



Adult Social Care Nursing Advisory Council (SCNAC)
MIDLANDS Region Quarterly Meeting 08
Tuesday 12th May 2026, 09:30-11:00

<u>Attending:</u>		
Jo-Anne Wilson	-	Registered Manager, Royal British Legion and Co-Chair for the Midlands SCNAC
Anita Astle	-	Registered Manager, Wren Nursing Home and Chair for the Midlands SCNAC
Deborah Sturdy	-	Chief Nurse for Social Care, DHSC
Lynne Bowers	-	Social Care Nursing, West Midlands ADASS
Jackie Riddett	-	Registered Manager, The Willows Nursing & Residential Home
Ryan Alsop	-	Deputy Integrated Group Manager, NNICB and Nottingham County Council - Attends meeting on behalf of Rosa Waddingham, CNO for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Francis Villamin	-	Food Safety Specialist, BUPA Care Services
Lucy McDonald	-	Senior Transformation Lead (Midlands), Skills for Care
Rita Flanagan	-	Operations Support Director, BUPA
Jasmine Stanhope	-	RMN & Deputy Chair for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland SCNAC and Managing Director, Rushcliffe Care Group
Vicky Sandy-Davies	-	Independent Health & Social Care Lead Nurse, RCN
Andrea Barker	-	Workforce Development Coach and Shared Nursing Tasks, LINCA
Gabriella O'Keeffe	-	Head of Service for Quality & Improvement, NICB
Jaqueline Barnes	-	Regional CNO and Director of Nursing Professional & Systems Development, Midlands Region
Sonia Pritchard	-	SCNACS Admin, The Outstanding Society
<u>Apologies:</u>		
Zoë Fry	-	Exec Director of Nursing, The OS
Nina Morgan	-	NHSE Regional Chief Nurse, Midlands
Andrea Westlake	-	Director of Nursing, Birmingham & Solihull ICB
Rosa Waddingham	-	CNO Derby & Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottingham & Nottinghamshire. Ryan Alsop attended on her behalf.
Yvonne Higgins	-	Director of Nursing for NHSE Midlands
Sally Roberts	-	CNO, Birmingham, Black Country & Solihull
Kathryn Cobain	-	CNO, Coventry & Worcestershire and Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Maria Laffan	-	CNO, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland



Mike Slator	-	Project Support Specialist, VIVALDI Social Care & The OS
Sandra Prew	-	NIHR
Sam Preston	-	Lead Nurse Independent Health & Social Care for the East Midlands, RCN
Lisa Hughes	-	Home Manager, Ardenlea Grove Care Home (BUPA)
Joyce Fletcher	-	Employer Link Service Adviser for the Independent Health and Social Care (Midlands), NMC
Diane Mayhew	-	Co-Founder, Rights for Residents
Louise Luckman	-	Clinical Programme Lead Social Care, NHS Birmingham & Solihull ICB
Miranda Tapfumane	-	May attend on behalf of Maria Laffan
Mandy Staples	-	May attend on behalf of Maria Laffan, also Chair of LeDER panel
Shirley Way	-	Head of Area for East & West Midlands, Skills for Care
Shirley Hall	-	Director of Care and Wellbeing, Star and Garter
Karen Spilsbury	-	Leeds University
Tony Newman	-	Regulations Advisor, Midlands, NMC
Richard Ayres	-	Care England

Please see the attached spreadsheet for the action points of this meeting.

Date of Future Meetings:

- Tuesday 4th August 2026, 09:30-11:00
- Tuesday 3rd November 2026, 09:30-11:00
- Tuesday 2nd February 2027, 09:30-11:00

Note Summary:

Update from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC): Deborah Sturdy, Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care joined the meeting to give her last update as Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care before leaving post in July.

- **International Nurses Day:** Deborah wished the council happy International Nurses Day and encouraged attendance at the Outstanding Society's virtual 'Everyday Excellence: Celebrating Adult Social Care Nursing' and the Skills for Care virtual celebration, both taking place later in the day.
- **Sea of Change:** Deborah confirmed that this would be her last meeting in post and thanked the Co-Chairs, the OS and the Council Members for their work and support in making SCNACs a success. Council Members responded with a very emotional thank you to Deborah for everything she had done for Adult Social Care and wished her well in the future.
- **NIHR Internships:** Deborah encouraged council members to in turn encourage their teams to apply for the NIHR Internships around research.



