

**Summary Report – Workshop on Children's Social Care  
Workforce**

**Oxford Island Discovery Centre, Lough Neagh**

**24 November 2022**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services in Northern Ireland was announced on 21 January 2022. Ray Jones, Emeritus Professor of Social Work at Kingston University and St George's University of London, has been appointed as the Lead Reviewer. Professor Jones is being assisted by an Advisory Panel which includes Professor Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement; Marie Roulston O.B.E, Former Director of Social Work at the Northern HSC Trust and Her Honour Judge Patricia Smyth, a Deputy High Court Judge who had previously served as an Advisory Panel member on the Gillen Review of Family and Civil Justice.

Since undertaking the Review, Professor Jones has met with a wide range of stakeholders, and importantly, children, young people and parents / carers who have experience of children's social care services. In order to gather as much feedback as possible, a series of themed workshops have taken place to hear from the experts with experience, practitioners, managers and policy makers to listen to their views and experiences to help improve children's social care services.

This report relates to the workshop on Children's Social Care Workforce which was held in Oxford Island Discovery Centre, Lough Neagh on 24 November 2022.

### **1.1 Workshop Objectives**

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Highlight the key issues in relation to children's social care workforce.
- Provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to engage, discuss and feedback on the main challenges and issues to help provide for future workforce requirements.
- To help inform and improve future workforce planning.
- Explore and examine opportunities to develop robust and sustainable service models.

### **1.2 Attendees / Delegates**

A total of 70 delegates attended this workshop, including frontline practitioners, service managers, policymakers and representatives from the community, voluntary and statutory sector.

## 2. Structure of the Workshop

The workshop was Chaired by Marie Roulston and was structured as follows:

- Professor Jones opened the workshop and welcomed attendees.
- Marie Roulston introduced the workshop programme.
- Attendees were asked to complete a survey questionnaire to identify what they consider to be the three main issues children's social care workforce.
- Five speakers each delivered a presentation outlining the key issues relating to children's social care workforce from their perspective. The speakers included Michael Burns, Office of Social Services, Laura Crilly, SHSCT HR Assistant Director, Chantelle Hamill, NHSCT Senior Social Worker, Gerry Largey, NIPSA, and Noeleen Higgins, BASW.
- Round table discussions followed. Each table had groups of 8 -10 individuals based on their organisations / roles. This allowed participants to engage in discussions to identify the main issues for children's social care workforce.
- This information recorded at each of the tables was collated and analysed along with the completed survey questionnaire responses. A summary of the qualitative findings was presented by Professor Pat Dolan, a member of the Review Advisory Panel.
- A plenary discussion was led by Professor Jones enabling attendees to reflect on the key issues and themes that emerged.
- At the end of the workshop delegates were asked to complete a short feedback survey questionnaire.

### 2.1 Key Speakers and Presentations

Michael Burns, Department of Health, delivered a presentation on '**Update on the Social Work Workforce Review.**' A copy of Michael's presentation is available in **Appendix 1**. The key areas covered included updates on the:

- Social Work Workforce Review.
- Social Work Workforce Implementation Board.
- Workstreams within the Implementation Board.
- Departmental Actions in terms of Commissioning, Workforce Planning, Supply, Recruitment Retention and Workforce Development.
- Need for a whole system approach '*Everything is connected to Everything*'

Chantelle Hamill, Northern HSCT Gateway Team Senior Social Worker, delivered a presentation on the realities of being a social worker in children's social care from a Trust perspective. A copy of Chantelle's presentation available in **Appendix 2**. The key issues raised were the:

- Reality and challenges for frontline social work practitioners and the impact this has on recruitment and retention of staff.

- Training and Development and AYE (Assessed Year Employment) mentoring models and options.
- Importance of continuing to promote and support what is working well in terms of social work practitioner teams.

Laura Crilly, Southern HSCT Assistant Director of HR delivered a presentation on the recruitment and retention challenges for children's social care workforce across Health and Social Care. A copy of Laura's presentation available in **Appendix 3**. The key issues raised were:

- The need to attract, recruit and retain people to work in children's social care.
- Learning from issues in nursing and medical professions in terms of recruitment and retention.
- The need to reach out to attract a from a wider diversity range of candidates.
- Recognise and accept that recruitment should be all year-round process and not a one-off intake in September each year.
- Work to address retention issues, by introducing more flexibility, piloting a job plan approach, and ensuring appropriate focus is given to social workers wellbeing.
- Bringing back the '*good energy*' that existed in the workforce prior to the pandemic, valuing supportive and conversations with and among teams / staff.

Noleen Higgins, BASW delivered a presentation on major issues and challenges for children's social care workforce. A copy of Noleen's presentation is available in **Appendix 4**. The key issues raised were:

- Children and young people were sorely tested by the pandemic in terms of the impact on their education, health, and wellbeing.
- 'The System' is under unsustainable pressure, is bereft of leadership / middle management.
- Staff safety is an increasing issue with recent attacks on social workers and the number of threats escalating to an all-time high of 75%.
- Unsafe staffing levels must be addressed urgently given the numbers of vacancies and pressures.
- Workload and caseloads increasing in volume and complexity.
- 3 things that must be done to address some of the challenges are:
  - Invest in recruitment of family friendly flexible advertising that will attract people.
  - Tackle poor working conditions.
  - Enable more time for practice based social care, enabling social workers more time with families.

