

Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers

Building a Caring Society. Together.



social development

Department:
Social Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



The Department of Social Development is the main employer of Social Workers in this country. The services of Social Workers are considered crucial towards helping the social development sector to deal effectively with various social problems ranging from services to vulnerable groups, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, chronic poverty, food insecurity and other related social conditions.

The provision of the afore-mentioned services is informed by the constitutional, legal and international obligations as well as policies and programmes that are central to the mandate of the department in contributing towards the creation of a developmental state. Government is also striving to ensure that there is increased access to services in this sector, especially developmental social welfare services, as they were previously marginalised.

The current challenge facing government is lack of capacity to implement these policies and programmes due to amongst others, the overwhelming demand for services and the inability of the sector to deal effectively with the surge in demand, mainly because of the shortage of Social Workers.

The continuous shortage and turnover of Social Workers in South Africa, results largely from their movement between NGOs, government departments, private and corporate sector as well as migration from rural to urban areas and to overseas countries.

When looking at the geographical distribution of Social Workers per province, it also becomes apparent that whilst poverty levels are higher in more rural provinces, they are without exception the most under resourced in terms of the numbers of Social Workers in those areas. It could be postulated that even within the rural provinces, Social Workers are located within the bigger urban centres rather than in the rural areas.

In order to retain and increase the number of these professionals, the department took a decision that effective solutions should be investigated, hence the realisation of the need for the development of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers.

The government Draft Scarce Skills Policy Framework (2003) recognises social work as a scarce skill and proposes that as with all scarce skills, strategies are developed to facilitate the recruitment and retention of such scarce skills. One of the objectives of the National Human Resources Development Strategy is the supply of the high-quality skills (particularly scarce skills) that are responsive to societal and economic needs.

South Africa's need to recruit and retain Social Workers can therefore not be overemphasised. The desired outcome of the recruitment and retention strategy is to determine conditions that impact negatively on social work services as well as to provide guidelines and measures that will ensure the recruitment and retention of Social Workers within the profession. This I believe will facilitate our steadfast efforts of ardently confronting the challenges that government face with regard to effective and efficient delivery of social welfare services.

The application of this strategy will require commitment from all role players. Therefore I want to urge all critical stakeholders to join hands towards the comprehensive implementation of this strategy for the benefit of the social work profession, the sector and the masses of our country towards the achievement of a common goal of a "better life for all".



Dr Zola Skweyiya, MP
Minister of Social Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers is a collective effort of the department and key stakeholders in the social welfare sector, who made a direct contribution in the compilation of this strategy. The department would therefore like to extend its sincere appreciation to the team that was led by Ms N Kela, Chief Director: Welfare Services Transformation and consisted of Representatives from Labour Organisations (Hospersa and NEHAWU), the Council for Social Service Professions, the Department at Provincial and National level. This team conducted research on the specific areas allocated to them and wrote specific parts or chapters of the strategy.

The team consisted of the following:

Ms Nomathemba Kela

Ms Margo Davids

Ms Yvonne Mbane

Ms Civil Legodu

Ms Bernice Hlagala

Ms Iveda Smith

Ms Fazeela Fayers

Ms Nonhlanhla Mthimkulu

The department further acknowledges and recognises the contribution of all the other stakeholders who made a significant input in the development of the strategy by participating in consultative sessions and giving input on, as well as editing the document. This includes Institutions of Higher Learning (ASASWEI), Non-Governmental Organisations and Members of the National and Provincial Department of Social Development, HSWS and others who may not have been mentioned directly.

Social Workers remain a key resource in the development agenda of the country and their recruitment and retention in the sector and in the country will ensure realisation of the social development goals of the country.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	06
1. Introduction	14
2. Aims and Objectives	15
3. Policy / Legislative Framework	15
4. Situational Analysis	17
5. Implementation Strategies	24
6. Recruitment and Selection	25
7. Education, Training and Development	27
8. Service Delivery	31
9. Governance Structures in the Social Work Profession	34
10. Promote Occupational Safety Standards within the Workplace	37
11. Conditions of Service	41
12. Marketing and Communication	51
13. Implementattion of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy	53
14. Conclusion	54

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social work services in South Africa have undergone major transformation since 1994. With the acceptance of South Africa back into the international arena, the social work profession has not escaped the process of globalisation and the extremely aggressive recruitment policies of the international agencies. International markets have begun recruiting skills from other developing countries including South Africa, thereby robbing these countries of scarce skills. The attraction and retention of highly skilled people is a priority for organisations worldwide.

It is recognised that Social Workers in South Africa are well trained and there is an increasing demand on their skills, both nationally and internationally. A high percentage of Social Workers have left South Africa on short term contracts to provide services, particularly in the present Common Wealth countries. In order to place the migration of social work professionals in context, it is imperative to understand the various factors that influence migration, both locally and internationally.

Although international migration of Social Workers has been occurring even before the 1970's, there has been a rapid increase of outward migration of staff with internationally accredited qualifications from South Africa. Reasons for emigration have been cited as availability of lucrative salaries and improved living and working conditions in the countries of choice.

As mentioned in the situational analysis, Social Workers have not escaped the lure of globalisation and have reacted by obtaining lucrative short-term contracts in other countries. The main recruiter of Social Workers at this time seems to be the United Kingdom followed by Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In interviews conducted with Social Workers that are considering the migration to other countries, many of them stated that their skills as Social Workers are being recognised and appreciated much better in other countries.

These countries require the specialist clinical skills of Social Workers and the Social Workers trained in this paradigm have been able to fit into such environments without much additional training. Other factors that impact on the environment of Social Workers include the paradigm shift from a welfarist to a developmental approach as determined by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM).

By virtue of the Constitutional duties imposed on public social services and the vast expanse of its duty, it needs to be adequately geared for the pressure and challenges of a country whose HIV/AIDS pandemic has already reached 5.3 million South Africans, the highest number of infected people in a single country in the world.

The Department of Social Development is likely to face a challenge in its contributions to a Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Strategy, in terms of mitigating the impact of the disease, facilitating social behavioural change necessary in prevention, responding appropriately to vulnerable persons and orphans, as well as achieving development targets.

Social Workers are increasingly viewed as key strategic resources in addressing the needs and challenges of society. Their diverse knowledge and skills make them a resource to the social development sector as well as other various sectors.

The Department of Social Development currently employs the bulk of Social Workers of the country to effectively deal with the social problems and issues such as psychological stress, chronic poverty, food insecurity and other adverse social conditions. These services have to be rendered based on the constitutional, legal and international obligations as well as policies and programmes that inform the mandate of the Department in the provision of services. Government is also striving to ensure that there is increased access to this sector, which was previously marginalised.

The current challenge facing government is the lack of capacity to implement these policies and programmes due to amongst others, overwhelming demand for services and the inability to cope with such demands, especially for Social Workers rendering services to the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society.

There seems to be a critical problem with the recruitment of Social Workers to the profession. Recruited Social Workers cannot be retained either in the department or within the profession in general. This is due to the availability of more lucrative offers either in other sectors or internationally due to the impact of globalisation. The inability of the sector to retain Social Workers is further exacerbated by lack of support and the poor working conditions that Social Workers are subjected to, which often lead to burnout and inability to render an effective service.

Government's Draft Scarce Skills and Policy Framework (2003) recognises social work as a scarce skill and proposes that as with all scarce skills, strategies must be developed to facilitate the recruitment and retention of such scarce skills. One of the National Human Resource Development Strategy objectives is to improve the supply of high-quality skills (particularly scarce skills) that are responsive to societal and economic needs.

Government has recognised that the scarcity of Social Workers and the inability of the Department and the sector to retain them require further investigation. The need for the development of the recruitment and retention strategy was then realised. A comprehensive view was taken in the development of this strategy with short, medium and long-term approaches towards the resolution of the problem. This strategy aims at retaining Social Workers within the country and the profession for the realisation of the many changes and improvement of service standards for the benefit of society.

The strategy also aims at determining conditions that impact negatively on social work services as well as to provide guidelines that will ensure the recruitment and retention of Social Workers within the profession, the sector and the country.

The desired outcome of the recruitment and retention strategy is to determine conditions that impact negatively on social work services as well as to provide guidelines that will ensure the recruitment and retention of Social Workers within the profession and the country. The application of this strategy will require commitment from all role players.

The Department of Public Service and Administration was given a mandate to develop a scarce skills strategy and to come up with practical guidelines in order to facilitate the implementation of the strategy. From the discussions in Cabinet it was apparent that service delivery departments are seriously affected by the skills shortage and this often translates to the lack of capacity to deliver services. It was also determined that South Africa is at a serious disadvantage in terms of competing with employee benefits payable internationally and in the domestic labour market.

The turnover of social work in South Africa results largely from movement of social work staff between NGOs, government departments, private and the corporate sector as well as migration from rural to urban areas.

This consequently leads to scarcity of skills which is further threatened by the fact that Social Workers are multi-skilled and therefore are easily absorbed into other fields, such as Employee Assistance Programmes and HIV/AIDS management in the corporate sector, especially due to lucrative benefits.

When looking at the geographic distribution of Social Workers per province, it also becomes apparent that whilst poverty levels are higher in more rural provinces, they are without exception the most under resourced in terms of the number of Social Workers in those areas. It could be postulated that even within the rural provinces, Social Workers are located within the bigger urban centres rather than in the rural areas. Migration of Social Workers to other countries therefore exacerbates the situation.

