RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PRACTITIONERS

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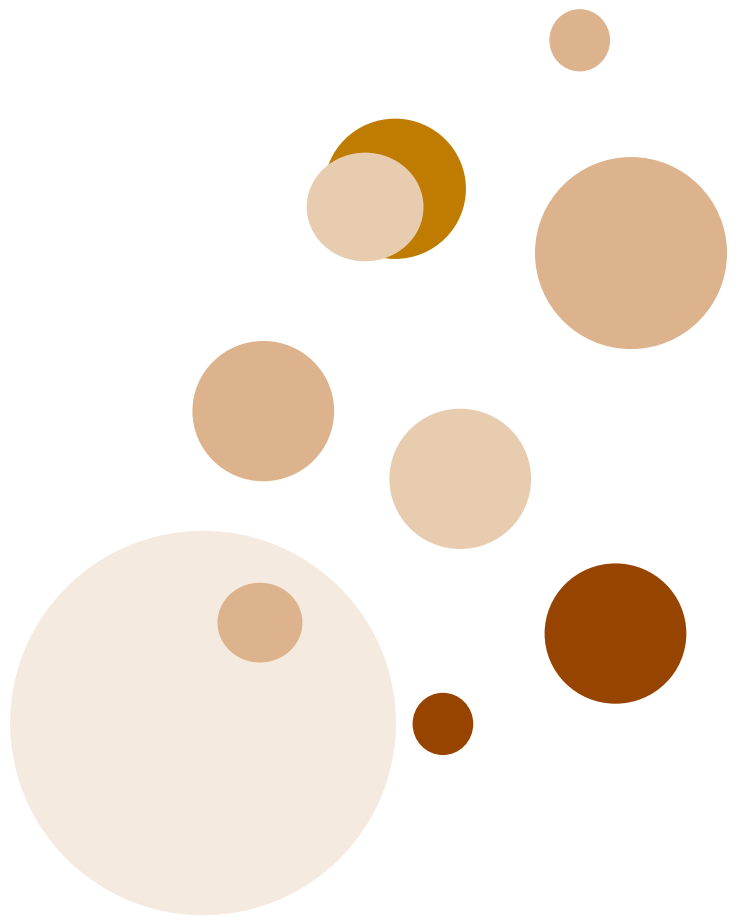
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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PRACTITIONERS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Department of Social Development is sincerely grateful and commends all the stakeholders that participated immensely and contributed significantly in the development of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social service practitioners. These comprised of; human resource management officials, social work managers, social work supervisors, social workers, social auxiliary workers, managers of community development practitioners, supervisors of community development practitioners, community development practitioners, and the child and youth care workers at both provincial and national level. The strategy seeks to fulfil the mandate of the Department to transform the society by building conscious and capable citizens through the provision of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The core mandate of the Department of Social Development (DSD), is to facilitate human development and improve the quality of life for the citizens of South Africa. This is achieved through a caring and integrated system of social development services. The paradigm shift from a welfare approach to a developmental approach to social services delivery was determined by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), as well as the adoption of the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM).

Inconsideration of the paradigm shift and being confronted with the socio-economic challenges that the country continues to face. The need for expansion and diversification of social services skill sets to include social workers, social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers, community development practitioners, auxiliary community development practitioners, early childhood development practitioners and caregivers amongst social service practitioners is deemed necessary and is widely accepted. Therefore, to fulfil its mandate the DSD must not only attract and recruit qualified practitioners with diversified skill sets, but needs to also put measures in place to deploy and retain these qualified practitioners to meet the sector's demand for social development services.

The overall aim of the strategy is to expand and improve social development services through the recruitment and retention of sufficient, competent and high performing social practitioners in a range of social service occupations. It supports the strategic outcome oriented goals of the DSD's Strategic Plan 2015-2020, which focus on social assistance to reduce poverty; enhanced capabilities for sustained livelihoods and household food security; reviewed and reformed social welfare services and finances; improved provision of early childhood development; and strengthened coordination, integration, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services.

The DSD has embarked on several initiatives as part of the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers. The strategy, however, did not fully achieve its goals primarily due to the lack of clear implementation plans and the lack of clarity as to who was responsible for the implementation. It is evident from the situational analysis that many of the challenges affecting recruitment and retention have not been sufficiently addressed, resulting in few social service practitioners and a high turnover rate.

The four factors model was utilised to categorise the push and pull factors that motivates social service practitioners in the DSD to enter an occupation; to stay in or to leave the occupation based on the systems involved such as personal, work, organisational and external factors. Understanding these pull and push factors informed the recruitment and retention strategies.

The purpose of the recruitment strategy is to ensure that the DSD has a strong planning and implementation system in place in order to attract and appoint the right professional, at the right time, to the right position, at the right place. Enabling it to deliver on its mandate whilst achieving its strategic goals. The recruitment purpose will be achieved through the following outcome-oriented goals:

To review and expand the organisational structure of the DSD to meet the mandate for social services.
To market and promote social service occupations and the DSD as employer.
To recruit and select sufficient, suitable social service practitioners to meet the demands for social services.
To recruit and select social service supervisors and managers with relevant skills and experience.

The purpose of the retention strategy is to ensure that skilled and high performing social service practitioners remain in the service of the DSD. The retention purpose will be achieved through the following outcome-oriented goals:

- To strengthen onboarding and skills development of social service practitioners.
- To strengthen supervision and management of social service practitioners and social development services.
- To enhance the performance of social service practitioners.
- To review and strengthen the career path and remuneration system for social service practitioners.
- To enhance the working conditions of social service practitioners.
- To ensure compliance with professional and ethical standards.
- To empower and engage social service practitioners to express their views on work-related matters.

The strategy guides the operationalisation through national, provincial and district structures including well-resourced and monitored implementation plans. Ensuring the recruitment and retention of a range of skilled social service practitioners who can positively contribute towards the attainment of South Africa's development goals.

1.   INTRODUCTION

The Department of Social Development (DSD) derives its mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) which calls for the improvement of quality of life for all citizens and freeing the potential of each person. The vision of the Department seeks to provide a caring and integrated system of social development services that facilitates human development and improves the quality of life. The mission of the Department aims to deliver integrated, sustainable and quality services in partnership with all those committed to realising its vision of building a caring society.

To fulfil its vision and mission, the Department developed the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers in 2009. This strategy focused on the recruitment and retention of social workers but did not address the need for other social service practitioners.

The need for a differentiated workforce, with a spectrum of competencies on various skills levels, is what is required to manage the impact of the socio-economic "triple challenge" of poverty, inequality and unemployment in the society and on vulnerable groups.

The research that informed the development of the White Paper confirmed that:
"There is an overreliance on professional social workers and there is a need to expand human resource capacity through the employment of other categories of social service personnel, such as child and youth care workers, community development workers, social development workers, and volunteers" (Department of Social Welfare, 1996).

The increasing demand for and the expansion of social development services with the introduction of new services for children, persons with disabilities, older persons and vulnerable members of society, necessitates a range of occupational groups to implement developmental social welfare programs (Health and Welfare SETA, 2015).   The three occupational groups included in the Draft Social Service Practitioners Policy are social workers, child and youth care workers, and community development practitioners, each with a professional and an auxiliary level. The draft policy also identifies early childhood development practitioners and caregivers. This diversification of skills is required to realise the DSD's mission to transform the society by building conscious and capable citizens through the provision of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development services.

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, underscores the importance of the social service sector in attaining the goals as set out in the NDP with regards to the well-being of all citizens. It projects that the ranks of social service professionals should be boosted to 55 000, in order for it to meet the demand for appropriate basic social welfare services.

"Responding to the social breakdown of families, communities and society, requires a range of generic and specialist education, and training that is not available to poor communities. The inability of South Africa's social welfare services to provide the quality of care required is reflected in the inadequate supply of social work, community development and child and youth care professionals. It is estimated that the country requires close to 55 000 social service professionals to respond to the country's social welfare needs.
Currently, there are approximately 15 000 qualified social workers registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions. Problems in the supply of qualified social service professionals are also linked to poor working conditions and a lack of funding for social services. Structural conditions in the education and health sectors affect the ability of tertiary institutions to produce social work, community development and social development professionals, as well as specialists." (National Planning Commission, 2013)

There is a growing demand for an expanded range of social service practitioners and thus the review of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers must be inclusive of all social service practitioners. The development of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Service Practitioners, including social workers, child and youth care workers, community development practitioners, and social auxiliary workers, affirms that the social development sector requires a multi-professional approach and acknowledges the value of a range of social service practitioners.

