



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SOCIAL CARE

4-5pm, 14 May 2008

Committee Room 12, House of Commons

Attendees

Joan Humble MP (chair)	MP
Jill Manthorpe	Kings College London (KCL)
Ruth Cartwright	British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
Owen Davies	General Social Care Council (GSCC)
Mike Wardle	General Social Care Council (GSCC)
Lisa Watch	General Social Care Council (GSCC)
Claire Ainsley	General Social Care Council (GSCC)
Ronnie Barnes	British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
Emma Carr	Council for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)
John Metcalfe	British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
Amanda Hatton (for Andrea Rowe)	Skills for Care
Joanna Mackie	Dept for Children, Schools and Families(DCSF)
Alistair McMillan	Dept for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
Judy Weleminsky	Mental Health Providers Forum (MHPF)
Rodney Brook	General Social Care Council (GSCC)

Speakers

Mike Wardle	General Social Care Council (GSCC)
Patricia Kearney	Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

Other

Don Brand	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Iris Steen	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Liz Scott	Social Care Institute for Excellence

1. Apologies

Judy Downey	Relatives and Residents Association
Anne Milton	MP
Sue Collins	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Baroness Wilkins	
Colin Angel	United Kingdom Homecare Association
Jenny Willott	MP

2. Oral evidence session

This meeting heard evidence from the recent report - Social work at its best a statement of social work roles and tasks for the 21st century. It was jointly presented by GSCC and

SCIE. A full copy of the report is available on the GSCC website:

<http://www.gsccl.org.uk/News+and+events/Consultations/Roles+and+Tasks+of+social+work/>

Mike Wardle, Chief Executive, General Social Care Council (GSCC)

Copy of speech attached as Appendix 1.

Summary points as follows:

- Social work at its best is a statement defining the purpose, value, role and contribution of social work in the context of social care policies in England for children, adults and families in the 21st Century.
- The concepts behind Putting People First and the Children's plan – improving outcomes and providing personal solutions - are underpinned by the values and skills of social work. The statement is helping to inform the reforms and ensure that they recognise the vital and distinct role that social work plays.
- Social work recognises and plays a crucial role in ensuring that all children and adults have a right to safety and opportunity.
- This is done through relationship-based work. It stresses the value of human contact and care, over systems and technology. These attributes will be key to delivering personalised services.
- The support that people will need in arranging and managing their own care will require the skills of social workers - taking account of people's needs in the round, rather than focusing on a particular condition or delivering a defined service.
- Personalisation will also call for an increase in advocacy services to help people to get more out of their lives. People who use services regularly report that social workers who combine respect and care with knowledge of the support systems that they need, are those who make the biggest difference to them.
- In findings emerging from the 'In Control' evaluation in 71 per cent of their sample cases, people had support and help from social workers and, to quote the findings, "...within the group of older people, people were more likely to report improvements in choice and control if they were supported to plan by a social worker".
- There are a range of situations where social workers intervene because the law (and the interests of vulnerable people) requires them to do so and where the users may not welcome that intervention.
- Social workers play a key role in understanding where other services need to play a part in improving outcomes, and working alongside other social care staff, and of other professionals.
- Social workers have to deal with managed risk, and so there will continue to be a central role for social workers as accountable professionals for complex cases that span social care, health and education.
- The statement describes social work as one profession with a core set of skills, knowledge and values where social workers undergo generic training and then begin to specialise as their careers develop. There is no such thing as a 'children's social worker' or an 'adult's social worker'.
- There is a set of key roles that must be carried out by social workers – no other professionals have the skills and expertise to provide this service.

- Social work has received the professional status it deserves as a graduate profession which is regulated to ensure high standards.
- The government has asked that the statement be used as source material for the development of its adults and children's workforce plans to deliver these agendas.