The Social Service Professions Act (110 of 1978) compels registration of social work students and practicing Social Workers with the SACSSP, but also encourages registration of non-practicing Social Workers. A comparative study was made between the years 2001 and 2003 regarding those Social Workers that are registered with the SA Council for Social Service Professions. Even though the annual figure for the registration to study social work is low if one considers the vast demand for Social Workers in the country, the situation seem to be exacerbated by the drop out of students which is estimated at an average of 30 to 75 per cent. The reasons for this also reflect students' knowledge about the low salary levels of Social Workers in practice.

Additionally, social work schools at universities have reported a decrease in the number of learners applying to study social work. Conversely, learning institutions have strict selection criteria in terms of in-take to study towards a social work qualification.

In addition to this, there are a low number of learners registering as social work students. Learners generally indicate that social work is financially not a lucrative career to follow and also that the profession offers very little benefits and few career path opportunities. The few learners, who register to study social work, once they realise that this field has limited opportunities to offer in terms of development and better working conditions, they then opt to translate to other study fields.

Social work recruitment seems to be low, both in terms of recruitment of learners to the field of social work and the recruitment of Social Workers to social work

services. Whilst learner intake is low, the shortage of graduates is leading to significant vacancy levels. In an effort to develop a new cadre of workers, it is imperative that the scope of the social work curriculum be broadened.

Social work training is known for integration of theory and practice. Currently, there is a view that there seem to be a mismatch between the content of the curriculum and what is happening in the work environment pertaining to the working conditions. There is also a view that the majority of fieldwork supervisors are not adequately trained to supervise students and there is no proper or formal assessment tool. There are also no incentives given to students during practical to defray travelling and other expenses.

The opportunities for national and international exchange programmes are non-existent. There is therefore a need to create exchange programmes provincially, nationally and internationally including Africa. These programmes should comprise of all levels in the occupation and they should be linked to a mentorship programme in which a host country provides mentorship to professionals from the other country. South Africa as a host country could provide mentorship to professionals from other countries and vice versa.

Twinning programmes entail agreements entered into between states and/or countries for mutual benefit in terms of knowledge, skills and other developmental areas. The existing diplomatic agreements/arrangements do not necessarily cover the development of social services professionals. There is therefore a need for the Department to establish its own twinning agreements, from which both the national and provincial departments would benefit. These agreements must facilitate skills transfer at all levels and ensure that opportunities for utilisation of acquired knowledge and skills are created for the benefit of this country. A national comprehensive skills audit should be done to identify skills gaps in the profession. The National Skills Development Strategy may be used to facilitate this process.

In addition, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) has finalised the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system for social service professions. This is aimed at ensuring that on completion of their studies and upon entering the profession, Social Workers keep abreast of the latest developments in the profession.

There is an urgent need to develop fields of specialisation for social work services. The SACSSP, the department and universities could work jointly to develop these fields and the appropriate curricula. Due to the lack of career paths, most experienced Social Workers have no option but to apply for and are often diverted to managerial positions. However, experience in social work cannot necessarily be equated with knowledge and expertise in management. In addition, not all Social Workers make good managers and some are not interested in management.

There is a need to identify potential managers and provide management training to prepare Social Workers for their role as managers without creating expectations. It is critical that the employer funds these management development programmes either through own funds or through donor funding. Career pathing should however be linked to performance management as well as individual development plans.

In determining the compensation and remuneration levels as part of the broader retention strategy, it is critical to understand the issues that serve as predictive factors propelling the migration of Social Workers from the profession and the country. These issues are Social Worker's perception of job security, compensation levels, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, whether the job meets the Social Worker's expectations, the expressed intentions to search for another job, organisational tenure and demographic variables. The latter refers to variables like age, gender, education, number of dependants. These must be addressed if the country and the profession are to retain their Social Workers. It further distinguishes between monetary and non-monetary compensation options, which whilst not the only measures to facilitate retention of personnel, but plays a significant role in ensuring that social work skills are retained.

Whilst this has been found to be a short-lived motivating factor, it is important to note that a lucrative salary is essential for employee satisfaction. Remuneration is perceived as the best and most tangible form of recognition of the employee's worth in the organisation.

This strategy relates to a broader human resource retention plan that should be utilised in conjunction with an analysis relating to high staff turnover. Through this strategy, employees (new or current) whose contracts are being renewed enter into a term contract (over a number of years) with the payment of a cash

bonus in return for specific outputs and terms. The payment of this form of incentive should also be directly linked to skills transfer.

This scheme may be used to attract personnel to other under serviced areas such as rural areas, during which time the employee may be guaranteed employment commitment.

This strategy also relates to retention allowances. In this case, the employer offers monthly retention allowances in order to retain employees with the necessary scarce skills for the organisation, over an agreed period. This incentive is similar to bonuses linked to project milestone/completion, this form of incentive may be paid in respect of exceptional performance, possession of specific scarce skills, or goals attained.

A more progressive merit award system involving a higher percentage allocation (in line with the newly developed incentive policy) may be introduced. This provides an excellent basis for employee motivation and could improve the performance culture in the department. These are clear and simple goals to be attained before a merit is awarded, e.g. obtaining a certain qualification, meeting a particular target etc.

In addition to merit awards, there are other staff recognition initiatives that could be used. These include long-term awards, awards for consistent work attendance, productivity, punctuality and other innovative awards aimed at encouraging employees to identify themselves more closely with the organisation. These should satisfy the needs of both newly appointed and experienced workers equally.

Employee benefits are defined as elements of remuneration given in addition to various forms of cash payment. They are not necessarily restricted to remuneration and may comprise pension, medical aid, car allowances, homeowner allowances, loans etc. This is one area that the Public Service has been utilising extensively with little success in terms of recruiting and retaining personnel with scarce skills. Since most of the benefits are already in existence, new and innovative plans could be introduced in order to attract and retain Social Workers in the Public Service.

Non-monetary incentives are numerous and can be developed jointly with personnel. Such incentives can range from day care facilities, scholarships, organised sports or other recreation programmes for personnel.

Critical amongst these is the support for Social Workers that experience work related stress and burn out. In an environment where Social Workers are faced with depressing and emotional situations, it is critical that they receive the necessary support and assistance where possible. The support could be in line with the framework of Public Service Employee Health and Wellness Programme.

Social work intervention is intangible and therefore undervalued. It is therefore important to market the social work profession in order to enhance the societal understanding of the role and value of the profession. There is a need for Social Workers themselves to promote the general understanding of social work services to non-professionals within the agency and in other sectors.

The Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) has, amongst other things, sought to provide clarity on the nature, scope and level of services in the developmental social service sector. Providing education to clients about social work services in general and other specific agency functions are important. In that education process, clients should be assisted with dignity and referred accordingly when necessary. Part of this process is the need to facilitate clear understanding of the types and functions of different categories within the sector, like Social Workers, Social Auxiliary Workers, Child and Youth Care Workers, Community Development Workers, social security personnel and lay counsellors.

The success of this strategy will require the commitment of the social development family and all other stakeholders. It is hoped that this strategy will have a positive long term impact on the sector in terms of the manner and effectiveness of the services it provides. In summary, the strategy should be able to contribute towards facilitation of human development and improvement of the quality of life of the people on the ground, who are recipients of social services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Workers are increasingly viewed as a key strategic resource in addressing the needs and challenges of society. They have the appropriate training and skills to deliver effective services to this sector. Their diverse knowledge and skills make them a resource to the social development and various other sectors both locally and internationally.

South Africa is facing unprecedented challenges that threaten the livelihoods and wellbeing of society. Contributing factors are high levels of poverty, unemployment and high incidence of HIV and AIDS, as well as other associated socio-economic problems. These challenges do not only require appropriate policies and interventions, but also adequate and skilled social service professionals.

In its efforts to push back the frontiers of poverty, the government has put in place laudable policies to address the challenges that are faced by society, especially the poor and vulnerable.

There is however, a serious mismatch between the overwhelming demand for services and the numbers of social service professionals to deliver on these demands. Whilst this is particularly true for Social Workers that are at the coalface of delivery, it applies equally to other social service professionals, who deliver services to the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society. Although this strategy focuses on Social Workers, it will be supported by a ten-year human resource plan inclusive of other social service professionals.

The strategy is applicable to the public sector, given the fact that interventions proposed in this document are skewed towards the public service. The recruitment and retention of Social Workers in the non-governmental sector will be dealt with by the sector itself, which will then forward recommendations as applicable to the relevant stakeholders, including government.

The National Minister for Public Service and Administration recognised the scarcity of Social Workers as early as 2003 and declared it a scarce skill. The Department of Public Services Administration developed a National Human Resource Development Strategy to improve the supply of high-quality skills (particularly scarce skills), which are responsive to socio-economic needs of society.

The Social Development MINMEC debated the matter of social work being declared a scarce skill in August 2003, and mandated that a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers be developed.

A comprehensive view was taken in the development of this strategy with short, medium and long-term approaches towards the resolution of the problem. The implementation of this strategy will require commitment from all role players and adequate resource allocation.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Aim

The aim of the strategy is to determine conditions that impact on social work as a scarce skill and to provide guidelines for the recruitment and retention of Social Workers within the social work profession, the sector and the country.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the strategy are:

- To provide a framework for the recruitment and retention of Social Workers as learners and professionals that will be committed to render services where they are most needed in the country.
- To reposition the social work profession to meet the challenges of the 21st century.
- To promote a positive image of social work as a career of choice.
- To address the concerns and conditions of service that impact negatively on service provision.

3. POLICY / LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The following policy and legislative framework informs this strategy:

- The Public Service Act 1994 (No.103 of 1994), as amended, the Public Service Regulations of 2001, as amended (PSR) and collective agreements allow departments a degree of flexibility to introduce retention strategies to suit specific circumstances and needs.

