



**Report of 21st Century Social Work Review
Edinburgh Open Event
25th May 2005**

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline the views presented by participants at the Edinburgh open event on the 25th of May 2005.

The event was designed to encourage the views of anyone with an interest in Social Work Services and/or the Social Work Review and contribute to debate surrounding important issues within Social Work itself. The participants came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some participants were service users and carers, others front line social work staff and some were for example representatives from health, education and housing that had a relationship to social work services.

The aims of the event were:

- To consider the implications of the findings of the Review so far.
- To develop potential solutions to problems experienced within social work currently.
- To seek consensus on what kind of social work we need for the future.

During the event there were workshops held on ten topics focusing on visions for the future:

1. Access to Services
2. Integrated Services
3. Leadership and Management
4. Skill Mix
5. Bureaucracy, Systems and Processes
6. Personalisation through Participation
7. Prevention and Early Intervention
8. Professional Accountability
9. The Voluntary and Statutory Sectors
10. What Kind of Social Worker Do We Want For the Future?

During the lunch break participants were invited to record their thoughts through a 'talk to the wall' exercise on the subjects of: Role of the Social Worker, Performance Improvement, Service Organisation & Delivery, Management & Leadership, Confident, Competent Workforce and Legislation. These comments which have come direct from participants can be found in the summary of findings. In addition participants were also invited to 'vote' on how strongly they agreed/disagreed with a series of statements that are also included in the summary.

In the afternoon the workshop groups went on to discuss how to make their visions happen, some groups breaking this down to the national, local and individual levels.

Summary of Findings

During the workshop participants were asked to summarise their vision into key points. These provide a useful outline of the main ideas that were discussed at the Edinburgh open event:

1. Access to Services

- Extended administration staff availability to enable people to access services when they need them - as opposed to within office hours.
- Improved promotion and advertisement of services and contact details.
- Locally accessible services delivered through the use of information points and one stop shops.
- Increased integrated working between statutory and voluntary services.
- Particular attention needs to be given to questions of access for rural areas.

Making it happen

- Locally accessible services positioned in places that people frequent in their everyday life such as supermarkets, schools and community centres increasing accessibility whilst decreasing service use stigma.
- On the national level the Scottish Executive could run an advertisement campaign similar to the 'See Me' campaign letting people know how to access social work services.
- The internet could be further utilised as an information tool.
- Relationship between the statutory and voluntary sector better integrated - working together in partnership rather than each providing bits of services. Scottish Executive to directly guarantee funding for voluntary organisations.
- Incentives for social workers to develop specialist skills.
- Extra resources required in rural areas to address transportation shortages.

2. Integrated Services

- Services need to be designed and delivered on the basis of service user needs.
- Integrated services do not happen by accident, they need to be invested in, in terms of time and space to develop team identity.
- Clarity of roles in integrated teams is central to successful team development.
- Need to be able to see the big picture in integrated services.
- Need for teams to have a sense of shared purpose, commonality of goals and trust in each other to attain effective working relationships.

Making it happen

- Scottish Executive needs to have a coherent approach to data collection, to set minimum standards for integrated service, to streamline funding and provide joined up policy direction.
- Mapping of Scotland's population in order to inform where services are located.
- Duplication of services cut.
- GP information needs to be made accessible.
- Standardised terms and conditions for social workers across and within sectors.
- Sharing and learning from good practice.

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3. Leadership and Management

- Needs to be strong leadership from the top and across all levels of organisations.
- No consensus surrounding what is the right model for professional leadership and whether operational and strategic management are separate things or part of an integrated whole.
- Need to ensure that staff share a vision.
- Need to foster a positive culture throughout organisations and build staff pride.
- Need for agreed national standards for each level of management and mechanisms for removing those not up to standard.
- Investment in training and development needs to be taken seriously.

Making it happen

- Increased application of theory into practice.
- Service users to play an increased role in social worker appraisal system.
- Transparency in promotion system.
- Increased movement between sectors through secondments.

4. Skill Mix

- There needs to be core skills for social workers across all grades.
- Need flatter structures – fewer tiers of management and better enabled professionals.
- This requires a collaborative approach – not just about social work but across a whole range of services.
- Need dedicated, clearly defined administrative support who are integral workers in social work teams.
- Need to recognise and learn from existing good practice.
- Workforce issues - need to get more social work staff across the board.

Making it happen

- Need demand forecasting modelling roles.
- National agenda on post qualification of social workers.
- Training for social workers standardised across the 32 local authorities.
- Need clear career structures.
- SE reduce complexity of funding streams.

5. Bureaucracy, Systems and Processes

- Need training in information management to be a core part of social work training.
- There needs to be better use made of skills - move away from the social worker 'jack of all trades' culture.
- Administration and other non social work staff skills need to be respected.
- Delegate decision making in order to minimise paperwork and reduce duplication of effort.
- Need regular reviews of systems and processes.

Making it happen

- Use software for speech interpretation and project management systems.
- Chains of decision making made simultaneous rather than sequential.
- Develop a national qualification in social services administration.
- Audit of organisational information management skills identifying areas for development and training.
- Reorganise teams to include administration staff under the same management as the rest of multi-disciplinary teams.

6. Personalisation through Participation

- Not just about social work - personalisation agenda reaches across all services such as health, education, housing etc.
- Is about empowering people in their roles, rights and responsibilities.
- Society generally is risk averse and has a blame culture. Need to be able to manage risk in a meaningful way that society and its organisations can accept.
- Need a confident and competent workforce who work flexibly with available resources to deliver personalised services.
- There is no one right answer but different solutions for each individual.

Making it happen

- Ring fenced funding for advocacy work.
- Review of DWP Benefits system.
- SE provide joined up policy.
- Retain Direct Payment but look into issues such as registration.
- SE produce realistic targets with realistic timeframes.
- Investment in developing staff skills to deliver personalised services.

