IMPROVING AND SAFEGUARDING SOCIAL WELLBEING


This is the first Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland and reflects the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety’s commitment to social work as a valued and valuable profession providing a unique service to individuals, families and communities.

A Vision for Social Work in Northern Ireland

Social workers will work to improve and safeguard the social wellbeing¹ of individuals, families and communities by promoting their independence, supporting their social inclusion and participation in society, empowering them to take control of their lives and helping them to keep safe.

A Framework for Social Work Practice

The framework is intended to support the delivery of the vision of social work in improving and safeguarding social wellbeing.

¹Social wellbeing includes personal, social, emotional and physical wellbeing.
There are ten strategic priorities which will inform an action plan to strengthen the workforce and build a strong foundation for social work now and into the future.

**Strengthening the capacity of the workforce**

1. Valuing the workforce/building confidence: improve employer supports for social workers in carrying out their work;
2. Building capacity/meeting demand: improve workforce planning and deployment of social workers to meet demand;
3. Adding value/delivering outcomes: promote a culture of continuous improvement and a focus on demonstrating the outcomes and learning from practice; and
4. Developing expertise/supporting accountability: support the development of professional expertise and the individual accountability of social workers.

**Improving social work services**

5. Person centred services/flexible working: design and deliver social work services around the needs of the people who use them and to making the best use of resources;
6. Promoting effective partnership/strengthening integrated working: support partnership approaches in practice and service delivery and effective multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working; and
7. Promoting high standards/managing risk: ensure robust professional governance arrangements to support high standards and manage risks effectively.

**Building leadership and trust**

8. Leading the profession/managing practice: foster the development of a community of professional leaders: (build management capacity);
9. Promoting trust/fostering understanding: promote understanding of the contribution of social work in improving and safeguarding social wellbeing; and
10. Influencing policy/shaping practice and service development: strengthen the capability of social work to influence policy decisions and practice and service developments.

*The report can be accessed at: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk*