Children's Social Work Practices:

Key Lessons for Children's Social Work

Report on the London Summit

The College of Social Work

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Children's Social Work Practices Summit
Key lessons for children's social work services
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Summit Report

Introduction

1. This report focuses on the Children's Social Work Practices Summit, held by The College of Social Work (TCSW) in London on 16th October 2014, to draw out and evaluate principles for innovation in children's services in the light of learning from the social work practice (SWP) pilots.

2. Nearly all those at the heart of the children's SWP project came together at the Summit to share ideas and discuss what worked – and what didn't – in the practice pilots. TCSW assembled a varied but eclectic group of participants in the hope of an informed, lively debate that would deliver significant conclusions for the future of children's services. It did not disappoint.

3. Practising social workers, academics and sector leaders from across the country converged on the Royal College of Surgeons in London for the Summit, which was chaired by Dave Hill, a TCSW Board member and Director of Children's Services. Academics from the national evaluation of the children's SWPs and SWP practitioners themselves fed their views and findings into the discussion, as did some of those involved in the parallel social work practices with adults.

4. Keynote speakers were Professor Julian Le Grand, co-inventor of the SWP concept as a "greenhouse" of innovation in social work, and Professor Nicky Stanley, who led the national evaluation of the SWP pilot programme. Both of these leading academics clearly thought that much of value had been learned, but they also represented two different aspects of the debate, Le Grand being seen as a keen proponent of SWPs while Stanley has been seen as more cautious. A full list of Summit attenders can be found in Annex A.

5. These contrasting perspectives energised the discussion. How far had the children's SWPs been successful and why? If they had been successful, could local authorities reproduce this success? To what extent did SWPs live up to their founding principles and was it feasible for local authorities to embody these principles too? What would it take for LAs to do equally well in the same respects? These were some of the questions to which the Summit, made possible by a grant from the Department for Education's (DfE) Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, ventured answers that will merit careful consideration as children's services are redesigned.

6. High profile failures in local authority children's services have led to a rethink of the way they are provided. There is an appetite in some LAs for experiment and innovation. Our Summit drew on the experience of the SWPs and wider developments in children's services as a contribution to the process of renewal.

Summit purposes and background

7. In her introductory remarks to the Summit, TCSW Chair Jo Cleary said that innovation was critical to good outcomes in social work services. But she said that some local authorities were reluctant to innovate and that this would have to change for the sake of service improvement. Local leadership, intelligent commissioning and a learning culture based on confidence in social work would be required if children and families were to get the services they have a right to expect.

8. Key purposes of the Summit were to identify lessons from the SWPs and consider how the learning from them could be used to promote innovation in children's services generally and support the development of different models of social work practice. Before looking in detail at the findings of the Summit, we will summarise the ideas that inspired the creation of the SWPs and the problems that it was hoped they would solve.

9. The 2006 *Care Matters* Green Paper[1] raised the subject of social work practices as part of a chapter on the local authority's role as corporate parent. "Like any good parent," it said, "[the local authority] should put its own children first. That means being a powerful advocate for them to receive the best of everything and helping children to make a success of their lives."

10. Against this broad test, the children's social work practice (SWP) pilots can lay claim to a measure of success. But a closer examination of the detail suggests that their success in achieving some of their aims has to be set against the failure to achieve others. A short description of the five evaluated "first wave" SWPs can be found in Annex B.

11. So could the learning from SWPs be the basis of similar or new models of service delivery for looked after children and care leavers, or for that matter in other services for children in need or in child protection? Should the model simply be replicated or should it be treated as source of components, the good being harvested for the development of new service approaches and frameworks while the bad or indifferent are discarded?

12. The Munro review's final report[2], published in 2011 after the pilot programme began, laid down some important principles which will also have to be taken into account in any service reform conducted in the light of learning from SWPs and other more general social work developments. In the report's words: "The **professional** account of

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[1] Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care, Department for Education and Skills, 2006.

[2] The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, Department for Education, 2011.

social work practice 'in which relationships play a central role' appears to have been gradually stifled and replaced by a managerialist account that is fundamentally different."

13. Strong **leadership** would be required, Eileen Munro said, at all levels of organisations to move from a "command and control culture" to a **"learning and adapting culture"** that valued social workers' professional judgement and freedom to act on the evidence in the interests of children and families.

14. Her report stated that among the characteristics necessary for a good local service was "an operational structure and systems (practice and managerial) which enable all social workers to spend most of their time undertaking effective work that directly benefits children and families and which values continuity of social worker with children and families."

15. Debate about the future of SWP-style social work must be seen in context: the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme was established in 2014 with an initial £30 million of funding to encourage innovation in social work practice. This comes against a background of large-scale innovation in recent years, such as the Hackney model ("Reclaiming Social Work") of statutory child care social work, the core elements of which have been used in different ways in a range of other authorities and agencies.

16. Changes in organisational structures in some areas have added to debates about the optimum environment in which to secure the best social work practice. One of the most radical structural reforms has been in Doncaster, where an independent, not-for-profit company was created to create a "clean break" with the council's history of failure and in response to government's assessment. The Doncaster Children's Services Trust now delivers children's safeguarding services to achieve the far-reaching **cultural change** believed to be necessary. Elsewhere, authorities have themselves decided to create new types of organisations; for example, Richmond and Kingston children's services are now delivered within a single not-for-profit body 'Achieving For Children'.

17. SWPs were intended to bring about a similar, if smaller scale, divorce from their councils to accomplish cultural change and make a positive difference to the quality of work with, and outcomes for children looked after. But, as we will see, broadly speaking the "divorce" seems to have been amicable. The Hackney model has shown that cultural change is possible without severing links with the council and it appears that SWPs can say the same.

18. There were conflicting views at our Summit about whether children's services were better delivered inside or outside local authorities (LAs). Many participants took the view that the organisational vehicle for innovation mattered less than the principles driving it. But one of these principles, perhaps a precondition of everything else, is summed up in the source book for Reclaiming Social Work:

    Anything that an organisation creates should only exist to facilitate effective working with families. Anything that exists which hampers effective practice should be

quickly changed or stopped altogether."[3]

Principles underpinning SWPs

19. As already mentioned the corporate parenting role of local authorities informed the thinking behind social work practices as set out in the *Care Matters* Green Paper (which referred to them as social *care* practices). While LAs would continue to be the corporate parent, legally speaking, and accountable as such, implementation of the role would be delegated under contract to the SWPs.

20. The stress put on this **corporate parenting** role by the authors arose from history of poor outcomes experienced by looked after children. Compared with their peer age group their life chances were bleak, consistently languishing well below the average in terms of health, education, job opportunities later in life, and a range of other indicators.

21. It was concluded that the fundamental problem was a lack of continuity of care and support for children in care. The turnover of local authority social workers was so swift that they had no time to form **trusting relationships** with children who had already had to adjust to the loss of significant adults in their lives.

