

Summary Report of the 21st Century
Social Work Review

changing

lives



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**Summary Report of the 21st Century
Social Work Review**

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introduction for users and carers to changing lives

from the User and Carer Panel

About this introduction

This is an introduction for the report on the social work review, it is written for users of social work services and carers. It will explain where the review and report came from and why it is important to you.

Why was there a 21st Century Social Work Review?

The review of social work happened because people felt services weren't working well enough: Scotland has changed, and what people needed from services has changed as well. Also, there are fewer taxpayers and more people needing services, so there is not enough money.

The purpose of the review was to find better ways of working for services and social workers, and to find ways of using resources better.

Where does this report come from?

This report comes from the work done in the review on how social work services and social workers could give better services to people. Lots of people were asked about what they thought of social work services and social workers.

One of the key groups that worked with the review was a panel of people who use social work services and carers called the User and Carer Panel. This introduction has been written by the Panel.

If you use services, or are a carer, this is what you can expect from services in future:

The report says that social work services have to be more responsible for the services they provide.

The person is at the heart of everything. That means that your service should start from where you are. It means services must see “service users” as people, and not just see their labels. Social workers need to think about what difference it makes to the user or carer.



You will have more continuity in your service - skilled workers will get the chance to stay on the front line. And there will be committed support for workers to develop existing and new skills. So there is a better chance that you will have a more understanding worker.

You can expect a better match between you and your social worker. To make this happen you will need to have

more say in your own assessments. That way, you will be more likely to get the right service earlier.



You can expect services to get better at preventing a crisis, rather than waiting for it to happen. This means services working with other agencies better. There will be a quicker response from services. Also social work will be based more where people are, like community centres for example.



To make all this happen, you can expect that social workers will have more responsibility, and have more power to make their own decisions. Social workers will have less red tape: this means social workers doing more social work, and less paperwork. The result will be a speedier, more efficient service.



People that use services and family carers will have more control over the services they are getting. "Citizen leadership" will become important, this means people having more of a say and taking more of a lead in planning services, like:

- More say in your own assessments
- More flexible services like Local Area Coordination
- More panels like the User and Carer Panel!

Finally, the Panel feels that we've made a difference by being part of the review. We feel that our voice has been heard and our ideas have been included in the report. The Panel welcomes the report. However, there's still a lot to do before these changes will happen – we'd better get started!

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introduction

The 21st Century Social Work Review was an independent review, commissioned in the summer of 2004 to take a fundamental look at all aspects of social work in order to strengthen its contribution to the delivery of integrated services. In particular, to:

- define the role and purpose of social workers and the social work profession;
- identify improvements in the organisation and delivery of social work services;
- develop a strong quality improvement framework and culture, supported by robust inspection;
- strengthen leadership and management giving clear direction to the service;
- ensure a competent and confident workforce; and
- review and if necessary modernise legislation.

This summary draws together the main findings of the review and sets out the 13 recommendations arising from them. Together, the recommendations set a new direction for social work services in Scotland. They will require transformational change in the way services are designed and delivered. To effectively meet people's needs and make best use of the skills of the whole workforce, services and the roles of workers will need to change. A multi-agency approach, driven by committed and imaginative leadership across the public, voluntary and private sectors will be needed to fully implement the recommendations. This will not happen overnight. It will need a long term commitment across government and public services.

From extensive consultation across Scotland and consideration of a wide range of evidence, we draw 3 overriding conclusions:

Doing more of the same won't work. Increasing demand, greater complexity and rising expectations mean that the current situation is not sustainable:

Tomorrow's solutions will need to engage people as active participants, delivering accessible, responsive services of the highest quality and promoting wellbeing.

Social work services don't have all of the answers. They need to work closely with other universal providers in all sectors to find new ways to design and deliver services across the public sector:

Tomorrow's solutions will involve professionals, services and agencies from across the public, private and voluntary sectors in a concerted and joined-up effort, building new capacity in individuals, families and communities and focusing on preventing problems before they damage people's life chances.

Social workers' skills are highly valued and increasingly relevant to the changing needs of society. Yet we are far from making the best use of these skills:

Tomorrow's solutions will need to make the best use of skills across the public sector workforce, refocusing on the core values of social work and its mission of enabling all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives and prevent dysfunction. Social workers will need to make effective use of therapeutic relationships and find new ways to manage risk.

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findings

Social service workers deliver essential services to some of our most vulnerable people. We found countless examples of services transforming people's lives and protecting them and their communities. We found many strengths that we need to retain and build upon.

