



## **The future of social work and social work learning: A visioning project from Lancaster University's Department of Applied Social Science**

### **Barrow Practitioner workshop February 2012**

Seven social work practitioners took part in this half day workshop during which they explored the following questions:

1. What is the meaningful contribution that social work can make to citizens in the future?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges affecting social work today?
3. What do you need in order to make such a contribution and to develop your career?

The following pages are a summary of the information gathered in answer to these key questions.

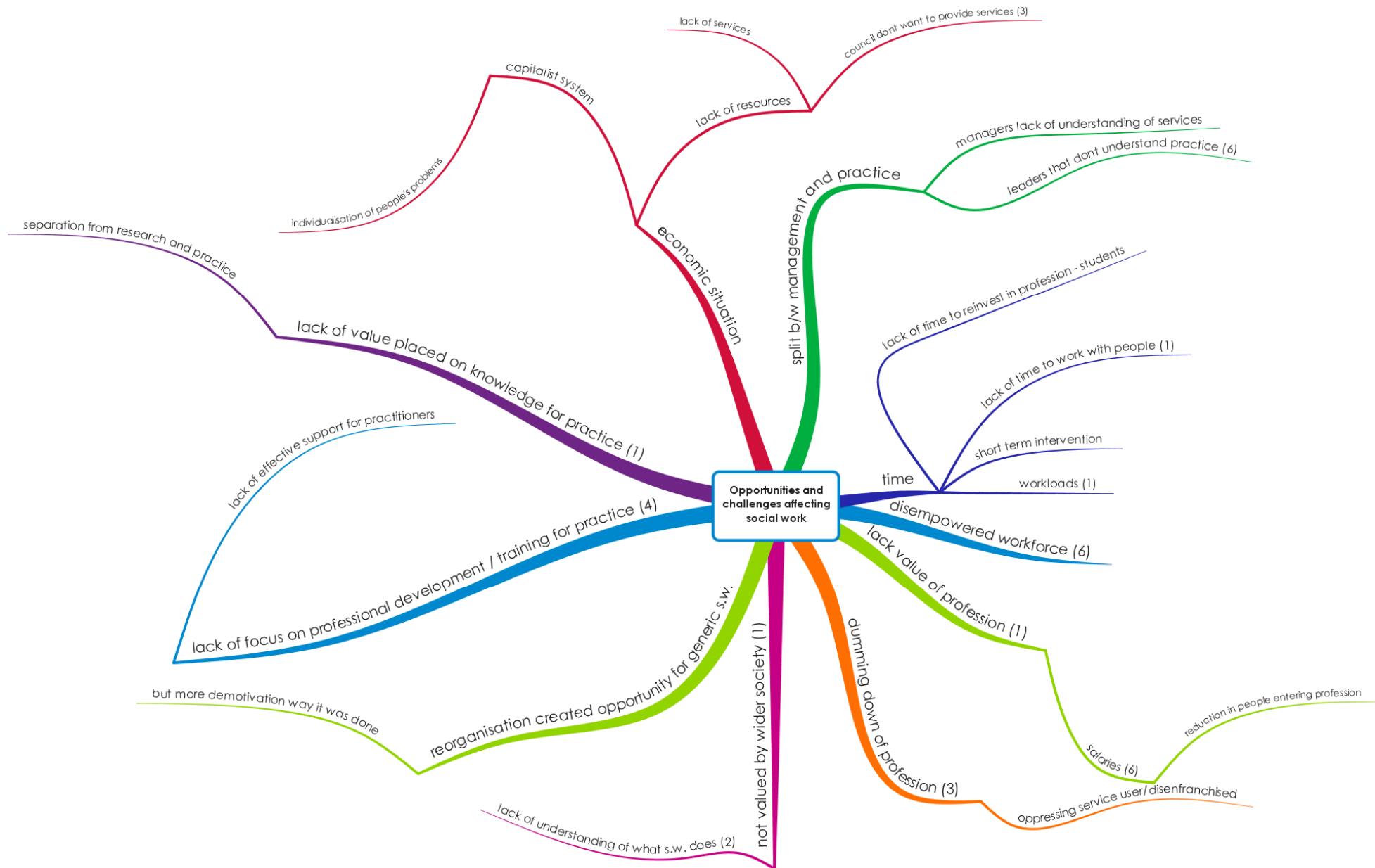
#### **Participants**

All participants were social workers working in Adult Social Care in Cumbria.