22. The new Ofsted inspection framework and the Munro review both require social workers and their employing organisations to attend to children and families' journey through services, stressing that children and young people should have a coherent and quality experience from their first to last contact with social care generally and social workers specifically. It can be inferred from the Green Paper that local authorities were frequently the wrong vehicle for the journey and that a new model ought to be tried out.

23. SWPs were thought to be a possible solution because social workers would be able to work independently of local authority management structures. The extent of this parenting role, as envisaged in *Care Matters*, is apparent from the following extract:

> *"Social workers would be given the autonomy and the freedom from a complex management structure needed to be able to put the child above everything else. The members of the practice would play a strong parental role in all the key aspects of a child's life.*
>
> *"They would take a strong interest in the child's education, including helping the child and their carers make decisions about the best school for the child and acting as a parental advocate to get the best from the school and to address specific issues such as possible exclusions."*

How SWPs worked

24. The idea of social work practices was first floated by Julian Le Grand and Alistair Pettigrew[4] a week before the Green Paper was published. Subsequently both were on

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[3] Steve Goodman and Isabelle Trowler, *Social Work Reclaimed*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012.

[4] "Childcare would be better as a business," Julian Le Grand and Alistair Pettigrew, Guardian, 4 October 2006.

the Social Care Practices Working Group, chaired by Professor Le Grand, to explore the potential for this model of service.

25. The working group's report, *Consistent Care Matters (CCM)*[5], recommended that nine SWPs should be piloted, comprising three employee-owned "professional partnerships," and three each run by the voluntary and private sectors. In fact, although 15 local authorities expressed a strong interest in running one of the pilots, overall there were just seven first and second wave SWPs in operation by May 2013.

26. Apart from lack of continuity of care in local authorities, *CCM* identified the restricted professional autonomy of social workers, too much paperwork, too little time building relationships and the absence of incentives for innovation and responsiveness as problems to which SWPs could be the answer. Several possible positive outcomes from the pilots were listed, and are very briefly summarised here.

27. Employee-owned SWPs, in particular, may command more loyalty and have a lower staff turnover than a local authority (LA), it said. Their small size and community location would mean that all of the SWP "partners" could familiarise themselves with the families who required their services. Freed from the onerous bureaucratic demands of their LA, they would have more time for building relationships.

28. Similarly, social workers would be able to take decisions rather than referring them up LA hierarchies. Their judgement would count much more and the tendency to deprofessionalisation would be reversed. Perhaps, too, SWPs would have more of an incentive than LAs to respond promptly to the needs of families and **innovate in their practice** if the alternative was to risk losing their service contracts.

29. The pilot programme was intended to provide the evidence for or against. But there was one controversy that the pilots could not decide one way or the other: should SWPs be allowed to make a profit? The *CCM* working group answered with an unapologetic "yes" because, in its view, **profit-sharing** would reward "responsiveness, industry and effectiveness, while penalising indifference and inefficiency."

30. SWPs would be left free to concentrate on looked after children and care leavers rather than child protection. They would be voluntary or community sector organisations, social enterprises, or private businesses liberated from the control of their local authorities and able to be more flexible and versatile in consequence.

31. Ultimately the intention was to improve **outcomes** for children and the SWPs pursued these outcomes in a variety of ways. The following aims, which can be divided into practice-related and workforce/organisational aims, can be gleaned from *Care Matters*, *CCM* and the national evaluation of the SWPs:

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[5] Consistent Care Matters: Exploring the Potential of Social Work Practices, Professor Julian Le Grand, Department for Education and Skills, 2007.

32. **Practice-related aims**

   A. More social work time for **direct and more innovative work** with children and families thanks to a reduction in bureaucracy and paperwork;

   B. More **advocacy** for children, ensuring that they get the support they need in key aspects of their lives, eg education, health, leisure and birth family contact;

   C. Stronger and **more lasting relationships** between social workers, acting as "lead professionals," and the children and families they support;

   D. A more **responsive,** proactive style of working with children and families;

   E. Fewer placement changes, giving children **more stability**;

   F. Social workers to have more **control over budgets** to fund the placements, support and activities they deem best for children.

33. **Workforce/organisational aims**

   A. SWPs to be **autonomous**, small groups of social workers, similar to GP practices and independent of their local authorities and their top-down management style;

   B. Better **recruitment and retention** of social workers, who have improved working conditions and are freed from the restrictions of local authority employment;

   C. Complete culture change with more **independence** for social workers to decide what is best for children and families;

   D. SWPs to be **commissioned** and contracted by local authorities, with clear lines of accountability, devolved budgets and ability to use surplus funds for profit or reinvestment;

   E. Social workers to have a "genuine **financial and personal stake**" in their SWP.

   F. Different SWPs to develop **diverse specialisms** over time, eg disabilities or parenting problems, eventually offering people a choice of SWP.

What SWPs achieved

34. How successful were the SWPs in achieving these aims? A summary of the findings from the national evaluation[6] was presented at the Summit.

Relationships with the local authority

- Close relationships with the LA were essential for the start-up and survival of SWPs;

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[6] Social Work Practices: Report of the National Evaluation, Nicky Stanley et al, Department for Education, 2012.

- SWPs were reliant on LAs for a range of support services, e.g., to various extents, for training, legal services, out-of-hours services, advice on complex cases and child protection work. One SWP never moved outside LA management.

- LAs were reluctant to cede control of placement budgets to SWPs and most SWPs were not prepared to manage the risks this would entail. Only one SWP held the placement budget for all young people, but managers had control of it rather than frontline workers.

- The upshot was that, although four of the five SWPs were legally independent entities, they continued to depend on their LAs. But social workers still reported that they enjoyed more autonomy and easier decision-making than they thought would have been allowed within an LA bureaucracy.

Local authority commissioning

- Providers found the commissioning process demanding, potential GP-practice style professional partnerships being put off by a lack of experience and resources in relation to bidding for contracts.

- One LA commissioner argued that contracts of more than three years were needed for a new service to establish itself and produce quality work, especially given the investment of time and energy necessary for the tendering process.

Welcoming office environment

- Children and parents often found SWP offices homelier and less clinical than local authority equivalents. "It's a lot better than any social services building I've ever been in," said one parent.

Being known to staff

- SWPs were often experienced as friendlier. Small, close-knit teams shared information about caseloads and knew children and families by name. This improved service users' self-esteem and sense of personal value.

Accessibility of services

- It was originally expected that SWPs would provide a formal 24-hour, seven days a week service. This raised two issues:

  - It put off prospective SWPs, proving to be a barrier to commissioning pilots to do the work and to recruiting staff;

  - Children and young people preferred informal contact with staff via mobiles to using formal out-of-hours services. But SWPs and LA comparators performed equally well, most children finding it easy to contact their worker.