Thus, the overall aim of the strategy is to provide a framework to attract, recruit, develop and retain all social service practitioners for the DSD which responds to the demands for social development services. It provides support for the five (5) overall strategic outcome-oriented goals of the DSD's Strategic Plan, 2015-2020, which focus on social assistance to reduce poverty; enhanced capabilities for sustained livelihoods and household food security; reviewed and reformed social welfare services and finances; improved provision of early childhood development; and strengthened coordination, integration, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services.

2. AIM OF THE STRATEGY

The aim of the strategy is to expand and improve social development services through the recruitment and retention of sufficient, competent and high performing social practitioners of a range of social service occupations.

2.1. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The following policy and legislative documents define the context in terms of which the new recruitment and retention strategy is to be realised.

- *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No 108 of 1996*

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, as the supreme law of the country is the basis within which all legislation must be developed. It emphasises accountability by all public administrations, to comply with the rule of law. The Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution stipulates that services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably, and without bias. The Constitution provides the principle of cooperative governance that guides the relationship between the national and provincial spheres of government.

The Constitution states that everyone has the right to appropriate social development services and social assistance. Services are required to be accessible and to comply with the principles of administrative justice.

- *The Labour Relations Act (LRA), No 66 of 1995*

The Labour Relations Act aims to promote economic development, social justice, labour peace and democracy in the workplace. It applies to all employers, workers, trade unions and employers' organisations.

- *Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997*

The purpose of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act is to advance economic development and social justice by ensuring that all fair labour practices which have been conferred by Section 23 (1) of the Constitution, are applied to all employees. The Act establishes a regulatory framework for employment and standardises the basic conditions of service to which all employers must adhere. The Act also makes provision for the protection of all employees against discrimination. The Code of Good Practice for Employers is derived from this Act.

- *The Public Service Act, No 103 of 1994 as amended*

The Public Service Regulations of 2015 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: Chapter 4, Part 1; makes provision for employment matters, including job descriptions, job evaluations, job grading. Part 2; addresses remuneration and other benefits, Part 3; the working environment, Part 4; appointments and other employment matters, Part 5; performance management and Part 6; training.

- *Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998*

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act is to achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment. Through eliminating unfair discrimination and implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, and to ensure equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

- *Occupation Health and Safety Act, No 181 of 1993, as amended*

The Occupational Health and Safety Act aims to provide for the health and safety of persons at work as well as the health and safety of persons connected to the activities of persons at work, and to establish an advisory council for occupational health and safety.

- *The South African Qualifications Act, No 58 of 1995*

The South African Qualifications Act 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*

The Skills Development Act provides for the establishment of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SAETA's) required to facilitate skills development in the relevant sectors.

- *The Skills Development Levies Act, No 9 of 1999*

The Skills Development Levies Act provides for the securing of resources to support skills development initiatives in the country.

- *The National Qualifications Framework Act, No 67 of 2008*

The objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) include; creating a single integrated national framework for learning achievements; to facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths; to enhance the quality of education and training; to accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities. The objectives of the NQF are designed to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

- *Social Service Professions Act, No 110 of 1978, as amended*

The Social Service Professions Act provides for the establishment of the South African Council for Social Service Professions and defines its powers and functions. It also provides for the registration of social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers and persons practising other professions in respect of which professional boards have been established; for control over the professions regulated under this Act; and for incidental matters. The Social Services Professions Act was formerly known as the Social Work

Act, which provided for the establishment of the South African Council for Social Work and defined its powers and functions. The development of the Draft Social Service Practitioners Policy will give effect to the review of the Social Service Professions Act.

- *The White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997*

The White Paper for Social Welfare identifies the existing service providers in the social welfare sector as planners, social workers, social auxiliary workers, social development and community development workers, social security personnel, and child and youth care workers. It emphasises the lack of human resource capacity in the welfare field, the disparities between provinces, the urban bias as well as the overreliance on social workers. The need to expanding the human resource capacity to include other categories of social service personnel is highlighted.

The White Paper also addresses redeployment, capacity building and orientation, education and training, accreditation, remuneration and working conditions of social welfare personnel. The White Paper for Social Welfare is currently under review.

- *The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, 1997*

The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, establishes 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 in the Public Service, 1997*

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service sets a framework for the development of a service delivery oriented, multi-skilled and multicultural workforce that is effective and efficient in the performance of duties.

- *The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1995*

The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service deals specifically amongst other priorities, with the human resources development and training in crucial areas, such as policy management, strategic planning, project management, leadership, etc.

- *Policy for Social Service Practitioners, 2017*

The Draft Social Service Practitioners Policy, which aims to regulate all social service practitioners, is the product of a protracted process to review the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 as amended. The sections of the Policy that have legal elements will be translated into the Bill. Ultimately, the Bill will be enacted into the Social Service Practitioners Act. The objectives of the policy include providing a framework which will guide and improve the legislation that will ultimately serve as a regulatory framework for social service practitioners to expand and give recognition to the human resource profile, and to serve as an enabling framework that will facilitate the professionalisation of the human resources in the social development sector.

- *The National Skills Development Strategy*

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is the overarching strategic guide for skills development and provides direction to sector skills planning and implementation in the SETAs. It provides a framework for the skills development levy resource utilisation of these institutions as well as the NSF, and sets out the linkages with, and responsibilities of, other education and training stakeholders.

- *The Organising Framework for Occupations, 2015*

The Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO), is a coded occupational classification system used for identifying, reporting and monitoring skills demand and supply in the South African labour market. The OFO is constructed by analysing jobs and identifying similarities in terms of tasks and skills; categorising similar jobs into occupations; and classifying these occupations into occupational groups at increasing levels of generality.

- *Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council Resolution 1 of 2009: Agreement on the Implementation of an Occupational Specific Dispensation for Social Service Professions and Occupations*

Resolution 1 of 2005 describes an occupation specific remuneration and career progression system for social workers, including social auxiliary workers; probation officers and assistant probation officers; community development practitioners, including community development assistants; and child and youth care workers. It provides for career pathing; pay progression and performance; grade progression based on performance; recognition of appropriate experience; and increased competencies to attract and retain social service professions and occupations in the Public Service. The agreement introduces differentiated salary scales for identified categories of social service practitioners based on a new remuneration structure and a change in the pensionable composition of the total cost to employer packages in the middle management service of social service professions and occupations.

- *Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, Department of National Treasury 2010*

The DSD's Retention and Recruitment strategy follows the National Treasury's 2010 Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans. The document defines key strategic concepts. The strategy uses concepts like strategic outcome oriented goals, objectives, outcomes and indicators in line with the National Treasury Framework.

- *Department of Social Development: Towards Improved Social Services: Generic Norms and Standards for Social Services (2011)*

The framework serves to guide the delivery of integrated quality services to identified beneficiaries. The generic norms and standards set out in the framework are applicable to all social service providers, and all programs at all levels from local to national. The framework synergises the norms and standards pertaining to:

- The context in which service delivery takes place (legislation, policy, collaborative partnerships, strategic planning, quality control, monitoring and evaluation).

- The organisational functionality of the service provider – whether DSD, an NPO or other organisation. Norms and standards applicable to the HR function (refer to pages 23 -24 of the document) have been established and are considered in the formulation of the recruitment and retention strategy.

- Process norms and standards applicable to the social service practitioner when rendering services relating to the quality of the service and the relationship between the practitioner and the citizen served.

- Outcome norms and standards which address the tangible results of the actions taken to improve the social service beneficiaries' current and future situations, as well as the overall quality of life.

- *Social development policies and legislation*

Social development services and social service practitioners are guided by what the existing legislation contains and therefore prescribes. The legislation identifies the category of role player (practitioner) to deliver services. The Model for the Management of Human Resources in the Welfare Sector (Department of Social Development, 2011), identifies   the legislation, policies, guidelines and reports governing and referring to the utilisation of these practitioners.