Despite the excellent work being done on a daily basis, we should not be complacent about the scale of the challenge facing social work today. We found a profession and services under great pressure and not delivering their full potential. This has resulted in a growing mismatch between the values of social work and the experience of people who use and work in services. This poses many challenges for the future.

Strengths	
Lots of unrecognised good practice, unacknowledged and uncelebrated.	Knowledge skills and value base highly relevant to society’s changing needs.
Practitioners working successfully in the most challenging of circumstances, making fine professional judgements about risk.	New regulatory structures and a new degree programme raising the professionalism and competence of the workforce.
Services deal skillfully with complex problems.	Commitment to develop joint services and recognition by partners of the contribution of social work.
A mixed market of services across public, private and voluntary sectors.	Appetite for performance improvement and new inspection arrangements.
Public opinion shows most people are generally satisfied with services they received.	Recruitment to social work much improved.



Challenges

Unreasonable expectations of what services can do to sort out society's problems.

Highly skilled professionals working below their level of expertise, with little opportunity to advance their careers.

Lack of self confidence within the social work profession about its contribution.

Professional leadership eroded by pressure to manage services and budgets, leaving workers with little sense of the values or priorities of their employers.

Decision making ability and professional autonomy of practitioners constrained by controlling line management.

Aversion to risk in society, leading to restriction of practice and limiting life opportunities for people who use services.

Unequal and inconsistent relationship between commissioners and providers, lacking a strategic approach.

Services and workers overwhelmed by bureaucracy and systems, gathering information that serves little purpose.

People who use services have little influence, having to accept what's offered not what's needed.

Lack of focus on both individual and organisational learning, with little opportunity to share good practice or learn from mistakes.

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aspirations

Our aspiration is to make a real and lasting difference to the experience of those people who use social work services and their carers and everyone in the social service workforce.

People who use services should:

- influence the design planning and delivery of services;
- find it easy to contact services;
- know what to expect from services;
- have their strengths, interests and aspirations built on by services;
- be active partners in finding and developing solutions;
- be able to get the help they need when they need it;
- regard social work services involvement as a positive option rather than a last resort;
- have a consistent and reliable relationship with their worker; and
- have someone to advocate on their behalf.

Carers should:

- be recognised as active partners and care providers, able to influence how services are designed, planned and delivered;
- be able to choose how much involvement they have in providing care; and
- be able to have a wider life outside their caring role.



The general public should:

- have confidence in the work of social work services;
- understand how and when services may be able to help them;
- be clear about how to access services;
- have a realistic expectation of what services may be able to do to help them; and
- value help and support from social work services.

Social service workers should:

- be able to use their skills and knowledge effectively;
- work to their full potential and be able to make sound decisions, supported and challenged by quality professional consultation;
- use evidence based practice and continue to learn throughout their careers;
- have a range of career options that allows progression in practice as well as in management;
- work in supportive teams and feel empowered to find innovative and creative solutions to meet people's needs; and
- have access to technology that helps them do their job effectively.



Employing organisations should:

- trust their employees to practice safely and effectively;
- support the development of the whole workforce;
- promote and celebrate excellence, learning from good practice and from mistakes; and
- resource employees to deliver first class services.

Partner professions and agencies should:

- understand the distinctive contribution that social work services can make;
- have effective joint service planning and design arrangements in place to make sure that best use is made of social work skills; and
- respect and value the contribution that social workers make to achieving shared priorities.



the changing context for social work services

Introduction

We all aspire to live in a society that is healthy, tolerant, safe, fair and inclusive. Social work services have a vital contribution to make to that through:

- supporting the most vulnerable and excluded people;
- protecting those at risk of harm from themselves or others; and
- working with others to close the opportunity gap.

Demographic, social and political trends pose challenges and opportunities that will influence the future design and society that is healthy, tolerant, safe, fair and inclusive. Social work services have a vital contribution to make to that delivery of services. The challenges and their impact on social work services are summarised as the context for our conclusions.

Changing needs

- The population as a whole is ageing. By 2030, 25% will be over 60 and the number of people over 75 will increase by 60%.
- The number of children has halved over the last 40 years and will decrease still further, yet the number of children in need continues to grow.
- Medical advances mean that more children survive into adulthood with complex disabilities.

