



## **The vision, mission and purpose of The College of Social Work - November 2010**

### **Introduction**

The College of Social Work is being established following the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force. A full consultation about the proposed purpose and functions of The College took place between May and November 2010.

This document outlines and clarifies the future vision for a College of Social Work, as agreed by the Interim Board.

### **What will The College of Social Work do?**

The College of Social Work will enable the development of the profession, responding to current and future challenges, in turn benefitting the people it exists to serve.

The mission of The College is to develop a strong profession, confident about the unique contributions it makes to the individuals, families and communities it serves, with a clear sense of its values, ethics and purpose.

The College of Social Work exists to ensure that social workers are able to work to the highest possible professional standards, enabling them to work as effectively as possible with people who use Social Work services and their carers, allowing children and adults to achieve their full potential.

### **Values**

The College will reflect and work to the following values, principles and intentions:

- **Leadership:** The College will provide leadership to the profession

- **Led by the profession:** The College will mobilise the considerable expertise of the profession and its members, who will contribute to and inform on all College activity
- **Excellence:** The College will enable and guard excellence in the profession
- **Pride:** The College will have pride in, and bring pride to the Social Work profession
- **Independence:** The College will be independent and willing to challenge when necessary
- **Co-production:** The College will engage actively with people who use Social Work services and their carers, ensuring that it is responsive to their views, promotes their empowerment and enables them to contribute to the development of The College and its services
- **Partnership:** The College will actively seek partnerships with organisations and groups whose work complements its own
- **Starting from strengths:** The College will build on existing good practice in the UK and overseas
- **Collaborative:** The College will work collaboratively with allied professions and with organisations that are involved with and affect or influence the profession
- **Coherence:** The College will bring coherence and clarity to the profession
- **Public benefit:** The College will improve standards of Social Work to benefit communities.

## Aims

The College will seek to improve and support Social Work by providing leadership by and for the profession. It will lead the development of the profession and represent it in discussions with organisations that regulate, train, work with and are affected by Social Work.

The College will be established as an independent organisation, led and run by social workers. Its' remit will initially cover England and will later develop as a UK body. It will build strong links with other membership organisations.

The College will work collaboratively with the organisations that have statutory responsibilities to the profession and will work within the regulatory framework for Social Work.

## **Strategic aims for the first three years**

- to be a powerful voice for the Social Work profession, in discussions with the public, policy makers and the media
- to provide strong leadership for the profession
- to develop The College
- to work closely with people who use Social Work services and their carers, ensuring that their views are incorporated into the overall development of The College
- to be an international centre of excellence for the Social Work profession.

## **Objectives**

The College will:

- generate cultural change and raise the status and standard of Social Work
- act as the source and guardian of the highest possible professional standards at every level of the profession, building from the work already undertaken by the Social Work Reform Board, developing standards for practice and for employers
- promote clarity and coherence about the role of Social Work, by defining and promoting the reserved functions of the profession
- improve public understanding of, and support for Social Work, by developing a positive and transparent relationship with the media and representing the profession in public debates
- facilitate and maintain peer review and support, to improve and develop the profession
- facilitate employee union representation
- act as the essential source of advice on Social Work to bodies who regulate, support and deliver Social Work and Social Care
- ensure that its work is grounded in how Social Work can best support people who use Social Work services, and their carers.

## **Functions for The College**

### **Providing a strong voice for, and leadership to the profession**

The College will represent and lead the Social Work profession by:

- influencing the development of national policies that impact on Social Work and social workers, acting as an advocate for the profession
- building relationships and developing policies with other professional bodies regarding issues of common interest (e.g. occupational therapists, nurses, probation officers), acting as an advocate for the Social Work profession
- building relationships and developing policies with the academic community, including researchers, lecturers and teachers
- representing the Social Work profession in discussions with policy makers in government, the public, the media and other professions
- establishing links with similar organisations overseas, learning from and sharing good practice in supporting Social Work.

## **Defining the values and purpose of the Social Work profession**

The College will:

- set out and uphold the values and purpose of Social Work and will be committed to placing people who use Social Work services and their carers at the heart of the process
- define and uphold the reserved functions of Social Work (the activities which only qualified social workers can undertake).