Legislation/Policy/Guideline/Report	CYCW	CDP	SW	ASW	ECD	Caregiver
Social Service Professions Act	Y		Y	Y		
Children's Act	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Child Justice Act			Y			
Probation Services Act			Y	Y		
Older Persons Act			Y			Y
Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act			Y			
Mediation in Certain Divorce Proceedings Act			Y			
Domestic Violence Act			Y			
Criminal Procedure Act			Y			
White Paper for Social Welfare	Y	Y	Y	Y		
White Paper on Families	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Policy on Disability			Y			
National Youth Policy	Y		Y	Y		

Draft Strategy for Women			Y			
Draft Social Service Practitioners Policy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Draft Community Development Policy		Y				
Framework for Social Welfare Services	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Guidelines for services to children infected and affected by HIV and Aids	Y	Y	Y			
Guidelines for establishing HCBC and support programs	Y		Y			
Model for the management of Human Resources in the Social Welfare Sector	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y

Table 1: Occupations identified in Legislation, Policies, Guidelines and Reports

3.   SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Recruitment and retention is a key strategic objective for organisations across the globe and in all sectors. Human resources affect the achievement of organisational vision and mission directly. Great emphasis is placed on human resource management and the alignment of recruitment and retention strategies to that of the overall strategy of the organisation.

3.1   Social service occupations as scarce skills

A critical consideration in any recruitment and retention strategy is that of scarce skills, (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). The strategy needs to ensure that the recruiting and retaining of scarce skills will be the main strategic priority. The debates around scarce skills in social development services in South Africa have not reached conclusion and must be noted.

The definition and measurement of scarce skills: Since first mentioned in the State of the Nation address by the former President, Mr Thabo Mbeki in 2004, both the description and the measurement of scarce skills have been contested.   The latest national scarce skills list published in 2015 distinguishes between absolute scarcities which refers to the unavailability of skills due to low supply, whereas, relative scarcity refers to a lack of fit between available skills and employment need in terms of geographical location or equity requirements. A critical skill refers to a gap in the skills profile to perform on the required level of competence. The National Social Work Indaba identified the lack of supervision and management skills as critical in the DSD.

The level of scarcity of social service practitioners: It is quite clear from the NDP 2030 and from the Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA) sector skills plan that larger numbers of the different social services practitioners are required to meet the demand for service delivery. The critical need for skilled social service supervisors and managers, specifically social work supervisors and managers was emphasised during the National Social Work Indaba in March 2015. Despite consensus in the sector and in the above mentioned documents on the increased demand, it is not clear how many practitioners of each of the occupational groups are required. In contradiction, however, not one of the social service occupations is on the Department of Higher Education 2015 top hundred (100) list of scarce in demand skills.

Availability of accurate data on social service practitioners as a workforce: There is currently no single and comprehensive data base for social service practitioners in South Africa and there is, therefore, no clear understanding of the actual number of social service practitioners available in the country. The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), has the statutory mandate to keep a register for any professions for which a professional board has been established.

Currently the SACSSP has a register for social workers and social auxiliary workers and is in the process of establishing a register for child and youth care workers as well as auxiliary child and youth care workers. The SACSSP is, however, not able to provide accurate data on the employment status or setting of the registered practitioners. At the end of 2015, 24 657 social workers and 7 683 social auxiliary workers were registered with the SACSSP. Social workers and social auxiliary workers are employed in various government departments; metropolitan municipalities; nonprofit organisations; private organisation and companies and some are self-employed in private practice. There are also several social workers who are unemployed; non-practising; practising outside of South Africa and retired on the register of the SACSSP. Although the process of registering child and youth care workers, and auxiliary child and youth care worker has started at the SACSSP, the total numbers are not available as many are still in the process of registration. The National Association for Child Care

Workers has a database, but this includes practitioners on all levels, some of whom will not be able to register due to lack of formal qualifications or recognition of prior learning. Many child and youth care workers, and auxiliary child and youth care workers work in the Isibindi program are employed through non-profit organisations. Others are employed through the Extended Public Works Programme. Consolidated numbers for community development practitioners in South Africa do not exist as there is no single formal qualification or registration that can be used to determine the numbers.

The DSD has a database of all social service practitioners employed in the Department. The Comprehensive Report on the Review of the White Paper, 1997 (Department of Social Development, 2016), identified 9 598 social workers, 8 129 of whom are frontline workers; 2 573 social auxiliary workers, all frontline workers; 2 329 community development workers, 1 993 being frontline workers and 3 818 child and youth care workers, which also included the "Isibindi" workers on the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) in the DSD by end of 2015.

The table below provides a summary of the scenario with regards to posts and actual numbers of social service practitioners, supervisors and managers within the DSD at the end of the 2015/2016 financial year:

SOCIAL SERVICE PRACTITIONERS (all post levels)	Total national and provinces			
	Post Status			
	Active, filled	Active, vacant	Total posts	%Vacancy
Child and Youth Care Workers	1 437	98	1 619	6.1
Child and Youth Care Team Leader	93	18	111	16.2
Child and Youth Care Supervisor	264	8	272	2.9
Sub-Total	1 794	124	2 002	6.2
Community Development Practitioners	1 060	115	1 175	9.8
Community Development Assistant Managers	93	11	103	10.7
Community Development Managers	55	20	75	26.7
Community Development Supervisors	202	62	265	23.4
Community Development Policy Developers	31	2	33	6.1
Community Development Policy Manager	25	5	31	16.1
Sub-Total	1 466	215	1 682	12.8
Social Auxiliary Workers	2 475	1 698	4 174	40.7
Sub-Total	2 475	1 698	4 174	40.7

Social Work Supervisor	884	226	1 157	19.5
Social Work Manager	249	26	275	9.5
Social Work Policy Developer	132	24	156	15.4
Social Work Policy Manager	137	8	145	5.5
Sub-Total	9 022	917	9 987	9.2

Table 2: Social service practitioner posts for all levels in the DSD by end of financial year 2015/2016

The overall vacancy rate against approved posts for the DSD was 13% and 11% for 2013 and 2014 respectively. Table 2, however, indicates an overall vacancy rate of 16.6% for social service practitioners by the end of the 2014/2015 financial year. It further indicates that the highest percentage of vacant posts in the DSD by the end of the financial year 2014/2015 was for social auxiliary workers (40.7%); community development managers (26.7%); community development supervisors (23.4%); social work supervisors (19.5%); community development policy manager (16.1%); social work policy development managers (15.4%) and social work managers (9.5%).

The statistics at the end of financial year 2014/2015 indicates an increase in the vacancy rate on the practitioner level

DSD SSP March 2016	Six Provinces	
Social Service Practitioners	Posts	% Vacant
Social Workers	7 120	9%
Social Auxiliary Workers	5 421	58%
Child and Youth Care Workers	864	11%
Auxiliary Child and Youth Care Workers	0	0%
Community Development Practitioners	1 534	27%
Auxiliary/Assistant Community Development Practitioners	643	6%
Care givers	278	87%

Table 3: Vacancy rate for SSP post in DSD end of financial year 2016/2017

The following table provides a summary of the vacancy rate for social service practitioners on production post level in the DSD per province at the end of the financial year 2015/2016:

Province	SW		SAW		CYC		CDP		TOTAL	Population estimate mid 2014
	No. of posts	% Vacancy	No. of posts	% Vacancy	No. of posts	% Vacancy	No. of posts	% Vacancy	No. of posts	
EC	2 006	23	1 940	83.9	183	1.1	223	35	4 352	6 786 900
FS	419	3.8	113	15.9	107	19.6	63	0	702	2 786 800
GP	1 076	4.9	521	5.4	611	7.5	34	29.4	2 242	12 914 800
KZN	1 519	1.7	268	0.4	155	1.3	136	5.2	2 078	10 694 400
LP	1 385	2	192	2.1	56	19.6	340	0.3	1 973	5 630 500
MP	419	1.2	431	0.5	82	0	166	1.2	1 098	4 229 300
NC	232	3.9	129	2.3	84	3.6	63	6.4	508	1 166 700
NW	620	3.1	388	1.6	29	0	140	8.6	1 177	3 676 300
WC	578	4.2	192	4.2	312	4.2	10	10	1 092	6 116 300
TOTAL	8 254		4 174		1 619		1 175		15 222	54 002 000

Table 4: Social service practitioner posts and vacancies on production level in the DSD per province by end financial year 2014/2015

The national average vacancy rates at the end of the 2014/2015 financial year were: social workers – 7.7%; social auxiliary workers – 40.7%; child and youth care workers – 6.1%; community development practitioners – 9.8%. Eastern Cape (23%), has a vacancy rate higher than the national average for social workers. The highest vacancy rate for social auxiliary workers was also in the Eastern Cape (84%), higher than the national average, followed by Free State (16%). Limpopo and Free State (20%) and Gauteng (8%) had a higher vacancy rate than the national average for child and youth care workers. Eastern Cape (35%) and Gauteng (29%) have a higher vacancy rate than the national average for community development practitioners.