Changing opportunities

- Technology offers new opportunities in the design and delivery of services.
- New regulatory structures provide a new emphasis on clear and measurable standards.
- Devolution has enabled Scotland to pursue distinctive policy.
- Clear political leadership at local and national levels will be increasingly important in responding to a changing context.

Changing society

- People have more complex and fractured relationships, meaning less readily available family support.
- Society is increasingly polarised, with growing concentration of need in some communities.
- Communities themselves are changing and less cohesive and tolerant.
- We have greater cultural diversity.
- The available workforce is declining as the population shape changes.

Changing expectations

- People will increasingly expect choice and flexibility in the delivery of services that are personalised to meet their needs.
- Increasing risk aversion in society poses challenges and a tension between individual choice and protection of self and others.

Integration and social work services

The changing needs and expectations of society linked to increasing integration of service delivery pose distinctive challenges for each area of practice,

Criminal justice

- Demand continues to grow, driven by increases in serious crime, demands for action against anti-social behaviour and a fear of crime.
- Increased recognition of child sexual abuse calls for new partnerships balancing protection with rights.
- Community Justice Authorities will result in new partnership working arrangements and new challenges to develop shared understanding and language.
- Balancing effective enforcement of orders with developing a therapeutic relationship to achieve change will be a challenge for practitioners.

Community care

- The shift from institutional to home based care has meant massive change including:
 - New approaches to assessment;
 - New ways of delivering services;
 - Opening up a diverse provider market; and
 - Managing huge budgetary transfers.
- Balancing the demand for personalised services with the need to protect vulnerable adults continues to pose challenges.
- A well informed public has growing expectations and will increasingly expect to self assess and manage their own care through approaches such as Direct Payments.
- Specialisation poses a challenge in getting the right skills in the right place to support people.
- Integration with health services in particular is well advanced and will go further.

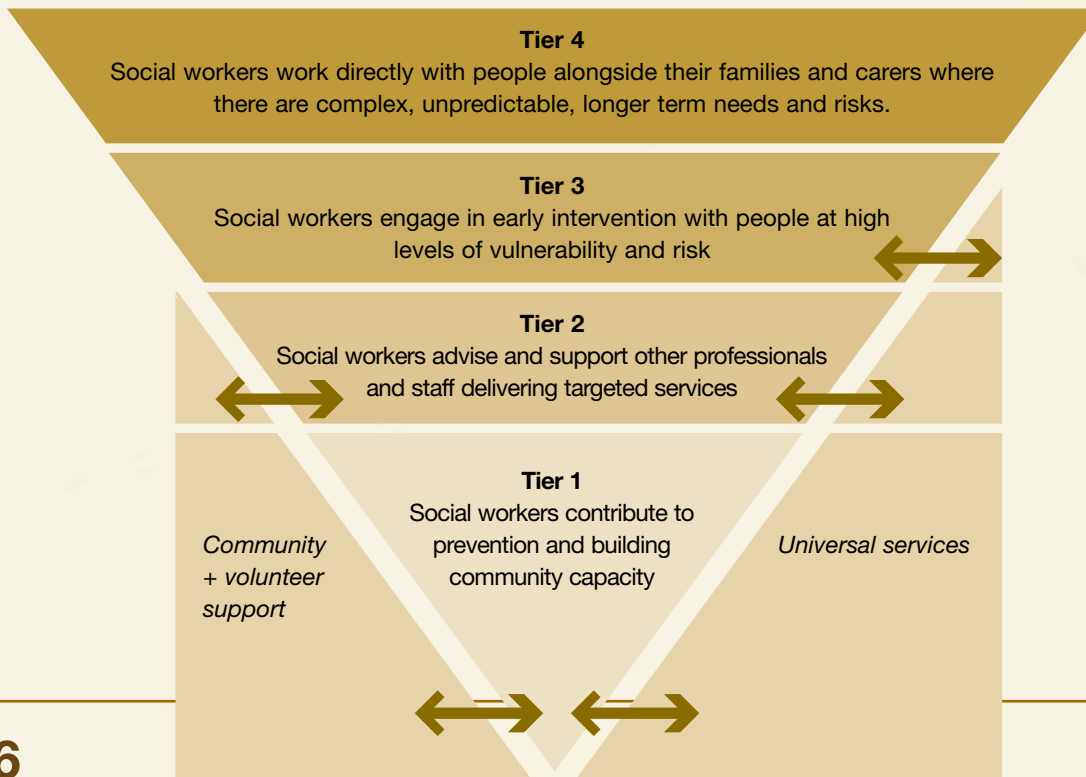
Children and families

- There are growing levels and complexity of need driven by fluid and unstable relationships and chaotic lifestyles.
- Our understanding and recognition of child abuse has grown, highlighted by tragic cases.
- Child protection is increasingly recognised as everyone's business.
- There is a renewed drive towards integration of children's services.
- Residential child care is dealing with increasing complexity of problems.
- Youth offending is high on the political agenda requiring integrated solutions.
- High pressure, demanding work has resulted in recruitment difficulties in children and families social work.

