



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON SOCIAL CARE

6.00-7.00pm, 27 November 2007

Committee Room 11, House of Commons

Attendees

Joan Humble MP (chair)	MP
Baroness Wilkins	House of Lords
Baroness Howells	House of Lords
Baroness Greengross	House of Lords/International Longevity Association
Mike Wardle	General Social Care Council
Rodney Brooke	General Social Care Council
Keith Brumfitt	Children's Workforce Development Council
Amanda Edwards	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Richard Banks	Skills for Care
Michael Hart	Ofsted
Roger Morgan	Ofsted
Andrew Mercer	Ofsted
Julia Skelton	National College of Occupational Therapists
Vic Citarella	Local Government Association
Emma Carr	Commission for Social Care Inspection
Robert Khan	Commission for Social Care Inspection
Don Brand	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Jane Carlson	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Iris Steen	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Ronald Morton	Commission for Social Care Inspection
Dan Beety	Sue Ryder Care
Lisa Watch	General Social Care Council
Elena Scherbatykh	General Social Care Council
Sian Lockwood	National Association of Adult Placement Services
Patricia Kearney	Social Care Institute for Excellence
Liz Banks	King's Fund
David Walden	Commission for Social Care Inspection
John Metcalfe	British Association of Social Workers
Ian Johnstone	British Association of Social Workers

1. Apologies

Apologies were also received from the following:

Angela Browning MP	House of Commons
Baroness Pitkeathley	House of Lords
Jim Dobbin MP	House of Commons

Prof. the Baroness Finlay of Llandaff	House of Lords
Gwyn Prosser MP	House of Commons
Stewart Sutherland MP	House of Commons
Lord Rix	House of Lords
Jenny Willott MP	House of Commons
Eleanor Laing MP	House of Commons
Michael Jack MP	House of Commons
Richard Taylor MP	House of Commons
Anne Williams	ADASS
Martin Green	English Community Care Association
Andrew Cozens	Improvement and Development Agency
Mona Sehgal	Improvement and Development Agency
Niall Dickson	Kings Fund
Dame Jo Williams	MENCAP
Fran Branfield	Shaping Our Lives National User Network
Andrea Rowe	Skills for Care

2. Oral evidence sessions

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

David Walden, Director of Strategy, CSCI

- Social Care is a people business – workforce is key to delivering outcomes for people who use services. Yet social care workforce is typically low paid, low status and relatively low skilled. There is limited scope for replacement of the workforce by technology. CSCI Status of Social Care report 2006/07 (due out January 2008) will reveal continuing difficulties with recruitment and retention (approx ¼ of local authorities refer to difficulties with recruiting and retaining social workers and occupational therapists and 1/3 report difficulties with home carers for older people).
- Good management and leadership skills are essential and attracting managers is a key challenge. CSCI want to see retention of registration of managers. Council star ratings show that strong management and leadership produce good performance within three star councils. CSCI supports the Skills Academy proposals particularly in relation to management, leadership and commissioning skills.
- Introduction of minimum standards on training is helping to drive up quality.

Michael Hart, Director, Children, Ofsted

- There is a variation in vacancy rates across local authorities (eg two local authorities have vacancy rates of 0.6%, one has rate of 38%; 15 are over 20% - with 8 of these based in London, but yet one London LA has a rate of 2.2%).
- There is little correlation between vacancy rates and inspection outcomes
- Children's views are that 'social workers are like young people – there are good and bad ones'. High turnover of workers make handovers difficult and children end up repeating information to new staff. There is a need for improved communication skills – particularly in relation to working with young people with communication problems.
- There are some positive initiatives such as: local training and development opportunities, with some local authorities supporting local access degrees; specialist

staff working alongside care staff; employment of trainee social workers; young people being involved in recruitment.

- In general, young people are saying that the individual social worker is more important than the star rating of the council.

Richard Banks, Head of Workforce Development, Skills for Care

- National Minimum Data set is now providing more up to date, accurate information on the workforce including age, gender, ethnic origin, pay, etc.
- Recruitment costs the sector approx £78m per annum, with an overall turnover of 25%
- When social care is good, it is invisible – therefore it is difficult to promote as a career opportunity. Initiatives such as Accolades aim to raise status.
- 50% of the workforce has a qualification. There are a number of initiatives aimed at upskilling the workforce (eg I Care, Sector Skills Agreement, Skills Academy)
- People who use services are involved in every aspect of decision making within Skills for Care. This is a key cultural change for the workforce.

Keith Brumfitt, Director of Research and Development, Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)

- There are 140-150,000 workers in children's social care. Local authorities are having difficulties recruiting staff, but improvements are being made at local level.
- Residential care has high vacancy rates, with employers finding it difficult to find suitably qualified candidates. Need a better career structure within the sector.
- There is a 10,000 shortfall in foster care placements
- Mobility is within children's workforce – therefore we need to remove barriers into and out of children's social care.
- CWDC has let contracts for pilots to enable LAs to remodel practice and reconfigure how qualified and trainee staff work together to provide services.
- The Sector Skills Agreement sets out a series of agreements regarding training priorities.