The following provisions are relevant in this regard:

- (a) PSR, Chapter 1, Part IX makes provision for training.
 - (B) PSR, Chapter, Part V provides flexibility with regard to recruitment and retention of scarce skills. The executing authority is allowed to award higher salaries to posts or employees to facilitate recruitment and retention of employees with specific competencies.
- The White Paper on Public Service Training & Education established a policy framework for the introduction and implementation of new policies for public service training and education. It also recognises the key role that can be played by less formal forms of staff development through amongst others, on-the-job learning opportunities such as mentoring and job enrichment.
 - The White Paper on Human Resource Management sets amongst others, the framework for the development of a service delivery oriented, multi-skilled and multicultural workforce that is effective and efficient in the performance of its duties.
 - The South African Qualifications Act, 1995 provides for the national qualifications framework. One of the objectives of this framework is the “full development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.”
 - The Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) provides for the establishment of Sector Education & Training required to facilitate skills development in the relevant sectors.
 - The Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999) provides for the securing of resources to support skills development initiatives in the country.
 - The National Skills Development Strategy sets priorities and defines indicators to measure progress on skills development.
 - The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, deals specifically amongst other priorities, with human resource development and training in crucial areas, such as policy management, strategic planning, project management, leadership etc.

Chapter 4 of the White Paper for Social Welfare gives an overview of the status of human resources within the welfare sector, specifically Social Workers. It reflects issues of re-deployment, capacity building and orientation, education and training, accreditation, remuneration and working conditions.

All the above provide a legal framework that will contribute towards the recruitment and retention of Social Workers.

4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

There seems to be a critical problem with the recruitment and retention of Social Workers to the profession. This can be attributed to the availability of more lucrative offers either in other sectors within the country as well as internationally. The inability of the sector to retain Social Workers is further exacerbated by poor working conditions. Additionally, globalisation has afforded Social Workers the opportunity to seek employment in other parts of the world.

Social work services in South Africa have undergone major transformation since 1994. With the acceptance of South Africa back into the international arena, the social work profession has not escaped the process of globalisation and the extremely aggressive recruitment policies of the international agencies. International markets have begun recruiting skills from South Africa and other developing countries, thereby depriving these countries of scarce skills. Worldwide, attracting and retaining highly skilled people is a priority for organisations. It is recognised that South African trained Social Workers have competencies that are increasingly in demand in the international markets. A high percentage of Social Workers have left South Africa on short term contracts to provide services particularly in the present Common Wealth countries. In order to place the migration of social work professionals in context, it is imperative to understand the various factors that influence migration both locally and internationally.

Globalisation has influenced the development of free trade agreements that South Africa has entered into. For example, the Common Wealth Trade and General Agreement on Trade Services (GATS) has both a positive and negative impact on cross border movements and the international mobility of the workforce. Developing countries and countries in transition face serious difficulties in responding to these challenges and opportunities. Unless the benefits of social and economic development are extended to all countries, a

growing number of people in all countries and even entire regions will remain marginalised from the global economy. There is a strong need for policies and measures at the national and international levels, formulated and implemented with the full participation of developing countries to effectively respond to challenges and opportunities affecting them.

Although international migration of Social Workers has been occurring as far back as the 1970's, there has been a rapid increase of outward migration of staff with internationally accredited qualifications from South Africa. Reasons for emigration have been cited as lucrative salaries and improved living and working conditions in the countries of choice.

Push and pull forces depend to a great extent on the relative poverty or affluence of the countries. In general, countries with a low GDP have a high push factor and emigration rates range from 10-60%. Those countries with a GDP of between 800-2000 US\$ have both weak push and pull factors and those with a high GDP (>US\$2000) have a high pull factor. No matter how strong the pull factors of the recipient countries are, migration only seems to result if there are also strong push factors from the donor country (WHO study 1970). The major pull factor of recipient countries is the desire to improve the migrant's financial situation, as many of these countries offer more attractive economic opportunities. Other factors relate to professional career and study opportunities.

Research on the skills drain within the health professions (in the absence of research on Social Workers), shows that there are a number of factors that may lead to reduction of migration tendencies such as family ties, social and cultural factors, language barriers and the individual perception about the outcomes and rewards of migration. It therefore becomes evident that there is no singular cause of migration. The reasons are complex and subjective, based on individual perceptions (Commonwealth Steering Committee for Nursing and Midwifery Guidelines on Workforce Issues. The Global Crisis in the Recruitment and Retention of Nurses and Midwives: February 2001).

Other professions such as education, health and engineers have also experienced a similar skills drain. The situation in the Health Professions Sector became so critical that a Common Wealth Code of Practice for International Recruitment of Health Workers was developed. This Code of Practice is intended to provide governments with a framework within which international recruitment should take place. This is perhaps another possible avenue that may be considered to facilitate the retention of Social Workers in the country.

In South Africa, the problem of scarce skills in the social work profession is historical in nature. It impacts on the ability of the sector to recruit and retain personnel critical to the improvement of service delivery. The turnover of Social Workers in South Africa results largely from movement of social work staff between Government Departments, NGO's, the Private and Corporate sectors, as well as migration from rural to urban areas and other countries. This is exacerbated by the fact that Social Workers are multi-skilled and therefore easily absorbed into other fields.

In his February 2005 State of the Nation address, President Mbeki expressed his concern over the "lack of all round capacity" and "weakness in the implementation of certain national programmes".

Similarly, the Minister of Public Services and Administration, Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, at the Senior Management Conference held on 4th September 2005, raised the issue of capacity requirements to ensure sustainable growth and development. In her keynote address the Minister made the following statement: "the single most important question that the Executive has been grappling with at the beginning of our second decade in Government is whether we really have the capacity to implement our development programmes?"

From the above input it is obvious that to provide services to the vulnerable groups for which the department is responsible, adequate and trained human capacity is crucial. This sentiment mirrors concerns with regard to the profession of social work.

The social work profession is governed by the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978, which regulates the registration of social work students and practicing Social Workers.

A comparative study was done between the years 2001 and 2004 regarding those Social Workers that are registered with the SA Council for Social Service Professions. The number of Social Workers registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions in the country during the period in question is as follows:

Table 1: Data base: Number of Registered Social Workers

CATEGORY/PROVINCE	YEAR OF REGISTRATION		
	2001	2003	2004
Gauteng	2746	2998	3164
KZN	1362	1625	1749
Mpumalanga	319	364	417
North West Province	429	503	228
Limpopo Province	431	634	732
Northern Cape	365	316	332
Free State	480	500	516
Eastern Cape	940	1152	1221
Western Cape	2029	2139	2287
*Other			304
Total No. of Registered Social Workers	9101	10231	10950

*Other: non-practising Social Workers, foreigners and those practising overseas.

(Source: South African Council for Social Service Professions)

The above figures illustrate a progressive increase in the number of Social Workers registered with the Council. This is attributable to the active recruitment campaign by the Council to facilitate the registration of Social Workers that were de-registered from the Council's records for a variety of reasons. This is not necessarily a reflection of an increase in the number of practicing Social Workers, but rather a reflection of Social Workers that maintain their registration status.

When looking at the geographic distribution of Social Workers per province (table 2), it also becomes apparent that whilst poverty levels are higher in more rural provinces, they are without exception the most under-resourced in terms of the number of Social Workers in those areas.

Table 2: Number of Social Workers in the NGO and Government Sector

Province	Population	No. of SW Post per norm	Existing SW		Proposed increase in no. SW
			NGO*	Govt	
EC	6,436,763	2146	245	510	1391
FS	2,706,775	902	165	148	589
GP	8,837,178	1767	564	532	671
KZN	9,426,017	2095	536	429	1130
LIM	5,273,642	1758	92	361	1305
MPU	3,122,990	1041	48	208	785
NC	822,727	274	98	108	68
NW	3,669,349	1223	60	238	925
National		26	13		13

Table 2: Social Workers in the service of the social welfare sector as at August 2005

(*Source NACOSSA)

The above table shows the number of Social Workers employed at provincial and national departments of Social Development, as well as Non-Governmental Organisations, which are the major employers of Social Workers in the country. The last column indicates the number of Social Workers required as per the generic norm in the Integrated Service Delivery Model.

Table 3 depicts the trend of registration of first year students who study social work, and those who complete their studies after four years. Even though the annual figure for the registration to study social work is still low if one considers the vast demand for Social Workers in the country, it would seem that a high percentage of students either divert to other disciplines or drop out. If one assumes that the same cohort of students that registered in 2000 and 2001 respectively should have completed their studies in 2003 and 2004, then one finds that only 32% and 23% respectively completed their studies in social work.

Table 3: Student Registration at 1st and 4th year of Study

Year of study	FIRST YEAR LEVEL OF STUDY - ADMISSIONS					FOURTH YEAR LEVEL OF STUDY - GRADUATES				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Johannesburg	32	75	87	119	139	25	11	17	19	17
Stellenbosch	64	85	107	106	102	40	37	29	17	19
Fort Hare Main	92	180	230	304	199	60	44	30	33	47
Fort Hare – East London	30	33	39	43	39	9	11	6	4	8
North West	30	25	32	29	38	22	15	21	16	5
Free State	44	34	33	67	86	27	18	28	18	13
Huguenot College	76	86	77	79	83	34	23	33	38	41
Rhodes	30	33	39	43	39	9	11	6	4	8
Cape Town	57	58	77	45	58	44	33	41	46	38
Walter Sisulu	59	92	53	118	89	33	46	35	33	21
Western Cape	87	112	103	91	73	65	74	54	64	77
Pretoria	46	30	28	34	34	40	23	28	40	19
UNISA	610	999	1590	1643	2442	55	59	76	68	72
K/Zulu-Natal	83	127	107	140	156	11	18	9	8	13
Limpopo	79	43	86	93	86	27	26	35	44	38
Wits	42	42	72	71	81	27	24	26	21	14
Venda	105	100	122	121	88	36	47	51	38	52
TOTAL	1566	2154	2882	3146	3832	564	520	525	511	502

Table 3: Student registration at 1st and 4th year of study

Having said this, it is critical to note that according to information received from Institutions of Higher Learning, a large number of students who register for other fields of study, choose social work as an elective in the first year.