Decision-making and bureaucracy

- SWP staff and children's carers both reported speedier decision-making because frontline staff had more responsibility for taking those decisions. But, compared with LA sites, SWP children were both more likely to report quicker decision-making and more likely to report delays;

- There were no differences between SWPs and LA comparison sites in terms of staff time spent on form-filling and bureaucracy.

Direct work, innovation and staff morale

- SWP staff were more likely to report sufficient time for direct, face to face work with children and families, attributed to lower caseloads;

- Workplace culture was judged more positive in SWPs and morale was generally higher. But this was counteracted by a greater sense of job insecurity;

- SWP staff were more likely to feel that innovative practice was encouraged and that mistakes were viewed as learning opportunities.

Staff retention

- Three of the five SWPs evaluated had low staff turnover, but experience in the other two was mixed. The private sector SWP lost half of its qualified staff in the second year of the evaluation, thanks to what became a fractious relationship with its LA.

Lasting relationships and placement changes

- SWP children were more likely to report having had the same worker over the last year. But many children said their key worker had changed when they were transferred from the LA to the SWP and that they were given no choice, something they resented;

- Most children in SWPs and LA comparators said allocated workers listened to them, cared about them and did their best;

- Most SWPs were successful in reducing placement changes in their first year (but not the SWP which had incentives to cut placement costs and made high use of the private sector).

Other points

- Evidence for 33E and F above was mixed. Higher morale in SWPs probably gave rise to a sense of having a personal stake, although various schemes to give social workers a financial stake too were not an unalloyed success. It is not possible to tell from the pilots whether a broad, national programme of SWPs would lead to the development of diverse specialisms.

- Questions have been raised about sustainability, although the DfE's pilot programme was always due to end after three years. Just one of the five evaluated pilots was still operational by the end of 2014.

MESSAGES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT*

- **Developing organisations**

  - Trusting relationships between SWP providers and their local authorities as a source of public sector expertise are vital;

  - Since payment by results and round-the-clock services were generally resisted by SWPs, their future inclusion in the model is inappropriate;

  - Children should be fully consulted about any move into an SWP to avoid feelings of disempowerment and dissatisfaction.

- **Developing practice**

  - User-friendly buildings promote children's engagement and children and their families value the recognition and welcome of a small group of staff who know them. Quality relationships were a feature both of SWPs and LAs;

  - The contracting out process can undermine continuity of worker and choice, although lasting relationships appeared more evident in SWPs once they were established;

  - Small teams make for a more flexible, personalised service and co-locating specialist staff (eg mental health) promotes communication and collaboration;

  - Lower caseloads and specialist focus on looked after children/care leavers raise morale and free up time for direct, higher quality work with children and their families;

  - Attention to contact and the needs of birth families is important, particularly practical and emotional support to meet the difficulties of contact.

- **Threats to future development::**

  - Local authorities could see SWPs as competing to recruit from a limited pool of social workers;

  - LAs may prefer to commission from known organisations rather than small groups of front line staff in professional partnerships;

  - Public spending cuts are making LAs more risk averse;

  - Achieving a workable balance between independence and dependence for professional partnerships can be too complex for some LAs.

*Adapted from the national evaluation of children's SWPs

The way forward

Local authorities: part of them or partners with them?

35. It has already been pointed out that many Summit participants took the view that the organisational vehicle for innovation mattered less than the principles driving it. But there was still some discussion of the relative merits of local authorities and SWPs and whether LAs could capture the same spirit of enterprise.

36. While there appeared to be no reason in principle why the characteristics highlighted in the national evaluation – for example, **user-friendly buildings**, continuity and choice of social worker, and smaller, more approachable teams – could not be duplicated by LAs, some participants doubted whether councils could make the necessary cultural adjustments.

37. On the other side there were conflicting opinions about the interpretation of the evidence for and against SWPs. While Nicky Stanley, speaking for the evaluators, said there was "no clear evidence" of their value as distinct from LAs, Julian Le Grand said the evidence showed that SWPs had performed at least as well as their LA comparators and in many areas better.

38. There was also a difference of view about the extent to which lower caseloads were responsible for the better performance in some respects of SWPs. The evaluators were clear that **lower caseloads** freed up time for face-to-face work with children and families. However, some Summit participants felt that this finding had more to do with the choice of LA comparison sites, arguing instead that SWP caseloads were similar to those in the commissioning LA.

39. As for the **profit motive** we have seen that the *Consistent Care Matters (CCM)* working group, chaired by Le Grand, had been in favour of it. But at the Summit he had modified his view. Although he had no objection to small or medium size for-profit organisations operating in the area, he was more cautious about the use of large corporate providers. Such firms, whose principal aim was the maximisation of shareholder value, were much less likely to be trusted by LA commissioners, he said, yet trust was vital to the success of the commissioning relationship and hence of the service itself.

40. Two of the SWPs evaluated were "professional partnerships" of the kind approved in *CCM*, ie groupings of social workers and other practitioners along the lines of GP practices. One of these, Evolve YP in Staffordshire, was run as a not-for-profit public service "mutual" and was a conspicuous success.

41. "On the whole [mutuals] are remarkably successful," said Professor Le Grand, who also chairs the Cabinet Office-appointed "Mutuals Taskforce". "There is a notable degree of consensus internationally that they have delivered much better services, much more satisfied users of services and a much happier workforce," he told the Summit.

42. Donna Fallows, practitioner manager of Evolve YP, appeared to bear this out in her

presentation to the Summit. Overseen by a social worker-led board, the service consists of four social workers, four personal advisers and one project worker. There were both **pros and cons** to setting up as a social enterprise, as she confessed (see box), but having your own business was an extra incentive to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. Social workers could "make their own magic and get the fire back in their belly," she said.

Donna Fallows, "Evolve YP" SWP, Staffordshire

The positives

- Ownership – when you own something you want to work hard in order to achieve the objectives;

- Cutting bureaucracy – there is no longer any need to chase senior managers for a signature or a decision;

- Creativity – social workers are freed to focus on the needs of children and families, and can be more innovative;

- Agency relationships – have strong links with the LA but have also forged better relationships with others such as foster and residential care staff;

The challenges

- Entrepreneurship – practitioners have to become business-minded;

- Flatter hierarchy – absence of managers meant staff had to grapple with the responsibility to make decisions, leading at first to the need for conflict resolution;

- Infrastructure support – the SWP had to deal, for example, with building maintenance and human resources issues.

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43. The question raised at the Summit was whether a local authority could ever produce the same sense of ownership and enthusiasm. Could the characteristics identified by Fallows ever take root or would the frozen earth of bureaucracy never thaw? What was needed was **"culture change."** In this connection the experience of Deborah Jarman, who ran the Liverpool SWP until it was absorbed by the council after a change of political leadership, was instructive.

