Training the social services workforce of the future

Alfonso Lara Montero
Chief Executive

23rd March, 2018   Riga, Latvia

European Social Network

The Social Services network in Europe

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Credits : Sean McGrath

European Social Network

Our activities

- **Who are we?**
    - The social services Network in Europe

- **What do we do?**
    - Learning exchange & development in policy & practice

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

European Social Network

Publication

- 2017 – **Investing in the social services workforce**

- Analysis of key issues concerning social services workforce in Europe
  - Recruitment of staff
  - Retention of staff
  - Qualifications and skills

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Report Methodology

Overview

- Scoping review

    - Literature and news reviews covering period 2005 to 2016

- Online questionnaire

    - 97 completed questionnaires from 27 European countries received

- Group discussions

    - Seminar November 2016

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Report Methodology

Questionnaire

Question examples:

- Is there a national body regulating and/or providing continued professional developments and training for social workers?

- What is the minimum level of training and qualifications required for social care workers prior to recruitment?

- Are service users involved in the provision, recruitment or assessment of social work training in a formal way?
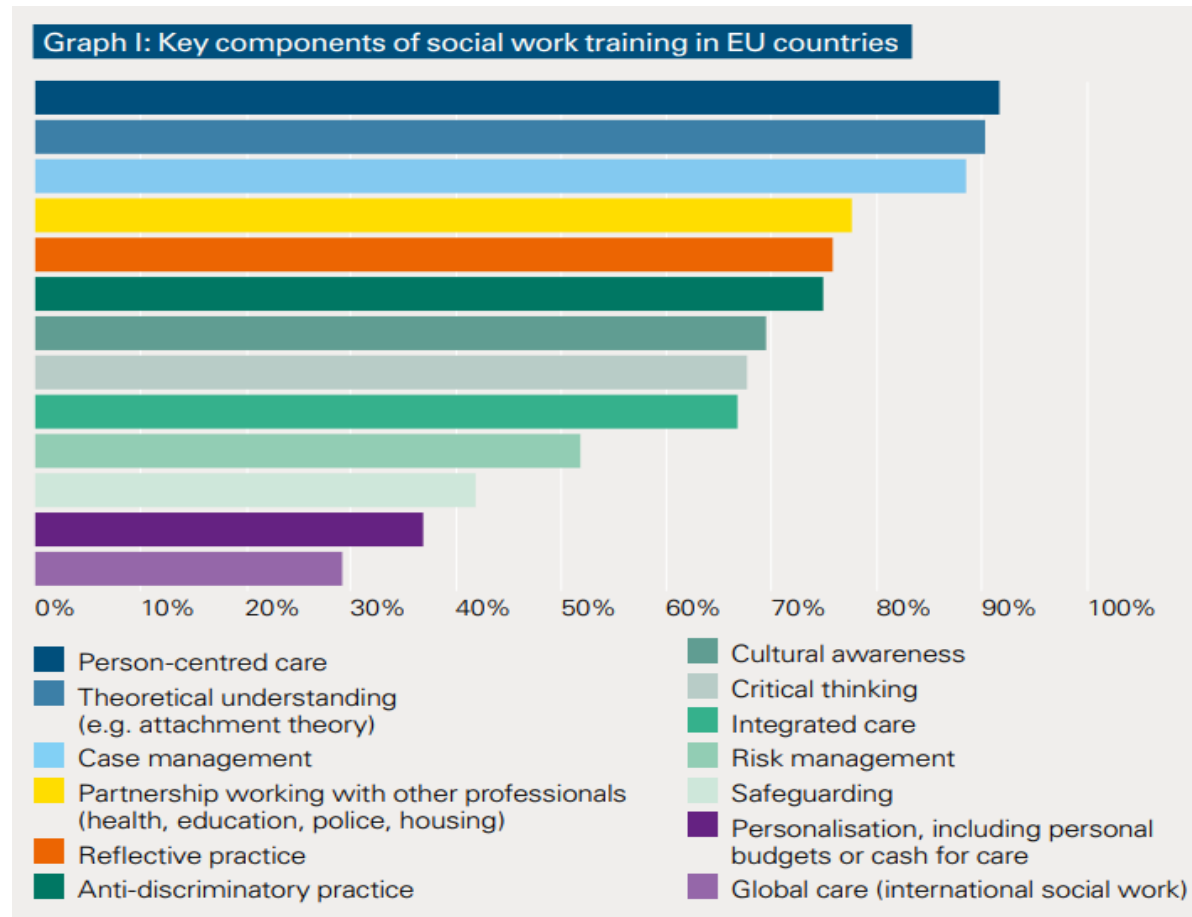
@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Research findings

Identified social services activities

Scoping review highlighted five key components of the work of social services:	The top five key activities of social services identified by the respondents to the questionnaire were:
• Providing personal care • Coordinating services • Empowering service users • Helping to create an inclusive community • Building relationships with informal carer and other agencies including community-based voluntary organisations	• Assessment of service users' needs (95%) • Working in partnership with other professionals (93%) • Preventative work (90%) • Care planning and management (82%) • Helping disadvantage people of all ages (81%)