This may be attributed to the recognition of skills that Social Workers acquire even at this early stage of their training. This has an effect of distorting the figures and assumptions made in the earlier part of this section. However, it raises concerns about the low registration of students for social work.

UNISA has the highest number of registrations but the number of fourth year students shows a similar trend. A similar scenario prevails in Kwa-Zulu Natal, which has the lowest number of fourth year students. It is not clear from the current data, how many students actually complete their fourth year of study. In discussions with learners there is generally a perception that the social work profession is not a financially lucrative career, offers very little benefits and few career path opportunities.

Table 4: Registration of 1st to 3rd Year Social Work Students (where available)

University	2006/2007		
	Number of students and year of study		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Johannesburg	154	51	53
Stellenbosch	72	56	45
Fort Hare Main	350	191	134
North West	32	33	23
Free State	110	90	52
Huguenot College	134	86	54
Cape Town	95	64	45
Western Cape	65	63	53
Pretoria	45	25	35
UNISA	750	600	300
Zululand	228	277	223
Limpopo	91	124	69
Wits	40	36	37
Venda	120	115	66
Total: SW	2286	1811	1189

Table 4: Registration of 1st and 3rd year social work students (where available) (Source IHL – 2006)

The above table gives the latest data received from fourteen of the sixteen Institutions of Higher Learning that train Social Workers and from which such data could be obtained, on the registration for the social work degree as at August 2006. The content of this table verifies extrapolations drawn from table 4. The trends are confirmed.

If one relates this to the generic norms and standards for Social Workers as indicated in the Integrated Service Delivery Model, it becomes clear that the country will have to find creative means to accelerate the recruitment, training and retention of Social Workers.

The Integrated Service Delivery Model has set preliminary norms and standards for Social Workers, pending the finalisation of norms and standards for social welfare. This is based on the national and international norm for the ratio of Social Workers to population, which is 1:5 000. This norm applies to developed countries but, because of the high levels of poverty and deprivation in South Africa, it has to be adjusted to reflect different conditions and needs.

The proposed norms for Social Workers to population are therefore as follows:

- 1:5 000 Urban (Gauteng)
- 1:4 500 Combined Urban/Rural (KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape)
- 1:3 000 All other provinces

Population is not the only determinant of norms. However, a more detailed investigation, incorporating other indicators such as poverty levels and distance, will be required in the long term to ensure equitable distribution of personnel. The population of Social Workers in the country is far below these norms. In addition, with the development of new legislation and the obligations it imposes on Social Workers, the norms indicated above will not enable the sector to respond to these obligations. For example, the costing of the Children's Act reveals that sixteen thousand Social Workers are required to provide an obligatory service to children, in the next medium term expenditure framework period (2007-2010). This means that the norms will need to be reviewed. However, it further illustrates the critical need for Social Workers in the country.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The strategy draws a picture of the vision for the recruitment and retention of Social Workers and provides a 10-year plan of action for improvement in this regard.

The core goals of the strategy are to:

- Increase human resources through strengthening the recruitment and retention of Social Workers;
- Promote education, training and development of the Social Workers;
- Improve the quality of social work services;
- Strengthen the governance structures within the social work profession;
- Promote occupational safety standards within the workplace;
- Improving service conditions for Social Workers, and
- Market and promote social work services and programmes.

In the following chapters these goals will be highlighted as specific strategies to ensure that social work becomes relevant and responsive in addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable sectors of society.

6. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

6.1 Recruitment and Selection of Students

Social work recruitment seems to be low, both in terms of recruitment to practicing and studying social work. Whilst learner intake is high, the shortage of graduates is leading to significant vacancy levels. There is a discrepancy in the number of learners who enter the universities to study social work and the number of Social Workers who complete their studies in this field. This necessitates research to determine trends and reasons for the high drop-out rate within Institutions of Higher Learning, in terms of amongst others, change of course of study, financial reasons, unprofessional conduct and academic reasons.

The general image of the sector and the relatively low pay, especially within the social services sector, in comparison to the general job market, contributes to recruitment difficulties.

The following are proposed solutions related to recruitment and selection:

- Recruitment packs and publicity material must be developed and updated regularly.
- Institutions of Higher Learning and the Department must hold open recruitment days to educate learners about social work and to recruit new Social Workers from those that have completed their studies.
- Recruitment drives must be held in High Schools to market the profession and to promote the public service as an employer of choice;
- Linkages between training institutions and social work agencies must be further enhanced to promote synergies and to bridge the gap between theory and practice more effectively;
- Job fairs or career guidance processes must be held both at Institutions of Higher Learning and High Schools to facilitate recruitment into the profession;
- Bursaries are to be pre-defined, that is, advertising a number of bursaries for social work studies only. These have to be linked to contractual obligations and allocated in close collaboration with institutions of higher learning.

- A database to monitor the recruitment, turnover, vacancy levels and migration patterns must be developed;
- A report with recommendations for current and future interventions must be compiled annually.

The above solutions are not all inclusive and a more comprehensive approach needs to be taken, involving personnel and other stakeholders.

6.2 Facilitating the Return of Social Workers

Many Social Workers have left the country and/or left the profession for other sectors. In addition to measures proposed by this strategy, there needs to be an active marketing of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy and progress in its implementation to Social Workers who have left the profession and the country. This can be achieved through the utilisation of South African Embassies of the host countries.

Should recruitment be successful, recognition must be given to the current experience and newly acquired expertise, so that returnees can be remunerated accordingly. This should however be balanced with recognition for the knowledge and expertise of Social Workers that remained in the country.

The Institutions of Higher Learning are currently not able to meet the demand for new Social Workers. Innovative measures will need to be employed which include amongst others, the recruitment of retired Social Workers to provide mentoring and other appropriate social work and related services in the country. In this regard, service conditions will need to be negotiated with the Department of Public Service and Administration, in the case of government employees, and with all other relevant parties in the case of other employers in the sector.

7. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In an effort to develop a new cadre of workers, it is imperative that the scope of the social work curriculum be broadened. In line with the above, training and development must be geared towards the continuous development of Social Workers in practice to effectively and efficiently address social needs, to adhere to the demands of a changing society and to ensure alignment with the government's transformation agenda in terms of service delivery.

7.1 Student Training

Learning institutions have selection criteria in terms of the intake to study towards a social work qualification. Whilst this is essential in ensuring that the right students enter the profession, it needs to be balanced with the need and demand for Social Workers in the country. In addition, adequate career guidance is needed before students enter their first year of study, to ensure that they make an informed choice about the profession.

There needs to be alignment between the curriculum and the practical demands in the work environment. There is a need for greater interaction and communication between Standard Generating Bodies and Employment Agencies, particularly those that employ the majority of Social Workers. This can also be enhanced through the mandatory placement of social work students in structured internship programmes that are managed by trained supervisors.

In many instances, there are no incentives given to students during practical training to defray travelling and other expenses. This places unrealistic financial demands on the students and could be a deterrent to entry into the profession. Learners must be given stipends or allowances.

Government subsidises the training of students by way of grants to institutions of higher learning that train amongst others, Social Workers. However, due to the country's focus on Science and Technology, which have been prioritised above Social Sciences, subsidies for social work training are diminishing. This may also account for the low intake of student Social Workers. Higher subsidies are needed for students who need to study social work both at graduate and post graduate level. The capping of numbers prevents adequate admission of social work students and consequently, failure to meet the demands of the country. There needs to be urgent consultation between the two ministries in this regard.

As already indicated, Institutions of Higher Learning are not able to meet the country's demand for Social Workers, and therefore creative strategies are required to address this scenario. One of the ways of ensuring that Social Workers who complete their training remain in the profession is a compulsory community service of two years, to serve particularly in under-served areas such as rural areas, with incentives as outlined being provided.

7.2 Exchange Programme

Opportunities for national and international exchange programmes are not fully exploited. Opportunities for exchange programmes provincially, nationally and internationally including Africa should be created. This should comprise all levels in the occupation. It should be linked to a mentorship programme in which a host country provides mentorship to South African professionals. South Africa as a host country could provide mentorship to professionals from other countries. The possibilities of national and international exchange programmes should be investigated. Priority should be given to categories as stipulated in the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998.

7.3 Twinning Programme

Twinning programmes entail agreements entered into between states and/or countries for mutual benefit in terms of knowledge, skills and other developmental areas. Existing twinning agreements/arrangements do not necessarily cover the development of social services professionals. Bi-laterals should be entered into with countries that South Africa has existing arrangements with, to facilitate mutual learning and development opportunities. Furthermore, the possibility of entering into new agreements should be explored, particularly with other developing countries. The department must also establish its own twinning arrangements, from which both the national and provincial departments must benefit. These agreements must facilitate skills transfer at all levels and ensure that opportunities for utilisation of acquired knowledge and skills are created for the benefit of this country.

7.4 Staff Development

A comprehensive skills audit should be done to identify skills gaps in the profession. The national skills strategy should be used to facilitate this process.