Gerry Largey, NIPSA delivered a presentation on key issues, challenges and changing framework that social workers are working within at present. A copy of Gerry's presentation available in **Appendix 5**. The key issues raised were:

- The need for safe doable jobs – if people don't have this they don't / won't stay in the profession
- Information systems challenges – PARIS – new technology systems / solutions required.
- Impact of austerity, cost of living crisis, long slow rolling covid wave on families.
- Budget cuts.
- 40% of P1 children starting school, not met developmental milestones, non-verbal, not toilet trained.
- 93 -93% staff voted in favour of strike action.
- Skills mix too often seen as a subtractive task,
- Specialties - i.e., addiction, appropriately trained skilled social workers – assessment work that could assist social workers and compliment the social work workforce.
- Time to effect change is now, real investment in children and young people outcomes groups.

### **3. Round Table Discussions**

Following the presentations, delegates engaged in group discussions to identify the three main issues in relation to children's social care workforce. Delegates were grouped according to their respective organisation / role to allow them to speak openly and discuss what issues impact them directly. A facilitator was assigned at each of the tables to lead discussion and record the key issues. **Appendix 6** set out the detail of the key points, from each group's discussion and feedback, in bullet point format.

### **4. Summary Analysis of Issues**

The information recorded during the group discussions was analysed by Professor Pat Dolan with the assistance of the Review Secretariat. This information was compared with the qualitative data obtained from the survey questionnaires to identify common themes and trends. **Appendix 7** provides a summary of the common issues and themes in bullet point format.

### **5. Plenary Discussion**

Professor Jones led the plenary discussion whereby delegates contributed to an open discussion on workforce issue. Key points from the discussion are summarised below in bullet point format.

- There are severe challenges in the supply of social workers, an issue which has been growing over a long period of time.

- Supply issues will need to be sustainably managed and improved over the over the next two years and beyond. Retention also needs to be stabilized.
- Routes into social work should be improved, currently 5 routes – recognition that we need to see improved action and results on this quickly – call to reinvent / reintroduce workplace route into social work.
- All HSCTS must be equally well serviced in terms of training and continuous improvement.
- Trainee scheme wound down in 2012 - should this be revisited.
- Recognition that given the financial position and there may be no or limited new investment, examine what else can be done to address immediate financial pressures / deficits.
- Parity of pay, team roles, tensions between and across teams and caseloads and the issues around this resulting in loss of staff
- Importance of acknowledging and valuing management roles.
- Tapping into opportunities for more part time and retired staff to join / re-join the workforce.
- CVS funding – need to move away from one-year contracts / funding.
- Need more collaboration between statutory and community voluntary sectors.
- CVS maintain service delivery – risk that organisation cannot continue to survive in current financial climate – this would have a significant impact of HSCT Gateway Teams.
- Local vs regional recruitment model – dispel myths – trade union views – regional model complicated and service loses people who cannot navigate it successfully.

### **Actions**

- Look at the structure of children's services at a regional level – review the current model of 5 Trusts – can cost efficiencies be achieved through restructuring?
- Commitment to take forward a programme of CPD (Continuous Personal Development) for social workers including looking at how other organisations / professions do this successfully.
- Possibly need bigger more resilient teams – small team concerns where a single absence has significant impact.
- SSW share team leader roles with AYE's.

## **6. Delegate Feedback on Workshop**

23% of delegates completed feedback forms on the workshop. Feedback was largely positive.

Further detail of delegate feedback responses is included in **Appendix 8**.

## **7. Reflections from Chief Social Worker**

Aine Morrison, Chief Social Work Officer for Northern Ireland, reflected on the issues raised and discussed in terms of children's social care workforce:

- Acknowledging that it was really helpful to listen to and hear the presentations and group discussions.
- State that from an OSS perspective there was unequivocal acceptance of the issues highlighted.
- Highlighting that first priorities for Northern Ireland must be political and financial stability in terms of the way forward.
- Affirming that the Workforce Review Implementation Board will continue with their work.
- Safe staffing legislation should include provision for the social work workforce.

## **8. Conclusion**

The workshop concluded with Professor Jones and Marie Roulston thanking attendees for their time and contribution in helping to highlight the issues and challenges and aid discussion and thought about what can be done to address same in relation children's social care workforce in Northern Ireland.



## Appendix 1 – Key Speaker Presentation - Michael Burns DoH, Update on Social Work Workforce Review

### Social Work Workforce Implementation Board

Michael Burns  
Office of Social Services  
Department of Health

24 November 2022



### Plan to cover...

- Social Work Workforce Review
- What is the Social Work Workforce Implementation Board?
- Workstreams within the Implementation Board
- Departmental actions



## Social Work Workforce Review

- commissioned to support the Transformation agenda
- part of the HSC Workforce Strategy 2026 (all HSC NI professions)  
'to deliver a more sustainable health and social care system for 21<sup>st</sup> century'
- SW Review's aim was to meet the needs of the SW workforce and secure a stable workforce to deliver safe, high quality social work services.
- published in March 22, makes 53 recommendations to strengthen commissioning, improve workforce planning and strategic oversight, improve recruitment and retention of social workers and further expand professional development.
- so far, work on 47 of the 53 recommendations has commenced.



## Actions from the SW Workforce Review (1)

### 1. Commissioning

- Current and future workforce demographics indicate that an additional 60 student social workplaces will be required to maintain a stable social work workforce.
- Education provision and supporting learning arrangements to be reviewed to produce, plan and timetable for increased capacity.



