

Social Work Task Force

“A shared responsibility for the future of social work”

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Chair, Social Work Task Force

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.
- Not whole of social care workforce or children’s workforce.
- Lord Laming’s report.
- Interim report in July.
- Final report – soon!

Social Work in England Today

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

Social Work in England Today

Increased need in adult services:

- Approximately 2 million new clients contact adult social services per year
- In 2008/9, 67,000 people moved permanently into residential care (a 3% increase)
- This contributes to a 3-5% increase in social worker workload each year

Also increased need identified by children's social workers.

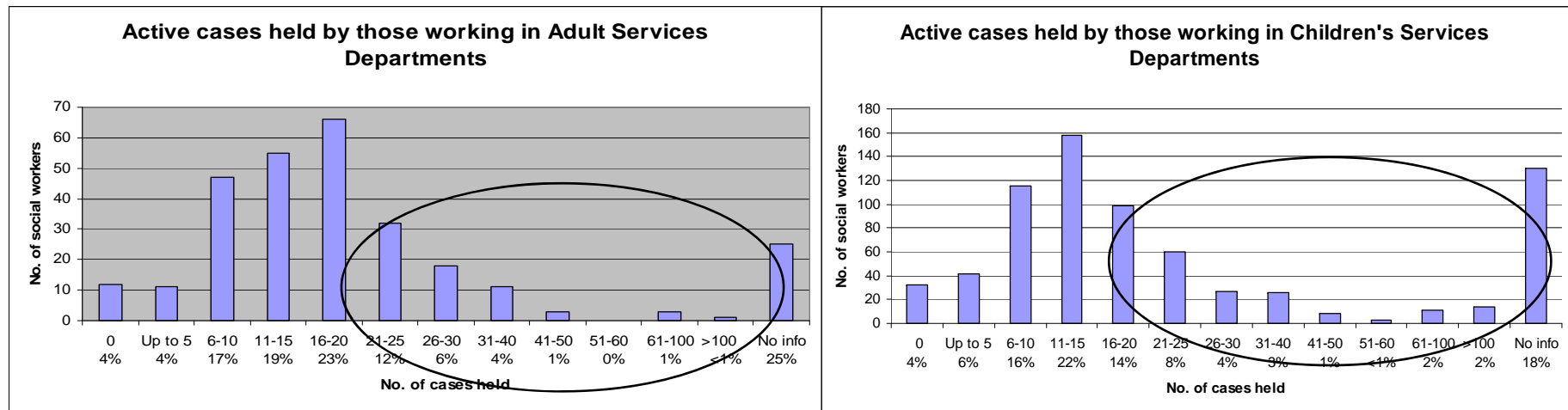
In 2008/9:

- Referrals up 1.6%
- Initial assessments up 9.1 %
- Core Assessments up 14.7%
- 11.5% more children became subject of child protection plans
- Care applications for the three months to September 2009 are up more than 47 per cent on the same period last year, June had the highest number of cases since Cafcass records began, in 2005.

Taskforce Workload Survey

The Task Force surveyed 1153 social workers over 2 weeks in May and June:

- 29% worked the hours they were contracted 49% worked more than contracted hours - 9% working over nine additional hours. 7% worked some time at the weekend* - average of 12 hours
- 25% front line social workers in children's services and over 33% in adults' services do not receive supervision at least every 4 weeks
- Significant numbers of social workers and managers report that they are holding over 20 cases.



