

Social Work Reform Board

NEWSLETTER

Issue Three
March 2011

Welcome to this third edition of the Social Work Reform Board newsletter

Since our last newsletter in December we have been busy canvassing and collating many of your views on the Social Work Reform Board's more detailed proposals to implement the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force.

Many people outside the Reform Board have been involved in these developments which is helpful in getting them right and should mean that adoption is more widespread. I have been impressed by the support for the Reform Board's work and the sector's commitment to getting on with improvements. But there is still an opportunity to comment and to help us ensure these tools, including the Capabilities Framework and the Standards for Employers, are as good as they can be. I would encourage anyone who has not yet responded to visit our website www.education.gov.uk/swrb.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Moira Gibb". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Moira Gibb CBE
Chair, Social Work Reform Board

Your views and opinions

Many of the key organisations involved in the education and training of social workers, their employers and managers, service user/carer groups and children and young people have given their views on the five areas of reform. We are still gathering views but below are some of the examples of the comments we have already received

An overarching professional standards framework

- key messages of the Capabilities Framework need to be aligned with regulation and the needs of employers.
- The simpler you keep guidelines (as long as all essential criteria are covered) the less chance of confusion and mistaken dialogue between Social Worker and Service User

- The importance of showing respect for other professionals and also peers, colleagues and service users.

Standards for employers and a supervision framework

- Need to better define social work 'accountability' framework
- Complexity of need makes skills mix planning for a workforce difficult

Principles that should underpin a continuing professional development Framework

- Social workers should take a greater lead in their own CPD, in order to promote professional values which may be at odds with organisational requirements.
- Need to get smarter at accreditation for everyone – CPD, in-house courses, NVQ, induction must all count
- Employers joining together to share programmes stretches resources and avoids duplication.
- Strong emphasis on service user support

Proposed requirements for social work education

- Key messages of the Capabilities Framework need to be aligned with regulation and the needs of employers.
- UCAS points – good A Level results don't necessarily equal a good social worker. What about other skills and qualities, widening participation?
- Support for the proposals on practice placements

Proposals for effective partnership working

- We can never move forward if we are not prepared to work together
- Value of written agreements – needs to be adapted and supported at senior management level and regularly evaluated at this level
- Issue of bureaucracy and process of going through legal departments – agreements can only be principles and guidelines

New tools to aid discussion

We have had a good response to the proposals as a result of national and regional meetings, workshops and conferences. During this process, we have developed tools that have been useful when discussing the proposals. These include: a two page summary on what the proposals mean for Social workers; and a questionnaire specifically for carers, service users and children and young people. You can find these tools on the "Hot Topics" section of our website - completed questionnaires can be returned to information.swrb@education.gsi.gov.uk

Munro Review Update

1st February saw the publication of [*The Munro Review of Child Protection: Interim Report - The Child's Journey*](#). The report sets out the characteristics of an effective child protection system, and the reforms that might help to create such a system. In the report, Professor Munro highlights the need to reduce bureaucracy to a manageable level. She also highlights the importance of having multi-agency services based in the community to identify the children and families most in need and give them help as early as possible.

Potential areas for reform include:

- Developing social work expertise by keeping experienced, more senior social workers on the front line so they can develop their skills and better supervise more junior social workers;
- Giving professionals from health, police and family support services easier access to social work advice when they have concerns about abuse and neglect; and
- Revising and reducing the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* so that core rules are separated from professional advice.

Two recommendations, designed to reduce bureaucracy, are made:

- announced inspections should end as part of forthcoming revisions to the inspection framework, in favour of unannounced inspections with a broader remit across the contribution of all children's services to the protection of children.
- Ofsted evaluations of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) should end in due course. Instead the quality of learning more generally should be given greater coverage within the overall inspection process.

The review is now in its final phase and is currently working with the professions across the sector to develop reforms to be set out in Professor Munro's final report, which will be submitted to Government in April 2011.

Social Work Practice Pilots for looked after children: Wave 2 – call for further local authority pilot sites

The Department for Education is expanding its current Social Work Practice (SWP) pilots – to include additional pilots in the second wave of the expansion programme.

There will be a rolling opportunity between March and end May 2011 for local authorities to participate in these exciting pilots. Local authorities interested in participating will need to:

- Phone 0207 340 7091/0207 340 8053 or e-mail socialwork.practices@education.gsi.gov.uk to register their interest
- Submit their proposal by e-mailing their completed questionnaire to socialwork.practices@education.gsi.gov.uk. **by noon either on:**
 - o **30 March 2011**
 - o **28 April 2011 or**
 - o **24 May 2011**

Local authorities are encouraged to submit their proposals as soon as possible on one of the above dates, as there is a limited pot of funding available and allocation of grant funding will be on a first come first served basis.

Further information is set out in the *Social Work Practices - Guide for Proposals* which can be found at: www.education.gov.uk/swps and includes:

- Further detail on how Social Work Practices will work
- How to submit a proposal
- The process and timetable for proposals for grant
- The evaluation criteria for proposals
- The support available for local authorities to set up a SWP.

Information is also available in Frequently Asked Questions and Success Stories at this web link.

Social Work Practice Pilots in the adult social care sector

The Department of Health will test whether this new model of service delivery is more effective, and provides better outcomes, for clients and staff than current arrangements for the adult social care sector.

A number of local authorities have expressed an interest in establishing a pilot, and discussions are underway with them to take this forward. An announcement on the successful pilot sites is expected soon and the Department of Health will provide up to £1m to help local authorities get the pilots established.

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