7. Prevention and Early Intervention

- The development of an overarching co-ordinating strategy rests with local authorities. Scottish Executive should ensure they implement prevention and early intervention strategies.
- Social work services need to have a central co-ordinating role in prevention and early intervention work.
- Need for cultural change from reactive to proactive.
- Legislation already points at need for preventative/early intervention work but a focus shift in how legislation is implemented is necessary.
- Clear guidance needed on what constitutes a 'good outcome' and how outcomes should be measured.

Making it happen

- National standards of practice.
- Joint training to deliver cultural change.
- Local level partnership strategies.
- Space for professionals to pursue personal development.
- Clear professional support structures.

8. Professional Accountability

- Need to have meaningful and accessible policies and procedures with people receiving training in how to use them.
- Need to ensure that those conducting risk assessments have the appropriate skills - arming people with tool kits.
- Think through how social workers can delegate to others without a social work qualification whilst retaining accountability.
- The importance of professional pride in terms of the extent to which people feel they are answerable to themselves, how they exercise personal accountability and set personal standards.
- Supervisors need to receive training in the necessary skills.

Making it happen

- Individuals need to take responsibility for their own learning and advise management of unmet need.
- Resources dedicated to staff learning.
- Change the blame culture, encourage openness.
- Flatten structures.
- National training programme on risk assessments.
- Remove postcode lottery of local authority funding.

9. The Voluntary and Statutory Sector

- Need for clarity in partnership working; this requires investment of time and money.
- Need to ensure adequate funding of voluntary services; the voluntary sector should not subsidise the state.

- The voluntary sector has a responsibility to promote itself in terms of its professionalism, local knowledge and commitment.
- Training needs to be included explicitly within service level agreements to enable voluntary organisations to learn and to meet quality standards.
- Increased collaboration needed in terms of resources and making best use of expertise.

Making it happen

- Social work champions.
- Flexible funding streams.
- Local authorities need skilled staff performing in service commissioning and monitoring roles.
- Voluntary sector partner in strategic planning.
- Voluntary sector to operate with confidence in own strengths and abilities.
- Forums for voluntary sector for information sharing and collaborative working.

10. What Kind of Social Worker Do We Want For The Future?

- Scope of social worker practice: need to be able to make full use of the repertoire of skills.
- Need to have professionals who can move flexibly between specialisms whilst also allowing for those who wish to develop specialist practice in different areas.
- Need for a learning culture that promotes effectiveness.

'Talk to the wall' comments

Service Organisation and Delivery

- *Increased involvement with people using services. Ring fenced finance to do this*
- *An urgent need to recognise the distinct needs of deaf and blind people and promote the guide/communication service to them. At the moment this is very patchy in Scotland and non-existent in many areas.*
- *Local authorities need to give social work a much stronger lead co-ordinating role in a number of strategy and planning forums. Social workers missing from the table at policy level.*
- *Care Packages worked out to the individuals needs rather than what the service can offer*
- *Support, support, support*
- *Consistency of care workers in community care packages. Notification to clients regarding inevitable changes to care workers PRIOR to visits.*
- *Must define purpose, and identify most efficient way of reaching it – not the cheapest*

- *Local authorities need to work more closely with private /voluntary sector to common services, facilitate co-operation between them.*
- *Represent all professions who are employed in social work. Lots are important key members of integrated teams.*
- *People need a generic service accessed by specialist routes/needs*
- *Talk to the people we work for: their service not ours.*
- *More joined up thinking*
- *Realistic care packages for individuals. 5-10 minute service is not a service!*
- *Resources – flexibility and availability*
- *Must be user centred and not dependent on where services sit*
- *More flexible patterns of service delivery more integrated working*
- *Early intervention: social work can identify unmet need and they (local authorities) should co-ordinate voluntary organisations and private sector and communities to meet it where no statutory issues.*
- *Workers access should be experienced, be able to give advice, redirect if necessary, and take appropriate referrals. If agency staff or newly qualified staff are inaccessible, wrong information is often given in error.*
- *Open honest dialogue between colleagues including management structures. Service user participation in all areas of service provision*
- *Planners..... What are they good for?*
- *If local authorities want to retain their control role in social work they are going to have to justify it and earn it – at the moment they deserve their social work staff.*
- *The need to promote more and better trained people who work with deaf blind people. The need to recognise the deaf blind diploma as a step in the process*

Management and Leadership

- *User led legislation like the Direct Payment legislation can be completely obstructed by non-user led management.*
- *Proper training for first line managers*
- *We need to discern the difference between leadership and management*
- *'managerial' social work staff to carry nominal caseloads:*
 - *can say they are practitioners*
 - *enhance their credibility amongst staff*
 - *More confident at case community*
 - *can then safely say they are social workers*
- *Need training for supervisors before they are in position*
- *Management can be from any profession but have the professional leadership from own profession e.g. social worker > social workers, O.T > O.T*
- *Leading to Deliver type of opportunities need to be continually available to maintain a sharp workforce.*
- *Voluntary sector to be seen as equal partners in strategic and policy development*

- *Training in management before practising as a manager e.g. the sergeant exams in the police force. Might help with the duality control/allowing people to dip toe in water.*
- *Team Leaders to be appointed because of their management skills – NOT just to promote from main grade post; often they have no management experience or training*
- *Community Care: recognise the need for occupational therapy in leadership in local authority community care teams*
- *Management and Leadership is important – a good leader is sometimes hard to find*
- *Listen. Good supervision to improve practise*
- *Management by walking about. Know the organisation; listen to your workers, as well as service users and other stakeholders. Explain decisions*
- *Crucial*