## **Professional services**

### **Developing, upholding, promoting and supporting standards**

Social workers should adhere to the highest professional standards and should be held to account by their regulator if they fail to meet these standards.

The College will enable the profession to work to the highest possible standards of conduct and practice by:

- building on the existing work of the Social Work Reform Board to agree, establish and promote the highest possible professional standards for good practice at every level of the profession. This will include providing advice, support and guidance to clarify the personal responsibilities of individual social workers, ensuring that each social worker understands the standards of excellence which applies to their particular work environment. It will include enabling social workers to exceed the standards set for them by the regulator

- building on the work of the Social Work Reform Board to agree, establish and promote standards that Social Work employers should meet. This will include standards for employing, supervising, supporting and developing social workers at all levels of seniority. The College will also clarify what actions social workers or other professionals should take if these standards are not in place or are not met by their employers
- The College will work with the organisations that regulate employers of social workers (i.e. the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted) to 'accredit' employers who meet these standards.

## **Providing guidance and support to the profession and allied professions**

The College will:

- provide national guidance to clarify what good practice means in difficult situations at all levels of the Social Work profession
- provide up to date information and guidance on issues affecting the profession
- collect and disseminate knowledge, evidence and exemplars of 'what works'
- enable social workers to access up to date knowledge and information to support their practice
- provide advice, guidance and support to social workers, enabling them to work to the highest possible standards.

## **Quality assurance**

The College will:

- build on the work of the Social Work Reform Board to agree, establish and promote standards for the quality of training
- build on the work of the Social Work Reform Board to influence the development of a more coherent approach to the initial selection and training of Social Work students, practice-based learning, ongoing training and professional development
- work in partnership with the sector skills councils, employers and training providers, to become an expert source of advice to the government on workforce planning
- enable and support social workers to access high quality Continued Professional Development (CPD).

## **Membership services of The College**

Social workers who decide to become members of The College will have access to a range of benefits including:

- a magazine
- a peer reviewed journal
- professional indemnity insurance and public liability insurance
- representation and employment advice via a union function
- practical guidance and advice via a professional advice service for individual members and via an extensive Q&A section on The College website
- practical tools and resources to use in practice
- attendance to annual conferences
- an online library, with access to up to date information and research
- awards for study
- access to communities of interest, special interest groups and forums (on line and potentially face to face)
- the provision of a directory of accredited training providers and facilitation of the development of individual portfolios to demonstrate that CPD requirements have been met.

## **Initial priorities for The College**

### **To establish The College as a legal entity by:**

- moving from transitional arrangements to an established legal entity
- continuing to develop dialogue with the devolved administrations and Social Work bodies in each of the countries of the UK, enabling The College to become a UK wide body in due course
- defining and agreeing governance and legal structure
- electing Chair and Board members and agreeing board policies
- appointing Chief Executive and staff as required
- developing the business model to achieve viability and sustainability.

### **To define the values and purpose of the profession by:**

- setting out the values and purpose of Social Work
- defining the reserved functions of Social Work
- consulting with social workers, members of The College and other key stakeholders including service users and carers and regulatory bodies, about the proposed values and reserved functions of The College
- agreeing, promoting and upholding the values and reserved functions of Social Work.

### **To define the role of and improve the reputation of Social Work by:**

- engaging with social workers, people who use services, carers and allied professionals to demonstrate what Social Work can and does already achieve
- developing and promoting a narrative for Social Work, to be conveyed to employers, social workers, policymakers and the media, focusing on the context in which the profession operates.

### **To develop and promote standards of excellence by:**

- building on the work done by the Social Work Reform Board to agree and embed training, professional and employer standards
- working with the regulator to ensure that professional standards complement proficiency standards
- working with the people who use Social Work services and carers about what high professional standards mean for them
- providing support, advice and guidance to members, employers and policy makers to meet proficiency and professional standards and codes of conduct.

### **To establish different types of membership by:**

- defining eligibility for different types of membership, associated benefits and subscription fees
- promoting and recruiting members.

## **Keep in touch**

We want to let you know about all of the latest developments at The College of Social Work and our regular email bulletins are a quick and easy way for us to inform you about any major changes or significant developments that take place.

To register your interest and to sign up for our regular email bulletin, please visit [www.collegeofsocialwork.org](http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org) today.