The turnover due to retirement, disease, death or merely change in personal circumstances is unavoidable and cannot be linked to any of the factors that motivate practitioners to stay in or leave the organisation or the occupation. These numbers should, however, be monitored to project recruitment requirements. The overall turnover rate of DSD staff personnel was 88% in 2014 and 9% in 2015. But it is not clear what portion were social service practitioners. The provincial numbers provided for the 2015/2016 financial year for six provinces are reflected below:

Social Service Practitioners	Resign	Retire/ Death	Non SSP posts	Other Depts	Terminated by employer	TOTAL
Social Work Policy Developers	1	3	0	0	0	4
Social Work Managers	2	3	1	1	0	7
Social Work Supervisors	17	12	0	1	0	30
Social Workers	74	17	6	21	1	119
Social Auxiliary Workers	14	3	0	1	1	19

Sub total	108	38	7	24	2	179
Child and Youth Care Team Leaders	0	1	0	0	0	1
Child and Youth Care Supervisors	3	0	0	0	0	3
Child and Youth Care Workers	15	19	0	0	2	36
Auxiliary Child and Youth Care Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub total	18	20	0	0	2	40
Community Development Policy Developers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Development Managers	2	0	0	0	0	2
Community Development Supervisors	2	0	0	0	0	2
Community Development Practitioners	11	6	0	5	2	24
Auxiliary/Assistant Community Developer	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sub total	15	7	0	5	2	29
Care givers	34	10	0	4	2	50

Table 5: Attrition of SSP in the DSD 2015/2016

The numbers in table 5 above indicate a 1.7% attrition rate using the attrition number of only four provinces with the total number of social workers reflected in the Comprehensive Report. The actual attrition rate is, therefore, higher. The rate for social auxiliary workers, using the same numbers, was 0.7%. It can thus be deduced that the attrition rate for social service practitioners is higher than the attrition rate for the total DSD staff.

Social service practitioners appointments 2014 – 2016 (five provinces)			
	TOTAL		
Social Service Practitioners	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Social Work Policy Developers	8	6	2
Social Work Managers	3	1	3
Social Work Supervisors	29	4	12
Social Workers	177	162	473
Social Auxiliary Workers	20	8	4
Sub total	237	181	494
Child and Youth Care Team Leaders	0	0	0
Child and Youth Care Supervisors	4	1	0

Auxiliary Child and Youth Care Worker	43	9	0
Child and Youth Care Workers	9	4	5
Sub total	56	14	5
Community Development Policy Developers	0	1	0
Community Development Managers	3	2	2
Community Development Assistant Managers	5	35	5
Community Development Supervisors	34	59	4
Community Development Practitioners	62	20	7
Assistant Community Development Practitioners	0	0	0
Sub total	104	117	18

Table 6: Appointment numbers of SSP in the DSD over three years

Although a low turnover rate is seen in the DSD, the current structures and posts do not support demand for social development services and, therefore, cannot accommodate even the limited supply of social service practitioners. The appointment numbers for the four provinces in table 6, although higher than the attrition numbers, except for community development workers; do not reflect an expansion of posts to accommodate more social service practitioners. The debate about scarcity is often complicated by the current unemployment rate amongst social work graduates. Unemployment of social service practitioners can, however, not be an indicator of oversupply. It is rather an indication of the limited resources (funding) available to develop sufficient structures and posts within the social development services sector, including sectors such as health, education, security, defense, correctional services, local government and other government departments as well as the non-governmental sector.

3.2   Social service occupational skills needed in South Africa

The HWSETA in the Sector Skills Plan update for 2015 – 2020 (Health and Welfare SETA, 2015), highlights the occupational skills and the blend of skills required for social development services. It motivates for an increasing demand for and the expansion of the range of social service practitioners, including occupational groups such as social workers, community development practitioners, child and youth care workers, social auxiliary workers, and auxiliary child and youth care workers.

The motivation for recruitment and retention strategies is not only to obtain scarce skills, but to ensure sufficient numbers of practitioners with the required competencies. The focus is, therefore, on the correct number of the correct category of competence or occupation with the required competencies. The Model for the Management of Human Resources in the Social Welfare Sector (Department of Social Development, 2011), describes the proposed social service human resource model for direct service delivery. It is, however, not aligned with the existing organisation. The human resource model does not provide clarity about the ratios between occupational group and in relation to the population. It is imperative that the human resource model should address these ratios to determine the demand for occupational skills. This should include ratios in terms of the different social service practitioners in relation to one another, as well as in relation to the population.

The existing ratios in the Norms and Standards for Social Welfare, based on the national and international norm for the ratio of social workers to population of 1:5 000, set the following standards for the ratio of social worker to population:

- "The ratio of a single occupation service delivery unit to the population should be:
  - Rural areas – 1:2 500
  - Urban areas – 1:5 000

- The ratio of a multiple occupation service delivery unit to the population should increase proportionately based on the size and diversity of the team
  - Rural areas – 1:5 000
  - Urban areas – 1:10 000"

To clearly determine the demand for all social service practitioners, this ratio must be amended in terms of a team approach in which the ratios between different occupational groups are described.

3.3   Recruitment and retention initiatives by the DSD

The foreword of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers developed in 2009, highlighted the following statement, "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," (Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers DSD (18/2009).

The DSD has embarked on several initiatives as part of the implementation of this recruitment and retention strategy for social workers of 2009. A summary of these initiatives is listed below:

- The Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) is a remuneration and career progression system that was developed and implemented from 2009 to provide for career pathing, pay progression based on performance, grade progression based on performance, recognition of appropriate experience, and increased competencies, to attract and retain employees in the social service professions and occupations.
- The scholarship for social work students of almost R1.3 billion over 5 years, with a total of 11 050 students who would have benefitted by 2016/2017, helped to boost professional registrations with the SACSSP by almost 4 000 between 2009 and 2014.
- Government approached NPOs to deploy unemployed social work graduates, but given the vast differences in remuneration structures, many candidates have, however, been reluctant to work for NPOs.
- The DSD is conducting capacity building and training of community development workers. Targeted training programs in community development practice and governance practices will be conducted for community development workers and NPOs.
- Community development is in the process of professionalisation. The DSD worked with the Higher Education Institutions to align curricula to the community development qualifications. The DSD further supports the development and implementation of a Recognition of Prior Learning model for community development.
- Norms and standards for community development have been developed and implementation commenced in the 2015/2016 financial year.

- The Isibindi Model was rolled out for the first time during the 2013/2014 financial year. It was conceptualised to address social challenges among children brought on by the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other socio-economic factors. Through this model, trained child and youth care workers are deployed within identified households to provide much needed support services to orphaned and vulnerable children.

- The DSD implemented the social work veteran program to mentor and supervise social services practitioners. The scholarship program and high turnover rate have increased the number of newly appointed social workers and, therefore, the demand for appointment of supervisors to conduct supervision has increased. The DSD is motivating for the introduction of compulsory community service for graduates in social development services to address the shortage in rural areas.

- Norms and standards for social service practitioners have been developed to promote professionalism and set benchmarks for practice.