Performance Improvement

- *Performance should be monitored, and if issues regarding good practice arise these should be addressed rather than left. Always room for improvement*
- *Mark the social work profession as a profession. Let the government lead the way in acknowledging the social worker task and place like all of the other front line services*
- *Recognise generic OT skills and reward accordingly*
- *NOT about 'stronger' inspection, but inspection as a partner in a process. Not threats but advice and shared learning*
- *There is a desperate need to specifically recognise the distinct needs of deaf blind people. England and Wales have legislation to protect deaf blind people, Scotland has little*
- *Performance Indicators require to be more than simply a way of mapping out hoops that need to be jumped through*
- *Financial incentives are required for social workers in specialist areas acquiring specialist skills e.g. BSL skills*
- *Greater emphasis placed on evidence based practice and monitoring/review/evaluation*
- *The interim report is simplistic! You follow the Blair mantra of more adoptions – families are struggling without post adoption support*
- *Value the views of service users and communities. What do they need from us? Design a social worker competition.*
- *More money, more responsibility*
- *Need to have a greater awareness of how their section fits into the greater whole*
- *Every social work professional should have a caseload*
- *Get ideas from workforce (and any other useful source), trial them, then adequately fund them.*

Confident, Competent Workforce

- *Consistency in training, and more evidence based learning for trainee social workers and those already practising*
- *Must be trained, valued, enabled and let get on with it.*
- *Take pride in profession training opportunities. Empower people to grow in professional role*
- *Confidence comes from being sure about your ability to deliver what is asked of you. Compliment and recognise competence*
- *Evaluate our work – be confident of what works. We need to avoid tunnel vision and network much more effectively*
- *Opportunity for job swaps/secondments. Not at expense of service however, e.g. time limited, not as in C.E.C where secondments have been extended and result in no one being anywhere!*
- *Having a recognised professional leader and supportive supervision structure. Time for CPD, career structure*
- *Worry less about professional identity and focus more on professional delivery of what people want*
- *Will not happen without pay improvement.*
- *Is needed otherwise the service becomes dangerous for those using it.*
- *Training and increased networking with other organisations*
- *Summaries of important information/research written for target audience i.e. not 100 page documents*
- *Ensure voluntary sector can access funding to enable staff training and development*
- *Ensure adequate training is provided – professional development, CPD meetings. Peer group support. Modular courses approach.*
- *Training and empowerment to take decisions*
- *Rotational posts/probationary post for 1st year post qualifying*
- *Recognition required for workers who have bilingual skills – including BSL*
- *Equal opportunities for occupational therapists need to exist for continued professional development (CPD)*

Role of the Social Worker

- *Don't forget residential child care and staff*
- *Help individuals achieve their goals*
- *Work from a sound value and knowledge base*
- *Firstly to give confidence*
- *Listen*
- *Facilitate change*
- *Assess need and risk, identify way forward, facilitate and manage intervention*
- *To define care skills and then develop support roles as needed*
- *Make use of appropriate personnel with appropriate skills – don't use social workers as interpreters*
- *Social workers to generate a more positive attitude with client group when organising care needs – to work with individuals creatively and flexibly, out of the box thing*

- *To work more closely with voluntary agencies to take a more proactive role in providing appropriate services to those such as deaf blind*
- *What about the role of the OT?!*
- *To have a clearly articulated knowledge base and sense of profession*
- *Ensure social workers are well trained and supported to raise esteem and status. Also we need to be much more pro-active in promoting good practice.*
- *Acknowledge the complexity*
- *To assist service users to make choices about their lives, whilst sometimes taking control of situations to protect vulnerable people*

Legislation

- *Need to sort out legislation responsibilities when/if integrating services*
- *Need to get away from legislation that gives power to do but does not have a duty placed upon it*
- *Historically local authority OT's have been unable to provide rehab – seen as a health provision. Legislation should acknowledge this*
- *Ring fenced resources for consultation with people who use services and advocacy services*
- *Workforce needs ongoing familiarisation with legislation – so do politicians*
- *When will NHS and social work legislation work together?*
- *Ensure staff have training on up to date legislation – include legal services to ensure they can be accessed in controversial cases.*
- *It is 'scary' how much this review focuses on children and families and other legislation – is this review reflecting a lack of understanding of community care and adult protection – like the public!*
- *Legislation when looking at the welfare of the child is positive until it is moved into the court situation then it is about winning and losing a case.*
- *Social work has now moved on so much need new legislation rather than keep amending '68 Act.*

Opinion statements

The following statements were displayed at the Edinburgh event with participants invited to vote whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed. The following results were obtained –

1. For most Social Workers peer supervision is more valuable than management supervision.

More people disagreed with this statement (16) than agreed (11), however that 7

people also voted 'neither' on this statement demonstrates that feeling was very mixed.

2. There is a true learning culture in Social Work

The clear consensus was that people disagreed (23) with this statement, with only 5 agreeing and 7 voting neither.

3. Quality assurance should be about promoting and sharing good practice rather than top down inspection.

Very strong agreement with this statement (30) only 2 people disagreeing.

4. The way we deliver social work services promotes independence.

Very strong disagreement with this statement (30) only 4 people agreeing.

5. We need a completely new approach to handling access to services.

Strong agreement (27) with this statement, 0 disagreeing and 5 voting 'neither'.

6. Local Authorities provide an ideal environment in which professional practice can thrive.

Strong disagreement (31), only 3 people agreeing and 2 voting 'neither'.

7. We need a new kind of partnership between local authorities and voluntary organisations.

This statement achieved the highest agreement (37 – 19 of these 'strongly agree') out of all 7 statements, 0 people disagreed and 5 voted 'neither'.

