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The professional association for
social work and social workers

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2023 CONFERENCE

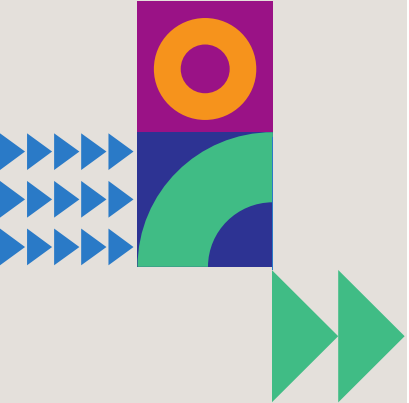
Reclaiming the Social in Social Work

#SASW2023

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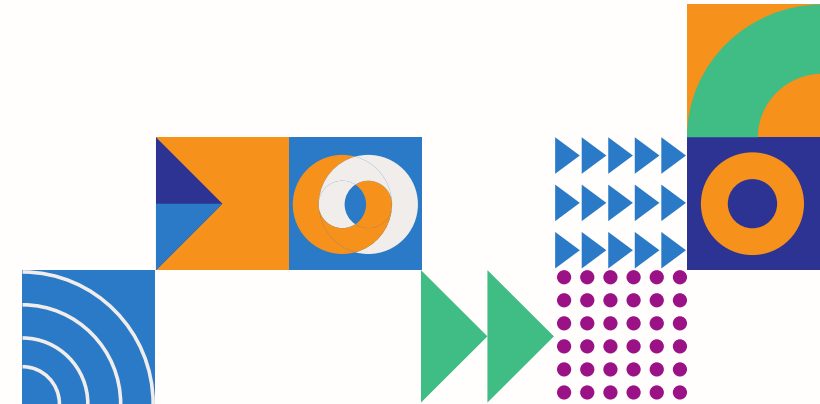
Scottish **Social**
Services Council



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PROF MARK SMITH

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL WORK,
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE



One of the UK's top 20 universities (*Guardian University Guide 2021*)



University
of Dundee

Putting the 'Social' back into Social Work
Relationships.

SASW Conference 2023

Professor Mark Smith

29th November 2023





This session

Premise: there is a lot of talk of relationships in social work but these often lack definitional clarity

Intention: to propose a framework that might allow us to ground the relational in social context, located in the major debate in social theory around recognition and redistribution (with a social work twist)



Agency and structure: a persistent tension in social work

What weight is to be given to the individual and to context?

Casework versus radical social work

Psychology versus sociology

‘Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both’ (C. Wright Mills)

Takes us towards other ideas from philosophy/social theory

Honneth (recognition), Fraser (redistribution) – Debate between these two (2003)

Need something to bridge this and to ground it in social work – Kathleen Lynch – Affective Equality



Honneth's theory of recognition

Axel Honneth – Frankfurt School of Social Theory

1995, theory of recognition

Three pillars of recognition: love; rights; solidarity

Growing interest in Honneth's work in social work

Draws on Hegel's (2018) ideas of identity being forged through the dialectical process of struggle with another or other(s)

Pillars of recognition do not exist as abstracts but are to be negotiated in the social sphere alongside others



Love

Refers to multiple sources of emotional connections among a small number of people

Shares some features with attachment theory but owes more to Donald Winnicott's ideas about 'good-enough' parenting.

Through the reciprocal interactions between 'mother' (Honneth uses inverted commas to denote the fact that it need not be the biological mother or indeed the mother at all) and infant, each acquires the capacity for affective approval and mutual encouragement.

This quality of love or emotional recognition allows a child to learn that they exist and matter, separate from others (Bainbridge, 2015).

Through this, one becomes aware of one's own uniqueness and abilities and can develop a positive image and resultant self-confidence.

One's attitude towards oneself emerges through mutual recognition; it is a social process.

Can't just demand love ...!

Rights



More sophisticated than the legalistic and contractual rights discourses that are often applied to care (cf National Care Service)

Honneth links love and rights, arguing that the experience of being loved is a prerequisite to becoming a bearer of rights, capable of participating in the public sphere.

The experience of love, developed in the family setting, enables an individual to view him or herself as a subject with dignity and moral worth. From this basis of self-confidence, rights become realisable in the process of an individual striving for self-respect, within a community of other rights bearers.

It is only at this point and through this process of struggle and negotiation within a wider community that an individual might be able to avail of codified versions of rights.

Attempts to offer rights without recognising the basis of these in inter-subjective relationships risk becoming patronising and descending into tokenism.