44. Liverpool council decided not to extend the SWP's contract in 2012 so Jarman and her team of six social workers, two project workers and two administrators transferred to the local authority. In her view the move went remarkably smoothly and proved that it can be done without detriment to the staff or to the children and young people themselves.

45. According to Jarman the council has been able to give the former SWP team liberty to carry on the same methods of working and it has retained its identity and ethos. "We're beginning to have an impact on the way the local authority works and to change their social workers," she said. "Other social workers within the local authority wanted to learn from the experiences of the SWP team and see whether they could adapt our approach to their own teams."

46. In other words, even some of the more sceptical LAs have been able to learn from the SWP experience. But not every LA had a positive attitude to its SWP or to the basic principles. In her talk Arlene Weekes, who ran a for-profit SWP, spoke of the advantages for children, families, and social workers. But its relationship with the LA broke down, partly because the LA became suspicious of its status as a private company, and the speedy execution of the pilot project had not allowed time for the necessary culture change to occur in children's services.

47. There is no formal **cost-benefit analysis** to help decide the issue between LAs and SWPs. The national evaluation said the complexities of LA finances made it difficult to be precise about costs and benefits, although none of the commissioners interviewed considered that the SWP model had resulted in savings. Commissioners in two LAs saw their SWPs as cost-neutral, whereas in two of the other LAs they said the SWP had been more expensive. It is important to note that LAs participating in the pilot were advised by the DfE that the SWP should cost the same to run as the in-house service. This was to ensure a level financial playing field for testing the model.

48. On balance, it seems unlikely that the considerations listed here, taken as a whole, decisively favour one model or the other. Enthusiasm for SWPs among some participants had to be weighed against scepticism among others, and local authorities had their advocates too. As Nicky Stanley put it: "The vast majority of children and parents in all the SWPs and LA comparison sites in our evaluation said allocated workers listened, cared and did their best for them. I get quite angry when Doncaster [council] and places with severe problems get cited as examples of work in children's services generally. Because our evaluation found that there's a lot of good work going on out there."

49. Even so, there did appear to be a middle ground on which many, if not all, participants felt they could safely congregate. Experience with SWPs, the Hackney model and the Doncaster Children's Services Trust, among others, had begun to mark out the boundaries of a new territory worth exploring, a diversified landscape of provision ranging from not-for-profit and smaller for-profit external providers, on one hand, to in-house services as part of a thoroughly committed LA on the other.

50. On that basis the Summit identified a set of principles, many of which would have to be mastered by *any* organisation, public, private or voluntary, seeking the kind of excellence in **corporate parenting** described in the *Care Matters* green paper. These can be headed as follows: experimentation, culture change, leadership, better commissioning, decision-making and autonomy, and independence and enterprise.

Experimentation

> ***Summit quotes***
>
> *"Social work practices are a way of looking at how great social work can happen – like a 'lab'"*
>
> *"It's such a shame we haven't pursued the SWP model as an experiment. We need to build on the evidence base because we just don't have it at the moment."*
>
> *"We should allow experimentation with practice, locations, budgets, staffing structures, hours, etc."*
>
> *"Outcomes should not be the only driver, but the quality of the experience of children and families."*

51. SWPs act as a **laboratory for new ideas**. They are a way to find out "what works," to experiment with new methods of working with children and families to see whether better outcomes can be achieved. *Every* organisation aiming at the best for children and families must be able to think beyond the tramlines of existing practice and – hugely importantly – create an environment in which this can happen routinely.

52. Testable ideas can be big or small. It might be delegating power and money to small teams of social workers to find out whether they are used more effectively in the interests of children and families. Or it might be as simple as barbecues for foster carers or parents' evenings. Whatever the idea might be, it should be an imaginative response to the expressed needs and desires of children, families and carers. The **evidence base** for interventions with children and families is still thin and new models of social work services are needed which can also serve as labs for the testing of new ideas.

53. There is little doubt that delegation of power would benefit from further testing. What happens, for example, when front line social workers take responsibility for budgets rather than referring decision-making up the management hierarchy? According to several Summit contributors, the result can be savings for the LA as social workers engaged in direct work can respond in a more sensitive, timely and cost effective way to need than a local authority manager or panel.

54. An example would be section 17 spending. Authority of this kind could be passed to social workers either inside or outside a local authority setting – the "Hackney model" and the SWPs have provided some evidence of its potential, but it would benefit from further testing.

55. On another level it might be an opportunity to test the achievability of **economies of scale** by inviting other LAs to consider commissioning the SWP's services. The

deeper the financial cuts in the public sector go, the more attractive such a business model appears. Once again, it may be worth more testing.

Culture change

> ***Summit quotes***
>
> *"There's a management mindset which says this is the way we've always done it. It's an inherent resistance to change."*
>
> *"We need a catalyst for change, a physical entity that is independent. But it couldn't happen in the absence of a relationship with the local authority."*
>
> *"When our social work practice was taken over by the local authority, it was seen in the council as a breath of fresh air."*

56. *Consistent Care Matters (CCM)* gave a succinct appraisal of the impact on social work of local authority culture: "In general, social workers who deal with looked after children come to work with a strong moral purpose, idealism, energy, enthusiasm and a commitment to rectifying injustice. However, once into the job, social workers often feel demotivated, **overwhelmed by bureaucracy** and paperwork and deprived of autonomy."

57. As we have seen, *CCM* saw liberation from LAs as a possible solution, but at the very least bureaucratic expectations and practices should be sufficiently flexible to allow frontline social workers to make their own decisions and for innovation to flourish. Eileen Munro, as also noted, argued in her child protection review that this required a shift from a command and control culture to a **learning and adapting culture** supporting innovation wherever it was generated. If innovation is isolated from the rest of the organisation, it is likely to wither and die.

58. At the Summit it was pointed out that social workers worn down by the demands of LA procedure, and consequently failing to innovate in their practice as much as they should, could be refreshed and reinvigorated by moving to a less hierarchical organisation outside of the council. Their style of working would change more rapidly than it would within the LA.

59. Management resistance to change was held partly responsible for the oppressed feelings of social workers. New forms of ownership, conversely, could be catalysts for change as social workers were liberated to give more time to children and families, listen to their needs and desires, and act accordingly. Service users could be in the driving seat of change.

60. The challenge of producing similar culture change inside a local authority is acute (see next section). Interestingly, the star example from the SWP experiment appears to

have been in Liverpool, where the spark of innovation ignited while the pilot was independent of the LA jolted management out of its rigid mind-set when the SWP was absorbed by the council.

61. According to the practice manager Deborah Jarman, social workers retained the same **ownership** of cases even when the council took over control. Paradoxically, having broken the cultural mould while outside the LA, the former SWP became a champion of culture change *inside* the LA.