### 2. Workforce Planning

- Collate, analyse and report on the state of the social work workforce, using agreed regional workforce data, to monitor trends, forecast future needs and inform workforce planning and decision making.
- Regional consistency (using agreed workforce data) in the numbers, deployment and use of SW practitioners (including use of title), based on a model to identify normative staffing/safe practice levels for social work services.



## Actions from the SW Workforce Review (2)

### 3. Supply

- To increase the supply of SWs, appropriate actions should be taken to promote social work as a career choice, to review the routes into the profession and to develop options for 'leavers' to return.

### 4. Recruitment

- Improve recruitment processes; to be responsive, timely and cost-effective, in order to secure workforce stability.



## Actions from the SW Workforce Review (3)

### 5. Retention

- Develop a strategy to secure and retain a stable, skilled and motivated workforce to ensure the appropriate mix of staff with the appropriate skills to deliver safe and high-quality social work services.

### 6. Workforce Development

- CPD, (PiP) should support effective practice, career aspirations, workforce mobility, new developments in service delivery and changing requirements.



## Background to the Implementation Board

- The Social Work Workforce Review recommended that there should be ;  
**strategic oversight to monitor workforce trends, sharing of good practice and agreed regional actions to strengthen the workforce.**
- The Implementation Board was established to oversee the delivery of the recommendations and action plan from the Workforce Review.



## What does the Implementation Board do?

- provides leadership and accountability for the delivery of the recommendations which are intended to stabilize the social work workforce.
- membership includes DoH, HSC Trusts, Probation, Education and Voluntary sectors, key stakeholders, and staff representatives.
- chaired by Chief Social Worker, Aine Morrison
- first meeting was on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and continues to meet quarterly



## Implementation Board Workstreams

The Implementation Board has set up six workstreams;

1. **Entry pathways into the profession**
2. **Accurate data collection and modelling systems**
3. **Increasing the availability of student places**
4. **Scoping of work already underway to support commissioning, recruitment and retention**
5. **Cross sector collaboration (with colleagues from criminal justice and education)**
6. **Developing a communication and engagement Strategy**



and there's more...

- further workstreams are planned to take forward Safe Staffing models and the delivery of the Action Plan to cease the use of recruitment agencies and maximise direct recruitment to HSC Trusts
- the recommendations of the Review of Children's Social Care, Mental Health Workforce Review and Learning Disability Review will all inform the future work of the Implementation Board.



## What happens next??

- all SW employers are taking forward actions on workforce strategies which will support the recruitment and retention of SWs.
- the NI Social Care Council are leading on improving data collection.
- DoH (with our partners) is leading on:
  1. An analysis of existing and possible new routes into SW profession
  2. Safe staffing models
  3. Ceasing the use of recruitment agency SWs/maximising recruitment into HSC
- all of this will require a whole system approach;



and finally...

Everything is connected to everything



## Appendix 2 – Key Speaker Presentation - Chantelle Hamill, Northern HSCT Practitioner

# Workforce Issues

Chantelle Hamill  
NHSCT  
Senior Social Worker  
Gateway Team



# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION FRONTLINE

- Current vacancy levels:
  - FSIT 35%, Gateway 24% & CWD 28% staff down
- Hard to fill posts.
- High turn over of staff – 15 staff leave from March 2020.
- Opting for jobs in other areas of children's SW or adult services
- Seeking Work-Life balance.
- Losing experienced staff / Impact on Team Leaders



## THE CHALLENGE –

- Continue to meet the needs of families in crisis at reduced capacity.
- Throughput of cases.
- Continue to support the staff when demands are higher and know the limits.
- Manage the Unallocated Cases



## AYE Staff

- Training and Development Team have completed a 16 week pilot with AYE staff.
- AYE's value an emotionally supportive relationship & validation from their manager and other mentors in the team.
- Considering options in terms of a more hybrid induction and mentoring programme over a period of time.





## WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

- A shared understanding at all levels – brings expectation & hope.
- The high standard of work from the team.
- Compassion of the team & team spirit.





**Attract**  
**Recruit**  
**Retain**

**HSC** Health and Social Care

## Attract

### Update:

- ❖ Trends continue- demand significantly outweighing supply
- ❖ High interest for other pathways into Social Work
- ❖ High interest for Support Roles
- ❖ Agency Conversion

### Key Issues:

- ❖ Reach – needs to be much broader and much earlier
- ❖ Negative media coverage – Industrial Action/Pay Issues
- ❖ Age/Gender/Diversity



[Skills Zone Video Clip](#)



## Recruit

### Update:

- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of Collaborative Regional Recruitment
- ❖ Significant support to applicants
- ❖ Value based recruitment
- ❖ Streamlining student recruitment
- ❖ Skills Mix
- ❖ Transfer Pilot – Northern Trust

### Key Issues:

- ❖ General supply
- ❖ Year round time and resource implications
- ❖ Timeliness of Recruitment



# Retain

## Update:

- ❖ Emergence from Pandemic
- ❖ Major focus on our “People” and their wellbeing
- ❖ Flexible Working –Section 33 Sept 21 & Hybrid Working Policies
- ❖ Regional OH Review
- ❖ Balanced Workload Pilot –Southern Trust
- ❖ Supporting to work longer/Retire & Return
- ❖ Exit interviews/Stay conversations

## Key issues:

- ❖ Agenda for Change –impact on career progression, comparison with ASG ASWs
- ❖ Cultural change
- ❖ Uptake of initiatives/support
- ❖ Employee relations & engagement



## Appendix 4 – Key Speaker Presentation - Noleen Higgins, BASW









## **WHAT SOCIAL WORKERS ARE SAYING**

## **THREE CALLS TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL WORK IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**







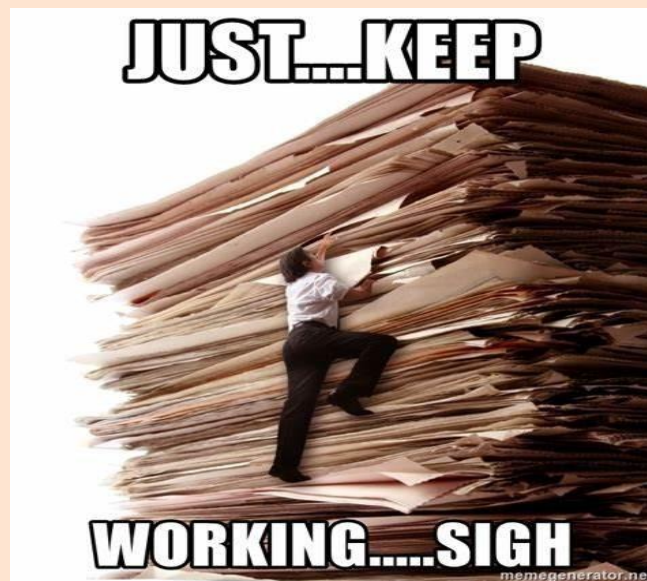


## Appendix 5 – Key Speaker Presentation - Gerry Largey, NIPSA

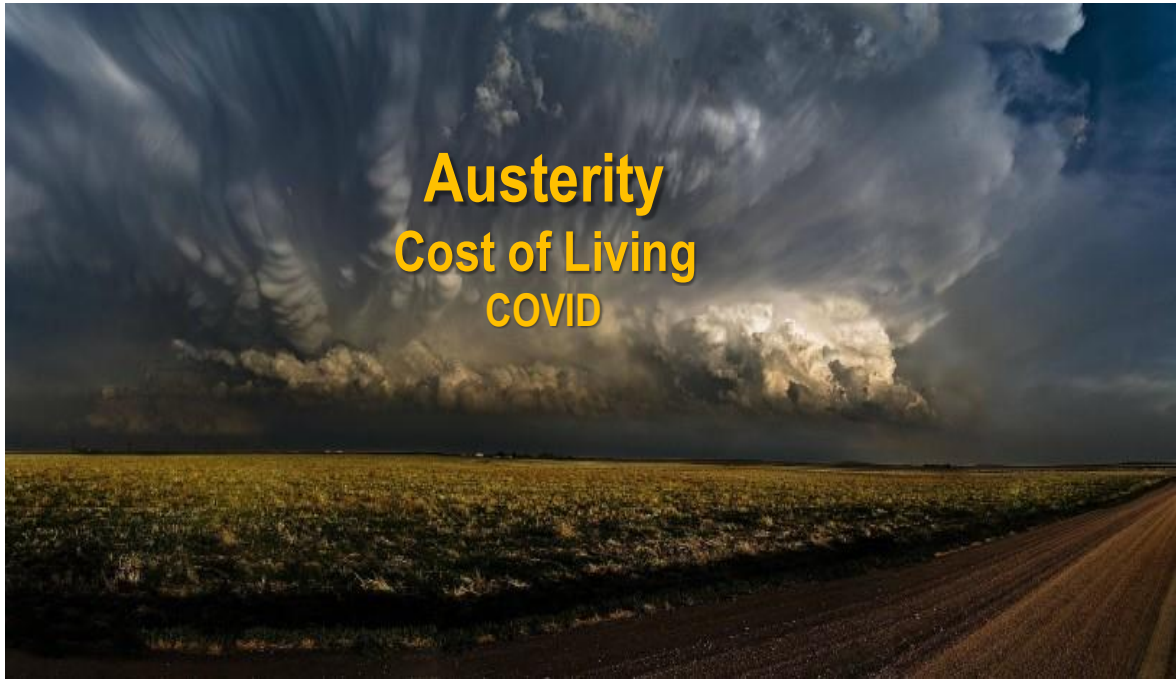
Where are we?

**HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE A  
SOCIAL WORKER TO CHANGE A  
LIGHTBULB?**

**10 SECONDS TO DO IT, THEN 3  
HOURS WRITING THE CASE NOTES  
AND ASSESSMENT JUSTIFYING  
THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION**