Legal rights, therefore, are not sufficient in facilitating participation in the public sphere. Rights, as love, cannot be demanded



Solidarity

Honneth's idea of solidarity posits that an ethical life is the basis for mutual esteem and shared values.

Self-esteem is built on the respect one receives in the public sphere for what one does. Having

one's contribution recognised by social networks, communities and groups to which one

belongs helps to build pride and competence

Recognition of competence enhances resilience and the ability to deal with difficulties in other areas of life.

Solidarity builds both societal and through this self-esteem



Disrespect

The converse of recognition is disrespect (Honneth 2014).

Disrespect can emerge when there is mis-recognition or an unequal distribution of recognition.

Inter-personal maltreatment can result in humiliation, shame and low self-confidence;

Denial of rights will lower self-respect

Dissonance between an individual's way of life and that of wider society will place self-esteem at risk (e.g. problem drug users).

On the other hand, experiences of misrecognition can provide the motivation to struggle against both economic and cultural injustices (Fraser and Honneth 2003).



Critiques of Honneth

Critics of Honneth claim that his arguments are too rooted in the realm of the intersubjective.

These claims were played out in a major debate between him and the American philosopher, Nancy Fraser (Fraser and Honneth, 2003).

Fraser claims that the intersubjective processes that Honneth describes play out in a political and economic context within which access to resources is unequally distributed and opportunities to experience recognition are correspondingly curtailed (cf rights without resources)

She has a point.

The gap between the rich (especially the super-rich) and the poor has increased in recent decades (and continues to do so).

This has material consequences, when a person or a family's resources are insufficient to meet their basic needs and, in a climate of austerity, relationships can be strained with consequent difficulties in experiencing the pillars of recognition.

Fraser asserts three 'conditions' of social justice: equalization of resources, respect and representation



Other critiques of Honneth

Solidarity/esteem has become group based - ethnic or religious minorities, different sexual identities, or disabilities.

Has resulted in a new form of politics, the “politics of difference” or “identity politics” rather than class

Proliferation of identities each fighting for recognition - ‘encourages separatism and group enclaves’... (Fraser) Focus on what divides rather than solidarity ...

Struggle is not for a more favourable distribution of resources - leaving economic power untouched

Nancy Fraser sees the call for redistribution as prerequisite for recognition (Honneth argues that recognition should bring about redistribution)



Grounding the debate in social work

Cantillon and Lynch (2017), argue that there is something missing from Fraser's tripartite schema or redistribution, respect and representation

... the relational element

Kathleen Lynch (2009) makes the case for debates around equality to include a dimension of affective/relational equality

Described as equality in the doing and receiving of love, care and solidarity (LCS). Affective inequality occurs when people are deprived of the love, care and solidarity (LCS) they need to survive and flourish as human beings

The absence of this produces negative outcomes: fear; a sense of being unloved and unwanted; anxiety and poor health



From the carer's perspective, LCS involves physical, mental and emotional work that requires attentiveness, responsibility, commitment and responsiveness.

It takes time, competence, energy and can be both a burden and a pleasure

Also, because LCS is largely dispositional and is generated in intentions and feelings for others, it is uniquely personal; caring is inseparable from the care-giver and cannot be assigned to another without altering the very nature of the caring relationship.

Systems that see care as a commodity to be parcelled into time slots or shift systems misconceive its relational and affective basis.

LCS involves affirming, supporting and challenging, as well as identifying with someone and supporting them emotionally in times of distress.

It is undertaken in the everyday through practical tasks such as cooking favourite meals, listening to cares and worries, offering physical comfort, or even giving financial help if needed.

It involves going beyond what has come to be seen as 'professional'



Relational equality in practice

Own experience as foster carers

the outcomes for our foster son have been better than those for his friends placed in a group home.

The nature of the financial settlement that each local authority receives is the same; so, in that sense there is equitable distribution of resource. So, distribution itself is inadequate in explaining the difference.

Experience of love, which has grown through the continuity of daily living and in the practical and affective practices

Access to social capital – relational bonding and bridging ...

This has allowed Faisal's self-confidence to grow, which has provided a basis for the negotiation of rights and for the recognition of achievements in the public sphere, such as success in school and university

But also in taking a political stance in respect of the situation in his home country.