In addition, Social Workers must adhere to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system for social service professions managed by the SACSSP. This is aimed at ensuring that upon completion of their studies and entry into the profession, Social Workers keep abreast with the latest developments in the profession.

Management should provide opportunities for self-development of staff to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. Individual development plans for officials, as stipulated in the Performance Management and Development System (PDMS) and must promote the profession of social work, its principles and ethics.

Accelerated refresher courses should be encouraged and implemented to facilitate equity in training. The scope of further education and training should be broadened by way of involving experienced professionals as training providers. Staff should be encouraged to attend training programmes (learnership and skills programmes; accredited courses and programmes) within the broader departmental and national skills development framework. Training of assessors and moderators in the field should be included to ensure that the processes of supervision, mentorship and student training are efficiently managed. More experienced Social Workers could be trained as trainers for utilisation as peer educators for inexperienced Social Workers.

There is an urgent need to develop fields of specialisation for social work services. The SACSSP, Government, NGOs and Institutions of Higher Learning could work jointly to develop these fields and appropriate curricular. Mechanisms must be put in place through curriculum development and rank structures within agencies/departments for these specialities. Specialist qualifications, coupled with practice experience, must be recognised for promotion. This would not only ensure a career path for Social Workers, but would also ensure that skills are retained at service delivery level.

7.5 Management Training

There is a need to identify potential managers and provide management training to prepare Social Workers for their role as managers without creating expectations. Potential managers must be identified through an objective and fair performance and development management system. This training could be employer initiated or the initiative of an employee. It is critical that the employer provides financial support for these management development

programmes either through own or donor funding. The training of managers should also be linked with the functions as set out in their job descriptions, performance appraisal systems as well as appropriate CPD programmes. Such training could incorporate social work administration and management, as well as transversal skills to enable them to manage efficiently and effectively. This should be done in line with the Workplace Skills Plan.

7.6 Career Pathing

The recent regrading of social work salaries has provided opportunities for career pathing within the social work profession. However, much more needs to be done in terms of the NGO sector as well as the development of opportunities for specialisation.

Career pathing should however, be linked to performance management as well as individual development plans.

7.7 Broadening the Scope of Further Education and Training

The policy and legislative framework exists, but the lack of capacity and resources are an impediment to implementation. There is a need to address the social challenges as well as the pace at which transformation takes place. Social research should be conducted on the need for continuous curriculum review in partnership with Institutions of Higher Learning and other research agencies.

Social Workers, especially new entrants into the labour market, still face a serious challenge of integrating theory with practice. It remains a challenge to implement what has been acquired through academic exposure due to the fact that the work environment is not always necessarily conducive to implementation.

Curriculum offered by Institutions of Higher Learning does not always prepare Social Workers to adequately handle the ever-changing dynamics of the environment as evidenced in their entry into practice. Practitioners have had to manage the inadequate capacity of new entrants into the profession. However, practitioners have not engaged adequately in curriculum development to add value from a practice point of view. The feedback loop between Standard Generating Bodies and practitioners must be strengthened.

The following interventions are therefore proposed:

- Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Learning need to be formed or strengthened where they already exist. This will ensure that a holistic and flexible curriculum is offered.
- A national forum of stakeholders needs to be formed to facilitate the sharing of curriculum development e.g. ASASWEI, HWSETA and HRD practitioners nationally.
- There is a need for increased diversity in terms of the curriculum and course content. Curricula of learning programmes should be continuously evaluated and reviewed.
- There is a need to design a curriculum aimed at equipping Social Workers with additional knowledge and skills to perform management functions.
- Capacity should be built on high-level professional expertise that would lead to specialisation.
- An advanced curriculum must be developed to support functions or methods of social work such as supervision, social policy, research, information management etc.
- A mentoring programme with academic partners, whereby social work students or practising Social Workers are paired with leading Social Policy Specialists, to broaden their knowledge and exposure at national and international level should be established.
- Bursaries for social work specific further education and training should be availed.

8. SERVICE DELIVERY

8.1 Scope of Service

The Integrated Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services provides a framework for the rendering of Developmental Social Services. The Integrated Service Delivery Model has sought to provide clarity on the nature, scope and level of services in the developmental social services sector. It further provides a framework for Social Workers within the development paradigm. This guideline document must be read in conjunction with the Policy on Financial Awards, which provides a framework for service provision and

transformation of the non-governmental sector, which is a critical partner of government in the delivery of social services.

The Integrated Service Delivery Model also acknowledges the role that other Social Service Professionals as well as other emerging categories play in either supporting or complementing the functions performed by Social Workers. For example, Social Auxiliary Workers, Child and Youth Care Workers and Assistant Probation Officers are already available to the sector. A comprehensive human resource plan is required and will be developed to determine the manner in which this capacity can be improved, enhanced and utilised in the delivery of social welfare services.

The Service Delivery Model must be cross referenced with the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers as it provides an overview of the areas that are crucial to social work service delivery, namely:

- The development paradigm.
- Provision of a basis for the reconstruction of social development institutions.
- Service integration.
- Social welfare service delivery.
- Target groups.
- Nature and scope of Community development services.
- Service providers and Institutional Mechanisms.
- Norms and Standards.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the services.

Key Challenges to Service Delivery

- Implementation of the Service Delivery Model by both the state and non-governmental organisations.
- Development and implementation of norms and standards for service delivery.
- Development of a human resource plan for the implementation of the service delivery model and to render the services to the most vulnerable sectors/groups.
- Developing a semi-professional cadre of Social Service Professionals to assist with non-statutory work.

8.2 Management and Supervision

A pivotal instrument in ensuring strategies towards skills retention lies in insightful and competent management and supervisory skills. Supervision is a management function which is evaluative, extends over time and has the simultaneous purpose of enhancing the professional functioning of a Social Worker through skills transfer, mentoring, and professional support; monitoring the quality of professional services offered to service recipients and motivating Social Workers to achieve their full potential in line with client and organisational goals.

There is a perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity and quality of services rendered by Social Workers. This is explained by the high case loads, emotional and other trauma experienced by Social Workers in service delivery, high stress levels due to management and societal demands as well as lack of resources to deliver on their mandate. Social work professionals are being utilised in non-professional tasks, which in itself deprives them of professional growth and increases their workload and thus their stress levels. This has been attributed largely to lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors, who themselves also lack capacity to conduct professional supervision.

This problem was exacerbated by historical practices, which assigned supervisory functions to new white Social Workers, thus defeating the purpose of this critical function and resulting in the development of negative perceptions about supervision. Furthermore, black Social Workers were subjected to perpetual supervision, as against a time linked developmental process, within a contractual relationship, which would enable a Social Worker to graduate to consultation, once the Social Worker is able to integrate theory and practice and the desired level of professional autonomy, is achieved.

The dearth of supervisors in practice is exacerbated by the perception that trained supervisors are not necessary, given the demand for service delivery. There is limited understanding of the need for such supervision amongst non-social work managers. In some cases, supervisors are non-existent, with new Social Workers not being able to receive guidance/mentorship that will enable them to become better workers.

The function of supervision also becomes critical in the placement of student Social Workers in agencies for practical work experience during their training. This often happens during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years of study. As indicated in chapter 7, there is an urgent need for the training of assessors, and moderators to ensure that the processes of supervision, mentorship and student training are efficiently managed.

The recruitment of students or new Social Workers into an organisational culture that is characterised by despondency, low morale and ever-increasing demands without the necessary supervisory framework, would not assist the retention of Social Workers in the profession. Supervisors would be able to manage the administrative, educational and supportive functions of Social Workers so that an enabling and conducive environment is created for effective work performance.

To give effect to the foregoing, an evaluation of the current practices of supervision must be conducted, gaps identified and an appropriate framework for supervision developed jointly with stakeholders.

9. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The purpose of this section is to explore the existence and effectiveness of structures that are aimed at supporting Social Workers, the professional conduct of Social Workers and how their functioning can be enhanced to promote dialogue and action that will facilitate the retention of Social Workers in the country and within the profession.

9.1 The South African Council for Social Service Professions

The SACSSP is a statutory body that sets standards for education, training and development; professional conduct, but most importantly is the protector of the interests of the consumer of the social services. There is a need to strengthen the monitoring of the professional conduct and compliance with the code of ethics of Social Workers.

It has therefore become necessary to develop practical strategies and an integrated approach to address challenges faced by employers, Social Workers, the profession and consumers, in relation to the monitoring of service delivery and maintaining good standards of practice.

Employers need to ensure that an enabling environment is created for Social Workers to adhere to their code of ethics and to respond appropriately to service demands.

One of the major functions of the Council, being a regulatory body for social work, is to submit to the Minister of Social Development, recommendations for the Social Service Professions Act of 1978, its Regulations and Rules. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the current legislation should be monitored and the Minister be advised accordingly, in line with the current realities, needs and developments in practice. Issues pertaining to the profession itself, rather than what happens in other professions must inform social work legislation and practice.

The Council must register more specialist fields within the profession, in consultation with stakeholders. Such a process must take into cognisance the current realities in the country and respond appropriately to such realities. Provision should be made in the Social Service Professions Act of 1978, as well as regulations, for the registration of other specialities, once they have been developed and approved. Such a process and its outcomes should not be restrictive, but serve the profession and facilitate retention of personnel.

Proposed interventions are as follows:

- To expand the current mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the professional status of Social Workers is enhanced and the profession is promoted.
- To continuously update the database of all Social Workers in the country and the fields in which they are currently functioning.
- To fast track the implementation of Continued Professional Development of Social Workers and align it with other capacity building initiatives for Social Workers.
- To facilitate the development of norms and standards for the social work professions.

