



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

### **Preston Practitioner workshop: 29th February: Gujarat Centre**

Twelve 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:

LCC Adult Services (3)

Blackpool Childrens Services (2)

Voluntary sector service providers (3)

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

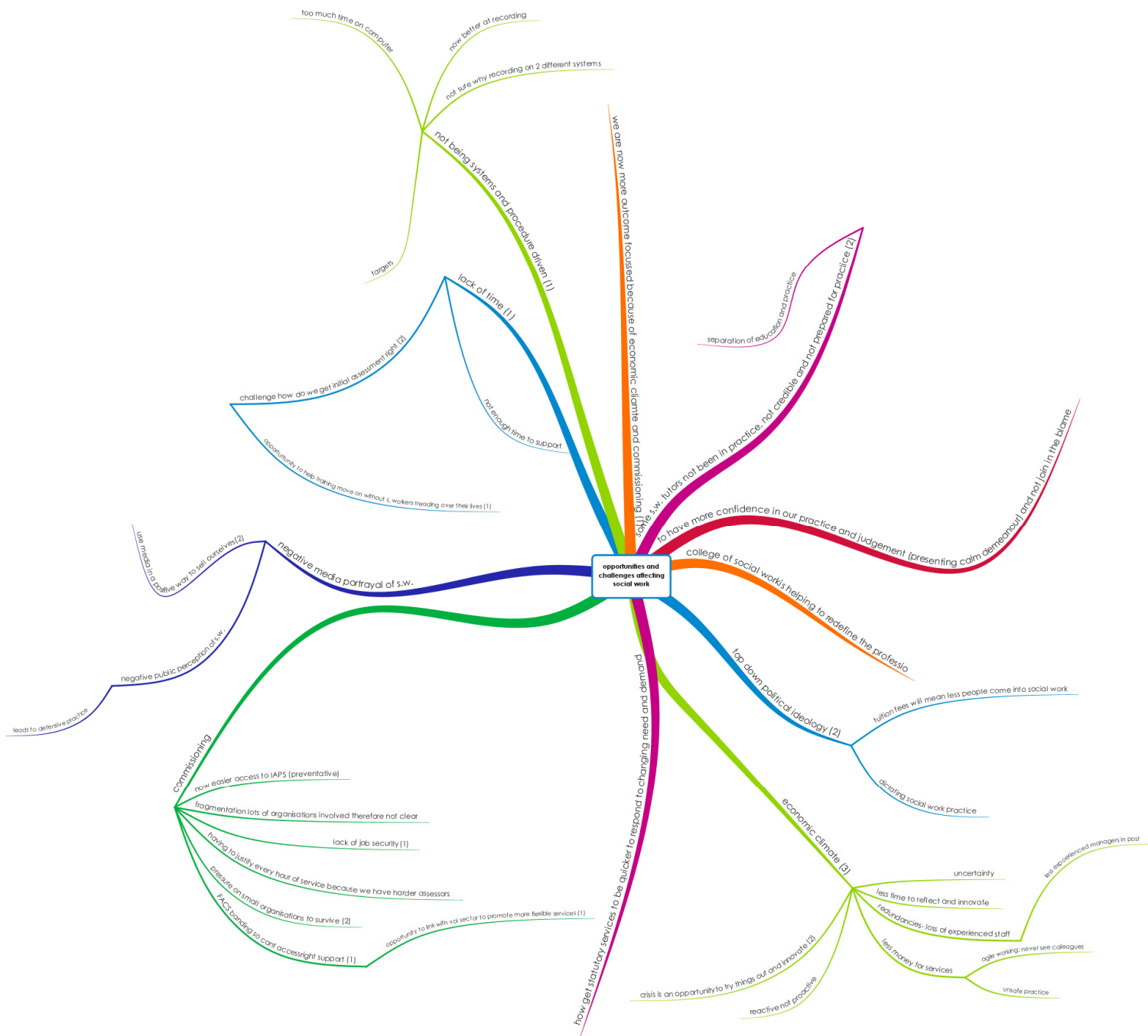
1. Respect underpinning all our work
2. Compassion
3. Listening to service users needs
4. True partnership working with service users
5. Understanding of power
6. Translator of services for service user
7. Challenge oppressive practice
8. Truly understanding communication and power within it
9. Being in touch with social worker values
10. Back in touch with our politics
11. Fighting for equality/fairer society
12. Campaign for the powerless
13. Innovators
14. Trusted
15. Reflective
16. Educators
17. Researchers
18. Freedom to develop approaches
19. To develop approaches that are appropriate for each family
20. Profession for other services
21. Autonomy as the practitioners but with accountability
22. Clear, shared set of standards
23. Clarity of role as social workers
24. An identity but with room for specialism