Conclusion

‘ ... any programme of social welfare will ultimately have to grapple not just with the rational design of society, It is not just malfunctions of economic and political systems that underlie chronic maldistributions of social power and opportunity. From the perspectives of Hume and Smith, these problems lie also in our ‘hearts’ (Hearn, 2016)



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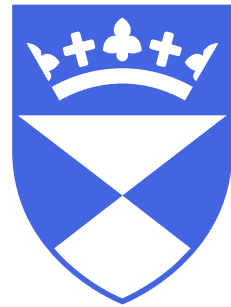
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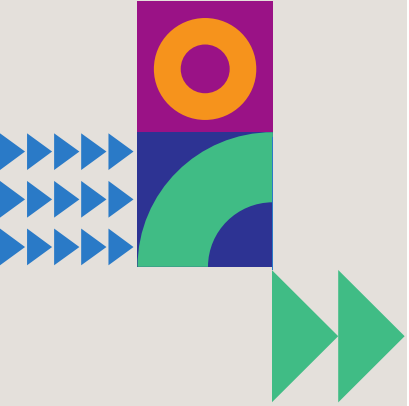
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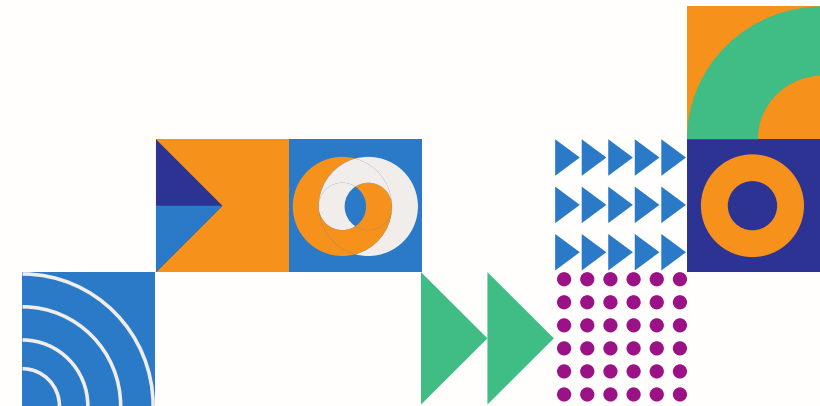
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LAURA LAMB
DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE, EDUCATION &
STANDARDS
THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL



BASW Codes of Ethics within the Codes of Practice

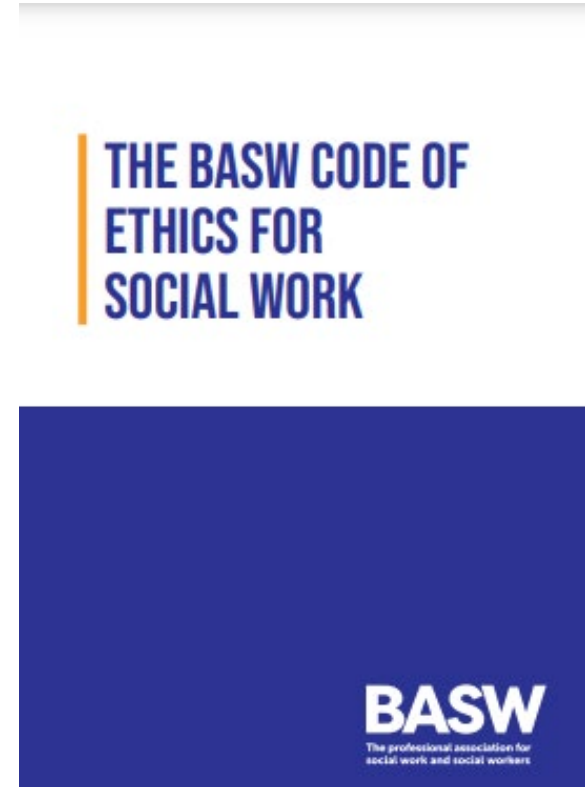
**Laura Lamb, Acting Director of
Workforce, Education and Standards**

**SASW conference
29 November 2023**

BASW Codes of Ethics

Values and ethical principles

- Human Rights
- Social Justice
- Professional Integrity



SSSC Codes of Practice

- The Codes of Practice (Codes) for Social Service Workers and Employers **set out the standards of practice and behaviour expected of everyone who works in social services in Scotland.** The Codes are established through the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and are an important part of regulating and improving the quality of care.



How the Codes interact

- Abiding by the Codes of Practice is a condition of registration as a social worker and sets out the behaviour and values expected of them. Registration allows social workers to practise,
- BASW's Code of Ethics outlines the values and aspirations which BASW believes should characterise social work. BASW members sign up to follow the Code, which is designed to make sure members act ethically.
- There are several places where the two Codes align and complement each other.
- The new Codes of Practice further support social workers to practise ethically.