9.2 Professional Associations

The main function of professional associations is to mobilise, support and contribute to the development of the social work profession, keeping Social Workers abreast of general matters relating to the profession and networking

with other social work associations on a local, national and global level. The primary reason for the existence of these professional associations should be the professional development of Social Workers.

The current reality is that existing professional associations are divided and fragmented, leading to non-accreditation and non-recognition by national and international fora and failure to address common concerns of Social Workers, in a unified manner.

Proposed interventions are as follows:

- The department to facilitate efforts to amalgamate the current professional associations, failing which, the establishment of a new association that will represent the broader interests of Social Workers and be in line with the country's constitutional principles.
- Professional associations need to perform functions that will facilitate the development of Social Workers and their retention in the profession and within the country.
- To promote jointly with other stakeholders, African and other global linkages that will ensure that Social Workers become part of the global community of professionals.

9.3 Labour

Social Workers only stand to gain through their affiliation to labour organisations, not only from the perspective of the collective bargaining strength and the protection benefits offered by organised labour, but also to have a platform from which to address shortcomings in the utilisation and remuneration of the profession by employers, including the public sector. However, the current number of Social Workers registered with labour organisations is minimal.

One of the tasks of a union and of organised labour generally is to develop and to enhance the position of indispensable occupational classes, such as Social Workers. They are a "scarce skill" group of employees and as such the employer needs to recognise the benefits of retaining those skills in the public interest.

Collective organisation within a trade union will also stimulate debate and provide critical inputs by the profession itself. There is however one requirement and that is that the employees within this occupation realise that

the infrastructure and platform for engagement with the employer by the unions is there to be utilised. No union (which per definition consists of members who then are the union) can take up a case if it cannot claim to have members and therefore a mandate to take up profession-specific issues.

Affiliation with a labour organisation will not only allow for Social Workers to have the power of collective bargaining and afford protection of their rights, but it will also allow interaction at national and international levels within the profession.

The trade union can thus provide the needed support, platform for debate and protection for Social Workers.

Proposed interventions are as follows:

- To embark on a marketing and information drive to educate Social Workers about the labour movement and the benefits of being part of this movement.
- To assist in educating Social Workers about their rights as employees in the social services environment/sector.
- To represent the interests of Social Workers as necessary.
- Government and other employers must create opportunities for Social Workers to participate in and to be part of these structures.

10. PROMOTE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY STANDARDS WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

10.1 The Burden of Disease

The pressure of particularly HIV and AIDS, on social services is increasing the number of orphans. In the light of the high levels of poverty, unemployment, orphans, infant mortality, disability, decreased life expectancy, which are projected results of this disease, there will be further demands on social service delivery. Government therefore needs to be adequately geared for the pressure and challenges of a country that is faced with this pandemic.

The Department of Social Development will become increasingly challenged in its contributions to a comprehensive HIV and AIDS country strategy, in mitigating the impact of the disease, facilitating social behavioural change necessary in prevention, responding appropriately to vulnerable persons and orphans, as well as achieving development targets.

The adequate procurement and retention of human capital is critical to such a service. Human resources in social services, as in other sectors, are under threat of succumbing to the disease, at both the workplace and personal levels.

With regard to this disease, there are specific risk factors, namely:

- Increased occupational stress due to frequent and consistent exposure during the course of duty to the social and emotional effects of the disease.
- Inadequate health and safety and infection control measures in the light of greater risk exposure to opportunistic infections such as TB.
- Lack of alternate labour replacement such as that provided by mechanisation, which assists in ensuring productivity in other sectors.
- The profession is dominated by women, as the most vulnerable group in relation to HIV and AIDS infection and affection.

The sector's capacity and sustainability in the provision of public social work services is therefore directly reliant on the urgency and extent to which a National HIV and AIDS Workplace Based Programme is incorporated into its broader human resource and capacity issues. Infection control measures must be developed in the sector together with a response that deals with the occupational stress factor. These are critical, especially for Social Workers, who may already be immune-compromised and subjected to unmanaged stress levels. The direct exposure of such employees to, for example tuberculosis in all its forms or varieties, may lead to a decrease in the employee's immunity, chances of managing a positive status and maintaining a longer life.

Whilst social work has already been declared a scarce skill, the threats imposed by both the occupational risks of exposure and personal threats inflicted by infection and affection, heightens threats of the skill scarcity. In order to minimise negative impact on the service, a workforce responsible for key aspects of a country's response to HIV and AIDS must be managed more closely and strategically.

There is currently no research regarding the prevalence of HIV and AIDS on social service professionals. However, research on other professions show high prevalence rates. The impact of HIV infection amongst professionals, shows striking similarities to the general population prevalence, thereby confirming the need for a more effective strategy aimed at the point where

most adults interact, namely the workplace. The benefits of a clearly targeted behaviour change programme cannot be overemphasised. A country based, adult targeted workplace response is necessary, in ensuring that human capital is sustained and productive, especially in addressing fundamental social services.

The proposed interventions for implementing an HIV and AIDS workplace strategy within the scarce skills framework and the implementation of an HIV and AIDS Strategy must be in line with the DPSA Guide on Managing HIV and AIDS in the Workplace: A Guide for Government Departments as well as Part 6 of Chapter 1 of the Public Service Regulations, 2001.

- In implementing the National Skills Development Strategy the following should receive attention:
 - The appropriate supply of social service professionals in relation to service demands due to the impact of HIV and AIDS;
 - The training in terms of occupational health and safety.
 - Research that would strengthen the general HIV and AIDS Management Programme.

10.2 Occupational Health and Safety

An employer is obliged to maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of its employees. In the absence of scientific research into the exact extent of risk involved in the field of social work in South Africa, which is not readily available at this stage, we may rely on a survey done by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), in 1990 which found that 52% of children's aid Social Workers in Toronto had been subjected to an aggressive act whilst at work.

This survey also confirmed that workers in shelters for women and children, Social Workers involved in custodial work, workers who paid out government payouts and workers who worked alone were confirmed to be amongst those at high risk of acts of violence at work.

Apart from acts of aggression, another aspect of health and safety that is highly under reported, is that of occupational and stress related illnesses that arise directly from unmanaged stress (especially emotional) that develops as a result of continuous exposure to crises, depressive social situations and high workloads.

Despite these situations, we may also accept that HIV and AIDS and its many repercussions exacerbate the emotional laden stress factors in its association with death, loss and grieving.

In addition to the above, a critical factor in the management of health and safety for Social Workers is their exposure to risky situations during field visits. Social Workers often have to drive long distances, in hazardous weather and road conditions such as gravel roads, which compound stress levels, fatigue and productivity and affects their relationship with clients negatively. As the occupation is predominantly female, there are higher risk factors that Social Workers might be exposed to should they for example, have a breakdown on the road. There are no mechanisms in place to mitigate these risk factors and to ensure that the safety of personnel is guaranteed.

The generally increased rate of crimes of violence, rape and gender based violence in South Africa also exposes social service professionals, who are mostly female to a high level of danger. Working with emotionally unstable and marginalised persons also heightens these dangers.

The physical environment, namely buildings and service points, are often neglected in the interest of funding the service and this may often pose a hazard for both the worker and the public being served. It is therefore crucial to assess all the risks and hazards and to develop appropriate safety measures. The fact that workstations or service points of Social Workers extend within the territories of clients and into secluded and risky areas, where varied levels of potential covert or overt danger may be posed, necessitates an appropriate Occupational Health & Safety response. Also highly neglected, may be the areas of compliance in terms of public dangers, fires, disasters, evacuation procedures, etc. which are often overlooked, yet which form part of an appropriate safety response, that could prevent major destruction to life.

Every employer should ensure that their organisation complies with provisions of the Occupational Health & Safety Act. If such provisions are not appropriately adhered to, the focus on risk reduction and prevention of incidences of violence at work, exposure to undue and unmanaged stress and hazardous work may continue placing greater risk to loss of the workforce. Greater attention to safety issues contributes markedly to job satisfaction, as working conditions appear more amenable. This will assist in reducing the undue loss of workers to other fields of work as a result of occupational risks and stress.

Proposed Interventions:

- The Department of Social Development and the NGO sector, should fast track mechanisms for occupational health and safety compliance at all its workplaces, beginning with a random risk assessment process to establish the extent of risks and hazards in its area of operation.
- Such research must include occupational stress, its impact on stress related illnesses and its effect on the skills exodus; and inform the development of a strategy to address occupational health and safety measures more appropriately and effectively.
- The National Skills Development Strategy can be used to fast track the education of Health and Safety Representatives and Managers who are responsible in this regard.
- Infection control measures must also be considered e.g. immunisation for TB and other infectious diseases as preventive measures within the occupational health & safety plan.
- Workers also bear a duty in terms of safety measures and a broad campaign in this regard may be embarked upon, especially within the context of broader prevention.
- Protocols for supportive services including employee assistance programmes, peer support programmes, debriefing and other means that may reduce burnout and stress disorders, should form part of the occupational programme.
- Provision of adequate resources for the promotion of health and safety of workers, depending on the need and the environment in which they function.

11. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

11.1 Compensation and Remuneration

In determining compensation and remuneration levels as part of the broader retention strategy, it is critical to understand that issues such as a Social Worker's perception of job security, compensation levels, job satisfaction, organisational tenure, demographic variables such as age, gender, education, number of dependants, organisational commitment, whether the job meets

the Social Worker's expectations and the expressed intentions to search for another job, are all predictive factors that determine whether a Social Worker leaves the profession of the country. The perception of organisational culture will also influence employee turnover.