Report of Findings

1. Access to Services

1.1 Modernising Social Work Services to deliver:

- *More flexible hours when mainstream services would be available*
- *More integrated services*
- *Less stigmatised services*
- *More proactive services*
- *More direct services through self assessment*

The group believed that existing out of hours services were difficult to access since gaining access to these services was often through arrangement that took place in standard office hours time. Social Workers themselves were often out of the office during working hours. This went some way to defeating the object of having out of hour's services. The group felt that dedicated administration support staff needed to be both on hand during working hours, and out of these hours, in order to provide a consistent route into services.

There was agreement that in general better quality information needed to be made available for service users, especially in regards to out of hour's services. Various suggestions were put forward based around the concept of locally accessible services positioned in places that people frequent in their everyday life such as supermarkets, schools and community centres. It was felt that providing social work services in this way could increase accessibility whilst decreasing the stigma that was sometimes associated with using social work services.

On the national level it was suggested that the Scottish Executive could run an advertisement campaign similar to the 'See Me' campaign letting people know how to access social work services. Information also needed to be made available on what services other agencies provide before people needed to access a social worker. The internet was also cited as a resource that could be further utilised, however this would need to be done in conjunction with other improvements so that user groups such as older people (who may not be comfortable with internet use) could still easily access information.

The working relationship between the statutory and voluntary sector needed to be better integrated, working together in partnership rather than each providing bits of services. It was suggested that one way of assisting such improvements could be through the Scottish Executive directly guaranteeing funding for voluntary organisations rather than going through local authorities.

The final significant issue noted by the group was the issue of social worker specialist services. It was felt that generally there were not sufficient numbers of social workers and that more should be done to increase the numbers through schemes such as allowing people to work and study to

become a qualified social worker at the same time. Further it was felt that there was no incentive for existing social workers to learn extra skills such as languages, BSL etc. This often resulted in a lack of social workers with specialist skills resulting in certain user groups receiving inadequate services such as deaf blind people.

In terms of assessment issues the group stated how single shared assessment processes were often not picking up everyone with need. In general assessment forms and questions needed to be more carefully thought through and better designed. New forms should be piloted by service users in order to ensure that they work as designed in obtaining quality relevant information.

1.2 The different models of service delivery needed for rural and island communities:

The group felt that there was no one model of service delivery that would work across all rural and island communities. The key concern was that acknowledgement was given to the case that services need to develop where people are. The main issue highlighted was that extra resources were required in rural areas in order to address transportation issues. One idea put forward for improving service delivery was the idea of mobile one stop shops.

2. Integrated Services

2.1 How integrated services can be successfully created:

The group agreed that the single most important factor in successfully creating integrated services and teams was time, in terms of allowing teams to conduct preparatory teamwork. This preparatory work allowed teams to develop a shared understanding of what integration meant and determine a common goal centred on the service user. The creation of successful integrated teams was also dependent on the recognition of the distinct skills that different team members brought. It was important that individuals retained their professional identities and were clear on their own and each others roles. A key tool in team development was noted as being joint training. Overall trust between team members was needed and commitment to a shared vision.

2.2 As Children and Families Social Work, Community Care and Criminal Justice become more integrated with other services will social work departments disintegrate? Will this matter?

There was no clear view on whether the possible disintegration of social work departments was necessarily an entirely negative thing. Views put forward were that specialisms in social work worked against a strong social work identity and also that problems were created in terms of deciding where problems should go. The group put forward that it did not matter if social work departments disintegrate as the public and service users were primarily concerned about their needs being met as and when required, not the structural set up of services.

2.3 The potential benefits of integration:

The potential benefits of integration were listed as being holistic service delivery, a reduction in the duplication of services and the user getting access to the best, most appropriate service as quickly as possible.

2.4 How the barriers to integration can be overcome:

The discussion on this matter looked at what some of the barriers to integration were a key macro issue identified was divisive funding streams and services being resource rather than user driven. Other barriers included problems around referral processes, confusion over roles and responsibilities in joint working, and a lack of continuity caused by the nature of contracting relationships between the statutory and voluntary sector.

Key factors in overcoming the barriers to integration were effective management of change, improved communication, and political understanding on all players' parts. The development of integrated services needed to be seen as an ongoing process. In general more flexible services were needed that addressed user needs rather than rigid contract determined services.

Making It Happen – Integrated Services

- Shared language in integrated service teams.
- Scottish Executive to give organisations realistic deadlines for data turnaround and generally to have a more coherent approach to data collection thereby avoiding organisations receiving the same data requests from different sections of the SE.
- Minimum standards for integrated services to be set from the SE.
- SE streamlining funding streams and budgets.
- A more joined up clear vision from the Scottish Executive needed to provide integration at the policy level.
- Time and investment needed for all levels of organisations to buy into a shared vision.
- Dedicated and trained administration support.
- Mapping the population – speculative work into what the coming demographic challenges will be. Managers need the space and time to be able to conduct such speculative work.
- Management improvements – the planning/strategic role needs to be linking back to the front line, both up and down management structures, and in/out of structures.
- Practitioners to be consulted allowing their thoughts to be fed into strategic planning.
- Duplication of services to be cut.
- GP information needs to be accessed.
- Social workers need to be able to 'live the values' that they joined the profession for – job satisfaction.
- Recruitment and retention issues – standardised terms and conditions for social workers.
- Share good practice models and publicise these.

3. Leadership and Management

3.1 What is meant by improved leadership and management in social work services?

The group agreed that there needed to be strong leadership at the top of organisations. Leaders need to have a clear vision and be able to communicate this to ensure that staff share the vision and can then work towards its delivery. Leaders also need to foster a positive culture throughout organisations and have the ability to rebuild peoples pride in what they do and where they work. Leadership was needed across organisations; not just from the top down, frontline staff should have leadership responsibilities.

3.2 Barriers to improved leadership and management:

The barriers to improved leadership and management in social work services were outlined as:

- a difficulty in challenging the way people are working as managers under the current system – no mechanism for removing those not reaching required standards
- managers not having sufficient time to reflect on what they do and continue to learn and develop themselves
- a lack of transparency in promotion systems.