Review of the Codes of Practice



There have been significant changes to policy and practice since the Codes were last revised in 2016. The SSSC register has also grown significantly and is likely to continue to do so.

Evidence from national policies, developments and events was reviewed to ensure that the revised Codes reflect current thinking.



Co-design of revised Codes

Over 400 people gave their views through Codes Conversations events, surveys and local discussions held in Autumn 2022. Key changes/improvements included:

- Wording to reflect relationship-based practice, risk enablement, trauma, rights and assets- based approaches.
- Use of more 'empowering' language (avoiding deficit-based statements)
- Clearer articulation of the values base, including the importance of kindness, compassion and involvement in decision making
- Strengthening accountability
- Revising outdated language (eg 'People who use Services') and change of terminology (eg individuals)
- Strengthening the importance of supervision
- Strengthening Employer Codes

Formal Consultation

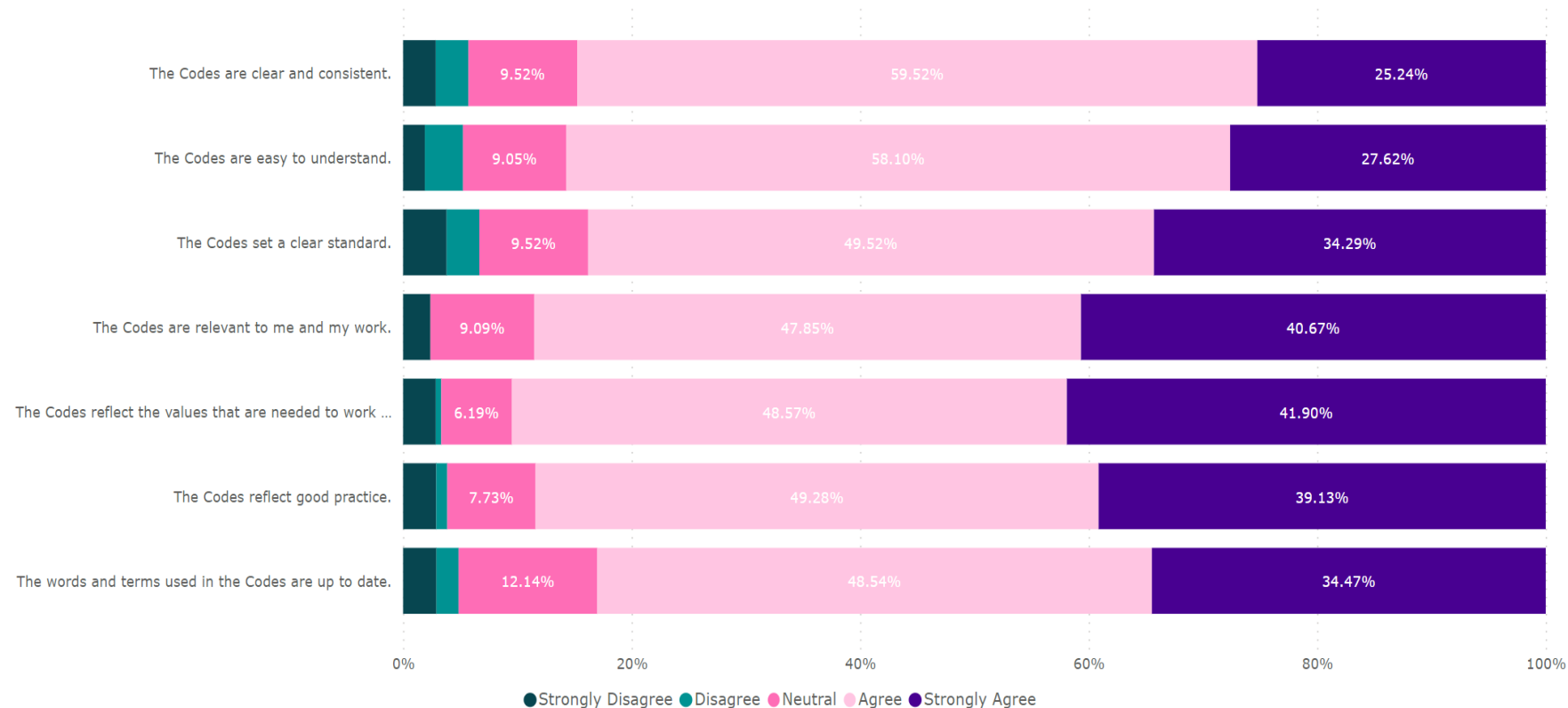
The formal consultation (April – July 2023) was designed to test:

- Whether the draft Codes are clear and easy to understand
- Whether the proposed changes are appropriate in practice
- What impact the proposed changes would have on workers, employers and individuals.

In total, over 500 people responded to the consultation, either through survey, events or a survey targeted specifically at people who use services and carers.

More than 80% felt that the revisions encouraged kindness, compassion, risk enablement, and safety and protection either 'well' or 'very well'.

When looking at the revised Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers how do you feel about the following statements?



Human Rights

Social Work is based on respect for inherent worth and dignity of all people

BASW Code of Ethics	SSSC Codes of Practice
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Upholding and promoting human dignity and well-being.2. Respecting the right to self-determination.3. Promoting the right to participation.4. Identifying and developing strengths.	<p>1.1 Respect and promote the rights and, where appropriate, the views, wishes and choices of individuals and carers</p> <p>1.2 Support the rights of individuals to have control over their lives and make informed choices about their care or support</p> <p>1.5 Respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of individuals</p> <p>4.1 Work with individuals to make informed choices about potential and actual risks to themselves or others.</p>

Social Justice

Social Workers have a responsibility to promote social justice, in relation to people and to society as a whole

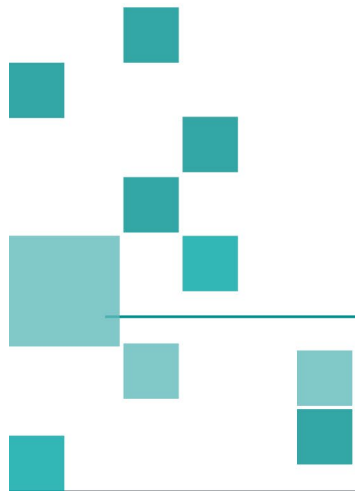
BASW Code of Ethics	SSSC Codes of Practice
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Challenging oppression.2. Respecting diversity.3. Distributing resources.4. Challenging unjust policies and practices.5. Working in solidarity.	<p>1.1 Work with kindness, compassion and respect and treat each individual as unique.</p> <p>1.6 Promote diversity and respect all identities, values and cultures.</p> <p>3.1 Report allegations of harm, challenge and report any dangerous, abusive or discriminatory behaviour.</p> <p>6.4 (I will not) discriminate or condone discrimination</p>

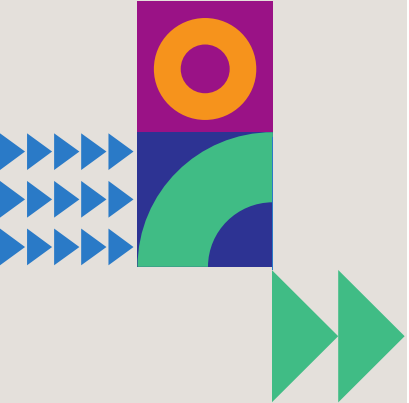
Professional Integrity

Social Workers have a responsibility to respect and uphold values and principles of the profession and act in a reliable, honest and trustworthy manner

BASW Code of Ethics	SSSC Codes of Practice
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Upholding the values and reputation of the profession.2. Being trustworthy.3. Maintaining professional boundaries.4. Making considered professional judgements.5. Being transparent and professionally accountable.	<p>2.8 Form open, positive relationships and maintain professional boundaries with individuals, colleagues and carers that respects their dignity, wellbeing and safety.</p> <p>6.3 (I will not....) form unprofessional or harmful relationships with individuals or carers.</p> <p>3.8 Recognise and use responsibly the power and authority I have when working with individuals, carers and colleagues.</p> <p>5.5 Prepare for and engage in supervision to reflect on my development, learning needs and practice.</p> <p>5.6 Maintain my continuous professional learning to improve my knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.</p>

THANK YOU

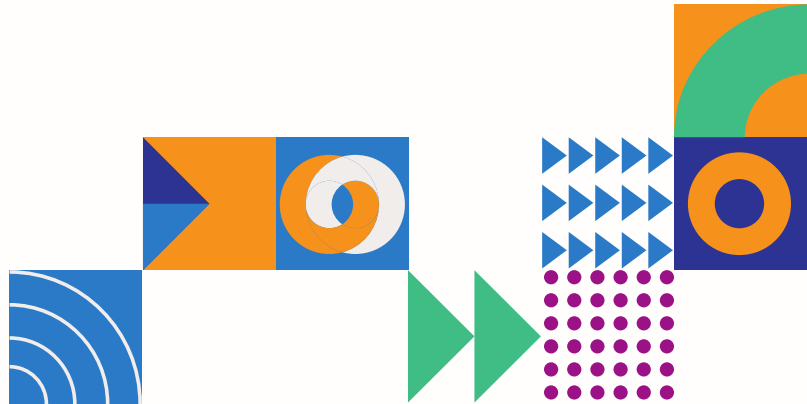




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IONA COLVIN

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK ADVISOR,
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT





How Scottish Government can enable the 'social' in social work

Iona Colvin, Chief Social Work Adviser

Social work: professionals in care and welfare in the community

Social workers:

- Challenge and protect people's rights, ensuring equity of access
- Support people to improve their lives and live the life they want to live, and are the gateway to social care support
- Professionally assess the needs of children and adults to ensure they have adequate protection and care – protecting people from harm is everyone's business
- Have a unique statutory role in local authority settings, operating within a legal framework, and discharge over 40 pieces of legislation on behalf of their local authority chief executive
- Assess and make recommendations to mental health tribunals, to courts, to parole boards and supervise statutory court orders and licences
- Act as lead professional and assess need in child protection, adult protection, and adults without capacity (AWI) scenarios



Workforce pressures across social work

- Ongoing and increasing demand
- Complex and evolving policy landscape
- Fragility across the profession
- Recruitment challenges, including:
 - Practising social worker vacancy rate of 11.8% reported in June 2023 (despite local authority social worker increase by 7.7% since 2018)¹
 - Reducing numbers of social workers in children's services
 - MHO shortage against growing demand
 - 1.3% decrease in whole time equivalent (WTE) of practising social worker filled posts (compared from December 2022 to June 2023)¹
- Some regions are reporting a majority of their staff are close to retiring.
- Median age (46) of the workforce is highest in public sector²

IMPACT AND RISK

- Increasing / unmanageable workloads
- More complex, time-consuming cases
- Greater instances of burnout and exhaustion
- High numbers of unfilled vacancies
- Loss of workforce experience and knowledge base
- Upward trend in adult protection referrals (since May 2020)
- More time focussed on crisis interventions
- Delays across services
- Lack of sufficient support for local people
- Challenge of adequately fulfilling statutory responsibilities and not fulfilling current policies

IMPACT AND RISK

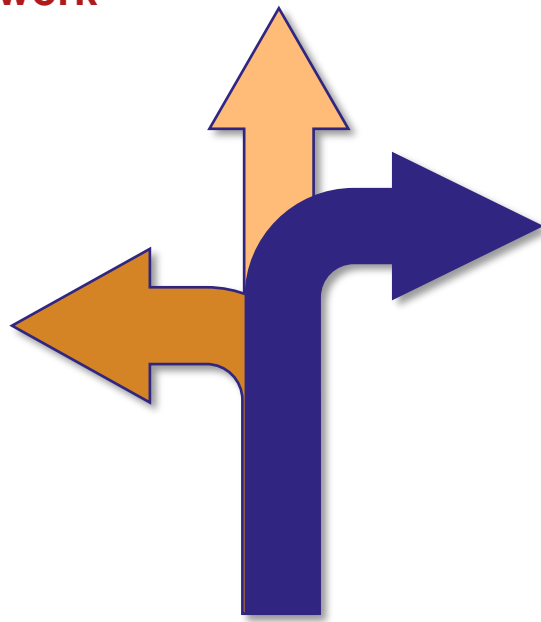
Challenges for social work students

Student social workers:

- Around 500 graduates each year, however **25% leave within 6 years**
- Petition to Scottish Parliament (Oct 2022) by social work students to ensure they have access to adequate financial support
- Need to increase the diversity of the workforce, including people with lived experience
- **New routes into social work are needed to increase the future workforce**

Practice placement challenges:

- Fragility of current system relies on goodwill between employers and universities
- Just under half of social work students qualify **without** undertaking a practice placement within a local authority to gain experience of statutory social work
- Employers and students highlight an overall 'lack of preparedness' for practice
- Students report having to take on additional part-time work, while also working in full-time social work placements **and** managing their academic work
- Fragility of placement support funding, which is ad hoc and unsustainable
- Lack of influence with universities regarding course content and student numbers



Challenges for the social work profession

Currently the profession has no national oversight / influence across:

- National leadership across a fragmented landscape
- Local leadership including succession and leadership planning
- Education incl post-qualifying qualifications, learning and professional development
- Pay variation impacting recruitment and retention
- Practice standards and challenges in scaling up of improvement
- Workforce planning, including numbers and caseloads
- Statutory duties, which are continuing to increase



Issues are leading to the current crisis management / high threshold approach to intervention and is undermining key policy areas across adults, children's and justice social work and social care.

