

Social Work Task Force in England

“Building a Safe, Confident Future”

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Introduction

- The **Social Work Task Force** was appointed by the Secretaries of State for Children, Schools and Families and for Health to conduct a 'nuts and bolts' review of social work and to make recommendations for comprehensive reform of the social work profession.
- Context of death of Baby Peter
- Not whole of social care workforce or children's workforce

Interim Report July 2009

Social Work in England struggling to hold its own with:

- Widespread staff shortages
- Inconsistent and inadequate support
- Education and training not delivering consistently
- De-skilled through mechanistic approaches
- No focus of responsibility for health or image of the profession
- Poor public understanding

Final report published 1st December 2009

“Building a safe, confident future”



15 recommendations

Starting out

1 Calibre of entrants

- Revised criteria for entry, including written test and interview;
- Proposals for clarifying thresholds for UCAS points and confirming competence in maths and English
- Regulation to ensure criteria are applied consistently and in line with Government widening participation policy

2 Overhaul of content and delivery of degree courses

- Consistent curriculum based on jointly agreed standards which are explicitly tied to robust assessment processes
- Course providers up to date with current knowledge, policy, practice

Starting out (cont.)

3 High quality practice placements

- Sharing of accountability and responsibility
- Advanced teaching organisations
- Revised criteria and funding
- Definitive standards for those who teach and assess students

2 Assessed and supported year in employment

- To be completed before licence to practise first awarded, as the final stage in becoming a social worker
- Opportunity for innovation e.g. joint units

Time, resources and support

6 New national standard for employers

- Management of workforce levels and workflow
- Clear standards for supervision, safety, welfare
- Health check

7 Requirements for the supervision of social workers

- Commitment to strong supervision culture
- Adherence to minimum frequency levels

8 Training and support for front line social work managers

- Targeting:
 - Aspiring managers
 - Newly appointed managers
 - Established managers

Professional development and career progression

9 National framework for continuing professional development

- Enabling social workers to continue to develop specialist skills, and to develop as leaders and managers
- Standardised, consistent outcomes that are accepted as valid across the country, while allowing choice and flexibility
- Encouraging a shift in culture – responsibility, entitlement
- Building on best parts of current PQ framework, Masters

10 Single, nationally recognised career structure for social work

- Links to CPD, licence to practice
- Progression routes available to quality practitioners which do not remove them from the front line

Leadership

11 National college of social work

- Promoting public understanding of social work as a public service and a profession
- Strong, independent leadership for the profession
- Representing the interests of effective social work in development of policy, legislation, education and regulation
- Remit will develop and grow over time

Public value and understanding

12 Programme of action on public understanding of social work

- Raising and maintaining public awareness of good social work's contribution to society
- Pro-active and constructive relationships with media

A cohesive and purposeful system

13 Licence to practise

- To replace current registration system – stronger, more demanding
- Code of practice for social work

14 A new system for forecasting supply and demand for social workers

- Regular, reliable, proportionate gathering of workforce data
- Central data analysis and expertise
- Collaboration between employers, HEIs etc.

15 Single national reform programme

- Delivery of recommendations – annual reporting
- Sustained commitment, collective action from employers, educators, profession, government
- Overseen by a new reform board

Reform Board

- 20 organisations plus observers
- Has met twice to date
- Government Implementation Plan expected early March