

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

Penrith Practitioner workshop: February 21st 2012

Ten practitioners took part in this half day workshop during which they explored the following question:

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:

Adult Services (Cumbria County Council) (7)

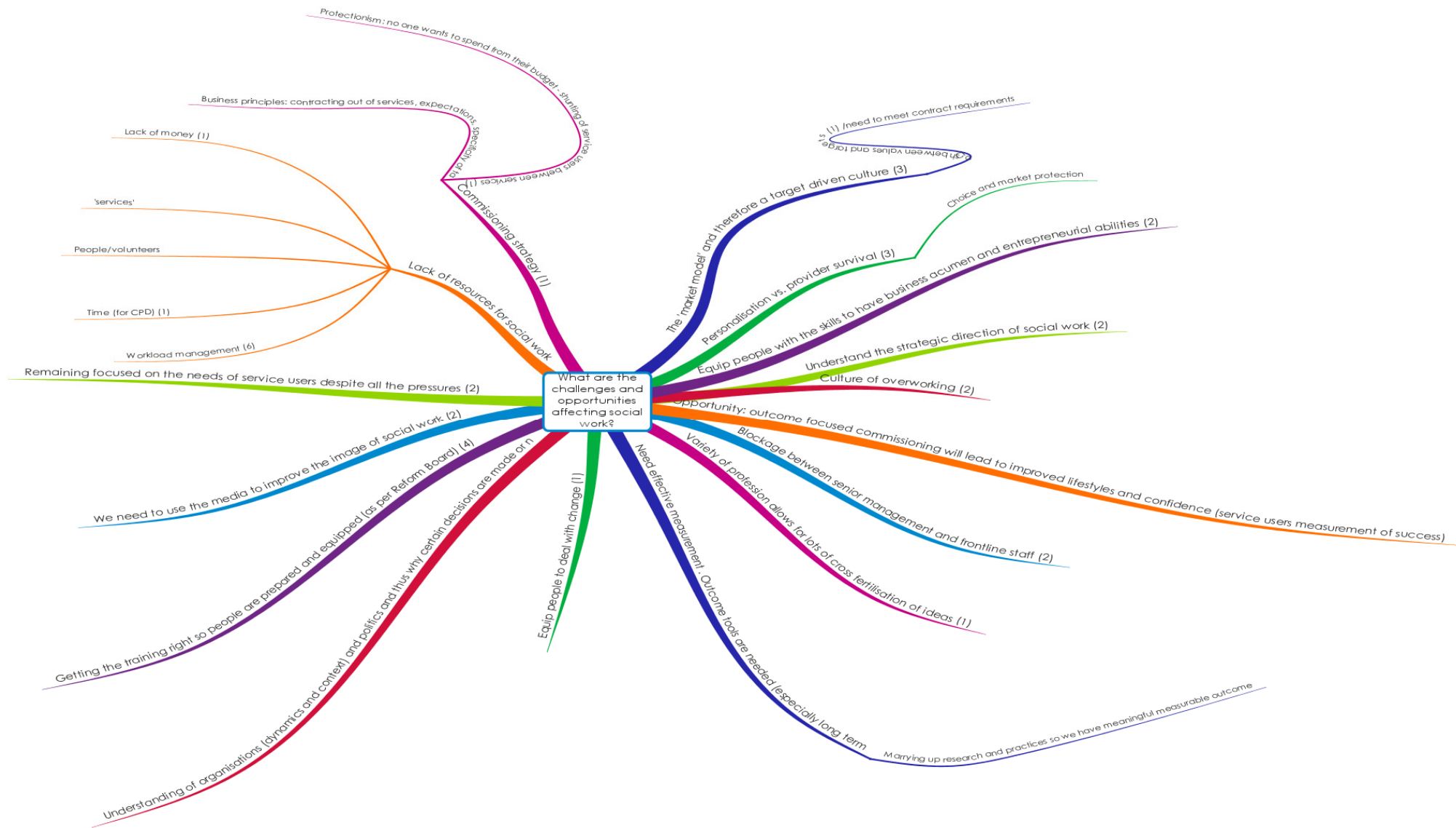
Voluntary sector (2)

Health (1)