- **Delegated Healthcare:** Deborah mentioned that there was a pause on delegation, not stopping or going away, but a rethink and the opportunity for people to get involved, with further growth predicted.

National and Regional Structural Changes in Social Care and NHS: Jacqueline provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing NHS England consultation, the significant reduction in regional staff, and the clustering of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), with details on chief nurse leadership and statutory status, while Jo-Anne, Anita, and Sonia discussed implications for social care nursing and the continuity of SCNACs amid these changes.

- **NHS England Consultation and Staff Reduction:** Jacqueline explained that NHS England launched a new design structure for staff, resulting in a 43% reduction across the region to align with the model region. The consultation closes soon, and this restructuring aims to ensure fitness for purpose.
- **ICB Clustering and Leadership:** Jacqueline detailed the clustering of 11 ICBs into five groups, naming chief nurses for each cluster and clarifying that ICBs remain statutory organisations until legislative changes, with some considering formal mergers pending government decisions.
- **Implications for Social Care Nursing:** Jo-Anne and Lynne raised concerns about the loss of immediate government voice for social care nursing, in particular Deborah Sturdy, due to structural changes, emphasising the need for increased engagement and advocacy, while ongoing uncertainty regarding leadership roles and responsibilities was noted.
- **Continuity of SCNACs and Engagement:** Jo-Anne confirmed that SCNACs will continue under Skills for Care and the Outstanding Society (OS), with only slight changes expected, and encouraged members to actively participate in external groups and meetings to maintain influence and increase membership.

Delegated Healthcare Activities and Funding Challenges: The pause and review of delegated healthcare activities mentioned in Deborah Sturdy's update was discussed, highlighting concerns about funding, cost transfer, and the need for social care nursing input, with Lucy sharing updates on guidance and regional initiatives.

- **Pause and Review of Delegated Tasks:** Jackie continued the conversation around delegated tasks being paused, prompting Jacqueline to commit to investigating further and ensuring adult social care nurses remain involved, as local concerns and ongoing work were noted.
- **Funding and Cost Transfer Issues:** Lynne emphasised that successful implementation of delegated healthcare activities depends on proper funding and cost transfer, rather than cost shunting, citing examples where upskilling staff without salary uplift is not sustainable.
- **Guidance and Regional Engagement:** Lucy reported that Skills for Care has published fresh guidance and is actively involved in regional conversations, with facilitator training and blueprint development underway in Coventry, Warwickshire, Hereford, and Worcester.
- **National Strategy and Oversight:** Lucy shared a position statement from the National Strategy Oversight Group, stressing the importance of social care in neighbourhood working and the need for all social care partners, including nursing staff, to be involved in developing neighbourhoods.



Dysphagia Work and Best Practice Sharing: Council members discussed ongoing dysphagia initiatives:

- **Infographic Development and Collaboration:** Jo-Anne described plans to consolidate best practice into an infographic with live links, involving technical support from Katie Thorne (Digital Care Hub) and Alan Fry (the OS), and input from working party members such as Francis.
- **Resource Review and Checklist Comparison:** Anita noted the review of Nottinghamshire's dysphagia checklist against BSOL's website and app resources, aiming to create a simple tool for care staff to recognise swallowing difficulties and share effective practices across the sector.
- **SONA Programme and Training:** Andrea introduced the SONA (Swallowing Oral Health Nutrition Ambassadors) programme, which has trained 400 staff with input from SALT teams and community dentists, and offered to share resources and outcomes with the group.
- **Impact and Data Collection:** Anita highlighted statistics showing eight deaths per month in care homes related to dysphagia, stressing the need for improved tools and education, while Andrea expressed interest in measuring the impact of training programmes on these outcomes.

Workforce Planning and Integration: Jacqueline, Lynne, and Lucy discussed the NHS 10-year workforce plan, its implications for social care, and the importance of synergy between NHS and social care workforce strategies, with updates on local skills improvement plans and regional workforce development.

- **NHS Workforce Plan and Social Care Synergy:** Jacqueline clarified that the 10-year workforce plan is NHS-focused but stressed the need for integrated approaches, with ICBs expected to consider social care workforce needs alongside NHS priorities.
- **Local Skills Improvement Plans:** Lucy reported that local skills improvement plans are being finalised and published, with significant sector involvement to ensure health and social care are prioritised in the Midlands.
- **Regional Workforce Events and Initiatives:** Lucy mentioned upcoming nursing career events, training and development sessions, and a proposed learning disability nursing workforce summit, all aimed at increasing interest and capacity in social care nursing.
- **Funding and Joint Agreements:** Lucy shared that Staffordshire County Council and Stoke ICB are working towards joint funding agreements for health needs that require enhanced care, suggesting this could support delegated healthcare activities.

