

**ADDRESS BY THE SKILLS FOR CARE CHAIRPERSON
PROF. D CROISDALE-APPLEBY AT THE HWSETA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT LORD CHARLES IN SOMERSET WEST ON THE 28TH OF OCTOBER 2009**

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to address your national conference.

As the Chair of Skills for Care, I'd like to start by saying on behalf of our board how much we welcome our relationship with HWSETA.

It is a valuable two-way relationship built up over the last five years that offers us a unique opportunity to share the best practice from both of our countries.

It is also a relationship I am determined to not only maintain but to build on.

I think it might be helpful to start by saying a little about who we are for those delegates unfamiliar with our work.

Skills for Care are a Sector Skills Council charged by our Government to create a well trained and flexible adult social care workforce.

We are also the voice of around 35,000 employers in England – big and small – who deliver social care in a wide variety of ways.

The adult social care workforce in England is around 1.5 million and growing rapidly.

In fact we estimate that by 2025 we will need a minimum of 2 million workers and it could possibly be as high as 2.5 million if we use more a personalised model.

We are governed by a board which I chair, have a CEO, more than 200 staff and a very strong regional network.

So you can see our reason to exist and structures are remarkably similar to HWSETAs which gives our relationship its real strength.

When I was thinking about what I was going to say today I looked back the Framework Agreement we signed last year.

At that time we agreed on four key strategic areas of work and I think they are relevant today.

We agreed to work together on **organisational development** with particular reference to tracking and understanding changing trends in social care across the globe.

How we can share learning on **service development** and we can offer evidence from more than 100 new types of worker projects as our contribution to that dialogue.

We wanted to work together on **programme development** including post qualifying frameworks and improving research and intelligence about our respective systems including our National Minimum Dataset-Social Care or NMDS-SC.

Finally we looked at **training methodologies** including our Common Induction standards and strategies to address the recruitment and retention issues that blight both our sectors.

It's an ambitious programme and one I think we have started to make some progress on.

As I have already outlined, there are strong similarities between our core objectives yet there are also stark differences.

We have explored how your Levy system operated and how you register your training providers to see if these models could be applicable to our country.

We have also highlighted a strong interest in looking more at your community social workers and Ancillary roles and we have already had initial exchanges with the South African Council for Social Service Professionals.

In February this year your HWSETA CEO Corrie Smit and Board member Fazeela Fayers attended our Annual Conference and met some of our key stakeholders.

They were also able to view first hand some of the specific areas of work that we are involved in.

Alongside the conference we arranged for our guests to take part in key meetings with our Senior Management Team and our Programme Heads who are the strategic hearts of our business.

They also met representatives of other groups such as the General Social Care Council and the Social Care Institute for Excellence so that they could begin to develop a greater awareness of how our work links into the complex architecture of our sector.

As you can imagine Corrie and Fazeela were bombarded with information on such a short visit but at the end of the visit we had agreed some specific areas that we should focus on.

I know research and intelligence is an area where we could very usefully share information.

Our Director-General of Social Care once described our sector as a "data desert" and we believe NMDS-SC has gone some way to addressing that criticism.

I know the report that Corrie prepared after his visit suggested the option of a centralised database for the levy exempt constituency should be explored.

There's no doubt in my mind that NMDS-SC is a key weapon in making sure workforce planning matches demand and I hope you will pursue this option.

Corrie and Fazeela also recommended that you look at our Accolades awards event and our care Ambassadors as quick gain options.

I wholeheartedly agree that these two concepts would transfer very easily into the South African environment.

Our Accolades are now seen as the Oscars of the social care work in England with our Government Minister presenting the awards.

They are a fantastic celebration of the very best practice in our country.

Celebrating the achievements of the very best in adult social care is a concept that has no borders or cultural barriers.

Equally our Care Ambassadors scheme is an idea that has no boundaries.

Like all great ideas it's very simple.

Our employers send out their best staff to schools and colleges to talk to young people about the rewards of working in social care.

Not surprisingly our Care Ambassadors are our very best recruiting officers because they offer an honest assessment of the good and bad points of working in our sector.

I can just imagine an army of dedicated young South African care ambassadors spreading out across this country spreading the word about the benefits of working in social care here.

Underpinning all those lofty aspirations is a commitment to honest face-to-face dialogue so teams from Skills for Care and HWSETA can see for themselves the issues when they visit each other's countries.

Visits like this one are vital as are reciprocal visits to us in England.

So I was delighted that your CEO Corrie Smit and HWSETA Board member Fazeela Fayers were able to visit England earlier this year.

Both of them impressed me deeply not only with their knowledge of how our work and your work have commonality but with their clear commitment to real change here in South Africa.

I am very pleased indeed that Corrie has agreed to speak at our second international conference next year which will focus on health and social care roles and new ways of working.

In many ways the learning from our international conferences underpins and strengthens our relationships.

I chaired the last international conference and what struck me as I listened to the debates is that no matter where you are on the globe or how our systems are set up we all share common problems that will challenge all of us in the debates to come.

For me those common problems include:

- Rapidly aging populations as people live longer.
- Rapid and costly rises in people with some form of dementia.
- Limited resources to lead with those issues.
- Rapidly expanding workforce who need to be limited.
- Poor image and status of social care.
- A greater drive to integrating social care and health services.