- The DSD developed the Supervision Framework for the social work profession in South Africa, 2012, to ensure effective supervision of social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers, learner social auxiliary workers, social work specialists and private practitioners in order to ensure competent professional social work practices that serve the best interests of service users in South Africa. The objectives of the Supervision Framework are to conceptualise, contextualise, and provide norms and standards guiding the execution of supervision. It also recognises amongst others, the interrelatedness between management and supervision to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of social work practitioners.

- The Policy for Social Service Practitioners has been developed to give effect to the review of the Social Service Professions Act, No 110 of 1978, as amended.

- The SACSSP and the HWSETA have taken steps to improve the skills sets and service delivery capacity of Social Auxiliary Workers. The Professional Board for the Social Work of the SACSSP intends to administer a Board Examination as a pre-condition for the registration of social auxiliary workers.

- The DSD has also commenced a process to improve human resource management in the welfare sector. Providers will be required to offer professional support and development to social service practitioners in the form of structured training, personal development plans and debriefing sessions to advance their health and mental well-being.

- A Social Work Indaba was held in March 2015 by the DSD and the main theme was to revitalise social work practice. The sub-themes which informed the resolutions, were social work supervision and management; the working conditions and retention strategies; social work practice; the promotion of integration and multi-disciplinary practices; and the professional and ethical considerations in social work. The resolutions decreed and adopted during Indaba are captured in the implementation of social work Indaba resolutions action plan. It further guided and informed the goals and objectives of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social service practitioners.

- A Community Development Conference was held in October 2016, which sought to improve community development practice. The main themes that were discussed included professionalisation of community development practitioners; norms and standards for community development practice; working conditions; training; and supervision. This culminated in the action plan for implementation, which also informed the goals and objectives of the strategy.

Recognising the initiatives by the DSD and other stakeholders such as the SACSSP, is deemed as a good practice to review and evaluate the progress made since the launch of the recruitment and retention strategy for social workers, and to build on effective practices, and close the gaps that retard the successful implementation and concomitant outcomes of the strategy. It is the right time to realign the recruitment and retention strategy with

the country's development goals as there has been a fundamental shift to restructure the social service workforce to include other occupations in addition to social workers.

3.4 Evaluation of the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention strategy for social workers

Despite the initiatives by the DSD over the years since the launch of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers, the goals set out by that strategy have not been fully achieved:

- 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 occupation safety standards within the workplace;
- Improving service conditions for social workers; and
- Market and promote social work services and programs.

The following strengths were identified by the participants in the Evaluation study on the implementation of Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Department of Social Development, 2014b):

- Improved remuneration and allowances;
- Availability of bursaries and consequently increased availability of social workers;
- Inclusion of accommodation needs of social workers;
- Training provided;
- Recognition of the importance of working conditions for improved service delivery.

In the Evaluation study, however, social workers, social work supervisors and social work managers also described the following main gaps in the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Department of Social Development, 2014b).

- That strategy addressed most of the issues and challenges identified as factors impacting on recruitment and retention. However, implementation did not support the strategy and, therefore, little has been gained in the past seven years.
- Documented implementation plans for the strategy were not in place. Where implementation plans existed, time frames and resources were not clearly indicated. Communication on implementation was fragmented, and this led to social workers feeling frustrated and uninformed.
- Few social work practitioners knew about the recruitment and retention strategy, and the perception was that the strategy was given low priority in the DSD, and that the key indicators to evaluate its success did not exist. Monitoring and evaluation plans, and other reporting mechanisms were so limited, that existing implementation plans could not be monitored or evaluated.
- Social work managers and human resource practitioners were not directly involved in decisions on the implementation of the strategy in their respective provinces. No clarity existed on who should be responsible for facilitating the implementation plan.

3.5 Challenges to recruitment and retention of social service practitioners

It is evident that despite a varied number of initiatives implemented by the DSD, many of the challenges affecting recruitment and retention have not been sufficiently addressed, resulting in few social service practitioners and a high rate of turnover.

A provincial readiness assessment for the implementation of the generic norms and standards was conducted in 2012. The Provincial Readiness Assessment Report (Department of Social Development, 2013), identified the challenges on the   meeting organisational norms and standards as follows:

- **Human resources;** In terms of human resources, the need for an organisational development plan that stipulates the key areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to practise optimally within a specific field of practice; the alignment of individual training and development with the organisational development plan; increasing the levels of staffing and turnaround time on filling vacancies; and reducing the ratio of supervisors to practitioners were identified as areas of vulnerability.
- **Infrastructure and occupational health and safety:** The report identified that the establishment and maintenance of infrastructure (facilities) was lacking in terms of accessibility to beneficiaries and especially to persons with physical disabilities, visibility, health and safety, and security. DSD provincial offices did not appear to adequately plan for the distribution of service facilities or to conduct regular occupational health and safety (OHS) inspections.
- **Information Technology:** Practitioners at the coalface did not have sufficient access to the information technology (IT) equipment that they require and an expansion of IT support staff was necessary.
- **Training and Development:** Training and development needed to be managed more purposefully and strategically. Induction programs were reported to be in place, but required improvement, given the demands of adjusting to the changing structure of the workforce. Practitioners were not complying with the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy and very few started to collect and document their accumulation of CPD points.
- **Supervision:** The report identified that the supervisor: practitioner's ratio was too high and that supervisors were not provided with the resources (e.g. office space, time and materials) to conduct supervision. The implementation of supervision in line with the Supervision Framework was lacking as documentation on supervision such as session reports was limited. Supervisors identified a need for training in order to conduct effective supervision and in turn improve the quality of social development services and the need for quality assurance of supervision was identified.

The Evaluation study on the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for social workers conducted in 2013, described the social workers' and social work managers' perceptions and experiences of the working conditions in terms of eight elements, namely: office facilities, office equipment, human resource administrative support, transport, organisational support, community support, respect for the social worker and conditions that enhance confidentiality. It also explored their perceptions on the implementation and impact of the OSD.

The findings on **working conditions** revealed that:

- The working conditions of social workers were perceived negatively. The highest positive score for any element was for community support and acceptance, although all scores for all elements were still below 60%.

- Office facilities were experienced as a huge challenge and closely linked to the experience that confidentiality was not enhanced in the workplace. This, combined with the perception that social workers were not respected in the workplace, posed a huge threat to social welfare service delivery.
- Office equipment was another challenge. This was seen to compromise social welfare service delivery and the quality of work, as well as to increase the stress of social workers.
- The common challenges in most provinces were the sharing of offices with insufficient office furniture, insufficient office equipment, lack of transport and organisational support, and the perceived undermining of values.
- The current working conditions threatened the profession as a whole, in terms of ethical conduct, burnout and lack of a positive image of the profession. It further compromised social welfare service delivery in terms of the quality of service.

Social workers' and social work managers' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of the **OSD** pointed to the following challenges:

- There were indications that the OSD impacted negatively on social workers, mainly due to the way the OSD had been implemented and more particularly to a perception that some people were discriminated against. The qualifications and experience of social workers were not recognised, suggesting a lack of recognition and respect for the profession.
- The OSD was not viewed as an intervention strategy conducive to the retention of social workers in the public service, improved service delivery, or improved remuneration of social workers.
- The OSD was viewed as impacting negatively on the morale and motivation of social workers, as contributing to confusion and even conflict, and as damaging the profession and service delivery. The aim and intention of the OSD had not been realised due to incoherent implementation, lack of monitoring, evaluation and coordinated implementation plans.

The Literature Review: Situation Analysis of Social Welfare Workforce Servicing Children (Department of Social Development, 2012), identified the following challenges with regards to the social welfare workforce:

- The current Social Service Professions Act does not specify which social service practitioners should carry out certain provisions.
- There is a lack of generic qualifications in some categories of social service practitioners.
- Blurring of roles and responsibilities and at times overlap in terms of scope of practice.
- Challenges with regards to the process of professionalisation and registration of the social service practitioners.
- There is no systematic approach to improving the provision of categories of the workforce in terms of career pathing.
- The Organising Framework for Occupations does not tabulate nor is it aligned to the roles and functions in all the categories envisaged in the Children's Act.

