



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SOCIAL CARE

6.00-7.00pm, 29 January 2008

Committee Room 17, House of Commons

Attendees

Joan Humble MP (chair)	MP
Earl of Listowel	Peer
David Drew	MP
Susan Kramer	MP
Virendra Sharma	MP

Speakers

Alex Fox	Assistant Director (Policy and Service Development), Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Sian Lockwood	Chief Executive National Association of Adult Placement Services (NAAPS)
Sue Bott	Director, National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL)
Nick Johnson	Chief Executive, Social Care Association

Other

Jo Williams	Mencap
Debbie Cotton-Soares	Advance UK
Judy Weleminsky	Mental Health Providers Forum
Matt Townsend	The Disabilities Trust
Ruth Cartwright	British Association of Social Workers
Patrica Suarez	General Social Care Council
Ian Johnston	British Association of Social Workers
John Metcalfe	British Association of Social Workers
Mithran Samuel	Community Care
Rachel Supple	A National Voice
Nick Johnson	Social Care Association
Miss Preddie	
Richard Banks	Skills for Care
Don Brand	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Iris Steen	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Shirish Gandhi	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Beni-jo Tvler	

1. Apologies

Paddy Tipping	MP for Sherwood
Betty Williams	MP
Anne Main	MP
Angela Browning	MP
Peter Bottomley	MP

Bob Russell	MP
Jane Burt	Carers Uk
Colin Angel	UKHCA
James Brokenshire	MP
Savita De Sousa	BAAF
Andrew Mercer	Ofsted
Baroness Masham of Ilton	House of Lords
Michael Hart	Ofsted
Sue Collins	Joseph Rowntree Foundation

2. Oral evidence sessions

A summary of written evidence is attached. The following is a summary of main points given during oral evidence session.

Alex Fox, Assistant Director (Policy and Service Development), Princess Royal Trust for Carers

- There are 6 million unpaid carers – 1 million of them provide over 50 hours of care per week. They administer medicine, and provide personal care and emotional support. They provide approximately £87 billion work of care per annum – equivalent to a second NHS. It is likely that carers' input will rise due to demographic changes.
- There are a number of positive new initiatives in development including the New Deal for Carers and Green Paper. There is, however, too little focus on carers as part of the workforce.
- In general carers retire from their own careers 8 years early. Carer's payments are equivalent to 30p per hour.
- Direct Payments cannot be used to pay an informal carer (ie family or friend) but if this was reviewed, it could bring carers into the paid workforce.
- Carers require support to remain in paid employment.

Sian Lockwood, Chief Executive, National Association of Adult Placement Services (NAAPS)

- Micro providers are very small (micro), individualised, community based social care services. Services may be provided for payment or on a voluntary or barter basis. Where payment is received it may simply cover the costs of delivering the service or may form all or part of someone's income. Micro providers are self employed and many do not employ staff but directly deliver the service themselves.
- Micro providers offer individual solutions and can be alternatives to Personal Assistants (PAs). They are very important to a diverse local market.
- Motivation of micro providers is different – similar to volunteers in terms of giving back to community or supporting a particular individual. Income is just one factor, and career progression is less relevant.
- Micro providers have to meet same standards as larger providers despite fact that standards may not fit or be relevant. They are often invisible to commissioners and regulators.

- Policymakers often do not consider micro providers when thinking about social care workforce. Eg. Options for Excellence strategy is all about traditional, larger providers.
- Current NVQ is designed for mainstream services – it is not appropriate for small providers who are likely to be both manager and care worker.
- Training and access to training is also designed for larger groups.
- Individual budget pilots show how micro providers can support work.
- NAAPS is working with Skills for Care re occupational standards and individual skill sets.

Sue Bott, Director, National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL)

- People typically employ 1-2 personal assistants (PAs) each. They look for personal compatibility and mutual interests as rapport is particularly important.
- PAs come from all walks of life and backgrounds – very diverse workforce. Brings in more people into social care workforce than might have consider it as a career.
- People need good support to recruit PAs. Most people do not have a lot of experience as an employer and it is particularly difficult employing someone to work in your own home.
- Support services are very patchy across the country.
- Wages for PAs is very low and conditions are poor due to low funding. People with Direct Payments do not receive adequate levels of funding to support more than the minimum wage, and there are no pension arrangements.
- Need more recognition of what PAs actually do.
- PAs are very vulnerable to local authority cut backs as it is easier to cut back on PAs than cut back on local authority workforce.
- Personalisation of budgets is likely to result in an increase in number of PAs. NCIL welcomes this.
- Need to have more of a focus on outcomes rather than tasks – what does a service enable someone to do?
- Pay and conditions impacts on status. Need to be improved in order to make being a PA a job worth doing.
- Need more dialogue between staff groups involved in social care.
- Need to be break down the barriers (eg public v private; agency v individual) and think about what we are collectively contributing.
- NCIL is having discussions with Unison about how they can work together to consider pay and conditions of PAs.
- NCIL is in discussion with Skills for Care regarding ways to recognise complex range of support provided by PAs. Currently no way of recognising this if a PA moves on to another employer. NVQs not applicable to this workforce.
- NCIL welcomes the Skills Academy proposal and believes it offers a fresh way of thinking about qualifications.
- Service users can and are involved in recruitment, training and providing feedback on standard of care.
- The Experts by Experience project support active user involvement.