The nature of compensation and remuneration awarded to employees will impact on the retention of Social Workers in the profession and the country. Compensation-related insufficiencies have been identified in terms of the occupational category of Social Workers. These must be addressed if the country and the profession are to retain their Social Workers.

The draft Scarce Skills Framework for the Public Service, which includes Social Workers, proposes that whatever compensation and remuneration measures are introduced, have to be in line with the policy and legislative framework of the country. It further distinguishes between monetary and non-monetary compensation options, which whilst not the only measures to facilitate retention of personnel, play a significant role in ensuring that social work skills are retained.

11.2 Non-Monetary Strategies

Non-monetary incentives are numerous and can be developed jointly with personnel. Such incentives can range from day care facilities, scholarships, organised sports or other recreation programmes for personnel. Critical amongst these is the support for Social Workers that experience work related stress and burn out. In an environment where Social Workers are faced with depressing and emotional situations, it is critical that they receive support.

The Department of Public Service and Administration propose amongst others the following non-monetary strategies:

- Improvement of work environment;
- Promotional/career opportunities;
- Special training and educational opportunities;
- Additional leave days;
- Sabbaticals; and
- Job rotation.

Some of these have been covered elsewhere in the document. Only those not covered will be dealt with in more detail in the other sections of the strategy.

11.3 Improvement of Working Conditions

As mentioned in the situational analysis Social Workers have not escaped the lure of globalisation and have reacted by obtaining lucrative short-term contracts in other countries. The main recruiter of Social Workers at this time seems to be the United Kingdom followed by Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In interviews conducted with Social Workers that are considering migration to other countries, many of them stated that their skills as Social Workers are more recognised and appreciated in other countries. These countries require the specialist clinical skills of Social Workers and the Social Workers trained in this paradigm have been able to fit into the environment without much additional training.

Work environment covers a few factors that either impact positively or negatively on an employee's working life. A good working environment may result in high productivity, organisational effectiveness and the general improvement of the well being of employees. In a nutshell, work environment encompasses such factors as safe and healthy working conditions, future opportunity for continued growth and security, adequate, fair and equitable compensation among all employees. This form of incentive is sadly lacking in the Public Service but is one that most leading organisations in the private sector pay strict attention to.

Although this strategy may prove costly for the Public Service, it is effective and has been proven as such in the private sector. A good example is the Liberty Life Group, which provides childcare facilities, excellent catering facilities and gym facilities at its Head Office and has thus been constantly rated as one of the employers of choice. This just proves that intrinsic motivation may work as much as monetary rewards. Although this is ideal, the focus of this strategy is on the basic or minimum requirements for Social Workers to be able to perform their professional tasks to the best of their ability.

Other factors that impact on the environment of Social Workers includes the paradigm shift from a welfarist approach to a developmental approach. The difficulties that Social Workers here had in understanding the policy shifts was compounded by the fact that the White Paper on Social Welfare, was never properly discussed, systematically unpacked and supported by continuous capacity building programmes and training material.

Change management principles were not adequately employed and in many cases Social Workers found the changes could not be sustained in the working place even if they had understood the developmental approach. The changes in policy were further exacerbated by the frequent changes in top leadership. This impacted upon the implementation of policies as well as the continuity of programmes. Social Workers on the ground experienced these policy shifts negatively and it impacted on the service delivery, retention and morale.

11.4 Promotional/Career Opportunities

Promotional and career opportunities relate to the broader principle of career management, which in itself consists of career planning and management of succession processes. Career path relates to one's ability to move upwards within an organisation and it is linked to performance and potential. A promotion, on the other hand, is a reassignment of the individual to a job of a higher rank.

Promotion has the following benefits:

- Individual and organisational skills and competencies are enhanced.
- It may lead to personal development due to training.
- It leads to improved utilisation of personnel and therefore contributes towards avoiding organisational obsolescence.
- The individual has a certain degree of control over the process — defining goals, needs and personal growth.
- Individuals are motivated to stay and commit themselves to the Public Service.
- Individual's unique needs, wants and abilities are recognised.
- It increases employees' loyalty and commitment to the organisation.
- It provides opportunities for training and development for promoted employees.
- It may result in good behaviour by employees.

Due to the rigid structures in the Public Service, there is very little opportunity for vertical promotion as promotion prospects within an individual's area of expertise are scarce. Opportunities for specialisation in the social work field could be the answer in this regard.

However, the system has to be perceived by employees as being just and fair, and not favouring some above others.

11.5 Special Training and Educational Opportunities

Training is the systematic modification of behaviour through learning that occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned exercise. The fundamental objective of training and educational opportunities is to assist the organisation to achieve its purpose by adding value to its key resource, the people it employs. There are various kinds of training but for the purpose of this discussion, special training, i.e. training relevant to organisational needs, and the specific education that addresses people development within the organisation was covered in the earlier sections of this strategy.

11.6 Additional Leave Days

Departments may consider granting additional leave days to Social Workers that agree to work in rural areas or traumatic situations.

11.7 Sabbaticals

The granting of sabbaticals, e.g. Granting extended leave (3 months) every third year to professionals to take up lecture duties, research, visit foreign institutions, etc. The department could determine the conditions with regard to salary and other benefits. This would be an appropriate incentive to deal with work related stress and burnout. It could also be a form of recognition for performance and preparation for specialisation.

11.8 Job Rotation

This relates to the movement of employees between the various offices/ institutions. A clear policy should be developed to provide for the process and procedure. Incentives may be included in the policy to ensure compliance or, this may be achieved through the collective bargaining process, legislation/regulation.

11.9 Monetary Incentives

This refers to incentives that are linked to financial gain. Some of these incentives are currently in place and others are not yet in force.

11.10 Remuneration of Social Workers

Whilst this has been found to be a short-lived motivating factor, it is important to note that a good salary is essential for employee satisfaction. Pay is the best and most tangible form of recognition of the employer's worth in the organisation.

They include the following:

- Remuneration of Social Workers.
- Incentive schemes.
- Introduction of new and separate salary structures for identified categories.
- Bonuses linked to term contracts.
- Retention allowances.
- Bonuses linked to project milestones or completion.
- Special cash bonuses for group or departments.
- Allocation for merit and other wards to identified categories.
- Differed compensation.
- Bursary schemes.
- Employee benefits.
- Payment of study debts.

To date, a set of generic job descriptions has been developed for Social Workers. These job descriptions were put through the job evaluation system to determine whether they are correctly graded, which led to the proposed improvement of salary levels of Social Workers. It is however incumbent upon all Managers to evaluate the specific jobs of Social Workers that work in different environments to ensure that they are correctly graded and those Social Workers are remunerated properly. Furthermore, the grading of social work posts must be a continuous process to ensure alignment with market trends.

11.11 Incentive Schemes

Michael Armstrong defines incentives as payments linked to the achievement of previously set targets which are designed to motivate people to achieve higher levels of performance targets, usually quantified in such terms as output or sales.

Before an incentive scheme is introduced, it is imperative to understand the organisation's culture, goals, strategy and current incentive schemes. In addition, the introduction of any incentive scheme into a unionised environment (like the Public Service), requires careful handling if the overall union-management relationship is not to be jeopardised. Although methods such as profit-share and gain share etc, are tangible rewards for successful performance (and that it is important that such methods be introduced if remuneration is to be used to motivate staff), it is highly unlikely that they can be utilised in the Public Service environment (where there is no profit to share).

11.12 Introduction of New and Separate Salary Structures (Salary Key Scales) for Identified Categories

The Minister may determine a separate salary structure (for Public Service and Administration) specifically for those occupations regarded or defined as permanent scarce skills. This implies the introduction of additional normal salary structures (salary key scales) for identified categories of employees such as Social Workers that can be linked to a specific market position (on market or even above market). This would be achieved through the job evaluation process prior to translation to a separate salary structure for Social Workers.

11.13 Bonuses Linked to Term Contracts

This strategy relates to a broader retention plan that should be utilised in conjunction with an analysis relating to high staff turnover. Through this strategy, employees (new or current) whose contracts are being renewed are tied to a term contract (over a number of years) with the payment of a cash bonus in return for specific outputs and terms. The two parties may agree that the employee would be paid a lump-sum bonus either on the commencement of the contract or on the completion of the contract. Although this is not an employment contract, it is closely linked to it. The payment of this form of incentive should also be directly linked to skills transfer. This scheme may be used to attract personnel to other under serviced areas such as rural areas, during which time the employer may be guaranteed employment commitment.

11.14 Retention Allowances

This strategy also relates to the broader retention plan. In this case, the employer offers monthly retention allowances in order to retain employees with the necessary scarce skills for the organisation, over an agreed period.

The following are two types of allowances that could be payable:

- The allowance could be arbitrary and therefore not linked to any salary base. In this regard, the allowance has an uninformed basis (not linked to salary). The allowance is also not subject to any increase; therefore it is phased out and becomes obsolete within a period of time.
- The allowance should be subject to regular (e.g. annual) review.
- The allowance could be determined as a percentage of salary; therefore the allowance is automatically adjusted in line with annual adjustments.

Both forms of allowance could be subject to termination, should it be determined that the payment of the allowance is no longer necessary.

An example of a retention allowance is the scarce skills allowance as well as the rural allowance proposed for health care professionals working in public health institutions. The latter allowance is critical to facilitate the recruitment and retention of Social Workers in rural areas, which are currently grossly under-serviced and under-resourced.