Many of the issues raised in the above mentioned research reports are similar to those raised in the study by Earle (Earle, 2008), which guided and informed the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers. The first National Social Work Indaba held in March 2015 (Department of Social Development, 2015), reiterated many of the above mentioned issues and listed them as follows:
- The state and image of the social work profession;
- The need for trained social work supervisors and managers with a social work qualification;
- Standardised supervision and management;

- Dissatisfaction with salaries, benefit structures and incentive schemes;
- Insufficient resources;
- Resources and infrastructure;
- Specialisation in social work;
- A collective voice for social service practitioners;
- Insufficient organisational structure to support service delivery strategies;
- Ineffective functioning of the SACSSP;
- Lack of sufficient and effective social work placement opportunities;
- Lack of continuing professional development opportunities;
- Standardised induction program; and
- Career pathing for social auxiliary workers.

Many of the same issues were again raised at the Community Development Conference held in October 2016 by the Department of Social Development. . In terms of the status and image of the community development, professionalisation through amendment of the new social service practitioners' policy and bill, the establishment of a board, code of ethics and development of regulations were identified as key gaps to address. The need for approval of norms and standards; ongoing professional development; fieldwork supervisor training programs at HEI's, career pathing, working conditions, insufficient organisational structures and lack of induction programs and a supervision framework for community development are an echo of the issues listed at the Social Work Indaba in the study by Earle.

The HWSETA (Health and Welfare SETA, 2015), also describes several issues that still influence the supply of skills for the social development sector:

- The new statutory framework for social development services demands services from occupational groups that are not yet formally organised, recognised or regulated.
- Absence of a broader occupational framework to categorise more social service professions and occupational groups. The Policy for Social Service Practitioners has made significant strides in addressing the categories of social service occupations.
- Although the number of social work graduates increased over the past five years. The supply to the sector is still insufficient to meet service demands due to the limited capacity for the intake of students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) also caps student intake based on the available infrastructure, training facilities and teaching posts. One of the factors that impacts on the capacity of academic institutions is the government subsidies to tertiary institutions that are lower for social work compared to some other fields of study.
- Higher Education Institutions are increasingly challenged with the placement of final year social work students in the field due to limited access to workplace training. Workplace training providers often lack the resources to take in students and to provide adequate supervision. High staff turnover in organisations depletes skills and the remaining social workers are often too inexperienced to supervise social work students.

To develop a focused, relevant and effective recruitment and retention strategy it is important to understand what factors motivate people to become social service practitioners and what motivates them to stay in the chosen occupation. It is, however, as important to understand which factors drive voluntary turnover. Understanding these pull and push factors should guide any recruitment and retention strategy.

4. THE FACTORS IMPACTING ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The situational analysis clearly indicates different categories of factors that impact on recruitment and retention of social service practitioners.

4.1 The four-factor model of recruitment and retention

The four-factor model conceptualises the categories of social service occupations and embodies an approach to recruitment and retention that recognises and addresses the four main systems involved. The systems are the person or the social service practitioner him/herself; the work or social service practice; the organisation; and the broader societal context in which social development services are delivered.

Based on these systems, the model identifies four categories into which retention/recruitment factors can be classified, namely; personal characteristics, work factors, the working environment and external factors. The model is not all inclusive, but it demonstrates that social service practitioners must respond to many organisational and external factors, all of which constitute a complex, potentially stressful and unpredictable work environment (Westbrook, Ellis, & Ellet, 2006). It also demonstrates the multidimensionality of the work environment, and the possible conditions that should be in place to retain social service practitioners.
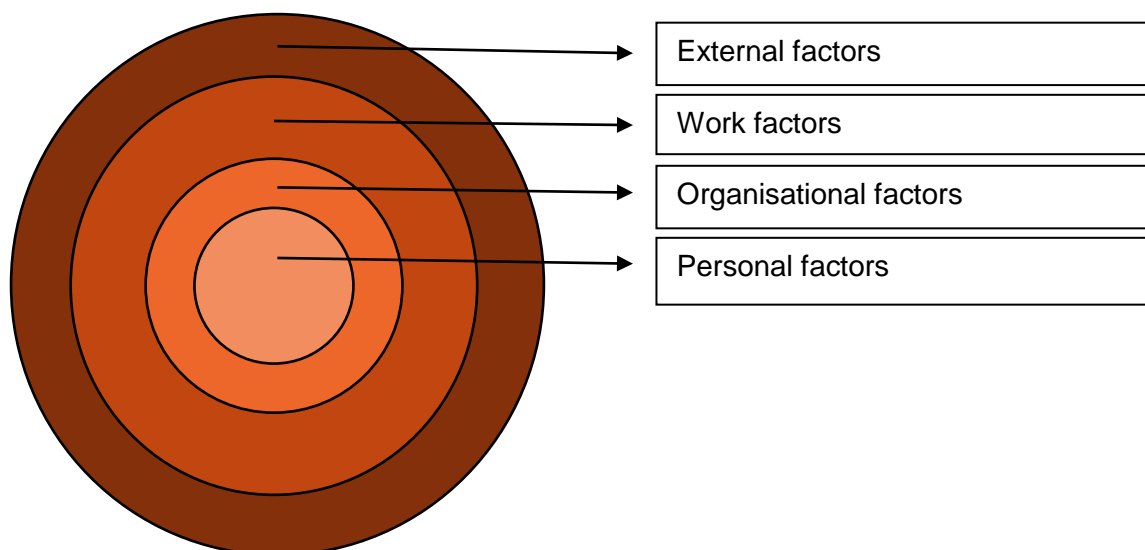

Figure 1: Classification of Retention factors

Personal factors refer to the personal characteristics of the social service practitioner, value systems, values, experiences, education and motivation to practise their specific occupation.

Work factors refer to the nature of the work. It is a challenge to work with diverse client populations, many of whom live in difficult circumstances and often have multiple problems, in a context where it is difficult to navigate and access what tends to be fragmented and where resources are often limited.

Organisational factors refer to the climate and culture in the organisation, supervision and support, clarity of organisational policies, opportunities for professional growth, recognition and salaries. The climate includes the flexibility of policies, salaries, caseload, fellow employee trust, quality of supervision and support, support from supervisors, colleagues, administration and management, worker autonomy and participation, level of

professionalism and professional behavior, level of fairness and whether there are sufficient resources available to conduct one's work.

External factors refer to the broader policy directions, funding, the perceptions portrayed in the media about the occupations, as well as the reaction and view of the public about social development services and service delivery. Some of the factors cannot be managed by either the social service practitioners or the organisation, but can be influenced to some extent, (Westbrook, Ellis & Ellet, 2006).

4.2   Factors experienced by DSD practitioners

The factors impacting on recruitment and retention in the DSD as confirmed in the literature review, and the national and provincial consultative sessions are as follows:

Factors motivating entry into social service occupations

Findings from the Evaluation study on the Social Work Scholarship (Department of Social Development, 2014a), on what motivates social workers to choose social work included personal motivation such as a sense of calling and the need to be involved in helping or facilitating change in people and communities. The availability of the scholarship was also a motivating factor, but not the main factor. These findings were confirmed by the inputs of social service practitioners during the national and provincial consultative sessions for the development of the Draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

Personal factors were identified as the main reason why practitioners chose occupations in social development services. These include amongst others being driven by a passion and love for communities and the work, often underpinned by faith/religion; a need to be actively involved in the process of social change; and a need for self-development.   The other reasons identified were personal socio-economic conditions with the occupation not being a choice, but an opportunity; the need for a job and a salary; the nature of the job to help, assist and support people; working with specific client populations (for example children); the specific skills set that the job entails; and finally the market demand for the specific occupation.

Factors motivating voluntary turnover

The findings of the Evaluation study on the Implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Department of Social Development, 2014b), indicated that 30% of social work managers and 50% of social workers were considering leaving the DSD within the next six months because of working conditions, lack of career pathing and insufficient remuneration.

These **organisational factors** were confirmed by the Evaluation study of the Social Work Scholarship Program (Department of Social Development, 2014a), and the national and provincial consultations with all social service practitioners on the Draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy.   Other reasons were lack of supportive management and leadership. The lack of job satisfaction and the perceived lack of recognition of the occupation and the contribution of the social service practitioners were also strong motivating factors to leave.