3.3 How professional leadership in social work services could be developed:

A number of suggestions were discussed in relation to the issue of how professional leadership could be developed in social work services:

- Careful thought into whether social work managers were the right people to supervise staff. There is an argument for separating out the management and supervision aspects and giving it to professional managers.
- There needs to be increased application of theory into practice.
- Service users need to play an increased role in the social worker appraisal system feeding in what they thought of the services they received.
- Need for ongoing accreditation and qualifications for managers all the way to the top.
- Transparency in the promotion system.
- Need for agreed national standards for each level of management.
- Investment in training and development.
- Mechanism for removing those not up to the required standard.
- Increased movement between sectors through secondments.

Making it happen:

- National standards in management and training
- Locally: sharing and exchanging ideas on a regular basis. Secondments, job swaps etc to cross-fertilise ideas.
- Support and management mechanisms need to be examined.
- Local forums a possibility but this is down to good leadership skills – they must have a possibility of outcomes rather than just be talking shops. Change will take time and this has to be realised.
- Social workers need to make much better use of their time.

4. Skill Mix

4.1 The roles that need to be developed to improve the skill mix within social work services:

The group felt that more staff were needed across the board and that integrated working practices would be central to improving the skill mix within social work services. The group came up with a list of skills that needed development in order to improve the skills mix:

- Co-working
- Evaluation
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Planning
- Recording – case working
- Report-writing
- Interviewing
- Client relationship building
- Negotiation
- Listening
- First line management
- Reading and information management
- Health and safety
- Risk assessment
- Time management

4.2 Examples of business or administrative roles that work well:

The examples noted were:

- Stirling's experience of income maximisation services (administration roles)
- Nursing's grading of staff and functions (qualified and unqualified staff)
- Glasgow's drug teams
- Integrated mental health and learning disability teams

4.3 The need for 'para-professional' roles and more service support staff:

It was felt that dedicated, clearly defined administrative staff were needed. These staff would need dedicated training and induction to social work practice.

4.4 Moving from hierarchical professional structures to a culture that values a range of functional and vocational roles:

Flatter structures are needed with less tiers of management and better enabled professionals at the front line. The group also advocated the development of more senior practitioner level posts.

Making it happen:

National Level:

- Increased training places - study the demand
- Increased funding for post qualification training and CPD
- Demand forecasting/modelling numbers and roles
- Education on responsibilities, rights and risks
- National policies, local implementation
- Better integration of national agencies – SWIA, SSSC
- Ring Fenced Budgets
- Means of attracting and then supporting social workers into profession – realistic about what a newly qualified social worker can be expected to do.
- Research and evidence based practice (health care ahead here)
- National Agenda on post qualification
- Training for social workers – standardised across the 32 local authorities.
- Career structures made clear
- Build on National Standards
- National support to achieve and promote good practice
- Learning Culture
- Strategic planning, less budget driven.
- SE promote good practice reducing complexity of funding
- Dissemination of research, good practice etc

Individual

- Self-evaluation
- Identify and ask for opportunities to develop
- Mentor and mentored (if leading to deliver) extensive use of mentoring
- Sign up to organisations learning culture; take responsibility for CPD and informal learning
- Take time to absorb newly disseminated information (e.g. on evidence-based practice)

5. Bureaucracy, Systems and Processes

5.1 How the level of paperwork can be reduced/cut:

The group felt that electronic systems had actually resulted in an increase in paperwork through the widespread distribution of policy documents that people then printed out. This could be reduced by organisations adopting policies of only printing when absolutely necessary. A further example of a reduction measure was through the use of electronic questionnaires rather than paper. An idea for the future was the use of software for speech interpretation and the use of project management systems. More training on information management was needed along with targeted IT training. Time would need to be made for such training. It was felt that the delegation of decision making would reduce unnecessary paperwork by reducing the number of people that have to sign documents off. Chains of decision making could be made simultaneous rather than sequential.

5.2 Areas that should be targeted most:

The strong consensus that came through was that the key area that required targeting was getting dedicated administration support for social workers. This would result in social workers having more time with clients.

5.3 Examples of systems that have successfully cut unnecessary paper work:

Good examples given were library systems and the Care Commissions information on care homes.

5.4 Developing new and different systems and roles to reduce the burden of paper work:

It was stated that social workers were spending between 30%-40% of their time on non-social work tasks such as administration, contracting services and welfare rights. New roles could be developed to take on these tasks.

Making it happen:

National Level:

- SWIA or another body should have a public voice for social work services (including positive marketing)
- Incorporate information management systems learning into the syllabuses of OT/social work/social care training courses
- Incorporate information management systems training into all CPD for staff at all levels.
- Public awareness campaign on risk issues
- National qualification in social services administration (APL)

Local Level:

- Audit (at a departmental level) current I.M skills, identify areas for development and training
- Reorganise to include administration staff under same management as rest of multi-disciplinary team

- Review management/business procedures in order to delegate decisions and budgets as low as feasible
- Review and re-organise to match skill mix within team to changing needs of users. Includes needs of users to have access to IT.

Individual, professional level (all social service staff):

- Accept responsibility for own decisions
- See I.M as integral core skill to professional practice and development (By Information Management we mean: communicating, storing, retrieving and using information in a skilled, relevant, efficient, effective, ethical purposeful manner to create a model of best IM practice)
- Including personal communication skills (listening, speaking, writing) awareness of impact of information on service users and collating and sharing information
- Best use of IT for shared assessments and records.
- Most effective use of modern technologies: for communication (email) storage (database), retrieval (internet)

6. Personalisation through Participation

6.1 Whether 'personalisation through participation' is a different approach from that already adopted:

The group decided that personalisation through participation was not a different approach from that already adopted for example as seen in the CC Act and NHS Act.