the role of the social worker

The social worker's role – a tiered approach

The tiers of the pyramid represent the distribution of social workers time. Intervention increases between the tiers as need increases. Social workers never work in isolation and are always part of multidisciplinary approaches. At tier 4 the social worker is lead professional, fulfilling roles that only a social worker can do, negotiating a balance between care and control. This may be where the local authority is under statutory obligation, or the nature of the situation is complex. The focus of social worker's efforts and time should be spent at tiers 3 and 4 which maximise the use of their professional expertise. Other services will focus their efforts primarily at tiers 1 and 2. All social workers have a significant contribution to make at tiers 1 and 2, supporting and informing the delivery of services both within social work and across partner agencies.



Reserved functions of the social worker

Social workers should assess, plan, manage the delivery of care and safeguard the well-being of most vulnerable people and children, in particular, those who:

- are in need of protection; and/or
- are in danger of exploitation or significant harm; and/or
- are at risk of causing significant harm to themselves or others; and/or
- are unable to provide informed consent.

To do this social workers must:

- carry out enquiries and make recommendations when necessary as to whether or not a person requires to be the subject of protection procedures; and
- be responsible for the development, monitoring and implementation of a plan to protect the person, in particular, identify and respond appropriately to any risks to the achievement of the plan and/or any need for the plan to be revised because of changing circumstances

(Reserved Functions of the Social Worker)

What do social workers do?

Statham *et al* (2005) identified three main functions that define what social workers do. They:

- intervene between the state and the citizen – assessing and determining eligibility for publicly funded services and assessing risks which determine the need for statutory intervention;
- maximise the capacity of people using services – enabling individuals as far as possible to become ‘expert clients’ or informed clients’; and
- contribute to policies and practice that support social and personal well-being – building the platforms from which personalised services can be developed and through which individuals can promote their own well-being or manage long term conditions.

Developing therapeutic relationships

Common elements in successful interventions which lead to behaviour change or reduction in problem behaviours:

- accurate empathy, respect or warmth and therapeutic genuineness;
- establishing a therapeutic relationship or working alliance (mutual understanding and agreement about the nature and purpose of intervention); and
- an approach that is person centred, or collaborative and client driven (taking the client’s perspective and using the client’s concepts)

What are social workers especially equipped to do?

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building capacity to deliver personalised services

Introduction

Personalisation is driving the shape of all public services, with a growing public expectation that services will meet their needs, helping them achieve personal goals and aspirations. This may pose a particular challenge for social work, given the need also to manage growing demand and complexity as well as the need, to protect the public by taking measures to control people's liberty.

To be effective in meeting that challenge, social work services will need to engage the capacity of individuals, families and communities and to work in new ways with other parts of the public sector, focusing increasingly on prevention.

1 **Services must be designed and delivered around the needs of people who use them their carers and communities**

Services must be organised in ways that enable people to use them effectively, recognising the needs, strengths and aspirations of people and their families. In order to do this we need to:

- have simple, reliable and fair means of accessing services;
- make sure that assessment involves people, using self assessment, where appropriate, building on aspirations to produce clear actions;
- recognise unpaid carers as partners in the provision of care;
- make sure that people moving between different parts of the care system have smooth transitions;
- make sure that services are provided from premises that are fit for purpose; and
- test out the application of personalisation with different groups of people, then use the learning to change services.

2 Services must build individual, family and community capacity to meet their own needs

Managing growing demand means that we have to help people find solutions to their own problems through building on strengths, promoting resilience and developing informal support networks. We can do this through:

- working alongside regeneration and community development work to build the capacity of communities to support themselves;
- building the social economy and helping people gain self esteem through sport and cultural activity, preparing them to enter work;
- testing out different ways to develop the capacity of social work services;
- helping people with similar needs through group work approaches; and
- supporting the development of self help, volunteering and peer support.

3 Services must play an active part in a public sector wide approach to prevention and earlier intervention

While social work will always have a vital role in supporting people in crisis, we need to get much better at preventing crises and responding early to emerging problems. Without that, services are unlikely to cope with growing demand.