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

1. Supporting capacities within communities (community development role)
2. Helping people to mobilise
3. People feel confident to come to us when it isn't a problem or crisis they want to talk about (needing a social worker is not a sign of failure)
4. As an empowerer/enabler
5. To help people continue to be independent
6. An independent service (from central government) therefore more flexible
7. More visible/less stigma so profession would be valued
8. Equipping people- so they are able to overcome problems
9. Able to see the gaps in what people need (services or not services and the patterns)
10. A guide- being there for someone on their journey
11. Representing people ensuring the voice of those that are disadvantaged are heard
12. Value base (holistic social not medical model) taking risks for positive outcomes
individual focus, working with hope, recognising people's strengths
13. Happier and healthier nation (better lifestyles, self perception)
14. Help create an emotional intelligent nation
15. Knowledge base
16. National sense of security: challenging racism/discrimination etc. That threatens the value base – which will help others to do the same
17. Addressing root causes of social problems/prejudice
18. Co-ordinating/mediating of universal services
19. Co-ordination of safeguarding in line with our value base

What are the opportunities and challenges affecting social work today?¹



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 to develop your career?	How could the university work in partnership with you and others to support your contribution?
Permission for us to work with other colleagues, to reflect and make decisions together.	
Change of mind set and culture of professionals (social workers have permission to spend time learning).	Promote good time management, organisation and prioritising skills.
Change public's dependency culture – entitlement.	Social enterprise courses so people can encourage and organise community capacity building.
Stay as a practitioner but progress career ladder (a careers pathway – funding available)	
Reform board recommendations, capability framework and standards are adopted nationally, locally and at practitioner level.	<p>Support reform board recommendations to adopt national standards. Bring people together to discuss and think of ways to implement locally.</p> <p>Web based assessment and to evidence base practice that could be measured against the capacity framework and standards.</p>
Prioritise learning throughout the organisation so it is part of the culture.	<p>The university could extend academic accreditation to work based learning approaches with employers e.g. practice educators Course and placement needs.</p> <p>Make links with internal learning resources e.g. services of knowledge management team/libraries etc.</p>
Local courses and webinars	
	<p>Research reality vs. expectations of newly qualified social workers some time on from qualification.</p> <p>More online training and tutorials, like open university.</p> <p>Share research findings at no cost.</p> <p>Better prepare students for the realities of</p>

	<p>being a social worker.</p> <p>Circulation of interesting literature about the future of social work for discussion.</p> <p>Good liaison between practice and research (regular information sharing about aspects of social work.)</p>
United group of leaders who can fight the cause of social work.	Learning for leaders in social work.
Need thought out responses not reactive national policy responses.	
Skills to recognise strengths in yourself and in service users	
Freedom and flexibility; independence to tailor your learning and professional responsibilities as you see fit.	
Confidence not to stray from the path.	
We need to drive public perception not vice versa.	<p>Front line staff to be involved in national campaigns or spokesperson.</p> <p>Through support of university e.g. media training or support of department.</p>
Learning across organisations	<p>Facilitate local courses and or seminars to support practitioner development.</p> <p>Invite partner agencies to sit in on full team meetings so we can learn about each other's current issues, changes, demands etc.</p> <p>Support development of practitioner learning sets across organisations e.g. time out 1 hour a week via video link.</p> <p>Organise multidisciplinary workshops/focus/discussion groups.</p>
Career progression: business, media, management skills	<p>You can do a qualification where you pick the modules to suit the situation (like an American degree) e.g. business management, older adults, alcohol and drugs, accounts.</p> <p>Include sections on organisational culture and decision making in social work courses.</p>

	<p>Linking more theory to practice. Dissertation relating to practice that could be used within the directorate of placement.</p>
<p>Peer support and peer supervision (sharing ideas) e.g. Action learning sets throughout your career within organisations but also across sectors and organisations.</p>	<p>Come along to team meetings and give talks on how we can provide this to each other.</p> <p>Cross organisation action learning sets (e.g. voluntary sector or other social care organisations).</p>
<p>Reflective learning</p>	<p>Cross authority action learning sets</p> <p>Newly qualified staff to return to university to reflect on how knowledge impacts on practice.</p> <p>The uni to come to workbases and teach modules rather than us having to come to you.</p> <p>Tailored day workshops for developing leaders or people to lead reflective practice.</p> <p>Joint learning with health students on certain subjects - help with a more seamless service.</p> <p>Learning facilitators to come to team days or individually support learning.</p>
<p>CPD: Allowed to develop specialisms within teams and be trained to do so (funding and relevant courses must be available).</p>	<p>Tailor courses to meet need</p> <p>Specific training e.g. Therapeutic skills for children or media training!</p>