6.2 The achievability of providing 'pure' personalisation of services and their implications for:

- *Resources*
- *Power relationships- statutory involvement e.g. mental health, child protection, criminal justice*
- *Risk/accountability*
- *Planning and commissioning of services - best value*

There was an issue noted surrounding risk/accountability in regards to who has responsibility for carrying out police checks etc and who would pay for this. Social work services would need to be tailored allowing people to take risks in meaningful ways. Society at large would need to accept that risk is sometimes there. A balance of intervention and non-intervention would need to be struck. All stakeholders needed to be engaged in the planning and commissioning of services including service users.

6.3 The factors which will prevent this from occurring:

It was noted that there were stumbling blocks at the management level and with funding and budgets. The problem with budgets being that they were for the whole system and target related. The ring fencing of funding also

prevented social workers from exploring alternative ways of helping service users. The contracting system would need to be looked at in terms of individualising contracts. Assessments currently service based, these should be need based.

6.4 The messages that can be transferred to the development of the social work role and the wider social care sector:

Children and Families: need to train social workers to let go of power. Family group conferencing with families making decisions as something to be further explored.

The personalisation agenda would need addressing through training for other professions such as teachers. At the widest level a shift in the societal view of risk was needed in terms of accepting risk as a part of life. Social workers need to involve service users more in terms of evaluating the services they receive. Best practice to be shared.

Making it happen

National

- Support for individuals to participate in designing services
- Funding for advocacy work ring-fenced since legal advocacy a legal requirement (Mental Health Act) but currently not enough resources. Advocacy needs to be freely available. Some people will always need help – not time limited.
- Stop local authorities taking into account partner's financial circumstances as this is stopping people getting into employment. Examine the disincentives of getting people into employment – review of the benefits system.
- National and local level structure of social work is hard to move across e.g. criminal justice to children and families.
- Needs to be more joined up thinking between departments in SE regarding policy initiatives.
- Retain direct payments as they offer the choice – doesn't have to be someone with qualifications etc to deliver the service however registration issues required further examination.
- Issues around regulation in connection with personalisation of services. Also about support for staff and supporting supervision. Issue of practice skills for supervisors, increase the skill base.
- Political statements often out of touch with the reality of putting these targets into practice – e.g. more difficult to place children adopted – need realistic targeting. Stop introducing new targets need time to implement and to participate.
- Organisations should get easy read versions of legislation – should not be for the organisation /professional to carry this out.

Local

- Need for adequate packages for carers to go on training course etc.

Individual

- Need recognition that advocacy is one of the most conflicting roles. Needs good knowledge of person you are advocating on behalf of and also about interacting with agencies that work with balancing different tensions in many cases.

7. Prevention and Early Intervention

7.1 How social work strikes the right balance between early intervention, prevention and response to crisis:

The group felt that local authorities needed to develop overarching co-ordinating strategies involving partnerships with other agencies. In terms of resourcing these strategies ring fenced funding was needed specifically for the purpose of early intervention and preventative work. The Scottish Executive's role being that they ensure local authorities implement these strategies.

7.2 The role social workers should play in early intervention:

Social work services should have a central co-ordinating role in prevention/early intervention work involving more of a community development role.

7.3 How social workers can manage to focus more on early intervention, whilst at the same time continuing to deal with crises:

The group felt that fundamental to the shift from dealing with crisis to early intervention was the need for a change in culture from reactive to proactive social work. To achieve this a number of things would be needed including increased training, continuous professional development and raising the status of social work.

7.4 How we can measure/evaluate the effectiveness of early intervention:

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of early intervention clear guidance would be needed on what constitutes a good outcome.

Making it happen

National:

- Require local authorities to develop strategies for partnership working and ensure they deliver them
- Identify and disseminate examples of good practice
- Develop national standards of practice
- Develop joint training to deliver cultural change

Local:

- Develop partnership strategies
- Create space for professionals to pursue personal development (away days, career breaks, secondments)
- Put in place clear professional support structures
- Develop a staff retention strategy

Individual:

- practitioners needs to keep participating and keep their vision
- commitment to personal development
- Develop professional organisations that can support members and drive change.

8. Professional Accountability***8.1 How organisations can ensure that social workers are able to practice autonomously within the context of the organisation's legal and statutory requirements:***

It was felt that it was the organisations responsibility to prepare staff for autonomous practice through the provision of training focusing on competence and confidence and accessible policies and procedures. In addition social workers themselves can address autonomous practice issues through meeting the Post Registration Learning and Teaching (PRTL) requirements. Social workers also needed to take responsibility for raising issues.

8.2 Whether social workers should assess and manage risk and what the implications are for practice:

The group feeling was that there was a need to ensure that social workers responsible for risk assessment had the appropriate skills. There was a need for a 'tool kit' that everyone could use that would promote a good standard of risk assessment.

8.3 How social workers should manage their multiple accountabilities for their professional practice to the person using the service, their employer, the Scottish Social Services Council and the wider public:

The group concluded that further work was needed into looking at the issue of how social workers could delegate to other social care workers (without the social work qualification) whilst still retaining accountability.

8.4 How we can promote and develop greater openness to learn from mistakes:

In order to promote and develop greater openness it was felt that professional pride had a key role to play. There was a feeling that the blame culture was a common cultural trend across wider society; it was not specific to social work. In terms of addressing this issue organisational cultures needed to change in order to promote openness.

8.5 The role professional supervision should play in promoting accountability and the safe management of risk:

The main thing that needed addressing was that supervisors needed to be trained as supervisors. It could not be taken for granted that good social workers would necessarily be good supervisors.