Leadership

> ***Summit quotes***
>
> *"You have to give professionals autonomy. It's not impossible in local government but you do have to have a leadership which is utterly committed to that type of culture."*
>
> *"One of the big issues in innovation is that senior managers have got to keep an eye on it. It's not good enough just to have a strategic vision about something, you've got to pay attention to the detail."*
>
> *"Devolved decision-making doesn't necessarily need to be achieved in a social work practice. There is plenty of evidence of successfully delivering this through local authorities."*

62. Responsibility and decision-making can be delegated in all sorts of organisations, be they local authorities or social enterprises. But the organisational commitment to do so must be rock solid and that requires leaders at all levels with a keen eye for the danger of bureaucratic inertia. Some of those present at the Summit thought that sometimes the source of these problems were in 'middle' management.

63. Everyone acknowledged that middle managers have the tricky task of reconciling the demands of those at the top with the needs of social workers on the frontline. But occasionally it leads to an over-reliance on tried and tested methods when the situation merits a more creative response. "The dream and the ambition get swallowed up by this rigid mindset," one contributor commented. So middle managers must be strong and effective leaders too, constantly open-minded about new ideas and propagating a culture of innovation up, down and across the organisation. Professional development for innovation may be part of the answer.

64. Another respect in which the professional partnerships have the advantage over LAs is that they are removed (to an extent) from the vagaries of politics. Even then, as several SWPs found to their cost, a switch of political control in the LA can spell the end of the contract.

65. Effective services for children should, as far as possible, **transcend politics**. They

should not be an ideological plaything. As Julian Le Grand said, one way to do this may be to engender trust by ruling large corporate providers out of the contest for contracts and focusing instead on public service mutuals or other forms of social enterprise. Or another way may be to keep the service in-house and alter systems to devolve responsibility and professional ownership to social workers.

66. It is worth quoting again from *Social Work Reclaimed*: "Anything that an organisation creates should only exist to facilitate effective working with families." No amount of good intentions or imaginative ideas will bear fruit without the political leadership to enable them to flourish.

Better commissioning

> ***Summit quotes***
>
> *"Commissioners tend to think 'I'll hand out the contract and review it in two years' time when it's up for renewal. That's the model, but it isn't the model here."*
>
> *"If you've got the senior people behind you, you've got a chance, because the bureaucracy and the commissioning process are a nightmare."*
>
> *"They haven't understood the necessity for a continuing relationship with the provider. It's partly because commissioners have been told for years not to have that relationship and that it's all about 'divorce' [from the provider]."*

67. When children's services are commissioned out to third parties, the process needs to be much subtler than the heavy-handed methods sometimes used by LA commissioners when SWPs were piloted. As was repeatedly emphasised during the Summit, children's services hived off into a social enterprise or not-for-profit company, must work in partnership with the LA to be successful. It has already been noted that, according to the national evaluation, close links with the LA were essential to the start-up and survival of SWPs.

68. This requires a **rethink** of common commissioning practice in LAs. Rather than floating off the service and then reviewing it in two years, the relationship between commissioner and commissioned should be closer with more frequent reviews of contracts, perhaps every three months. Local authority support should be written into the contract, which would probably fail to deliver if the main objective was to save money rather than strengthen services. None of the commissioners interviewed in the SWP evaluation considered that it had resulted in savings.

69. It is not enough that inspirational senior managers write their grand visions of commissioning practice into their strategies. It requires **attention to detail** and the determination to drive it through if it is not to risk stalling in the middle levels of management. Understanding of the complexities of commissioning, the Summit heard, should be promoted through CPD programmes because the paucity of these skills is a

real weakness in many organisations.

70. Professional development for middle management commissioners might, for example, move them away from "static" approaches to commissioning based on contract and review to "dynamic" approaches based on collaborative commissioning. Instead of a limited or occasional dialogue between commissioners and providers, perspectives would be regularly shared, commissioners would support providers to succeed and services would be better able to adapt to new or unanticipated demands. Rather than leaving providers to sink or swim, there would be an element of co-production involved.

71. Such an approach could help with the notoriously difficult business of commissioning for outcomes when it is hard to define exactly what a good outcome would be. A social enterprise might be empowered by its host LA to explore new styles of working which themselves help to define the limits of what is possible with children and families. They could work with children and families to **"co-produce"** the good outcomes and gather evidence of what works at the same time.

72. Services modelled on SWPs should be considered as "prototypes" rather than "pilots," it was suggested at the Summit. The prototype model allows for the idea that the LA is not merely commissioning a service but supporting the development of it. A Summit participant said that such services should be seen as "contracting partnerships" and should remain part of "the family of public services" – ie one among a variety of public services, differently organised but all dedicated to the interests of children and families.

73. Of course, the SWPs were being trialled for the first time and relationships with their LAs were almost bound to be abnormal in this early phase. The initial months were unrepresentative in that much time was spent working out who would do what, something that might not have been picked up by the national evaluation because the majority of the data was collected during the first year of the pilots. It is hard to predict from these pioneers how future relationships might differ and evolve in the light of learning from the pilot programme.

74. But it is evident that protocols clarifying the respective responsibilities of LAs and SWPs, drawing on the lessons of the pilot programme, would be necessary from the outset. Open, trusting relationships where both parties are willing to accept and learn from mistakes together are vital.

75. It has been noted that providers found the commissioning process tough, especially small-scale GP practice-style professional partnerships. Social workers with a taxing day job could easily be overwhelmed by the additional demands of a public sector procurement exercise. The DfE provided support to fill the capability gap, but both government and LAs would need to do more to strengthen social workers' capacity to cope.

76. The national evaluation raised the important issue of **job insecurity** in SWPs and the consequences for staff morale. One commissioner argued that contracts of more than three years were needed for a new service to establish itself and produce quality work,

especially given the investment of time and energy necessary for the tendering process. It might also be argued that a contract for five years, or even longer, would make social workers feel more secure in their jobs, although it would have to include safeguards against ineffective or failing SWPs.

77. The issue of organisational risk was also raised at the Summit. To what extent would LAs entrust politically sensitive services to an independent or semi-independent SWP and how equipped would such a small outfit be to cope in the aftermath of culpable error? More consideration could be given to how organisational risk can be managed through commissioning relationships.

78. Once again, trust was a condition of any relationship at all. Since council leaders and commissioners often distrusted the profit motive in children's services, several participants stated their commitment to the not-for-profit model as the way forward for innovation.

Decision-making and autonomy

> ***Summit quotes***
>
> *"We haven't empowered our team managers and frontline workers enough with the ability to manage and spend budgets."*
>
> *"Can we see if people having more autonomy, control, better buildings, does provide the context in which great social work can happen?"*
>
> *"In my experience social workers wanted responsibility because they wanted to be able to influence decisions."*

79. A willingness to delegate authority to front line social workers was deemed essential. Social workers themselves often comment that the lack of autonomy in their roles is a denial of their professionalism. As a social worker quoted by Le Grand said: "You train us as professionals and you treat us like clerks".

