practice... She is always the first to check in after a tough visit or meeting to rebuild a staff member’s confidence and resilience.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Lesley places an enormous emphasis on the professional development of her staff and has always encouraged her staff to develop and flourish in their roles.”

“Lesley has been able to identify gaps within the service and has adapted this to include a multidisciplinary approach to ensure that young people are having all of their needs met.”

“ She is always the first to check in after a tough visit or meeting to

rebuild a staff member’s confidence”



“Influential in bringing others along and
getting stuff done”



**LEADING
PRACTICE**

“Lee-Anne leads by example, her ability to provide clarity and remain solution-focused and innovative, without glossing over the complexities and challenges of the service are what make her so influential in bringing others along and getting stuff done. She’s inspirational!”



**LEADING
PROFESSION**

“Lee-Anne worked across services to ensure her team was getting the right support with the NIFITC implementation and prioritised staff training days to develop their capability of the new framework.”

Lee-Anne Sinnerton



Beverly McCusker



**LEADING
WITH
OTHERS**

“Beverly harnessed the abilities of each team member to match tasks to each persons’ strengths and interests. She has made a great difference to the efficiency and effectiveness of our team. She has nurtured and inspired me to become a social worker filled with enthusiasm and passion for my role. Even a simple goal chart on the wall... kept the team focused and motivated to meet patients’ needs in a timely and effective manner.

Her leadership, enthusiasm and compassion have built a team culture where both social workers and students feel encouraged, motivated and comfortable to learn. Her kind confident and knowledgeable way with service users continues to inspire me”.

“ Her kind confident and knowledgeable way with service users continues to inspire me ”



Carole Kirk



LEADING SELF

“She leads by example, bringing about change through positivity and genuinely caring for her staff... her sense of fun is a rare gift in the context of the current challenging times... natural leader who exemplifies the qualities of care and compassion in her approach to leadership in social work...”



LEADING PRACTICE

“Her leadership has helped change the way the Trust welcomes, inducts, supports and develops its social work staff.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Working with Carole is a pleasure where her transformational leadership is implicit; always leading in a pragmatic manner to nurture relationships, respectfully brokering challenges and always working in collaboration.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“I am really grateful for leaders like Carole walking their values... She is inclusive and makes us feel valued with our ideas. We love her kindness and humour, she has the capacity to harness the intelligence and resourcefulness of the people she works with to achieve positive change and inspire others.”

“She is inclusive and makes us feel valued with our ideas”





LEADING SELF

“She exudes passion for the profession and is very well regarded not just within the Mental Health arena but also across the wider Trust. She is highly professional in her response and ensures her knowledge and skills are updated through a Continued Professional Development approach. She has evidenced her collective leadership style on many occasions and is happy to ‘roll up her sleeves’ to support the teams when required. Joanne will be the first there with a coffee and a sandwich to give the ASW a break.”



LEADING PRACTICE

“She is a worthy nominee as she has made a positive and lasting contribution to social work practice within the field of adult mental health and beyond.”



Joanne Carey



*“ She has evidenced her
**collective
leadership style**
on many occasions ”*



“ Steph is a
**dynamic leader
with a passion
to improve services** ”



LEADING PRACTICE

“All of Steph’s communications and interventions are rights-based and challenge oppressive practices when these are identified in a professional manner, which facilitates improved outcomes for people with lived experience.”



LEADING SELF

“Steph leads others in a positive and inspiring way.

‘A visionary’, Steph readily shares her own experiences and expertise.”



LEADING PROFESSION

“Steph is a brilliant ambassador for social work and she has ensured that our professional values have directly informed and influenced these important developments for Northern Ireland.”



LEADING WITH OTHERS

“Steph is a dynamic leader with a passion to improve services and a genuine commitment to promoting a learning culture, supporting staff to achieve change and develop professionally.”



What to do next?

This publication has demonstrated leadership in action – we hope you can now see that as a social worker you are a leader.

As a leader in social work, there are things you can do for your own leadership development. You can use the publication to reflect on what that might look like for you, your practice, when working with others and as part of the broader social work profession.

Things you can do now to support your own leadership development could include:

Check out the Social Work Leadership Framework

Print off a copy and use it during supervision and your annual appraisal.

[Social-Work-Leadership-Framework-final-version-15-April-22.pdf](#)

Start to learn about leadership

Access the social work leadership learning modules on the Social Care Council Learning Zone.

<https://learningzone.niscc.info/leadership-in-social-work-in-northern-ireland/>



Scan the QR codes to find out more.

Consider taking an action for you, for each of the domains:

1. Leading self: Look around you, consider who you feel is a positive role model for you as a leader. Consider approaching them as a mentor or to develop a professional discussion about growing your own leadership style. How well do you know your own leadership style and how intentionally do you use it?



2. Leading with others: Think about the context within which you work – what other professions, teams, and services do you work alongside? Have you thought about engaging them in better understanding social work leadership? Start a conversation with them about how you can collectively lead together?



3. Leading with practice: This publication shares examples of where people have thought differently – examples of innovation, creativity and improvement all focused on the same outcome of delivering safe, effective and compassionate services. Consider how you too could lead in this way?



4. Leading the profession: Now you have read this publication – actively share it with others in the profession. Getting a discussion started with social work colleagues e.g. at a social work forum, event, or team meeting. How can you contribute to the profession that will make a difference for future?





This publication was produced by the Communication and Engagement Implementation Team for the DOH Social Work Leadership Framework.

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