Making it happen

Individual:

- Incorporate procedures into practice
- Reorganise sphere of influence
- Be a professional leader
- Trust colleagues at all levels
- Consolidate practice
- Be responsible for own learning
- Advise of unmet need

Organisational Level:

- Make space for staff to learn
- Review and update procedures/strategies
- Change blame culture
- Flatten structures
- Remove hoops which workers need to jump through to access resources/services

National Level:

- Remove the post code lottery regarding local authority funding
- Policy/guidance/direction regarding levels of joint funding
- Training strategy to prepare people to promote posts, e.g. trainee headships in Education
- National training programmes on risk assessments

9. The Voluntary and Statutory Sectors

9.1 What the involvement of independent organisations in policy development, strategic planning and the provision of services should be:

The group felt that currently the voluntary sector was not being treated as an equal partner with the statutory sector. The biggest problem being that under service level agreements the voluntary sector was supposed to do work on behalf of councils whilst not being adequately paid to do so. This led to the concern that the voluntary sector was ending up subsidising the statutory sector. Other issues included the case that front line staff were not being consulted enough in terms of what they actually needed to provide services.

9.2 How we support the development of flexible, personalised and good value services at the local community level:

The perceived antagonism between the sectors could be removed through the development of fora for voluntary organisations. These networks would potentially be very beneficial for the small local level voluntary organisations that were actually doing work such as early intervention and preventative work. A current problem noted was that group members felt that service level agreements were badly drawn up and acted against flexibility in service provision, did not allow for innovation, or for staff training to take place.

9.3 How we promote a greater interchange of ideas, staff, training and resourcing between sectors:

The group felt that there needed to be a bigger range of opportunities for contact at all levels between the sectors; with the voluntary sector getting access to actual social workers. The voluntary sector needed to be invited to take part in training with full cost recovery. Also training could be shared between voluntary organisations so that when trainers were brought in this opportunity was fully utilised ensuring that all places on the training were full. This sharing could also take place in terms of other matters such as HR, especially for smaller organisations that could not afford HR departments. In terms of staff moving between the sectors it was noted that the voluntary sector had problems recruiting because they could not match the salaries being offered in the statutory sector.

9.4 Whether projects in the voluntary sector could take on more responsibility and accountability for services and how this would be managed:

The group felt that voluntary organisations could be more assertive about issues, particularly in regards to underfunding. Voluntary organisations needed to define exactly what they would do and the cost. The feeling was that unless they did this they would be exploited: *"There's always the fear of biting the hand that feeds you, but you have to stand up"*. Parallels were drawn with business management where people did not have a problem with saying 'that's how much it costs, give us that or we cut the level of service'. However the problem for voluntary sector organisations was that they would not say no when the impact for their service users would be detrimental. In general the voluntary sector needed to sell its professionalism and demonstrate evidence of its quality, added value, local knowledge and commitment.

9.5 What good partnerships between the sectors look like, the factors that enable quality provision, and the factors that inhibit this:

Good partnerships recognise the expertise, knowledge and flexibility of the voluntary sector with mutual respect. A key factor in establishing good partnerships was noted as time; with integration level being explicitly linked with the length of the partnership. This allowed for stability and consistency to be built.

Factors that enable quality provision: the voluntary good at targeting certain audiences and achieving relationships between organisations and individuals that the statutory sector could not. They could get a different quality of co-operation.

Factors that inhibit quality provision included a lack of knowledge about voluntary organisations in local authority social work departments.

Making it happen

National

- Politicians should not just react to be seen to act, think strategically and long term, not just short termism, e.g. social inclusion agenda.
- Social work champions needed – to speak on behalf of and challenge on behalf of social workers and users, where is the leadership? What is the role of ADSW? SSSC etc?
- Social work is about advocacy and campaigning on behalf of users not just service providers – social work is unashamedly political.
- Flexible funding streams – strategic rather than systems driven.
- Research and development/training integrated into service provision including in funding streams.

Local:

- Room for improvement at all levels – local authorities are the natural place for social work but they need to be better in order to justify that role.
- Local authority structure purchaser/provider split needs appropriate skills on both sides of the agenda e.g. commissioning /monitoring (skills in managing these functions).
- Strategic/planning involvement of the voluntary sector – senior managers need recent experience/knowledge of the services they run – not necessarily of the same discipline as the sharing of principles and values more important.
- Improve management skills
- Local authority skills for working in partnership are not embedded – integration needs to be worked at.

Individual level

- Embrace and reward self awareness and honesty
- Listen openly and no-defensively
- Voluntary sector needs to operate with confidence in its own abilities
- Professional status is about not being held 'in awe' but as enabling and developing skills in others – professional as opposed to amateur.
- Forums for voluntary sector for information and collaboration
- Social workers need timeout from service delivery for reflection

10. What Kind of Social Worker Do We Want For the Future?

10.1 Defining what is a social worker:

In terms of the Reviews definition of the six core roles of social workers as counsellor, advocate, partner, assessor of need risk or need, care manager and agent of social control, the group perceived all of the roles as being part of the scope of social workers. The problem with social workers being all of these was whether social workers had the time, training and support to do so. Currently social workers were not able to make full use of their repertoire of skills.

10.2 Making most effective use of the skills of qualified social workers:

The group raised the question of whether social workers should be doing advocacy or counselling. There was a strong consensus around the fact that social workers needed to do the things that they had the special skills to do. This could be achieved through encouraging rotation of jobs and specialisations and using secondments.

10.3 The right balance between a generic social worker role and specialist roles:

The group discussed how it was necessary for social workers to have shared generic skills and values but that these could only take social workers so far in an increasingly specialised world. Professionals were needed that were flexible and able to move around specialisms whilst recognising that those who wished could develop and extend specialist practice in different areas.

10.4 Developing high quality therapeutic relationships between social workers and clients:

The group's discussion noted how therapeutic relationships came in different guises and settings. The differences between client needs; that some wanted therapeutic involvement whilst others did not needed to be recognised.