Factors motivating practitioners to stay in their chosen occupations

The Evaluation study on the Implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Department of Social Development, 2014b), identified **personal factors** such as a sense of calling, wanting to make a difference and wanting to gain experience as some of the main reasons to stay. It also identified some **work and organisational factors** as motivation to stay. Social work managers wanted to stay because they were satisfied and comfortable with what they did, whereas, social workers wanted to stay because of the training and bursaries they received. All social service practitioners during the recent national and provincial consultations confirmed personal passion, professional development and the perceived impact of the work and remuneration as the main reasons for social service practitioners to stay.

The Evaluation study of the Social Work Scholarship Program (Department of Social Development, 2014a), emphasised that beneficiaries (scholarship holders) would primarily stay because of the salary and contractual obligations of the social work scholarship program.

The table below provides a summary of the main factors identified through the literature review, and the national and provincial consultation sessions:

Four Factors	Key factors/issues in the DSD
Personal Factors *(In the DSD main motivation to choose the occupation and to stay)*	Personal motivation.
	Passion and love for type of work and communities.
	Want to make a difference and facilitate change.
	Personal growth goals.
	Own socio-economic situation.
Work Factors *(the nature of the work and the perceived impact are the only factors that motivate to stay; all the others are push factors that motivates turnover)*	Nature and scope of work need clarity.
	Scope of work should consider generic and specialised skills.
	High case and workload.
	Overemphasis on one component of work, limited scope; e.g. foster care.
	Clarity on scope of practice.
	Need for professionalisation and recognition of different occupations.
	No common voice speaking on behalf of social service practitioners.

Organisational Factors *(Access to professional development and bursaries are the only factors that motivate to stay; all others are push factors that motivate turnover). The main issues are remuneration; career pathing; working conditions - resources; and supportive and effective management.*	Supervision in terms of: • Too high ratio. • Lack of trained supervisors. • Lack of resources and time for supervision • Ineffective supervision.
	Management in terms of: • Lack of trained managers. • Style of managers - not supportive, participative and fair. • Ineffective management.
	Career pathing in terms of: • OSD perceived as inefficient. • Inconsistent implementation of OSD. • Lack of recognition of qualifications. • Lack of recognition of experience. • Too long period on one level. • Career pathing for all social service practitioners not addressed.
	Lack of recognition of contribution by the occupation and the individual.
	Remuneration • Salary • Benefits • Allowances • Financial Incentives
	Working conditions with regard to infrastructure: • Insufficient and unsafe facilities. • Lack of maintenance of facilities. • Facilities undermine values such as confidentiality and respect.

	Working conditions with regards to lack of resources: • Insufficient office furniture. • Insufficient office equipment. • Lack of transport. • Lack of information technology and support.
	Organisational structure does not reflect: • The demand for social development services. • The need for all social service occupations
	Ongoing training and development in terms of: • Bursaries for all social service practitioners. • Lack of standardisation and effective implementation of induction, and orientation for all social service practitioners. • Continuing professional development opportunities for all social service practitioners.
External Factors	Government policies determine the programs and actions of the department and therefore, have a direct impact on service delivery. This sometimes creates challenges for the social service practitioners in terms of the expectations of communities versus the operational realities of available resources for service delivery.
	The media and political statements may create negative perceptions and unrealistic expectations about the availability, range and quality of social development services from communities.
	The cultural and religious diversity within communities may impact on service delivery when social service practitioners do not understand and accommodate cultural and religious practices.

Table 7: Factors impacting on Recruitment and Retention in the DSD categorized according to the four-factor model

Organisational factors appear to be the most important contributor to making people leave the social service occupations or the organisation. The fact that organisational factors play such an important role in the turnover rate of social service practitioners, provides the opportunity to counteract job dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover. By adopting sound staff policies in terms of which people feel rewarded, valued and well taken care of, (Tham, 2007). Through addressing some of the organisational factors, job satisfaction will improve with a positive impact on the quality of service delivery. This in turn may improve the image of social service occupations and the DSD.

The analysis of factors that motivate the career choice in the first place, and then the decision to leave or stay in the social service occupations provides the rationale for the development of the recruitment and retention strategy. It also informs the specific interventions needed to ensure the requisite social services workforce to respond to the demands for social development services and thereby contribute to the wellbeing of all South Africans.

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5. RECRUITMENT STRATEGIC OUTCOMES-ORIENTED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the recruitment strategy is to ensure that the DSD has a strong planning and implementation system in place, so that the right professional is attracted to and appointed at the right time to the right position at the right place, enabling it to deliver on its mandate and achieve its strategic goals.

The purpose will be achieved through the following outcome-oriented goals:

- To review and expand the organisational structure of the DSD to meet the mandate for social services.
- To market and promote social service occupations and the DSD as employer.
- To recruit and select enough, suitable social service practitioners to meet the demands for social development services.
- To recruit and select social service supervisors and managers with relevant qualifications, skills and experience.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
1. **Review and expand the organisational structure of the DSD to fulfil the mandate for social services.**	1.1 To review and implement the human resource model to support developmental social service delivery by a range of social service practitioners in a multi-disciplinary approach by 2020/2021.	• Competency framework for social service practitioners. • Skills audit roll out plans (national and provincial). • Skills audit reports (national and provincial). • HRD implementation plans (national and provincial). • Documented scope of practice for different social service occupations. • Job descriptions of different occupations are aligned to scope of practice. • Approved human resource model for social development services which describes the ratio among the various social service practitioners.
	1.2 To review and implement a human resource plan for social development services, aligned with the NDP 2030 and relevant guiding	• Skills audit reports • Skills Audit Development Implementation plans (national,

	documents by 2020/2021.	provincial and district). • Demand and supply model for social service practitioners. • Demand and supply requirements for social service practitioners. • Sector human resource plan for social development.
	1.3 To review the national organisational structure and standardise across provinces by 2019/2020.	• Gap analysis report of existing national, provincial, district and local organisational structures. • Standardised organisational structure aligned with the demand and supply model, human resource model and the sector human resource plan.

The assessment in the National Development Plan 2030, is that 55 000 social service practitioners with diverse skills will be needed to meet the country's social service needs by 2030. The human resource model for social development services confirms the need for a range of social service practitioner, but does not provide any indication of the actual number of practitioners required per occupation. This model also does not provide guidance on the ratio among the different occupational groups within a multi-disciplinary team approach to service delivery.

The human resource model should inform the demand and supply requirements for the DSD in terms of the range of skills that is needed for social development service delivery. The demand and supply requirements should be guided by the competency framework for the various occupational groups.

A skills audit of the currently available social service practitioners based on the competency framework, with the demand and supply requirements must inform the human resource plan for social service practitioners to set realistic goals.

The human resource model will facilitate cooperative teamwork and a multi-disciplinary approach by clearly describing the scope of practice and the roles and responsibilities of each of the social service occupations. The human resource model also needs to address the minimum requirements for support staff to ensure that these support functions are included in the human resource plan.

An aligned human resource plan for social development services based on an approved human resource model for social development services, will determine the optimal organisational structure for the rendering of social development services on all levels. The structure must allow for a career path for each of the social service occupations and make provision for career advancement as well as for specialisation.

Uniform and standardised organisational structures, which make provision for sufficient posts to support a team approach, including all social service occupations in all provinces, districts and service offices will ensure equitable service delivery. These structures must be budgeted for and implemented over the next eight years.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
2. Market and promote the different social service occupations and the DSD as employer of choice.	2.1 To develop communication strategy by 2021/2022.	• Recruitment pack and promotional material. • Communication Strategy (R&R section to be included).
	2.2 To develop recruitment plan for social service practitioners not practising and those practising outside South Africa by 2021/2022.	• Data base of social service practitioners practising outside of SA. • Database of social service practitioners not practising in SA. • Recruitment plan for social service practitioners not practising and those practising outside South Africa.
	2.3 To improve the image of the DSD and social service occupations by 2021/2022.	• Document positive information on DSD services and social service practitioner. • Standardised branding of DSD offices and facilities. • DSD annual performance plan and report. • Newsletters on DSD, SSPs and services.

To improve the image of social service occupations, extensive marketing and communication initiatives should be implemented. These communication initiatives must be directed to the community at large, but should primarily target prospective students and employees in social service occupations.