80. The more autonomy that is entrusted to social workers, the more they can take responsibility for the children and families with whom they work. It gives them licence to use their **professional judgement** and makes them less likely to hide behind the procedure manual when the going gets tough. Social workers told the national evaluation that, while strong relationships with the local authority were essential, greater autonomy allowed more streamlined decision-making than was possible when it was integrated into the council bureaucracy.

81. One of the stickiest aspects of autonomy is control of budgets by frontline social workers. As already mentioned, key aspects of the original SWP model ran into difficulties during negotiations with local authorities, none more so than the aim that social workers should choose how to spend funding for children and families without

having to go to a manager or panel for approval. Only one SWP held the **placement budget** for all young people and managers had control of it rather than frontline workers. Financial decisions usually had to be referred to managers or to a panel and in some cases workers were reluctant to carry the burden during times of economic austerity.

82. But, as with decision-making in general, the national evaluation found that some SWP practitioners felt it was more efficient to devolve budget responsibilities to them (see paragraph 97 for a caveat about risk). They could make and act on decisions more quickly, with better and more informed use of limited resources. At the Summit it was commented that resources could be used more flexibly and sensitively in response to need without necessarily having to heed rigid monthly expenditure limits if it made more sense to spend more in some months and less in others.

83. At the very least children and families should get what they needed quickly and without fuss. Paperwork should be minimal. The local authority could allocate funding for the year and the service would be accountable to the LA for overall expenditure and the quality of provision. Rather than being micro-managed, it would be managed at a strategic level on the basis that a nimble, responsive service almost always has better outcomes.

84. Crucially, most staff told the national evaluation that less bureaucracy and paperwork meant more time spent with children and families, and **speedier decision-making**. In fact, SWP staff were more likely than their LA counterparts to say that they were able to give the right amount of time to direct work with children and families, although the evaluators attributed this to lower caseloads rather than a reduction in paperwork.

85. There was a strong current of opinion at the Summit that organisations should do more to ensure that social workers' caseloads were manageable, not least because innovation and enterprise could hardly flourish if they did not.

Independence and enterprise

> *Summit quotes*
>
> *"It's about the ability of social workers to be flexible in how the service is delivered, not quite so process-driven."*
>
> *"I was struck by how important user-friendly buildings were in the evaluation but it's really quite simple to improve the look of them. If councils could only be less rigid in their own approach."*
>
> *"Our social work practice showed the benefit of managers not being stuck in the office and of practitioners not being afraid to make mistakes so they can learn from them, not being scared to use their initiative."*

86. Taking ownership of your own service suddenly puts you in charge of your own destiny. That can be highly motivating for social workers, who, to quote again Donna Fallows from Evolve YP, can "get the fire back in their belly." Whether the same sense of enterprise and ownership can be recreated in a local authority setting is a moot point. A minimum condition would have to be that social workers were granted decision-making autonomy and "ownership" of cases, and that may be possible in an LA too, as Deborah Jarman's experience indicates.

87. Part of it is being able to determine the look and feel of the service, for example by giving the offices a more individual, child-friendly character, rooted in the neighbourhood rather than drawing on the LA's ubiquitous standard issue colour palate. Instead of feeling like the remote outpost of an indifferent or hostile bureaucracy, it can be made to feel more part of the community to which it belongs.

88. The national evaluation found that children and parents often found SWP offices more congenial and less clinical than local authority equivalents. Premises were accessible and tried to make visitors feel at home, offering things like computers, pool tables and space for contact activities.

89. Significant, too, was the fact that the small staff teams conferred about cases and knew the children and families by name, which improved service users' self-esteem and sense of **personal value**. As was remarked at the Summit, good outcomes for children and families should not be the only driver of service standards; the quality of their experience of services should also be fully factored in, though of course it is likely that the two are closely correlated.

90. It is hard to see why these service qualities should not be replicated in any sector, public, private or voluntary, given the will to do so. But, as Donna Fallows' comments about "fire in the belly" imply, it is easier for staff to discover the motivation when they have that all-important ownership of cases, if not of the enterprise itself.

91. Of course, sometimes the very idea of local authority involvement may be the problem. For example, the client group may be disaffected and dislike what they see as officialdom; or the social services function itself may necessitate a degree of independence from the LA. So it was suggested that the SWP model would be particularly useful for care leavers and children on the verge of leaving care who may be fed up with their LA. Or for a team of independent reviewing officers (IROs) who should be able to challenge the LA when they are dissatisfied with a child's care plan.

92. Alternatively the service may be highly specialised and benefit from the concentration of expertise that the SWP model can produce. For instance, one LA proposes to set up a SWP for culturally harmful practices, like female genital mutilation and forced marriage. SWPs for disabled children, young carers or child mental health are similar possibilities.

93. A further example could be preventive and early intervention services more generally, where families may be suspicious of LAs because of their involvement in child protection and "taking their children away". Many early help services are already

farmed out to the independent sector, but SWPs could be another model free of the LA "taint". Arguably, LAs could benefit from a strategic focus on child protection provision while commissioning others to provide for the preventive end of the spectrum.

94. There is a second, perhaps related advantage of the SWP model. It is that where there is a limited demand for a service, as might be the case within a single LA, say, for a team of IROs, it can be extended to other LAs which might also be interested in commissioning it for their own looked after children. The chance to achieve economies of scale in this way may be particularly attractive to LAs as they are forced to bear down on costs.

95. But the model does depend on a **special kind of social worker**. It is one who is not only willing to take on responsibility for cases without always referring to management for a signature or a decision, but who is also happy and able to run a business. He or she must not be afraid to write a business plan or manage the accounts, which requires aptitude, training and a measure of resilience.

96. In this respect size mattered. Small practices might be better able to motivate and retain staff, and job satisfaction might be more easily attained. But cash-strapped local authorities were looking for economies of scale and larger enterprises were more likely to be commissioned, which social workers might equally welcome as attended by more administrative and financial support. "Small" could look beautiful to social workers but "large" had its attractions too.

97. Much also depends, as already noted, on a **supportive partnership** with the LA (or LAs) of which back office functions are part. We have also commented that LAs should take a mature view of organisational risk and consider it explicitly during commissioning. Where services are contracted out, will the provider be permitted to manage risk according to its lights or will it be controlled by the LA through the contract? Might the consequences for a small organisation of mismanaged risk be catastrophic? Some SWP managers told the evaluators they were concerned about the risks implicit in assuming control of budgets for small organisations and did not want budgetary control for this reason.