25. Having pride in our profession
26. Clearer understanding of what the assessment is when presented at court- through skilled report writing (content and style- evidence based) so people understand it.
27. To go into a disruptive situation with a clearer plan of what will happen with objectivity and respect- “to hold people when needed but to let go when they’re ready”
28. Understanding of legal framework and space to properly understand application
29. Protect rights of those who don’t have a voice
30. Including other services- working with other partners
31. Understanding not here to make profit out of peoples misery



# What are the opportunities and challenges affecting social work today?<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Participants were invited to identify the issues they feel most needs addressing in the future. The number of voters each issue received is the bracketed figure at the end of the line.

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?
Workers need looking after so we don't burn out	Protected learning time used to look at stress etc
The streamlining of procedures	Have practitioners more involved in setting up and monitoring systems
Manageable case loads	Keep mentioning the word stress. Training on value not numbers
Less bureaucracy	
Admin support to do some of the recording to free us up to do our job	
Recruit calmer managers who are able to build teams	Training focussed on managers as team leaders / team builders.
Supportive supervision	Yes: for practice assessors – supporting SW students
	Students having clear knowledge / expectations of what supervision should involve and combining this with training SW managers /supervisors on effective supervision.
Extend SW values with our colleagues e.g. show respect etc within your staff teams	To discuss in team meetings
Support not checking	All managers should have yearly management refresher training
Have regular contact with Uni on new legislation and other issues (people at Uni to check with)	This would help us to focus and prepare better!
	Provide regular short briefings
Needs skills of how to deal with people – not just theory e.g. getting your foot in the door e.g. basic NLP e.g. talking to kids	Having more practitioners involved in the training
Being able to access resources at the University	Access resources at Uni re SW
	More access/allow access for local practitioners to resources
	Link to SW College members to give online access to info

	Dedicated account for Uni resources for practice educators
Dissemination of <u>accessible</u> info on what is happening in the profession	
Learning with others and reflecting with others not e learning	Supporting / educating non SW practice assessors
	Learning with others, practice assessors
Make sure that academics and practitioners are better linked e.g. coming to meetings	Come out to give examples of current research to teams not just when you want subjects
	Bring different professions together – seminars etc room bookings for meetings
	Utilising practicing Social Workers skills / knowledge to attend lectures and give advice /experience/examples for students on what life in the field is like.
Accept that different people make decisions about how they live their life 'there is room for everyone in the world' beware of judgemental attitudes	Will come with good training and opportunity to experience differences
	More work on cultures / backgrounds also visit work settings if possible
Have standards that show we must spend less time on admin and more on SW	May come with more recognition of the value of SW
Voice for the profession	Highlighting good SW practice – rather than it being negative portrayal in the media – making links with the media industry.
	Build formal effective partnerships
	Voice for the profession_ positive views of SW to all students starting early at Uni
Politicians with some of the SW values i.e. not greedy but respect for people.	Contribute to a credible political party with SW values (less personal greed)
A recognition that we are a public service not a business	No 'Barclays' ethic
Need confidence in unions	Can University link more with the unions?
More opportunities to resurrect understanding of circumstances / causes of people's problems	
Research into link poverty and SW – child protection. What to do about it in practice?	More service user research with poorer / less articulate people. See them in their homes and communities. What has or has

	not helped you?
Research that can influence / be used in practice	Very important this evidence can make us more confident and innovative social work practitioners
How will fees effect the make up of SW – class, background	Encourage more talk about this – not a given!
Other things the Uni should do	Learning from real practitioners: guest lecturers, seminars, contact details
	More effective links /support for practice assessors – refresher training
	For non qualified SW assessors help them become qualified if they have a lot of experience.