To do this we need:

- long term investment in prevention and early intervention;
- joined up approaches to prevention that cross the public sector, in which social work plays a part with health, education, police and other services;
- prevention to be part of everyone's job across public, private and voluntary sectors; and
- services to identify people who are likely to develop problems and offer them help early to prevent crises.

4 Services must become part of a public sector wide approach to support vulnerable people and promote wellbeing

Social work services can't be effective without the active co-operation and partnership of other public services. We need to move beyond integration towards shared responsibility for people in need. To do this we need:

- effective community and corporate planning mechanisms in which social work services play a full role;
- harmonised service delivery boundaries to promote partnership working;
- to provide and commission services at the right level, national, regional or local, to make best use of skills and resources;
- an integrated policy framework that rationalises information, planning and funding streams; and
- simplified governance and funding arrangements to allow integrated services.

5 Services must recognise and effectively manage the mixed economy of care in the delivery of services

To meet future needs, we will need streamlined, flexible approaches to commissioning that recognise the knowledge and skills of providers and enable personalised delivery of services. To do this we will need:

- new commissioning models that allow for more flexible responses to people's needs;
- new approaches to strategic partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors that make effective use of the knowledge and skills of all parties; and
- more effective joint working between everyone involved in the care of each individual, that uses all their knowledge and skills to reduce duplication of effort.

building the capacity of the workforce

Introduction

We are not making the best use of social work skills. Developing personalised services revitalises and refocuses services on the core values of social work. Achieving that will mean making full and effective use of the whole workforce, building capacity, developing confidence and trust and shifting the balance of power and control.

For front line workers that will mean enabling some people to take greater control over their own care and using the therapeutic relationship to help those with the most complex needs gain control of their lives.

For leaders and managers it will mean trusting and supporting their staff to exercise professional autonomy within a framework of accountability.

For everyone in social work services it will mean far greater flexibility to develop new roles and new ways of working that cross traditional boundaries.

6 Services must develop a new organisational approach to managing risk, which ensures the delivery of safe, effective and innovative practice

Effectively managing risk, while encouraging innovative practice is one of social work's biggest challenges. It requires a new and proactive approach to developing accountable, but professionally autonomous practice, with organisations developing new approaches to learning from best practice and from failures. In order to address that we will need:

- clear accountability frameworks that make explicit the accountabilities of social workers and enable them to exercise professional autonomy;
- a new approach to the governance of social work services that emphasises continuous improvement, effective risk management and creates an environment in which excellence can flourish;
- strengthening of the professional leadership and governance roles of the chief social work officer;
- structured approaches to managing untoward incidents that enable learning from mistakes; and
- a research and development strategy that enables evidence of effectiveness to underpin practice, focusing particularly on evidence based approaches to risk assessment and management

7 Employers must make sure that social workers are enabled and supported to practice accountably and exercise their professional autonomy

We must use the distinctive knowledge and skills of social workers to best effect to develop personalised and integrated services in a context of increasingly complex need. To do that, we will need to:

- define those functions that should be carried out by a social worker;
- make sure that practitioners have the necessary knowledge and skills to allow them to practice autonomously within new frameworks of accountability;
- make sure that social work education responds to the new skills required to deliver personalised services;
- develop new career pathways in practice and professional leadership that allow skilled practitioners to continue working with people who need their skills; and
- CoSLA to continue to develop a national recognition and reward framework for social workers that reflects career pathways and competence.

8 Services must develop a learning culture that commits all individuals and organisations to lifelong learning and development

Everyone in the social service workforce needs the skills and knowledge to practice effectively in a challenging and sometimes dangerous environment with some very vulnerable people. To develop a strong learning culture we need:

- to fully implement the National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A Plan for Action 2005-2010;
- national and local investment in lifelong learning across the workforce;
- all workers to maintain a personal portfolio as an up to date record of their skills and competence;
- all workers to have access to regular professional support, challenge and consultation;
- newly qualified professionals to have a period of more intensive initial support, promoting professional autonomy and accountability; and
- stronger links between employers and higher education ensuring high quality, well informed.