11.15 Bonuses Linked to Project Milestones or Completion

In general, bonus schemes provide an award usually in the form of a lump-sum payment. This is an additional payment to the basic salary and it can be linked to the performance of the individual or group, i.e. for completing or reaching a milestone in an assignment/project. Individuals or teams are awarded a bonus for attaining a certain goal in an assignment and it emphasises the importance of adhering to established timeframes.

11.16 Special Cash Bonuses for Groups or Departments

This incentive is similar to bonuses linked to project milestone/completion, this form of incentive may be paid in respect of exceptional performance, possession of specific scarce skills, or goals attained.

11.17 Allocation for Merit and Other Awards to Identified Categories

A more progressive merit award system involving a higher percentage allocation (in line with the newly developed incentive policy) may be introduced to identified categories. This may be linked to performance, scarce skills and acquisition of additional competencies.

This system rewards employees who comply with the following criteria:

- Rated as an excellent performer (performance rating of at least 75% and above).
- Categorised or classified as a scarce skill.
- Have obtained a particular qualification/competency level.

This provides an excellent basis for employee motivation and could improve the performance culture in the department. There are clear and simple goals to be attained before the merit is awarded, e.g. obtaining a certain qualification, meeting a particular target etc.

In addition to merit awards, there are other staff recognition initiatives. These include long-term awards, awards for consistent work attendance, productivity, punctuality and other innovative awards. These should satisfy the needs of both new and old workers equally.

11.18 Deferred Compensation

Deferred compensation is a certain kind of incentive scheme whereby benefits are credited to an employee's account; to be paid at retirement or other stated time but not immediately. It encourages employees to identify themselves more closely with the organisation by developing a common concern for its progress and assists in demonstrating the goodwill of the organisation to its members.

11.19 Employee Benefits

Employee benefits are defined as elements of remuneration given in addition to various forms of cash payments. They are not necessarily restricted to remuneration, and may comprise of pension, medical aid, car allowances, housing subsidy, loans etc.

The main objectives of employee benefits are to:

- Provide an attractive and competitive total remuneration package, which both attracts and retains high quality employees, i.e. employees with scarce skills.
- Provide for the personal needs of employees.
- Provide for some people a tax-efficient method of remuneration.

Note: Although each of the above benefits has its particular pros and cons, for the purposes of this document they are discussed as one.

This is one area that the Public Service has been utilising extensively with little success in terms of recruiting and retaining personnel with scarce skills. Since most of the benefits are already in existence, new and innovative plans could be introduced in order to attract and retain Social Workers in the Public Service. For example, the introduction of car allowances could entice some Social Workers. Also, the introduction of the flexible remuneration package system for salary levels 11 and 12 could be extended to all personnel who are considered to be Social Workers. Provision of an accommodation allowance or free accommodation within specific rural areas (i.e. development of villages or housing complexes specifically built for public servants) can also be seen as an incentive or motivator to attract.

11.20 Payment of study debts

A scheme to offer free loans to a newly appointed Social Worker after completing their social work qualification could be considered. The Social Worker could then be offered an opportunity to repay the loan during their employment. The other option would be for the employer to offer an interest free loan not repayable, subject to the Social Worker completing a number of years in a social work post in the department/agency.

11.21 Bursary Schemes

Bursary schemes could be provided for student Social Workers and/or Social Auxiliary Workers who are already employed in the department. Furthermore, to allow for career pathing, Social Workers with potential could be identified and given bursaries to study for management in the social work field or other specialised areas within the profession. This would not only ensure retention through contractual obligations as a result of studying through employer resources but could also facilitate the skills development process within the profession. This could also provide motivation to Social Workers and ensure that government/agency becomes the employer of choice. As already indicated in the earlier sections of this strategy, bursaries could be linked to recruitment drives in Institutions of Higher Learning and High Schools. Furthermore, they could also provide for the financing of field work placement of student Social Workers, in order to keep them in the profession and to defray the cost of travelling and subsistence during such placements.

Some of these monetary incentives are already applicable in the public service and in some agencies. However, a more conscious effort should be made to apply them in a manner that will facilitate retention of personnel.

12. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

12.1 Marketing In the Social Work Context

In order to improve the image of the profession to the external publics, an extensive marketing and communication drive, specifically designed for the social work profession must be strengthened. This communication, which may be directed to the community at large, beneficiaries, other professionals, shareholders, business and civil society organisations, should be aimed at facilitating understanding of the profession.

It is important to understand the environment in which the profession operates and responds appropriately to such demands. A closer look at the consumers is needed, with a view to understanding who they are, their needs and aspirations and enabling them to dictate the trends for service delivery, so that Social Workers become responsive to market needs.

Social work intervention is intangible and therefore undervalued. It is important to market the social work profession in order to enhance the understanding of the role and value of the profession in the socio-economic development of the country.

12.2 Internal Marketing

Internal marketing can be defined as a “strategy of applying marketing philosophy and principles to people who serve the external customer so that (1) the best people can be employed and retained and (2) they will do the best possible work. It can be regarded as an agency’s effort to communicate with and motivate employees to share the goal of improving customer satisfaction”. It can further be defined as “a practice of communication with employees: letting them know what is going on so that they can do their jobs effectively and efficiently, so that the external and internal customers are well served by the organisation; letting them know which activities are acceptable and which are not. In short, it involves treating employees as partners in the organisation’s effort to provide goods and services to the buying/receiving public”. This definition emphasises the need to focus internal marketing efforts toward ensuring that the best possible service is delivered to the external customers.

It therefore proposes that employees are not the exclusive targets of internal marketing but are the means to satisfy external customers.

It is true that there can never be any successful attempt at satisfying external customers' needs effectively unless employees that are responsible for this are themselves satisfied. Frost and Kumar (2000:1-18) put it aptly when they said: "the way to satisfied customers is through satisfied employees".

Social Workers are not working in a vacuum. They work alongside other professionals within their agencies, e.g. Employers, Management, Human Resources, Administration, Social Security, etc. It is significant that these groupings should understand the functions and expectations of Social Workers.

This requires that an internal marketing strategy be developed to ensure that Social Workers become efficient and effective in service delivery. It would enable the department to overcome organisational resistance to change, and motivate employees to integrate their services. This will also ensure customer satisfaction since they will receive coordinated package of services.

Internal marketing can be done through newsletters, seminars, workshops, brochures and other internal publications. Award functions for best Social Worker achiever could be initiated in order to promote positive action, commitment and dedication to real work amongst upcoming Social Workers. This will promote teamwork and encourage utilisation of social work services.

12.3 External Marketing

In order to improve the image of the profession to the public, an extensive marketing and communication drive, specifically designed for the social work profession must be strengthened. The community at large, beneficiaries, other professionals, shareholders, business and civil society organisations, should assist in facilitating understanding of the profession.

External marketing can be done through mass outreach programmes, multimedia campaigns, road shows, distribution of pamphlets, brochures, etc. Opportunities have to be identified to promote the profession externally.

There is a need for Social Workers to promote understanding of social work services to non-professionals within the agency and in other sectors.

It is important that Social Workers educate clients about social work services in general and about other specific agency functions. In that education process however, clients should be assisted with dignity and referred accordingly when necessary. Part of this process is the need to facilitate understanding of the types and functions of different categories of professionals within the sector, such as Community Development, Youth Development, Child and Youth Care Workers, Probation Officers, Social Workers, social security officers and lay counsellors.

Marketing can also be done through skills strategy by involving Health and Welfare Seta (HWSETA). Organisations like SAGDA for the unemployed graduates have to be consulted with. Politicians like the relevant Members of Executive Councils (MEC`s) and Portfolio Committees should contribute to the marketing of the profession.

Achievements and successes of Social Workers should be acknowledged and publicised. Awards should also be given to best performers (refer to incentives). Social work should also be re-positioned in such a way that it adopts a business approach. The whole outlook or infrastructures of offices and buildings where Social Workers work have to be changed.

13. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

The success of the strategy will depend on the following:

- Development of an implementation plan which is time bound, well resourced and project managed;
- Buy-in from all internal and external stakeholders;
- A well designed communication strategy to be developed and implemented;
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting must take place at regular intervals through the Heads of Social Welfare Services and Heads of Social Development Fora, within the department.
- A dedicated transformation unit at national and provincial level must facilitate the implementation of the strategy.
- An implementation plan will guide the implementation of the strategy.

Noting that the strategy has a substantial impact on the allocation of resources towards its achievement, it is imperative that priorities should be determined. This will be done by way of an action plan whose implementation will be dependant on availability of resources. It is however also critical to note that the retention strategy is a tool for lobbying for additional resources and action plans would therefore need to be reviewed accordingly. Elements of the recruitment and retention strategy have or are being implemented ongoingly. There are also elements that would not require allocation of resources and relate to the change in attitude and ways of working.

Implementation of the strategy would have to be the responsibility of the sector as a whole.

14. CONCLUSION

The success of this strategy will require the commitment of the Department of Social Development family and all other stakeholders. The strategy for the Recruitment and Retention Strategy must be read with other policy documents such as the Integrated Service Delivery Model for Social Services. It will further inform the impending human resource strategy of the Department.

This strategy will have a positive long-term impact on the sector in terms of the manner and effectiveness of the services it provides. The strategy must ultimately make a difference to service recipients and contribute effectively to the development agenda of the country.

**Department of Social Development
Chief Directorate: Communication**

Private Bag X901, Pretoria, 0001,
134 Pretorius Street, HSRC Building, Pretoria

Tel: +27 12 312 7500 / 7641 / 7653

Fax: +27 12 312 7988 / 7470

Toll Free: 0800 60 10 11

www.dsd.gov.za