Sir Rodney Brooke, Chair, General Social Care Council (GSCC)

- The quality of the workforce is fundamental to delivery of social care.
- The generic social work degree should support mobility across children's and adults' services.
- 93% of the public think that social workers do an important job in the community.
- 80,000 social workers and 13,000 social work students are now registered with GSCC. In 2008, domiciliary care workers will be required to register with GSCC. They will need to obtain qualifications as a condition of staying on the register.
- Misconduct inquiries are also raising the profile of social care in the media and improving its status.
- Degree in social work is now amongst the top ten courses being selected by students.
- GSCC involves people who use services in their work and have worked with partners to produce a report on benefit barriers to involvement.

Amanda Edwards, Head of Knowledge Services, Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

- Most popular sections on SCIE's people management site are on teamwork and supervision sections – reflecting priorities for the sector.
- SCIE is developing support for basic skills at induction through SISCO (Supporting Induction in Social Care)
- Social work degree course enabled sector to raise the status of social care workforce and SCIE has provided information packs for first year degree students
- Retention increases with development and careers opportunities as staff feel they have a future in their organisation.
- SCIE has involved people who use services in all work, including in social work education guides
- Participation of staff in decision making is also important. There is clear evidence that it is a key component of positive and effective change.

3. Comments and questions

Baroness Greengross: Is information on the National Minimum Data Set segmented?

Richard Banks: Yes. You can segment data by role, setting and region. Data is feeding into regional development agencies. Social care is a significant contributor to the local economy.

Sir Rodney Brooke: Registration will provide us with more information on the social care workforce.

Baroness Wilkins: It appears that the most vulnerable people are looked after by the least qualified staff.

Richard Banks: Qualified staff only earn 6% more than unqualified staff.

Joan Humble: Will National Minimum Data set link to variations in vacancies and turnover - for example will worst vacancy rates be seen as a local issue? New regulation authority will inspect less regularly based on risk analysis. But if you have high turnover of staff, situation can change. New regulator will not handle complaints.

David Walden, CSCI: The Bill does not change the frequency of inspection as such. There will be continual monitoring between inspections – including annual quality reports (AQAA), complaints etc.

Ian Johnson, BASW: We want to see an extension of the personalisation agenda to the workforce. Staff feel they are dispensable. BASW wants to see registration of managers, not just social workers. With move towards service users holding resources, social workers will be expected to be gatekeepers of resources.

Baroness Greengross: There has been little reference to diversity and racism in this evidence. People leave because of racism – can you ensure that it is included in the final report?

Sir Rodney Brooke: People from African/Caribbean and African origins are more highly represented in the social care workforce than they are in the general population.

Mike Wardle: There is a higher incidence of leaving amongst Black and minority ethnic and disabled workforce. GSCC is starting to monitor make up and movement of workforce.

Joan Humble: Are levels of pay more important for some groups (eg care assistants)? How does the salary of a social work graduate compare with other graduates? It would be useful to know if pay is a particularly problem in recruitment and retention.

Sir Rodney Brooke: New social work graduates salary is in the top quartile of all graduates at the early stage of career. This is not sustained as work progresses.

Julia Skelton College of Occupational Therapists: There is a pay differential between OTs working in healthcare and those in social care which adds to recruitment problems.

Sir Rodney Brooke: There is a small number of people who leave care sector to go into retail. Care workers are paid 9% above minimum wage.

Keith Brumfitt, CWDC: There is an extent to which pay and reward impact on children's workforce as a whole – not just social care children's workforce. It is not just pay that makes people stay in the sector – many other factors as well.

Joan Humble: Does a lack of understanding of what the job entails impact on retention?

Keith Brumfitt, CWDC: Yes. Proliferation of job titles in children's workforce and lack of clarity re non social work roles also adds to lack of clarity.

Jon Metcalf, BASW: Consideration needs to be given to role of independent social worker. Management does not understand the role of social workers, therefore more social workers are moving outside the statutory sector.

Joan Humble: We will include definitions of terms, roles and settings in the final report from the inquiry.

Sian Lockwood, NAAPS: Motivation factors are different in very small provider organisations. Pay can be important but role is often voluntary. Safety is an important factor. Use of small provider is likely to be an increasing option in personalisation agenda.

Dan Beety, Sue Ryder Care: Is voluntary sector included in the analysis? Voluntary sector pay tends to be lower than statutory sector.

David Walden, CSCi: Voluntary sector tends to outperform statutory and private sectors in performance standards.

Sir Rodney Brooke, GSCC: Data is across the whole workforce, . 35,000 people using Direct Payments employing on average 2.4 people each. This is the fastest growing area of the workforce.

Joan Humble: Are there any national pay scales? If someone is employing a carer under individual budgets – how do they know what is an appropriate payscale?

Sir Rodney Brooke: There is no standard pay scale other than national minimum wage. There is work to be done to provide support and advice on this area.

4. Date of next meetings

Further oral evidence will be presented at the following sessions:

6.00 – 7.00pm – Tues 15 January 2008, Committee Room 9

6.00 – 7.00pm – Tues 29 January 2008, Committee Room 11