Social Work Education

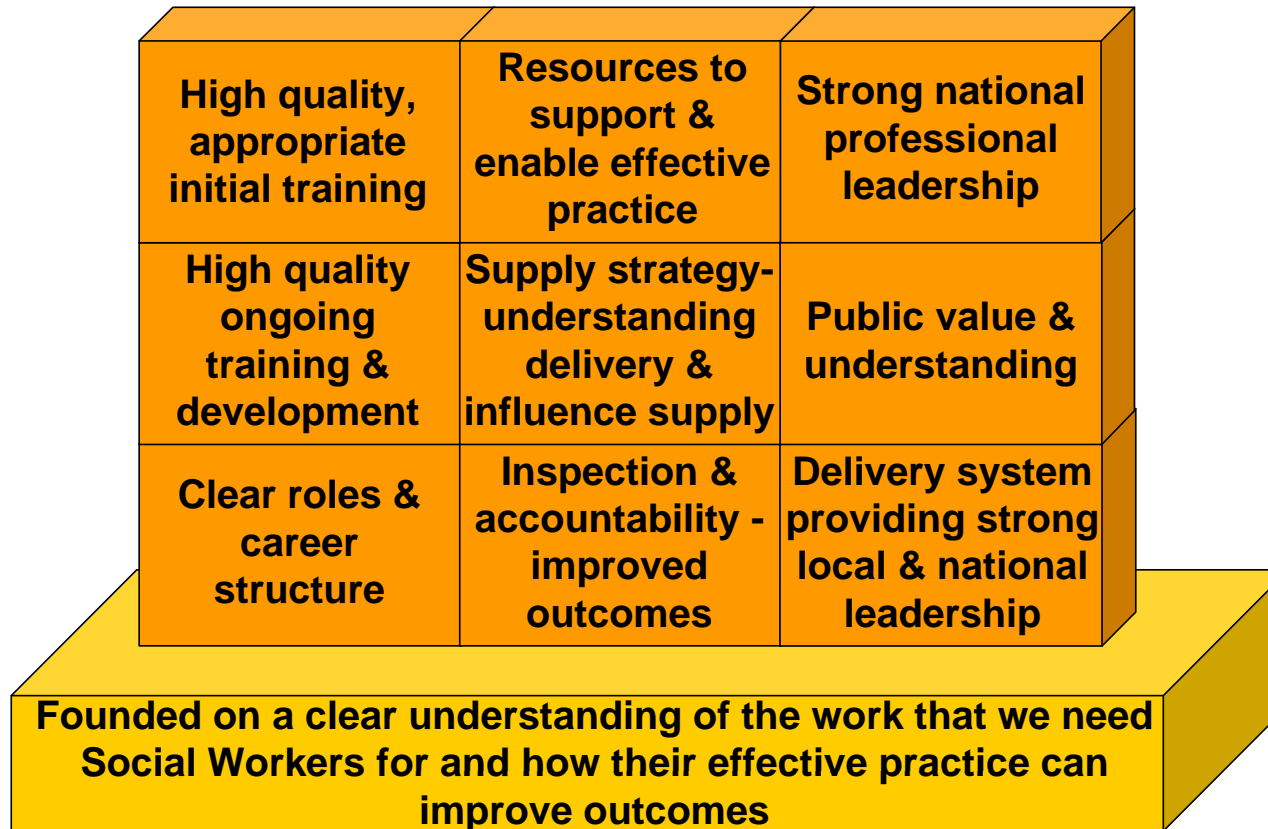
Since 2003:

- A graduate level profession
- More time spent in assessed practice
- Quantity of entrants to training up 30% to 5,500 pa
- Masters level training (25%); Undergraduate 75%
- Service user contribution embedded
- Age balance good – 60% over 25
- Balance of diversity good – 27% non-white
- Gender balance not good – 13% men

Social Work Education

- Good social work courses, but not consistently so.
- Lack of shared understanding and agreement about what we are training social workers to do
- The calibre of entrants to some courses is poor
- Not all students are getting the high quality placements they need
- Some students are passing who are neither competent nor suitable.
- The regulatory and inspection systems to drive improvements are weak

Social Work Right for the Future



The building blocks of the reform programme

Social Work Right for the Future

Some proposals:

- A national college of social work
- A coalition between employers and educators for the improvement of the degree including placements
- A year in practice pre-qualification
- Career progression
- A do-able job:
 - Caseloads
 - Supervision
 - Access to research and learning

A Shared Responsibility for the Future of Social Work

- Task Force Final Report
- Government response
- Employers
- Educators
- Social workers