10.5 How practice can be based more clearly on evidence of effectiveness:

The main issue that the group felt needed addressing was the need for a learning culture in social work that promoted effectiveness. Other factors listed were good professional supervision which challenged and enabled development. Feedback from users was seen as essential in evidence of effectiveness.

**Nicky Cleghorn
Research Assistant
21C Social Work Review
20th July 2005**

Annex 1 Raw Data Statements

The following statements focus on some of the most important issues the Review has uncovered. They do not in any way represent the review group's considered opinion; indeed many are worded provocatively in order to stimulate debate and response.

1. For most Social Workers peer supervision is more valuable than management supervision.

Strongly Agree : 0
Agree : 11
Neither : 7
Disagree : 16
Strongly Disagree : 0

2. There is a true learning culture in Social Work

Strongly Agree : 0
Agree : 5
Neither : 7
Disagree : 21
Strongly Disagree : 2

3. Quality assurance should be about promoting and sharing good practice rather than top down inspection.

Strongly Agree : 13
Agree : 17
Neither : 4
Disagree : 2
Strongly Disagree : 0

4. The way we deliver social work services promotes independence.

Strongly Agree : 0
Agree : 4
Neither : 1
Disagree : 22
Strongly Disagree : 8

5. We need a completely new approach to handling access to services.

Strongly Agree : 10
Agree : 17
Neither : 5
Disagree : 0
Strongly Disagree : 0

6. Local authorities provide an ideal environment in which professional practice can thrive.

Strongly Agree : 0
Agree : 3

Neither : 2
Disagree : 28
Strongly Disagree : 3

7. We need a new kind of partnership between local authorities and voluntary organisations.

Strongly Agree : 19
Agree : 18
Neither : 5
Disagree : 0
Strongly Disagree : 0

Annex 2: Workshop themes and questions

1. Access to Services

1.1 How could access to Social Work Services be modernised to deliver:

- More flexible hours when mainstream services would be available
- More integrated services
- Less stigmatised services
- More proactive services
- More direct services through self assessment

1.2 Would different models of service delivery be needed for rural and island communities?

2. Integrated Services

2.1 What do we mean by integrated services and how can these be successfully created?

2.2 As Children and Families Social Work, Community Care and Criminal justice become more integrated with other services will social work departments disintegrate, will this matter?

2.3 What do you see as the potential benefits of integration?

2.4 How can barriers to integration be overcome?

3. Leadership and Management

3.1 What do you mean by improved leadership and management in social work services?

3.2 What are the barriers to improved leadership and management?

3.3 Are there particular skills, competencies and/or behaviours needed for leaders and managers now or in the future?

3.4 How can we develop professional leadership in social work services?

3.5 How should issues regarding the need for leadership and management at different levels throughout organisations be addressed?

4. Skill Mix

4.1 What roles need to be developed to improve the skill mix within social work services?

4.2 Can you provide examples of business or administrative roles that work well?

4.3 Do we need new 'Para- Professional' roles or more service support staff?

4.4 How do we move from hierarchical professional structures to a culture that values a range of functional and vocational roles?

5. Bureaucracy, Systems and Processes

5.1 How can we reduce/ cut the level of paper work?

5.2 What areas should we target most?

5.3 Can you give us examples of systems that have successfully cut unnecessary paper work?

5.4 As well as looking at systems, do we need to develop new and different roles to reduce the burden of paper work?

6. Personalisation through Participation

6.1 Is 'personalisation through participation' a different approach from that already adopted?

6.2 Can 'pure' personalisation of services be achieved? What are the implications for:

- Resources
- Power relationships- statutory involvement e.g. mental health, child protection, criminal justice
- Risk/ Accountability
- Planning and commissioning of services- best value

6.3 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the personalisation approach?

6.4 What are the enabling factors which allow this approach to be adopted?

6.5 What are the factors which will prevent this from occurring?

6.6 What are the messages that can be transferred to the development of the social work role and the wider social care sector?

7. Prevention and Early Intervention

7.1 How does social work strike the right balance between early intervention, prevention and response to crisis?

7.2 What role should social workers play in early intervention?

7.3 How can we manage to focus more on early intervention, whilst at the same time continuing to deal with crises?

7.4 How do we measure or evaluate the effectiveness of early intervention?

8. Professional Accountability

8.1 How can organisations ensure that social workers are able to practice autonomously within the context of the organisation's legal and statutory requirements?

8.2 Should social workers assess and manage risk? What are the implications of this for practice?

8.3 How should social workers manage their multiple accountabilities for their professional practice to -

- The person using the service
- Their employer
- The Scottish Social Work Services Council
- The wider public

8.4 How can we promote and develop greater openness to learn from mistakes?

8.5 What role should professional supervision play in promoting accountability and the safe management of risk?

9. The Voluntary and Statutory Sectors

9.1 What might the future look like? What should the involvement be of independent organisations in policy development and strategic planning and in the provision of services?

9.2 How do we support the development of flexible, personalised, and good-value services at local community level?

9.3 How do we promote greater interchange of ideas, staff, training and resourcing between sectors?

9.4 Could projects in the voluntary sector take on more responsibility and accountability for services? How would this be managed?

9.5 What do good partnerships between the sectors look like and what enables quality provision? What inhibits it?

10. What Kind of Social Worker Do We Want For the Future?

10.1 Do you agree with the statements, 'the six core roles of the social workers are counsellor, advocate, partner, assessor of risk or need, care manager and agent of social control'? 'The social worker is suggested as the professional of choice when no one knows what the right answer is, and where there's a high degree of risk'?

10.2 How do we make most effective use of the skills of qualified social workers?

10.3 What is the right balance between a generic social worker role and specialist roles?

10.4 How can we develop high quality therapeutic relationships between social workers and clients?

10.5 How can we base practice more clearly on evidence of effectiveness?