Training the social services workforce

Key components

Graph I: Key components of social work training in EU countries

Legend:
- Person-centred care
- Theoretical understanding (e.g. attachment theory)
- Case management
- Partnership working with other professionals (health, education, police, housing)
- Reflective practice
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Cultural awareness
- Critical thinking
- Integrated care
- Risk management
- Safeguarding
- Personalisation, including personal budgets or cash for care
- Global care (international social work)

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Training the social services workforce
Key components

This means that practitioners need 'professional' skills to undertake:

- Case management

- Person-centred care

- Critical analysis

And also 'social' or 'personal' attributes to:

- Negotiate suitable services per individual users' needs

- Communicate within an increasingly diverse environment

- Be aware of cultural issues

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Training the social services workforce

Types of training for working in the profession

Social workers

- Training varies from country to country

- Social workers normally require an undergraduate degree

- In some countries social workers can specialise with postgraduate degrees

Social care workers

Table 2: Minimum level of training required for social care workers prior to recruitment

Country Group	Other	Basic skills	Foundation training	Higher than basic skills	Specialist training	Total
Western Europe	8	1	4	2	2	17
	47%	6%	24%	12%	12%	100%
Southern Europe	4	4	5	4	6	23
	17%	17%	22%	17%	26%	100%
Nordic Countries	4	1	2	7	2	16
	25%	6%	12%	44%	13%	100%
CEEC	5	3	3	1	4	16
	31%	19%	19%	6%	25%	100%
Total	21	9	14	14	14	72
	29%	13%	19%	20%	19%	100%

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Training the social services workforce

Is training fit for purpose?

- Bologna process

  - Helped to professionalise social work

  - But made gaps between theory and practice

- New training required:

  - Technology

  - Gap theory & practice

  - New role of service users

- Comparative overview for social services training

  - UK, Italy, Denmark

Qualifications and Skills
Social Workers

Profession	Education/traning	Regulation
UK: Social Worker (UK)	Undergraduate degree	Social work regulation is devolved to the four countries of the UK
DK: Social worker (*socialrådgiver*, literally social advisor)	4-year undergraduate degree in social work (including five months compulsory work-based training)	Regulated by a profession-specific Education Act from the Ministry of Education
IT: Social worker • Managerial role	Undergraduate degree with state examination • Postgraduate degree	The profession is regulated by the National Council of Social Work

Qualifications and Skills

Social Care Workers

Profession	Education/traning	Regulation
UK: Social care worker	Five levels of qualifications are available under the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)	Social care regulation is devolved to the four nations of the UK
DK: • Social and health care helper • Social and health care assistant	• 20-26 months course, school-based, 9 months of work placements • 3-3.5 years course: 48 weeks school-based education & 22 months work placements	• Certificate awarded by the Committee for Pedagogical Assistance, Social and Health Education • Regulated by the Social and Health Care Act
IT: • Social assistant worker • Social health worker	• Regional certificate after vocational training course of school-based education & internship. • Vocational training course provided at regional level combining school-based education and work placements	• Regulated at regional level • Profession formally recognised at national level through an agreement between the regions & the State in 2001

Qualifications and Skills

Themes to be addressed

- Service users and practitioners involvement in training

    - Bridge gap between academia and practice

- Increasing use of technology

    - Increased efficiency; new forms of support & new relationships

- Effective management of migration for professional purposes

    - Skills/Certification recognition

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

The Way Forward

Service users involvement in social work education

- Service user involvement in education addresses the gap between theory and practice created by Bologna Process
  - UK is European leader on service user involvement in education
  - Remains largely untapped in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe

- Service user involvement examples:
  - Netherlands homeless shelter – peer research project
  - Belgium service user module on poverty
  - Scottish Recovery Network

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

The Way Forward

Technological innovations in the workplace

- Technology can make administration procedures more efficient
- Increased use of internet and videoconferencing
  - Reducing travel time when visiting service users
  - Can improve front line care delivery
  - Intelligent facilities

- Technological innovations will accelerate due to:
  - Increasing service demand
  - Decreasing public authority budgets

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

The Way Forward

Recruitment, retention and training strategies

- 'Care Ambassadors'

  - Members of Social Services workforce who promote work to recruit and retain staff

- 'Fast track' UK post-graduate transfer

  - Step up to social work

  - Think ahead

- Use of EU funds

  - Latvia, SIS training (Support Intensity Scale)

  - Poland, Human Capital Operational Programme

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Conclusion

Policy recommendations

Policy-makers:

- Establish mutual recognition of social work qualifications across the EU

- Establish a national system to register and recognise social work skills and qualifications

- Implement a code of practice for the profession

- Enforce migrant care workers' employment rights

- Create technology standards of practice for social workers

European Social Network

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Conclusion

Policy recommendations

Managers and Practitioners:

- Encourage exchange and understanding of roles and responsibilities through interdisciplinary training modules

- Involve service users and carers in the recruitment and training of social services professionals

- Explore the potential of technological innovation to make care work more attractive

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Conclusion

Policy recommendations

Academics & Researchers:

- Involve practitioners and service users systematically in the educational structures and processes of social work degrees

- Ensure that social work education is adapted to current technological progress

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero

Thank you for your attention!

Alfonso Lara Montero
Chief Executive

@ESNsocial
@A_LMontero