The 'social' in social work – how to get it back

Social work is:

- Communication
- Compassion
- Empowering people
- Respect
- Human-rights
- Person-centred
- Complexity
- Social justice

Social workers:

- Understand
- Listen
- Connect
- Are non-judgemental
- Share decision making
- Challenge inequality
- Reject stigma
- Build relationships

Social workers are social justice heroes.

Investment in social work and social workers is investing in people and communities, and in our society.

Supporting the social work profession now

Expanding routes into social work: increasing access and diversity

- Finalising scoping to proceed with development of a Graduate Apprenticeship for Social Work
- Increased capacity within distance learning
- Reviewing support available to postgraduate students
- Ongoing review into practice learning

Social Work Education Partnership (SWEP)

- Working to establish national and regional infrastructure to support social work education
- Exploring how we improve support and funding of practice placements

Creating a strategic framework (from qualifying education to advanced practice) for all social workers and social work employers

- Implementing a mandatory supported year in practice for newly qualified social workers
- Developing an Advanced Practice Framework for Social Work and the structures to support social workers to progress through different career phases within practice, management and leadership roles

Trauma Responsive Social Work Services

- Ensuring Scotland's social work services can recognise where people are affected by trauma, and to respond in ways to reduce risks of re-traumatising and supports recovery

The National Social Work Agency

... is our opportunity to support and invest in our social work workforce, and therefore to improve the quality and consistency of support for people across our communities: keeping people safe, making Scotland better.

Our ambition for the National Social Work Agency:

- National oversight and leadership of the social work profession, including education (pre- and post-qualifying) and workforce planning, to create a safe, listening culture
- Creating an advanced practice framework to support learning and development over the social work career, and linked to a national pay structure for social workers
- Developing social work practice standards to support the workforce and scale up improvement
- A system that empowers social workers to confidently undertake the professional role they are trained to do
- Supporting, training and developing our leaders of the future

We envisage ... a partnership, working together to support **local solutions**, develop **regional approaches** where appropriate, and when needed, lead **national advances**.



Thank you for your time and your invaluable contribution to the people of Scotland.

If you'd like to hear more and join conversations about social work experiences, policy implementation and the development of the National Social Work Agency, please join us at the **Social Work Policy Panel** sessions.

- We meet virtually for an hour (12–1pm) every six weeks (approx.)
 - We discuss topics, as requested by social workers
- It's free to attend, contact SWPP@basw.co.uk for information and to register in advance

Social Work Policy Panel is run by
SASW, Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser, and Social Work Scotland

UPCOMING EVENTS

December

1

BASW 4 Nations Community of Practice

Statutory mental health roles in the UK nations negotiating human rights in the legal landscape.
(SASW/BASW Members only)

7

SASW Student and NQSW Support and Mentoring Forum

Share your experiences of studying or starting your social work career in Scotland

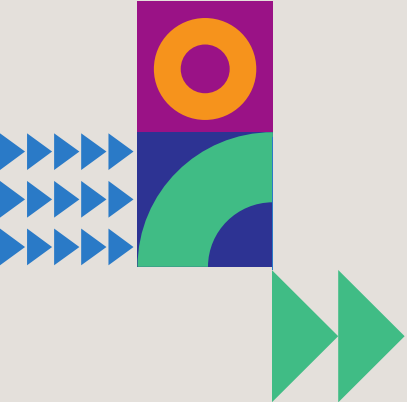
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Social Work Policy Panel

Does the practice of SDS support social work autonomy?

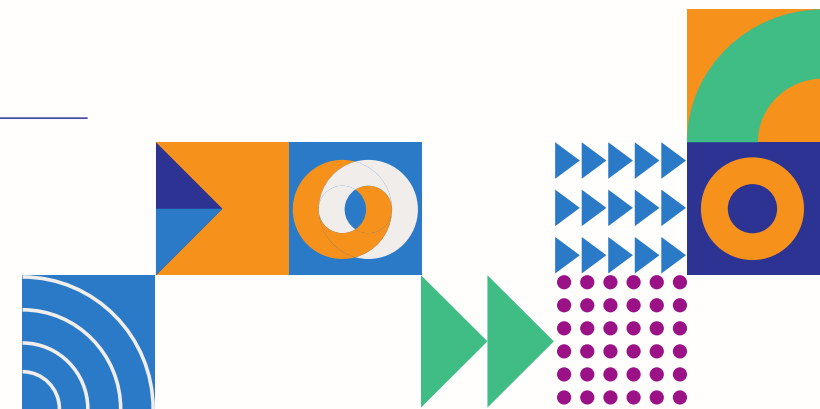
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Get your voice heard - on the implementation of SDS



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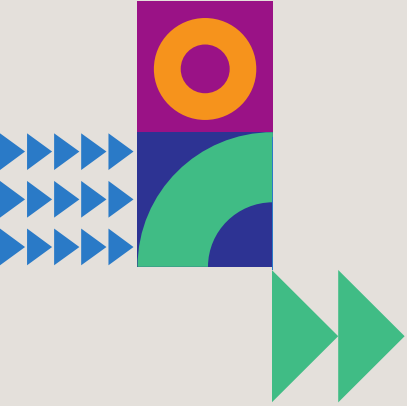
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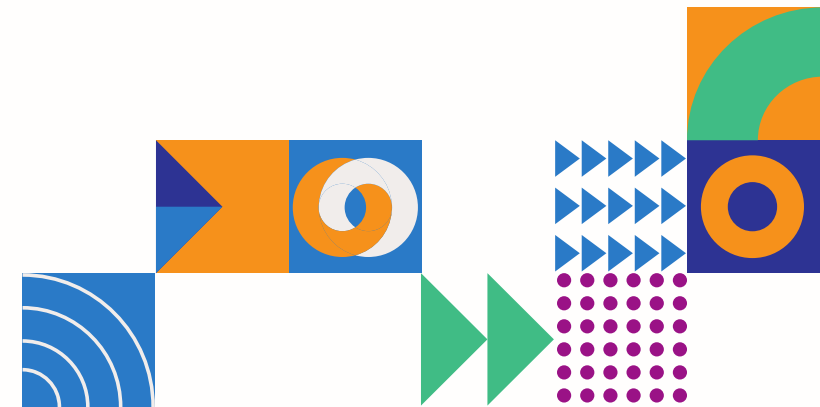
Conferences 2024

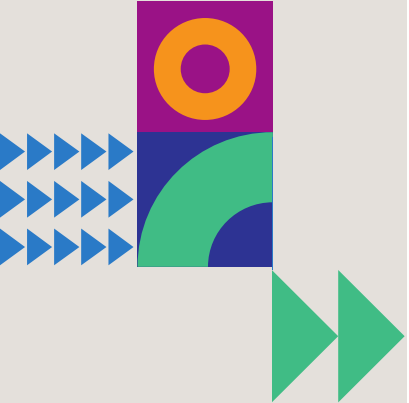
February 28 [Mental Health Officers Conference](#)
Embracing the Unknown: Finding Hope

June 18/19 [BASW UK Conference](#)
A Sustainable Future for Social
Work
Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh



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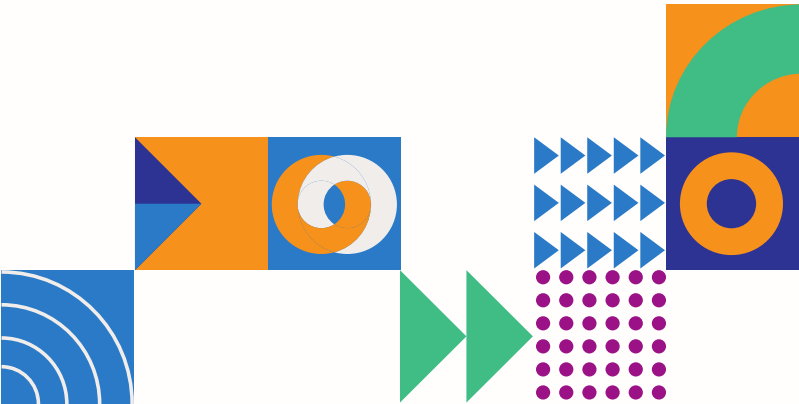


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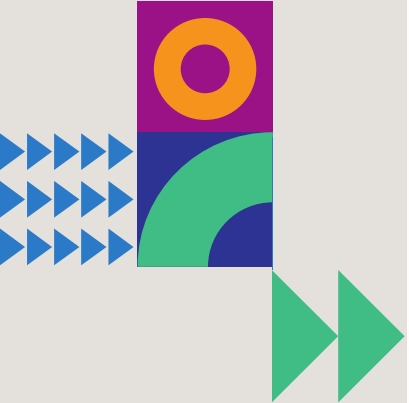












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THANK YOU!