Fitness to Practise and Disciplinary Procedures: Ongoing work and research into fitness to practise and disciplinary procedures in social care were discussed, focusing on consistency, issues affecting international nursing staff and males, and collaboration with Skills for Care and RCN.

- **Research and Data Collection:** Vicky is leading a project to collect data on disciplinary fitness to practise procedures in social care, noting significant issues and the need for targeted guidance, especially for international nursing staff and males.



- **Consistency Across Services:** Lynne and Vicky agreed that the main challenge is inconsistency in disciplinary and fitness to practise procedures, not poor performance, and emphasised the importance of providing clear pathways and guidance.
- **Collaboration and Case Studies:** Vicky and Lucy are working together to develop case studies and renew focus on students and newly registered nurses, aiming to improve disciplinary processes and support across the sector.

Research Initiatives and Support: Andrea, Lynne, Anita, and Jo-Anne discussed the need for research support in social care, particularly around bladder scanner proof of concept, with recommendations to contact Zena Aldridge and Karen Spilsbee for academic partnerships and funding opportunities.

- **Bladder Scanner Proof of Concept:** Andrea described a proof-of-concept project on bladder scanners, noting significant impact and the need for research support, with Lynne recommending contact with Zena Aldridge and Anita suggesting Karen Spilsbee at Leeds University for funding and academic collaboration.

Climate, Extreme Heat, and Business Continuity Risks: Lynne raised concerns about extreme heat, building suitability, safeguarding, and fire safety, as well as geopolitical risks affecting fuel and food supply, urging colleagues to prepare for potential shortages and highlighting West Midlands' vulnerability.

- **Extreme Heat and Resident Safety:** Lynne outlined obstacles to managing extreme heat in care settings, including building limitations, lack of air conditioning, conflicting safety advice, and insufficient monitoring, with West Midlands identified as particularly at risk.
- **Geopolitical Risks and Supply Shortages:** Lynne warned of anticipated fuel and food shortages due to geopolitical tensions, advising colleagues to prepare for disruptions and referencing government measures taken during previous crises.

Infection Prevention, Control, and Pandemic Planning: Lynne, Anita, and Jo-Anne discussed new infection prevention and control guidance, feedback from care provider associations, and upcoming pandemic planning involving communities of practice and co-produced action plans with key stakeholders.

- **Guidance Feedback and Communication:** Lynne reported blunt feedback from care provider associations that the new infection prevention and control document is too lengthy, prompting further discussion with the department and UKHSA on effective communication.
- **Pandemic Planning and Stakeholder Engagement:** Lynne shared that the department would establish communities of practice across six themes and co-produce an action plan with stakeholders, aiming to address lessons learned from COVID-19 research and outbreaks.



WMADASS Update Report – Midlands SCNAC (12 May 2026)

Shared in the chat by Lynne Bowers, WMADASS

Purpose: To provide a structured update on WMADASS activity and emerging system themes relevant to social care nursing and regional assurance discussions.

Executive Summary

- WMADASS continues to strengthen engagement across adult social care partners, supporting shared understanding of pressures in care homes and community provision.
- Regional intelligence indicates that CQC inspection activity remains a significant focus, with recurring themes around quality, leadership and workforce arrangements, including accountability for registered nurses in social care settings.
- Work is underway to improve how councils, providers and regulators interface in practice, with emphasis on proportionality, clarity and constructive engagement.
- Additional regional priorities include digital transformation and responsible AI exploration, emerging Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance and preparedness planning and increasing attention to climate resilience and supply-chain risks.

1. Network Engagement and Links with Social Care Nursing

WMADASS remains actively engaged with adult social care partners across the Midlands, including provider and professional networks, to maintain system-wide oversight of operational pressures and to support shared problem-solving.

- Ongoing engagement with adult social care partners continues, helping to surface pressures in care homes and community-based provision and to inform coordinated responses.
- The contribution of registered nurses in adult social care is increasingly recognised in local authority and integrated care system discussions, particularly in relation to quality assurance, workforce stability and regulatory scrutiny.