98. Allied to this was the question of personal risk. Better commissioning practice could give social workers more job security, but there were other risks associated with independence like the barriers that might make it hard to form important relationships with LA teams, the desire to innovate and try out new working practices, or the aptitude for business that might turn out to be more elusive than hoped. Evidently social workers might be more easily motivated as part of independent enterprises but this had to be weighed against the risks involved. Where should the balance lie?

Conclusion and next steps

99. The question whether the risks of SWPs are outweighed by the benefits is complicated, as we have seen, and the general view of the Summit was that it would be better to focus on the basic principles rather than the vehicle for their implementation. These

principles have been summarised under six headings: experimentation, culture change, leadership, better commissioning, decision-making and autonomy, and independence and enterprise. We have found no reason why they should not be realised by local authorities or SWP-type organisations, although it has been argued that there are significant hurdles to cross in both cases.

100.   SWPs might have worked better had they enjoyed better commissioning relationships and more decision-making autonomy; local authorities might do just as well given the right leadership and the internal structures to deliver effectively. Propelled by progressive leadership, the following factors can make a real difference: user-friendly buildings, social work decision-making autonomy, small teams with a degree of independence from LA bureaucracies and able to build strong relationships with children and families, collaborative commissioning, active caseload management, and a permissive rather than prohibitive culture. Taken together, they are likely to result in better outcomes for children and families.

101.   If the aspirations voiced at our Summit are to be realised, then steps need to be taken in relation to:

- A strong, well supported social work profession
- Collaborative commissioning
- Leadership and culture
- Building the evidence base

A strong, well supported social work profession

102.   At the heart of this is trust. It was suggested at the Summit that local authority leaders, for good reasons or otherwise, do not always trust social workers to deliver. Of course, this attitude to social work is often biased and unjust. But it is nevertheless essential that all social workers are ambitious for high standards and are seen to achieve them, if more power and influence are to be delegated to the front line. Stakeholders, including TCSW, ADCS, ADASS, LGA, Higher Education, Principal Social Worker national networks and DfE should consider how:

- A robust and effective approaches to CPD can build confidence and evidence that social workers are fulfilling their responsibilities for professional development in line with their own needs and those of their service;

- National frameworks, including the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF which will be reviewed in the early part of 2015 and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Work, recently published by the Chief Social Worker for children should support high professional standards and confidence.

- **A Rigorous and coherent** national framework for professional supervision should be developed, in line with the Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework held by the Local Government Association. This should set out standards for

supervision, remedy inconsistencies in standards between organisations, and improve outcomes for children and families.

Collaborative commissioning

103. Social work should be commissioned by local authorities, whether for in-house or external provision, with a view to the best possible outcomes for children and families. It has been argued here that collaborative commissioning is the right approach, in which the LA is a partner in developing the service.

104. We have seen that small-scale professional partnerships found the commissioning process particularly challenging because social workers had to deal with it alongside a demanding day job. Although in this case the DfE provided support to fill the capability gap, both government and LAs would need to do more to strengthen social workers' capacity and capability to respond to such needs and demands.

105. Central and local government and their partners should consider how best to promote and disseminate good practice in commissioning, given the problems that transpired during the pilot programme. For its part, TCSW plans to arrange a summit in 2015 on commissioning social work, building on some of the issues raised at the Children's Social Work Practices Summit and in other debates. A key purpose of such an event would be to bring together **key stakeholders** to evaluate and develop best practice.

106. Stakeholders should reflect on how they can better support managers, commissioners, practitioners and others in developing frameworks for maximising the contribution of social work and creating the conditions for good social work as elaborated in this report. Among these conditions will be professional autonomy, a learning and adapting culture, and sound leadership.

Leadership and culture change

107. Local government and social care leaders (including TCSW, ADCS, ADASS, LGA, Higher Education, Principal Social Worker national networks and DfE) ADCS, ADASS TCSW) should consider a new initiative to promote a progressive leadership and management culture in local authority children's services, particularly in relation to social work.

108. For example, Skills for Care and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services have created a management culture "health check," a dynamic diagnostic tool which promotes debate and change in organisations so that social work is better managed and led. Furthermore, Skills for Care and the National Skills Academy for Social Care have produced a social work leadership toolkit.

109. The focus of both tools is on social work with adults, but we believe there is considerable potential to extend the concept into children's services. Hidebound styles of leadership can be a significant **roadblock** to reform in children's services and

there is an urgent need to promote a new understanding at senior levels of how and when to use social workers to best advantage.

110.   Stakeholders should aim to build on the work of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). The remarks of Professor Eileen Munro, in her foreword to the NCSL's *Leading for Learning* report in 2012 are pertinent here:

> *"We need to move from a culture preoccupied with compliance to one focused on learning, where professionals have the freedom to use their expertise to assess and provide the help each individual child needs."*

Building the evidence base

111.   Stakeholders should consider how they can help to build a sound evidence base for the best organisational arrangements for different kinds of social work with children and families. It was noted in the section on "Independence and enterprise" that different models may be suited to different circumstances, but much more research is required to establish "what works".

112.   There are implications here for the DfE's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme. It is suggested that this should carefully consider funding small-scale, experimental service innovations in the field. Consideration should also be given by government to directing a bigger portion of children's services research budgets to testing new service models and evaluating outcomes.

113.   For its part, TCSW will promote the development of **research and practice** which explore the value of new models of social work service delivery for children and families, supported by our Professional Assembly, Faculties, and Research and Knowledge Exchange group (RAKE), and working with our partners including the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS). We would aim, in the longer term to assemble a database of good practice in the effective deployment of social workers.

114.   This brings us back to where we started: how can local authorities carry out their role as corporate parents? How can social work play its part in ensuring, as the *Care Matters* green paper said, that the LA is a "powerful advocate" for children to receive the best of everything and make the best of their lives? As our Summit showed, these are still very much live questions.

What next for SWPs?

115.   The pilot phase under the 2008 Children and Young Persons Act is now over and local authorities can now choose to delegate their social care functions. SWPs undoubtedly provide a workable model for LAs looking to diversify children's services and try out new, more innovative approaches. For LAs in search of new ideas SWPs can, as described above, be the key to experimentation, culture change, stronger leadership, better commissioning, decision-making and autonomy, and independence

and enterprise. Given the right leadership, a more open culture and better commissioning, SWPs can give social workers more latitude to bring professional judgement, enterprise and flair to their work with children and families.

116. Of course, LAs can promote this kind of social work internally too, although those willing to try out a variety of models of service delivery will have more opportunities to find out what works and what doesn't. But it is up to individual LAs to determine whether there is merit in the SWP model for them and their children and young people. Now, with new legislation in place to allow more outsourcing of children's services, they have experience elsewhere to call on before making up their minds. Doncaster Children's Services Trust, which has a 10-year contract, is trying to demonstrate how an entire department can be transformed into a not-for-profit company, while Richmond and Kingston councils are trying something equally radical with their "Achieving for Children" social enterprise.