9 Services should be delivered by effective teams designed to incorporate the appropriate mix of skills and expertise and operating with delegated authority and responsibilities

Effective teams have common goals, shared values, shared knowledge about the needs of clients. They have the right mix of skills and expertise and learn together. Increasingly such teams will be multi-disciplinary. To develop effective teamwork, we need to:

- invest in building and sustaining effective teams;
- take a team based approach to planning and performance improvement;
- devolve budgetary and decision making as near to the front line as possible;
- ensure that teams have the right mix of skills including a new paraprofessional role that would work across agencies taking responsibility for delegated casework;
- recognise and equip workers as a mobile workforce, ensuring that they are able to work effectively with partners in varied locations and agencies;
- invest in growing the capacity of teams to respond to changing demand; and
- develop effective approaches to integrated workforce planning, ensuring that we have the right skills now and in the future.

building capacity for **sustainable** change

Introduction

The review identified major changes requiring a real and lasting commitment to transform services at all levels and in all parts of the system. Achieving that will require:

- clear and effective leadership at all levels;
- a new focus on performance improvement;
- support for transformational change; and
- modernised legislation to consolidate change.

10 Services must develop enabling leadership and effective management at all levels across the system

Our goal is to empower workers, people who use services and managers to promote partnership and provide a supportive environment where creative solutions can be developed to meet people's needs. Developing both services and workers will require visionary, creative leadership and effective, supportive management. In order to do that we will need:

- to develop a national framework for leadership and management development that develops leadership skills at all levels including:
 - professional and practice leadership;
 - political leadership;
 - strategic leadership;
 - operational management;
 - academic leadership;
 - citizen leadership, enabling people who use services to influence their design and delivery; and
- a leadership style within organisations that gives staff, users and managers the power to develop creative solutions.

11 Services must be monitored and evaluated on the delivery of improved outcomes for people who use services, their carers and communities

A major driver for the review has been to develop a performance improvement culture in social work to complement the establishment of the new Social Work Inspection Agency. To do this we will need:

- a performance improvement framework for all social work services, based on outcomes. Work on a framework for children and families is almost complete. Work on other areas of practice will be completed in 2006;
- elimination of unnecessary information gathering, using an agreed framework of outcomes to inform a national dataset;
- development of tools to share learning and support practitioners to improve and evaluate outcomes, allowing them to improve their practice;
- an annual performance improvement report, peer assessed and published by chief social work officers, setting out achievements and future plans; and
- inspectorates to use performance improvement frameworks as a means of reducing the regulatory burden on services, ensuring that duplication is eliminated.

12 Services should develop the capacity and capability for transformational change by focusing on service re-design and organisational development

Achieving lasting change requires organisations to look at the way services are designed and organised and make sure that they are organised around the needs of people who use them. In order to do that we will need:

- to develop both the capacity and the skills to re-design services through the creation of networks resourced to support organisations to make change;
- to develop organisational development and change management skills within organisations;
- to use evidence based approaches to support the re-design of services and improve performance;
- to make effective, proactive use of technology to transform the delivery of services; and
- develop local and national social work fora which provide a means to engage practitioners, leaders, academics, policy makers and partners in transforming practice.



13 The Scottish Executive should consolidate in legislation the new direction of Scottish social work services

Although all of the changes we propose could be achieved without new legislation, it would make a powerful statement about the contribution of social work in the 21st century. It would create a new landmark in Scottish social work, consolidating the significant changes we propose. In particular it would:

- provide a new foundation for personalised services;
- embed performance improvement;
- enshrine citizen leadership;
- establish new governance arrangements; and
- develop social work practice.

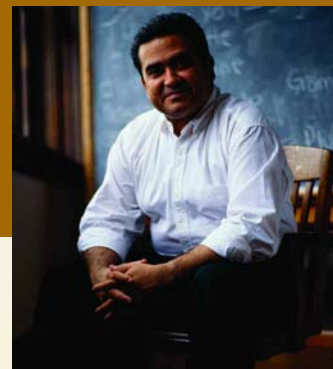
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conclusion

The 21st Century Social Work Review represents a landmark in the development of social work in Scotland. It sets a new direction for services in the early part of the 21st century. A direction that will require the creation of new approaches to practice and new skills, crossing traditional boundaries to build the capacity of both services and individuals.

It will require transformational change across the whole of Scottish society and public services. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to develop the type of services that we want and need to meet future challenges.

A copy of the full report of the review and the Scottish Executive's response to it is available on the Scottish Executive website www.scotland.gov.uk or from Blackwell's Bookshop.





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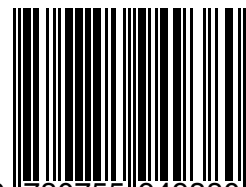
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