WMADASS is a practical system convenor between councils, providers and regulators, supporting consistent communication and escalation of shared issues.

2. CQC Inspections: Key Themes Identified Through the WMADASS Network

Regional feedback indicates that inspection activity continues to shape operational priorities and provider experience. WMADASS is gathering and sharing intelligence to support coherent, system-level responses.

- CQC inspection processes and outcomes remain a strong focus, particularly in relation to how they are experienced by adult social care providers.
- Recurring themes include scrutiny of quality, leadership and workforce arrangements, with direct implications for regulated professionals and nursing accountability in social care settings.
- WMADASS is consolidating and sharing themes across councils to support consistent approaches and to escalate system-level concerns where appropriate.



This intelligence is being used to inform regional learning and to support constructive dialogue with partners on inspection readiness and improvement activity.

3. Interface Between Councils, Providers and Regulators

WMADASS is considering how system interfaces are operating in practice and the downstream impacts of regulatory activity on commissioning, improvement support and workforce stability.

- Focus is placed on how inspection outcomes influence commissioning decisions, improvement activity and provider resilience, including impacts on recruitment and retention of regulated staff.
- Partners are emphasising the importance of proportionality, clarity and constructive engagement, particularly where regulated professionals are central to safe service delivery.

4. Alignment with SCNAC Priorities

WMADASS activity aligns closely with SCNAC priorities, particularly in relation to regulation and assurance, professional support for social care nursing, workforce sustainability, and system preparedness.

From a WMADASS perspective, continued attention is required on how regulatory processes and wider system pressures affect the social care nursing workforce. WMADASS will continue to share intelligence and learning that supports consistent, constructive system responses across the Midlands.

5. Digital Transformation and Responsible AI

WMADASS continues to contribute to regional collaboration on digital transformation across adult social care, with emphasis on practical improvements to digital maturity, data use and interoperability that reduce burden and strengthen quality and regulatory readiness.

- Regional digital network participation is supporting councils and providers to share learning on implementation approaches and benefits realisation.
- Responsible AI exploration is underway through cross-system collaboration, focused on governance, ethics, risk management and practical applicability to augment (not replace) professional judgement.
- Learning from this work will be translated into guidance and shared understanding relevant to social care and nursing leadership.

6. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC): Emerging Guidance and Preparedness

WMADASS is monitoring national IPC developments, including consultation activity and implications for adult social care settings. This includes consideration of implementation feasibility, workforce impacts and alignment with regulatory expectations.

- Care home and community settings are a particular focus, including training implications and the practicalities of embedding updated IPC approaches in day-to-day delivery.



- DHSC/UKHSA as a partner WMADASS is also considering pandemic preparedness and contingency planning, and how local authority planning, provider resilience and professional support should align ahead of winter and other system pressure periods.

7. Climate Resilience and Extreme Weather: Operational Impact

Across the WMADASS network, climate resilience is increasingly treated as an operational and safeguarding issue with direct implications for service continuity and workforce wellbeing.

- Extreme heat is a growing concern for care homes and supported living settings, requiring clear mitigation measures to protect residents, staff and continuity of care.
- Councils are sharing learning on heatwave planning, hydration, escalation routes, building resilience and staff wellbeing, recognising implications for nursing oversight and safe care delivery.

8. Geopolitical Context and Supply-Chain Risk

WMADASS is maintaining awareness of geopolitical developments that may affect fuel, food and wider supply chains, and the potential downstream impacts on adult social care markets and service resilience.

- While no immediate disruption is assumed, councils are considering mitigation, business continuity and market resilience for the year ahead, particularly for energy-intensive services such as care homes.
- Potential impacts on provider sustainability, staffing pressures and affordability are being kept under review, given indirect consequences for the social care nursing workforce.

9. Conclusion and Next Steps

WMADASS will continue to convene partners, share intelligence and support consistent regional responses to regulatory, workforce and operational pressures affecting adult social care and social care nursing across the Midlands.

- Continue to collect and disseminate emerging themes from inspection activity and provider feedback to support system learning.
- Support constructive dialogue between councils, providers and regulators on proportionality, consistency and improvement approaches.
- Contribute to regional digital and responsible AI discussions, with a focus on governance and practical benefits for frontline delivery.
- Monitor IPC consultation outcomes and support preparedness planning, including implications for training and workforce capacity.
- Share resilience learning related to extreme weather and supply-chain risks to strengthen continuity planning across adult social care markets.