117. Where innovation on a smaller scale is outsourced, it should perhaps be with longer-term contracts than were given to the SWP pilots. The ideas floated at the Summit have been mentioned already, e.g. SWP-style specialist services in child mental health or culturally harmful practices; or where the goal is independence from the LA as with IROs; or where the "stigma" of LA involvement in, say, early intervention services may prompt consideration of alternatives. Since the new legislation also permits statutory services to be outsourced, there is scope to apply the model in child protection.

118. SWPs may be regarded as an opportunity for experiment, say with devolving responsibility for deciding how section 17 funds are spent to frontline social workers. On another level they might be an opportunity to test the achievability of **economies of scale** by inviting other LAs to consider commissioning the SWP's services. The deeper the financial cuts in the public sector go, the more attractive such a business model may appear.

119. These steps would have to be considered as part of each local authority's improvement strategy for its children's services. What needs to improve, what are the objectives and how can they be achieved? There is no suggestion that one size fits all; as was said earlier, a more varied landscape of provision has come into view, ranging from not-for-profit and smaller for-profit providers to reformed in-house services.

120. SWPs are one possible response when financial austerity requires that quality improvement comes with a modest price tag. A strong, well supported social work profession, better commissioning, powerful leadership allied to culture change, and a more robust evidence base are **prerequisites of progress.** TCSW, with its partners, will support these developments and help to create a climate in which local authorities can innovate more freely. Ultimately, of course, LAs themselves will have to decide what is in the best interests of the children, young people and families they serve.

ANNEX A

List of Summit participants

Ruth Allen	Chair of the Mental Health Faculty Steering Group, TCSW
Bob Ashe	Children and Families Faculty Steering Group, TCSW *[Facilitator]*
Helen Austerberry	Research Officer, Department of Childhood, Families and Health (Institute of Education)
Lydia Bennett	Professional Practice Advisor, TCSW
John Bostock	Department for Education
Susannah Bowyer	ADCS Workforce Development Committee/Research in Practice
Chris Brophy	Partner, Commercial - Capsticks Solicitors LLP
Mark Campbell	Lead for Practice and Development, Essex Council
Ash Chand	Head of Professional Standards & Practice, TCSW *[Facilitator]*
Jo Cleary	Chair, TCSW
Rona Dixon-Cal liste	Business Support Officer, Professional Practice, TCSW
Elizabeth Edwards	Professional Assembly, TCSW
David Fairhurst	Director, Mutual Ventures
Donna Fallows	Practice Lead and Senior Practitioner, Evolve YP
Patrice Fennell	Topaz SWP, Lambeth
Beverley Folan	Topaz SWP, Lambeth
Mark Godfrey	Chair of the Adults Principal Social Worker Network

Philip Hatch	Blackburn SWP
Janice Haynes	Principal Social Worker, Royal Borough of Kingston on Thames
Lucie Heyes	Professional Assembly, TCSW
Dave Hill	Executive Director, Essex County Council and TCSW Board member
Colin Hilton	Chair, Doncaster Children's Services Trust
Annie Hudson	Chief Executive, TCSW
Shereen Hussein	Principal Research Fellow (Chair), Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King's College London
Mark Ivory	Head of Policy and Communications, TCSW
Deborah Jarman	Team Leader, Liverpool SWP
Helen Johnston	Head of Programmes, LGA
Cath Larkins	Co-Director, The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation (UCLAN)
Julian Le Grand	Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy, LSE
Cathie Louis	Senior Communications Officer, TCSW
Ellen Marks	Deputy Principal Social Worker, Islington Council
Carrie Marsh	Registered Manager, Match Foster Care
Peter Marsh	Professor of Child and Family Welfare (Emeritus), University of Sheffield
Anne Mercer	Professional Adviser, TCSW *[Facilitator]*
Dan Mobbs	Chief Executive, Map SWP, Norfolk
Alix Morgan	ADCS Workforce Development Committee/Head of Operations, Virtual Staff College
Vijay Patel	Senior Professional Practice Advisor, TCSW *[Facilitator]*

Colin Pettigrew	Director of Children's Services, Sefton Council
Rebecca Regler	TCSW Professional Assembly
Julie Ridley	Reader in Applied Social Science, School of Social Work (UCLAN)
Doina Sandor	Cabinet Office
Michael Simpson	Strategy and Policy Adviser, TCSW *[Facilitator]*
Nicky Stanley	Professor of Social Work, UCLAN
Tony Stanley	Principal Social Worker, Tower Hamlets/Vice-Chair of the PCFSW Network
June Thoburn	Children and Families Faculty Steering Group, TCSW
Lucy Titheridge	Principal Social Worker, Surrey County Council
Isabelle Trowler	Chief Social Worker for Children
Bernard Walker	Chair of the Professional Assembly & Adults Faculty, TCSW *[Facilitator]*
Joe Warner	Focus, NE Lincs/Adults Faculty Steering Group, TCSW
Arlene Weekes	"In the Spirit" SWP
Rebecca White	Young People's 16+ Accommodation Transitions Strategy Development Manager, Norfolk Council
Paula Wilton	Social Worker, Evolve YP

ANNEX B

Social Work Practice pilots in summary

121. The Department for Education (DfE) began piloting Social Work Practices (SWPs) for looked after children and care leavers in 2008. Fifteen local authorities (LAs) participated, although some withdrew and by May 2013 there were just seven operating in Barnet, Blackburn with Darwen, Bristol, Kent, Norfolk, Redbridge, and Staffordshire.

122. Five pilots started between December 2009 and May 2010 which were the subject of an independent evaluation commissioned by the DfE. Some of the findings reported in the evaluation have been summarised above.

123. Here is an abbreviated description of the five pilots as given in the report:

    - **SWP A:** remained within the LA as a separate and discrete unit, working with 180 young people aged 14 – 21;
    - **SWP B:** a professional practice (ie a GP practice-style group of practitioners) run as a private company, working with 80 children and young people aged 8 – 17 with high levels of need;
    - **SWP C:** run by a voluntary organisation, working with 582 young people aged 16 – 24 initially;
    - **SWP D:** run by a voluntary organisation, working with 120 children and young people aged 0 – 17;
    - **SWP F:** a professional practice run as a social enterprise and involving a group of social workers who moved out of the host LA, working with 148 children and young people aged 8 and above.

124. At the time of the Summit, only one of the original five pilots was still operating as a SWP (initial contracts were for three years). A second wave of children's SWP pilots, launched in 2011, was not part of the evaluation.

125. A parallel evaluation was commissioned by the Department of Health of Social Work Practices with Adults, seven of which were set up on the same basis as their children's counterparts during 2011 – 12. Their brief was to support adults with social care and support needs, particularly in relation to assessment, care planning and reviews. Five of the pilots continue to operate, but two have been brought back in-house by their local authorities.