Patricia Kearney, Director of Practice Development, SCIE

- SCIE has ensured that a rigorous and people-centred approach to knowledge and to the holders of knowledge has been an integral part of the Roles and Tasks development and consultation.
- SCIE's work has identified the gaps in social care knowledge and increased research capacity: a particular gap has been between service interfaces eg Parental mental health; Children of prisoners: now mainstream activity.
- SCIE supports the major culture change that putting people First and Children first require of social care, and its employers wherever they are. Particularly, that 'Social work at its best' looks forward to social worker's contribution to these changes.
- Major focus for SCIE is the identification and dissemination of good practice: working within regions to disseminate and identify evidence for better outcomes; working with sector to produce a good practice framework to kite mark claims of good practice.
- SCIE makes a contribution to children's workforce dev including NQSW and re-modelling initiatives and to adults workforce strategy; NQSW and plans for the Skills Academy for social care.
- SCIE will use the Roles and tasks report as a compass to help keep its work relevant, timely and useable.

2. Comments and questions

Joan Humble MP: Is there a difference in perceptions of social care staff and qualified social workers?

Mike Wardle, GSCC: There is a view that generic social care staff are well-meaning but restricted in their time (e.g. 15 min slots of care). Family support workers are very able and act as important links. They may enable social work intervention to take place.

Patricia Kearney, SCIE: We need to explore when it is best for a social worker as opposed to another social care worker needs to deliver a services. *Social work at its best* helps to move that debate forward. The Glasgow model is interesting – with social care teams led by social workers with a range of skills.

Jon Metcalf, BASW: Social workers can conflict with Government when interpreting legislation. Sometimes it can get in the way of effective delivery (e.g. care of children of immigrants and

asylum seekers). Social workers will often go ahead and provide care and support – which can be a risk for them.

Joan Humble MP: My main concern is local authority eligibility criteria and vulnerable young people (e.g. those just turning 16 years).

Patricia Kearney, SCIE: This can be about professional confidence rather than just the role.

Judy Welmenksey, MHPF: How will social workers' tasks link to other tasks? We need to map who does what (e.g. in relation to voluntary sector mental health services and social workers).

Mike Wardle, GSCC: We recognise that there are overlapping tasks – this report is a starting point as it maps out the role of social workers. The next steps are to see which roles and shared and which group is looked at next. Further development is needed.

Joan Humble MP: You've talked about social workers as advocates – what about independent advocacy?

Judy Welmensky MHPF: Who your employer is impacts on the level of independent advocacy you can provide.

Jill Manthorpe, KCL: Social work is an aging profession and 19% of UK social workers are born outside of the UK. Social workers receive 80% of the average wage of similar professionals – so there is a risk that they will be drained away into other areas of work. Also the recent DEMOS report implies that we won't need social workers in the future.

Mike Wardle, GSCC: Yes there is a problem with pay and vacancy rates, though there have been slight improvements. The graduate starting salary is comparable to related professions. This could mark the resurrection of real relationship-based social workers. We don't really know how many social workers we need per head of population – this varies across local authorities at present.

Joan Humble MP: Vacancy roles vary from area to area – but it's not clear why.

Patricia Kearney, SCIE: Some employers take the role more seriously – this is a strong message that appeals to professional social workers.

Don Brand, SCIE: We need to consider what training and workforce development is required to support future roles and tasks. Social workers are thinking 'Have I got a job in the future?'

We all have a responsibility to raise the status of social worker.

Owen Davies, GSCC: There is some mistrust of social workers within the service user movement due to their role as 'gatekeepers'. Individual budgets – with service users working in partnership with social workers to develop this package of solutions could revitalise the role of social workers and improve their status and popularity.

Ronnie Barnes, BASW: We would like to see joint working across Scotland and English on this area.

Amanda Hatton, Skills for Care: The consultation sessions for 'social work at its best' found people who use and work in care services want similar things. The statement could 'reclaim' the social work role as it highlights relationship based work which users want and is why many people come into the profession.

Joan Humble MP: The amount of funding available to local authorities and individual budgets varies. There are accusations that older people are not being given the same amount of funding. Under individual budgets, social workers may no longer be the managers of the money – but they may need to make the initial assessment.

Mike Wardle, GSCC: Social workers are less likely to be budget managers. Individual budget packages could deliver better overall outcomes.

Joan Humble MP: The Government is looking at personalisation of public services, not just social services.

3. Date of next meeting

9 June 2008, 4.00 – 5.30pm including Annual General Meeting.
Committee Room 11.