- Regulation is appropriate – but service users do not want an over-regulated service. Eg risk assessments need to be realistic. A care agency of 100 people will have different risks from one employer with 1-2 people.

Nick Johnson, Chief Executive, Social Care Association

- Demographic changes mean that the workforce profile is also aging.
- SCA supports the Care Ambassadors element of Options for Excellence but it is moving too slowly.
- Compass (workforce publication) could be distributed more widely via DCSF so that schools consider social care as career option.
- We need to support returning workers, those changing their careers and immigrant workers.
- Pay is an issue for recruitment and retention. Interestingly, however, there is no correlation between pay and quality of care provided.
- Local authorities should not offer nil fee increases whilst at the same time using public money to uphold better rates of pay in the public sector.
- Commissioners should realistically include the costs which are well-known to local authority commissioners.
- Social care national recruitment advertising campaign is very small by comparison to other public sector recruitment campaigns.
- Other agencies' campaigns (eg NSPCC etc) could show who carries out the work – ie the social care role. Most people do not know what social care is until you explain specific roles to them.
- Social work degree is a positive development. Parity for professional workers in peripheral groups needs to be established by aligning qualifications.
- Need a real sense of vision for workforce development and the support of tax payers.

3. Comments and questions

Lord Listowel:

Proposed changes to social care services for children are worrying because they may strip the workforce from other areas (inc adult social care). It is a complicated problem to get right. Children really need consistency of care. I recommend that the Group keeps a watch on the Children's and Young People's Bill as it may be difficult to stop these changes. It is often useful for peer groups to get together (eg foster carers, residential care workers). What happens in relation to PAs and carers – do they have opportunities to meet face to face or virtually? Is there are a resource to support them.

Joan Humble MP:

There is sometimes a requirement for formal training – and sometimes informal networking. Princess Royal Trust for Carers bring together carers in Blackpool to discuss shared experiences and exchange tips.

- Alex Fox:** The Expert Carers programme will provide support to carers. They rely on voluntary sector providers to support them. There is a gulf between positive national plans and local delivery in terms of support for carers.
- Sian Lockwood:** NAAPS brings workers together as well – both virtually and physically, alongside the people that they support so that they have a shared
- Sue Bott:** It is important to have good local support services led by service users. NCIL is trying to put people in contact via online forum. PAs are isolated and need support.
- Joan Humble MP:** Presenters have said that there is inadequate or inappropriate training for the non-traditional social care workforce. What can be done about this?
- Nick Johnson:** I think we need to try to make NVQs work for these groups. Hopefully NCIL and Skills for Care can come up with a solution, but don't pick apart the NVQ. There are concerns that if children and adult's services training is split – can workers move across from one to the other? Equally with different qualification and training arrangements in different UK nations, will the workforce be able to move across borders in the future?
- Ian Johnson (BASW):** Referring to early comment from Princess Trust for Carers, I don't think it is true that workers have negative attitude towards carers. We need to get rid of this 'us vs them' approach, and think of 'we'. Social workers want to deliver a personalised service – but they are expected to manage budgets. User-directed services will get us all working together in a new way. We need more radical ownership transfer to service users than is being proposed.
- Alex Fox:** There are many good examples of social care professionals working well with carers, but carers also say that they are not given the role of partners in care.
- David Drew MP:** A service-user led organisation was the gatekeeper to Direct Payments in my constituency but they have just lost the contract with the county council. There is a degree to which we have to accept that this is a tender-driven process, but if they can lose the contract at a whim this is difficult.
- Nick Johnson:** I agree – we should have service level agreements (SLAs) not tenders.

- Alex Fox:** Commissioners are concerned about price, not value, but in general services are happy to compete.
- Sue Bott:** Peer support groups are not always happy to compete and why should they? We would prefer SLAs not tenders.
- Richard Banks
(Skills for Care):** Today's CSCI report addresses the downfalls of commissioning. Providers need the business confidence to invest in developing their workforce – why train and develop someone if your business will not be running in a year's time? Skills for Care is working to see how standards and qualifications can work for a diverse workforce. We are working with GSCC to research training needs of Direct Payment employers.
- Beni-jo Tyler
(A National Voice/
Shaftesbury Trust)** Social care is often depersonalised. There is a lack of accountability – e.g. if a social worker fails to deal with a housing benefit issue for a service user, and as a result they lose their home
- Ruth Cartwright (BASW):** Sometimes social workers are elbowed out of the way by local authorities in terms of benefits issues.
- Joan Humble MP:** In some instances there are creative solutions eg a DWP secondee is help Blackpool Connections with benefit issues.

4. Date of next meeting

TBC.