Winter is Coming

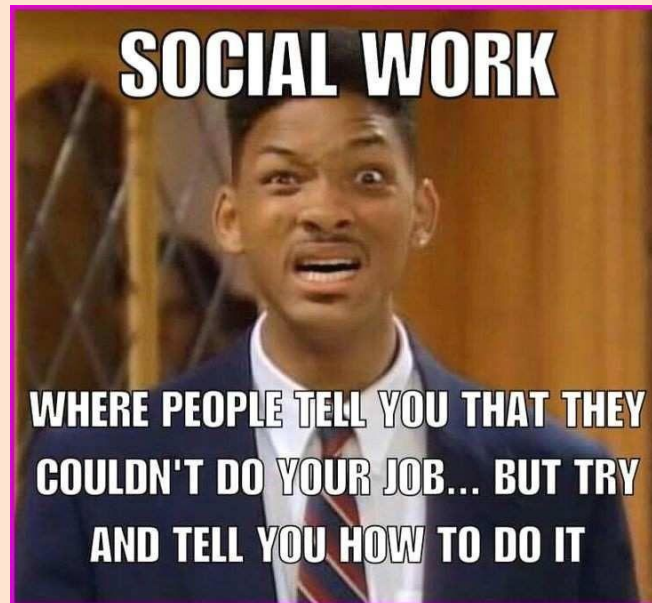


**Austerity**  
**Cost of Living**  
**COVID**



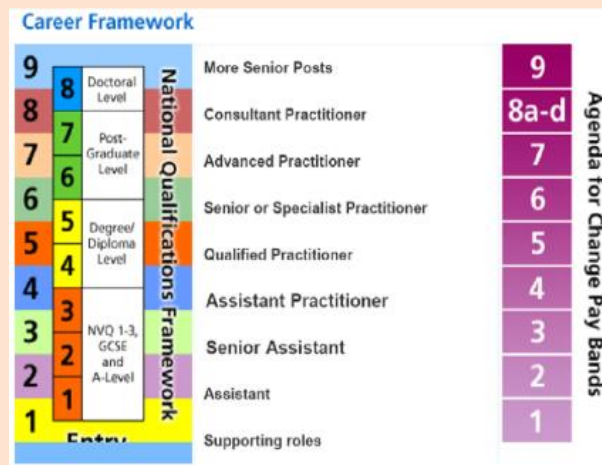
Due to budget cuts the  
light at the end of the  
tunnel has been turned off.

Aaron Paul



What might work?

Reimagining  
teams to reflect  
the work they do?



## Real Investment In Collaborative Partnerships







NIPSA's assessment of where children's social work is now.



## **Appendix 6 - Key Issues raised in Round Table Discussions**

### **Group One – DoH, SPPG, PHA, BSO**

#### **Issues**

- Re-ignite the shared purpose – convey hope (“I know plan is coming”)
  - Hard to fill posts – particularly focus on them.
- Job re-design -metrics – how to use what we have’
- Free up social work time for e.g.,
  - admin / paris support - but need strong development programme and invest in admin.
  - Prison health care – pharmacy support tech to free up qualified nurses.
- In long term need more qualified for statutory functions.
- No longer generic social work.
  - review what is needed – addictions.
  - Re-imagine.
  - Gather workforce intelligence.
- Review children’s service structure - S/W with other professions – is it structured correctly as a service?

#### **How to address**

- Re-imagine what is ‘S/W role’ addictions.
- Re-imagine what children’s services looks like.
- R&S systems
- Workforce planning – commission price - role re-design.
- Communications and engagement strategy with staff.
- Agree regional project group and local implementation.

#### **What can be done now**

- Review workload, what can stop, start, pause, continue – so we can start to focus on important job parts.
- Do not lose this commitment / energy.
- Influence, encompass – support job role – not add to it.
- Quick wins – engage and communicate to wide workforce – plan is in place.
- Engage staff – have conversation and engage staff on same.
- Look at regional recruitment – how to balance consistency of care to our children.
- Pilot induction mentor – key to new entrants staying, share learning, cascade, and spread.
- Invest so that staff do not keep moving round – pressure can be across the piece – support and help.

## **Group Two – HSCT DCSs**

### **Issues**

- Supply.
- Normative caseloads.
- Work / life balance.
- Unallocated = waiting lists – requires some focus and attention as acute.

### **What might we do**

- More action less talk.
- What are the expectations of social work role – review.
- Safe caseload and match your workforce to it.

### **How**

- Reintroduction of trainee programme
- Recruitment incentives – packages for other elsewhere / overseas – recruitment NISCC - make NI attractive – relocation costs etc.
- Develop social care workforce – e.g., Tusla dual system.

## **Group Three – HSCTs Service Managers**

### **Issues**

- Workforce.
- Workload.
- Placement crisis – resulting in increased workload for staff.

### **How do we address**

- Balance of SW and social care workforce social care staff / – could we recruit band 5 social care staff, and they undertake assessment / intervention work to Family Support cases.
- Pathway for social care is advertised with pathway for career in SW or social care.
- Transfer process needs to be implemented immediately to avoid cycle of transfers; this is a challenge as constant discussion of recruitment is unsettling.
- International recruitment.
- Package incentive to be recruited / retained in social work.
  - Progression from SW to SSWP within 3 years.
  - Review of pay band.
  - Retirement incentives – e.g., mental health would staff stay in children's services if status recognised as challenging.

## **Group Four – HSCT Practitioners**

### **Issues and how to address**

- Careful recruitment and special training of Band 3 / 4 staff – governance around unskilled workers.
- Address deficits in Regional Recruitment processes – delay, thinking more creatively. Work on 'hard to fill' posts.
- Attract people – consider trainee route, other pathways into SW.



- AYE (Assessed Year in Employment) – offer a more positive experience from the outset – more likely to retain.
- Build on foundation, AYE initiative already happening.
- Value of staff and include re-banding of roles – pay frontline staff for the complexity of the job they do.
- Flexible – working mums / carers.
- Safe staffing going forward to be considered.
- Invest more money in frontline and systems to support not hinder SW practice.

### **Group Five –HSCT HR and Finance Directors**

#### **Issues**

- Benchmarking for balanced / normative caseloads.
- Skills mix beyond Band 7 career pathway.
- Methods of attraction.

#### **Actions on Workload**

- Resolved by safe staffing and understanding normative caseloads.
- Attraction into Children's Services with career pathway beyond Band 6.
- Enhanced by new methods of attraction and retention.

### **Group Six – BASW, RQIA, NISCC, NIPSA, NIGALA**

#### **Issues**

- Understanding the demographic and needs of the workforce.
- Professional identity (positive public image).
- Remuneration and recognition

#### **What might we do**

- More social work ambassadors; a cross sector role.
- A collaborated approach; all sectors of the workforce – HSC, voluntary, Education.

#### **How to do**

- Links with media, positive media engagement.
- Social media to attract younger people.
- Review pay bands.
- Trainee route, work-based routes.

### **Group Seven – Youth Justice, PBNI, UU, EA, SBNI**

#### **Issues**

- Is this a wider issue that just health – Education YJA etc?
- Retention in Education is not problematic.
- ALBs / Other Agencies are already working well with children's services – is the organisational system as broken as being conveyed?
- Should we not be further expanding Family Support Services – voluntary sector.
- Concern that the issue is resource as opposed to need for organisational re=structuring.

## **Group Eight – Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations**

### **Issues**

- Mixed teams
- Broaden the skills base.
- One Trust – branding and recruitment.
- Traineeships - SW apprenticeships
- Children's teams instead of 3 different sections e.g., FIT, 16+ etc.
- Separate children's social care / work identity – Acute Trust and Children's Agency.
- Succession planning.
- Collaborative, integrative work with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector not receiving funding to provide regional traineeships e.g., social workers NVQ internal.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector realistic funding and tendering.

## Appendix 7 - Summary Analysis of Questionnaire Responses and Group Feedback

Children's Social Care Services Northern Ireland  
An Independent Review

### Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce

#### Key Issues & Analysis Questionnaire Responses and Round Table Discussions

Children's Social Care Services Northern Ireland  
An Independent Review

### Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce

#### Issues Identified by Practitioners

- 'Too long for action ' system doesn't work.
- Support for new staff joining.
- Staffing retention practices not fit for purpose.
- Staff well being lack of support from within.
- Better work life balance.
- One Team instead of three to replace FIT and 16+ FS etc.
- Too much red tape relationship of LAC having time is critical – face to face.
- No time for real social work.

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Specific Actions Identified by Practitioners**

- Better training for all levels of Practitioners.
- Better overtime pay.
- Caseloads lowered.
- Mentor for AYE (Newly Qualified ).
- Less paperwork.
- More multidisciplinary Teams.
- More Support for staff.
- High Caseloads leading to unsafe practices.

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Issues Identified by VCSE, HR, Finance, Children Services Directors, Social Work Governance and Service Managers**

1. Low staffing within the team make SW attractive
2. Caseloads need limit and protection
3. Recognition that SW is a specialist role
4. PayScale need review
5. Better Pathways for new talent at undergraduate level
6. Recruitment and Retention ... again and again
7. Staff safety and wellbeing .. Trauma informed supervision and work life balance

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Issues identified by VCSE, HR, Finance, Children Services Directors, Social Work Governance and Service Managers**

- Functions of SW could be carried out by others less paperwork to free to work directly with families
- More pathways in the profession
- Support Services for older children who are also carers
- Better joined up strategies with Comm and Vol
- Cross cutting collaborations
- Caseload getting more complex and ever increasing
- Better diversity needed in the workforce
- Better support for Comm and Vol

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Specific Actions Identified by VCSE, HR, Finance, Children Services Directors, Social Work Governance and Service Managers**

1. Trainee SW scheme to resume.
2. Increase employment workforce route.
3. Higher Band for work areas hard to fill.
4. Better Succession Planning.
5. More workplace balance and flexibility .
6. In house responsibility for staff recruitment .

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Specific Actions Identified by VCSE, HR, Finance, Children Services Directors, Social Work Governance and Service Managers**

- More Multidisciplinary Teams
- Ringfence cases in Teams
- Develop Tusla type dual system
- Reintroduce Trainee programme
- Increase employment workforce route
- End Regional Recruitment for hard to fill posts
- Recognize the SW Role e.g. increased admin impairs practice

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Issues Identified by Policy Makers**

- Effective and visible leadership
- Too much admin – job redesign needed
- Availability of workforce/talent pipeline
- Strategic/Operational Direction
- Recruitment – new staff and existing staff retention
- Positive career pathways
- Support to high pressure staff (LAC FIT)
- Vacancy Rates – address shortfall in staffing

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Issues Identified by Policy Makers**

- Rates and of use of Agency Staff
- Business Model that matches workforce need and Development
- Gather workforce intelligence (Wisdom)
- Lack of SW match up and skills mix to address needs of families
- Health and Social Care matched to SW led practices with closer real partnerships

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Specific Actions Identified by Policymakers**

- Recognize the complexity of the work in order to attain actual outcomes
- Workforce planning - coordinated
- Promote Children's Social Care as a discrete career path and with specializations

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Main Issues Identified by 'Other'**

- Ongoing professional development and training
- Workforce stability urgently needed
- Higher retention of quality staff – 'light of caseload'
- Need for a wider skill mix
- Reduce Bureaucracy
- Raise the profile of the workforce – away from bad press

## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

### **Main Issues Identified by 'Other'**

- Understand stress and burnout in the staff and system
- Vacancies are impairing the development of a quality SW service
- Succession Planning as integral working
- Recognition for SW as a specialist role – including pay rates
- Real time data analysis – PPI with service user
- More Diversity needed in the workforce

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## **Workshop – Children's Social Care Workforce**

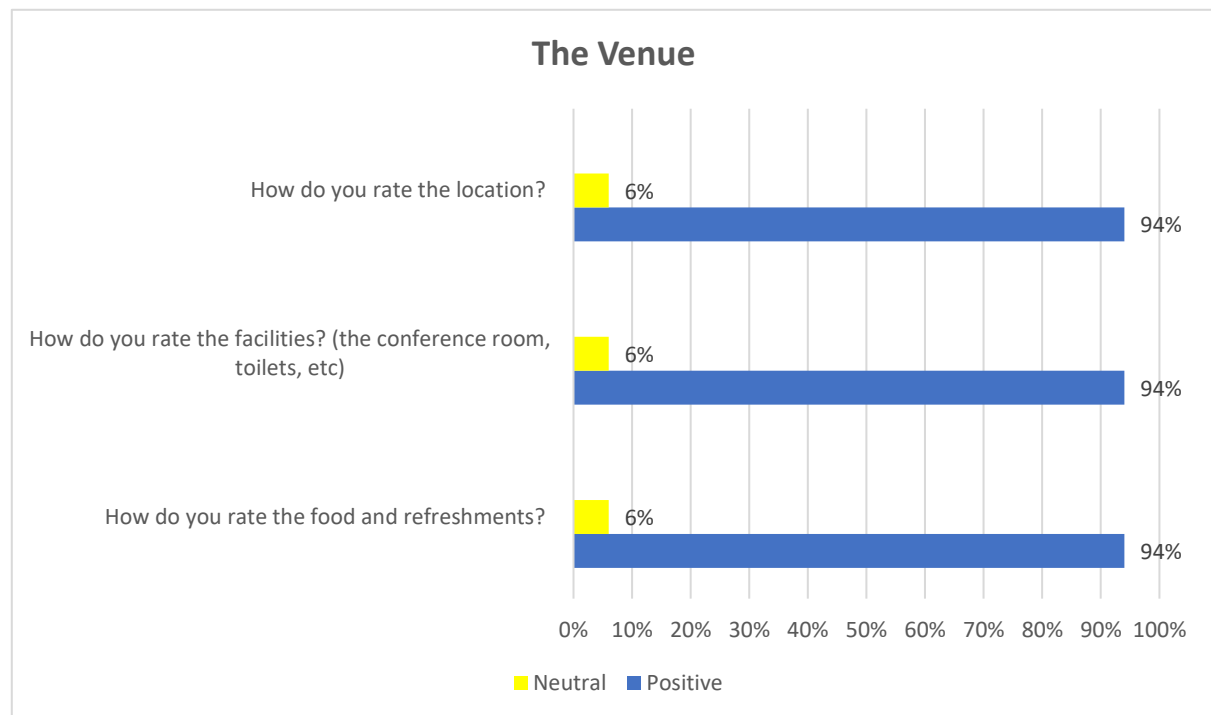
### **Specific Actions Identified by Other**

- More lucrative Banding – easier jobs at the same band
- Consider retirement at 55 similar to mental health professionals
- Development and promotion for residential and child care staff
- Consider undergrad routes to the profession
- Flexible working arrangements across the trusts
- Opportunities for staff to stay in frontline practice even as managers – crucial
- Positive media engagement including social media

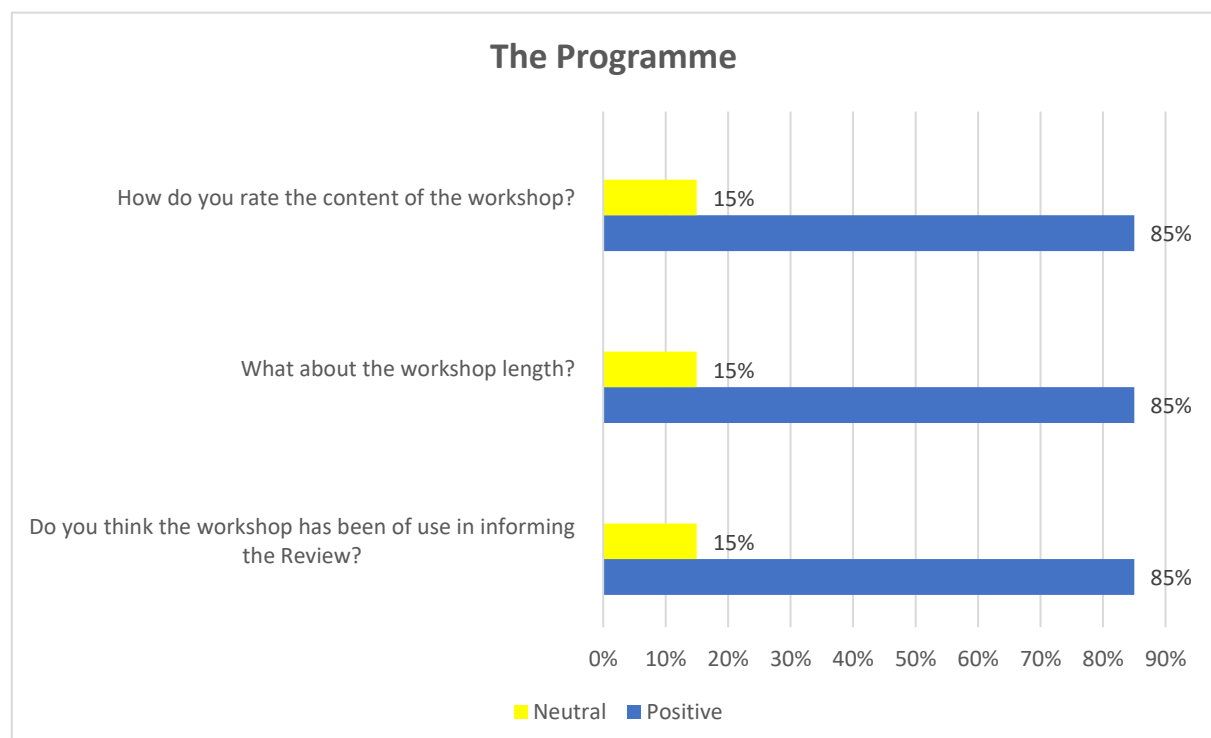
## Appendix 8 - Summary of Delegate Feedback

