

An analysis of the concerns of 200 social workers working in adult services in England

A series of eight seminars have been held across England in the past year. The seminars have been aimed at front line social workers working in adult services. The purpose of the seminars has been to provide an opportunity for social workers to express their views about factors affecting them. An average of 30 social workers attended each seminar. The seminars followed the same format and information from participants was gathered in the same way. The seminars used a qualitative research methodology. The seminars were run by an experienced social worker, who has research experience. The professional experience of the facilitator enabled a degree of trust to be developed quickly, enabling the generation of valuable information. The results of the seminars demonstrate that a number of common issues being experienced by social workers across England. These are:

- Increased bureaucratisation of service. Particularly the impact of the introduction of Resource Allocation Computer systems
- Concern about inadequate support systems for service users opting for personal budgets and concern that some service users are being pushed into accepting personal budgets in a drive to meet external targets
- The operation of multi disciplinary teams, with some social workers being put into isolated situations, without adequate support systems
- The tensions that participants feel regarding their professional practice and agency policy
- The desire of social workers working with adults to be listened to in the same way that the Eileen Munro review is listening to the views of child care social workers
- Concerns about cuts in numbers of social work posts and terms and conditions of employment, against a backdrop of increasing demand.

The purpose of the application to present the findings is to be able to share the lessons from the research / consultation exercise.