## What is the meaningful contribution that social work can make to citizens in the future?

1. Addressing and understanding the causes of problems not just the effects.
2. Support for people who need help at different points
3. Having an in depth understanding of a community
4. Influence policy to enable citizens to get rights
5. Empowering people to act collectively
6. lead and guiding people
7. Finding out what people need – what the problem is and what people want to do about it.
8. Whole picture – person in environment and community.
9. Adding value and empowerment
10. Creating opportunity
11. To be the resource
12. To be the linchpin; bringing all the services together – being the person alongside the service users.
13. Get people back into main flow of society – all aspects including employment.
14. Intervene to deal with problems leading to ‘safeguarding ‘issues rather than reacting to it in a punitive/legislative/ blaming way.
15. Understanding societal issues and political causes of problems.
16. Mobilising power of collective to represent voice of disenfranchised.

# What are the opportunities and challenges affecting social work today?



What do you need in order to make such a contribution (i.e. the vision identified in Activity 1) and to develop your career?

What do you need in order to make such a contribution and develop your career?	How could the university work in partnership with you and others to support your contribution?
Increased transparency in practice decisions	
Public have better understanding of our criteria	
Embrace other models of social work such as community development approaches/ psychodynamic not just task centred	Evaluation of impact on new models of working i.e. generic. (degree??)
Proper careers development and education	<p>Local accessible, open late hours services, more books!</p> <p>University to facilitate training and development opportunities post qualifying.</p> <p>Providing CPD courses and monitoring of demographics of uptake.</p> <p>Advanced PQ awards/contract with CCC for free access equitable to colleagues in health.</p> <p>Linking with CCC. Supervision appraisal career development and make an educational pathway for each employee.</p> <p>Looking at more person centred approaches in assessment process.</p> <p>Allowing all social workers access to e-learning, library etc.</p> <p>Don't let CCC dictate what you provide but tell them what is expected in social work training.</p>
Change public perception.	<p>Promotion of social work profession to the public in a more positive way to increase public support.</p> <p>Research into public's perception of social workers.</p> <p>Promote social work as a profession – good news stories.</p>

	Evaluation of changes in adult social care-reorganisation etc.
Removing prescriptive approaches to assessment and practice.	Helping to shape the paperwork that is used.
Freedom and professional discretion	
Evolving good practice	
Access to resources that meet the need/assess (e.g. being able to stay at home).	
Equal footing in access to higher degrees – CPD as health.	Liaison with council regarding benefits to both council and social workers undertaking further qualifications e.g. MA to encourage council funding.
Power to make decisions for the best interests of the service user.	Work closer with health - Accessibility for public
Valuing individuals	Research into how change affects staff and what the best way of managing change is.
Move away from culture of blame - protection	
Feel more like belonged not just an 'individual'	
Support and value	Being valued by managers.
Senior leaders with real understanding of social work practice	Ensuring that social workers have a voice all the way to the top of the organisation.  Incentives for social works Career paths Single status.  Social work leadership training and forum.
Quality of supervision	Supervision – emphasis on students how best to use supervision.  Specific supervision courses for SW run by uni to be offered as opposed to generic offered by council at present.
Incentives to carry on in practice – support and supervision.	
Stop commissioning of other services stop fragmentation	
Managers not to ask us and then ignore us	
Managers who understand practice	University to evaluate social work models in

	<p>different areas</p> <p>Management training to be evaluated. (for social work managers needs to be social work specific)</p> <p>Training of managers so they can understand different disciplines resources.</p>
Skills valued and used rather than feeling just directed.	