

Workforce – The role of the regulator

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Background to social work



2001: General Social Care Council (GSSC)

2012: Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Dec 2019: Social Work England

New specialist regulator for 100k+ social workers and over 300 higher education and training courses in England



The regulatory landscape

A large number of employers

Local authorities, NHS, charities, OFSTED, CAFCASS, agencies...

Plus independent social workers

Several routes into social work

Apprenticeships, fast-track programmes, masters programmes, and degree qualifications

Very limited infrastructure

Lack of royal college or similar. Little data or insight on the profession, or from those with lived experience of social work.

Lack of a workforce plan

No sector-wide strategy for recruitment, retention, career development, international applicants.



Arms-length from Government and sponsored by

Department for Education (DfE)

and

Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC)



Workforce

challenges

Recruitment

Quality and consistency of education and training

Retention

Gaps and shortages in statutory social work

Low morale

International recruitment

Agency working



The role of Social Work England

Safer care for all

Solutions from professional regulation and beyond

**Social work in England:
State of the nation 2023**



**The independent review
of children's social care**



Balancing the relationship between regulation, strategy and policy as noted in 'Safer care for all'



Systems leadership

- a national perspective
- coherence - engaging the sector
- influencing practice and policy
- the national round table on workforce
- what is the added value?
- who will drive strategic planning for the workforce?



The use of evidence and research

Social
Work
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Social Work Week 2024

Bringing people together to learn,
connect, and influence change

18 to 22 March 2024

#SocialWorkWeek2024 socialworkweek.org.uk



**Social workers in England quitting in
record numbers**

theguardian

Numbers fall for first time since 2017 despite increased need due to cost of living crisis

- **'High stress, high demand, high burnout': life as a social worker in England**



Thank you

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