I don't think anyone here today won't recognise some or all of those issues as being key challenges for them and the workforces they represent.

And it's clear that we must listen to the millions of people use services and their carers to make sure we are supporting services that meet the needs of their everyday lives.

But what all of us share is an absolute commitment to making sure we deliver the sort of trained and flexible workforce capable of meeting those challenges head on.

So what are we bringing as a contribution to this cross continent dialogue that we think could be useful in South Africa?

Perhaps the major piece of work we are developing is the Qualification and Credit Framework, or QCF.

I am not going to use this speech to go into the detailed mechanics of the framework.

But the headline news is that we believe the QCF is a simpler and much more flexible way of recognizing the skills and experience of adult social care workers.

It is a system that rewards what the worker actually does not what we think they should do.

The QCF reduces the confusing number qualifications on offer and allows us a framework where we can offer job specific qualifications like dementia or learning disabilities.

The good news is that employers are welcoming the QCF and we'd be delighted to share the details of how the new system works with HWSETA.

Our National Minimum Dataset – social care – or NMDS-SC – is the biggest ever collection of data on our sector.

I know it is a data collection system that HWSETA are very interested in and we have a number of additions to that system that will produce an even richer seam of data.

The reality is that if we don't have an accurate picture of the size and scale of our sector then it is impossible to plan how we train and develop those workers.

The final major piece of work I wanted to mention is our Newly Qualified Social Worker framework.

This framework is specially designed to support social workers who have left college in their first year of practice on the frontline.

The funding allows their supervisors the time to give the new workers the support they need in those difficult first 12 months.

We recognise that the first year of practice is crucial in determining whether new entrants stay in the profession and how their future practice will develop.

This Government funded project is worth around £3 million or ?? Rand so it is a huge commitment to supporting newly qualified social workers.

I have to admit that when Fazeela mentioned that South African social workers often have to up to 300 cases we were very surprised as English social workers might have around 30.

So given the workload social workers face here the Newly Qualified Social Work programme might prove effective.

But as I mentioned we regard this as a two way relationship and we are here eager to find out what we can take home from South Africa to use in our system.

As I mentioned social workers have a high priority and our Government has just introduced a national taskforce to improve the social work system.

So we are very interested in the community social workers model which you use very successfully here.

We will be using this visit to get a greater sense of how that role works here and seeing if it can fit into our structures back home.

Registration of the social workforce remains a massive issue for our sector especially as we move to more personalised model of care.

We regard the work you have done in registering significant numbers of your workers as being among some of the best in the world so we are keen to see what we can learn from that process.

Finally, we want to look at how you work with the numerous community based social care organisations that have sprung up organically in different communities across this country.

This is a different model from the English one but we are seeing more and more community based voluntary sector groups springing up as we move to more and more personalised care.

So anything Skills for Care can learn from you about how we nurture those groups and encourage them to train their staff we would very much welcome.

So it is clear to everyone at Skills for Care that we have much to learn from HWSETA and if I may be so bold I think the same applies in reverse.

The next question is how do we build a lasting relationship across two great continents?

Of course we can communicate through e-mail and the internet and we are already seeing the fruits of that electronic communication.

But there is no substitute for face-to-face contact with human beings sharing not only knowledge but their own experiences which are very common to both systems in many cases.

So that's why we are here to see for ourselves how you deliver social care and more importantly how you support and train the employers and workers who deliver social care on the frontline.

As I said time for face-to-face meetings is precious and so we all need to ensure that the short time available is used well and maximises upon real actions and real outcomes that will allow us to achieve our goals.

We have no illusions that some goals will be easily achieved and we can gain some quick hits others will need to develop over the long term perhaps even decades.

There will be many obstacles and frustrations to some of these goals but nothing worth achieving ever comes easy.

I do believe the commitment is there from Skills for Care and HWSETA and it will continue to develop in years to come.

I have a strong background in research and I know only too well how long it takes to gather the evidence to change things so this is a relationship that will need time and care to evolve.

I'm absolutely delighted that in November a small team from HWSETA will be coming to England in November to pick up some of the ideas Corrie and Fazeela identified in their report from their visit.

We are committed to placing key members of HWSETA with their "opposite" numbers within Skills for Care.

We will devise a programme that helps build upon the recommendations agreed by your board.

They will have time to focus on finding out more about the Common Induction Standards, our 100 New Type of Workers/ working projects, NMDS-SC, the Accolades and the Care Ambassadors scheme.

I suspect as they spend time with us they see other opportunities to export some of our work to South Africa and we will see similar opportunities to import ideas from South Africa.

I know our officers are really looking forward to the HWSETA visit and hope will be start of the regular exchange visits to share learning.

This visit has huge significance for our relationship as it will kick start the exchange of information that will greatly benefit both organisations.

But not just our organisations but also the employers we work with, the people they employ and the millions of people who use services and their carers.

So in closing I want to say once again I regard our relationship as vitally important to Skills for Care.

We are absolutely committed to making sure that the very best practice from across the globe influences the way we think and the training structures we offer to employers and their staff.

Thank you for your inviting me to give you some thoughts about where I think our relationship goes next.

I am looking forward to the rest of this conference as the information gathering process starts today.

THANK YOU.