Feedback is based on collated findings provided by 23% of delegates.

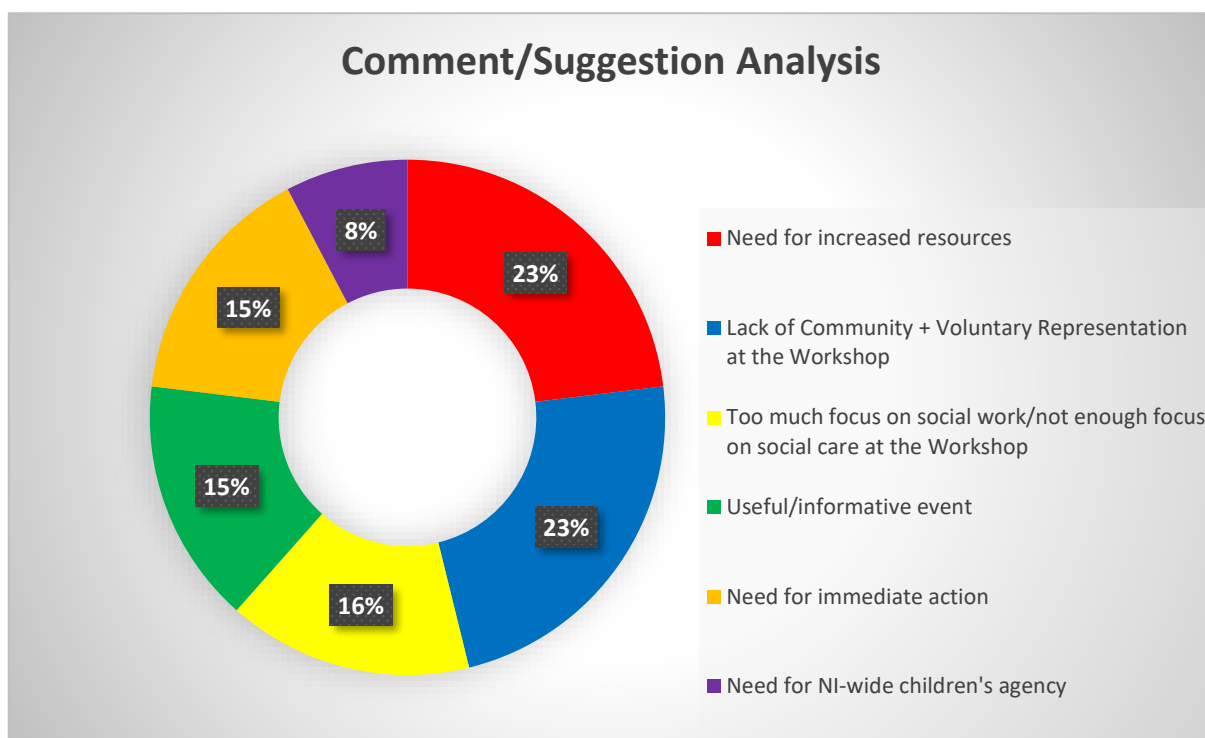
### (i) The Venue



### (ii) The Programme



(iii) **Comment/Suggestion Analysis**



“Progressing changes in a timely manner is essential. Until a long-term plan is agreed and implemented, let’s get a short-term plan in place to get things moving and save our services. Let’s increase pay, support staff, and do our best to make changes now.”

-Service Practitioner.

“The workshop was very helpful and has brought some serious issues to the forefront.”

-Service Practitioner

“HSC colleagues very inward looking. Demonstrated need for NI-wide children’s agency.”

-Service Manager

“Inclusion of voluntary sector in all of this could be explored more.”

-Service Manager

"Monetary investment [is needed] not just moving current pieces around hoping for different outcomes."

-Service Manager

"I feel the workshop was very social work workforce heavy and could have had more discussions around social care e.g., skills mix in terms of social care staff."

-Service Manager

"Disappointing once again that there was no presentation from the Community and Voluntary Sector. This is a review of children's social care not just social work. Ray is right – we need to support families and work from that premise."

-Service Manager

"A very helpful workshop addressing the fundamental issues in relation to the workforce within social work. The presentations were excellent."

-Service Manager

"It is extremely important that actions are followed through now to make any inroads towards the current crisis."

-Service Manager

"Clearly reorganization of children's social services... is necessary, but increased resources will also be needed for this."

- Service Manager