Social development services are intangible and, therefore, undervalued. It is important to market the social service professions to enhance the citizens' understanding of the role and value of the social service sector in the socio-economic development of the country. Building communications around the contribution of social service practitioners and the impact of their work increases the perceived value and status of social service occupations which attract individuals to the occupations.

Positive marketing can persuade potential recruits to enter social service occupations by leveraging the passion that some have to support their community, to be actively involved in social change as change agents, to make a

difference in the lives of communities, to name a few of the personal factors that play a role in choosing the social service occupations as a career.

Communication initiatives which highlight the successes of social development services in responding to the needs of society will also positively influence the retention of staff as social service practitioners experience a sense of success and influence. This will enhance the image of the DSD as an employer of choice; thereby, attracting potential recruits, but also qualified and skilled practitioners who may be non-practising or who left to practice in other countries; as well as retaining existing employees.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goals	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
3. Recruit, select, appoint and place suitable social service practitioners to fulfill the mandate of the department.	3.1 To recruit, select, appoint and place registered SSPs within DSD by 2021/2022.	• Recruitment, selection, appointment and placement of SSPs based on regulatory framework.
	3.2 To increase supply of the required social service practitioners by the training institutions by 2021/2022.	• Reviewed subsidy for all qualifications in social service occupations. • Approved scholarship policy for social service practitioners. • Increased numbers of students and learners attending higher education and training institutions for qualification in SSP occupations. • Guidelines on the utilisation of learnerships and RPL developed (for up-skilling of employed practitioners without the necessary qualifications).
	3.3 To ensure that social service student and learner practical field training adheres to the standards for practical training of the SACSSP and HEIs by 2021/2022.	• Student and learner practical field training comply with the SACSSP, and the Education and Training Institution. • Resourcing strategy for SSP student and learner practical field placements.
	3.4 To reduce the vacancy rate of social service	• Database of unemployed social service practitioners

	practitioner posts to 5% through targeted recruitment of available social service practitioners by 2021/2022.	in South Africa. • Absorption of qualified and registered SSP practitioners. • Improved recruitment, appointment and placement processes. • Policy for recruitment, selection appointment, placement and remuneration of locums in vacant posts for supervision or for specific projects.
	3.5 To improve recruitment, selection, appointment, and placement process to ensure the best fit within the DSD and to reduce voluntary turnover of social service practitioners to 1% by 2022.	• Students and learners selected for scholarships and learnerships, meet the criteria for recruitment, selection, placement and appointment SSP posts • Standardised job descriptions for specific posts of social service practitioners.
4. Recruit, select, appoint and place supervisors and managers of social service practitioners with relevant qualifications, skills and experience.	4.1 To reduce the vacancy rate of supervisors and managers posts to less than 5% in 2019.	• Job descriptions for supervisors and managers of social service practitioners to include the occupation specific competencies. • Appointment of qualified and experienced practical field training supervisors and managers.
	4.2 To improve management of scarce and critical skills and competencies within each social service occupation by 2021/2022.	• Based on the DHET gazette (on scarce & critical lists), identify posts for appointment of scarce and critical skills list. • Develop a priority list for recruitment of scarce and critical posts aligned with skills audit. • Review recruitment plan to address scarce and critical

		skills. • Implement recruitment plan.

The recruitment of social service practitioners must be informed by a recruitment plan aligned with the human resource plan, and by the availability of vacant and funded posts and projected turnover rates. This requires a reliable data management system which can monitor available social service practitioners, vacancies, turnover, migration and advancement patterns.

There must be a significant improvement in the recruiting of students in terms of the range of social service practitioners as well as the fit within the organisation. Some improvement has been accomplished in the recruitment of students to study social work and social auxiliary work due to the social work scholarship and learnership programs. The Department must ensure that all social service occupations have standardised qualifications and approved training; scholarships and learnerships should be made available to all social service occupations. The absorption of these students and learners must be a priority in the recruitment of new employees.

Regular engagement with both the SACSSP and the training institutions to communicate the requirements from practice aligned with the standards for registration with the SACSSP. Selection of prospective students should be according to the criteria for selection of a new employee as well as the criteria for access to the training program.

The DSD can play a significant role in the preparation of social service students and learners through creating opportunities for workplace experience during the practical fieldwork training. Supervisors of students and learners must be prepared to ensure that they facilitate ongoing learning during the practical fieldwork training by adhering to the SACSSP standards for practical fieldwork training.

South Africa has a pool of social service practitioners with valuable skills who are either in private practice or who are retired. These practitioners are a critical resource in the social development services sector and, therefore, ways to employ them for shorter periods or for specific projects must be established. These practitioners are also a valuable resource to address the immediate and short-term need for supervisors for newly appointed practitioners. Appropriate funding and remuneration mechanisms must be put into place to enable this.

The selection of social service practitioners, supervisors and managers must be guided and informed by clear advertisements, selection criteria and job descriptions. The selection process must be transparent and accountable. The guideline for fit and proper social service practitioners as well as the standards for registration with the SACSSP should be included in the criteria for selection. It should further provide accurate information on the post and the environment to enable both applicants and selectors to determine the best possible fit.

6. RETENTION STRATEGIC OUTCOMES-ORIENTED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the retention strategy is to ensure that skilled and high performing social service practitioners remain in the service of the Department of Social Development.

The purpose will be achieved through the following outcome-oriented goals:
- To strengthen onboarding and skills development of social service practitioners.
- To strengthen supervision and management of social service practitioners and social development services.
- To enhance the performance of social service practitioners.
- To review and strengthen the career path and remuneration system for social service practitioners.
- To enhance the working conditions of social service practitioners.
- To ensure compliance with professional and ethical standards.
- To empower and engage social service practitioners to express their views.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
5. Strengthen induction and skills development of social service practitioners.	5.1 To facilitate the induction of newly appointed social service practitioners by 2021/2022.	• Standardised Induction Policy and Induction Program for social service practitioners. • Induction Programme for newly employed social service practitioners.
	5.2 To strengthen the competency of social service practitioners based on the required skills in the DSD by 2021/2022.	• Skills development policy. • Workplace skills plan. • Annual training reports. • Skills audit analysis report.
	5.3 To support professionalisation and specialisation of social service occupations by 2021/2022.	• Social Service Practitioners comply with regulatory frameworks set by the SACSSP. • Specialist units and posts for designated specialist social service occupations.
	5.5 To promote job rotation and occupation specific cross transfers as a mechanism for job enrichment, motivation and prevention of burnout by 2021/2022.	• Guidelines for job rotation and cross transfers.

Ongoing professional development through education and capacity-building opportunities is one of the strongest factors in retention of social service practitioners. In line with the above, training and development must be geared towards the continuous development of social service practitioners 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.

A capacity-building and skills development policy for social service practitioners is required to guide ongoing development from their entry into the workplace throughout their career. This should include standardised, compulsory induction of all social service practitioners to ensure that newly appointed practitioners are integrated into the workplace and are able to render quality services in the shortest possible time.

A skills development plan informed by a skills audit and the competency framework should be developed and implemented. The skills development plan should be individualised and integrated into the personal development plans of every social service practitioner. The DSD and the practitioners should collectively take responsibility that each practitioner adhere to the policy prescripts of the SACSSP continuing professional development policy. Practitioners can be supported by allowing time for attendance of CPD activities, but also by ensuring that all skills development initiatives by the Department are registered for CPD points with the SACSSP.

The skills development plan should allow for a range of activities for ongoing development. This may include job rotation or lateral moves into vacant posts which will allow for broader workplace experience.

The professionalisation of all social service occupations is a prerequisite for the development of career paths. This requires the standardisation of required qualifications necessary to develop the specific competencies for satisfactory social service delivery. It is important that the DSD supports the professionalisation of the identified social service occupations, such as community development. Each of the occupational groups may in collaboration with the SACSSP and based on the needs for service delivery, identify and develop specialisation areas in the specific occupation. The department must ensure that specialisation is based on service delivery needs and is complementary to generic social service practice.

Skills development opportunities must be monitored and recorded in a monitoring system. To ensure adherence to continuing professional development requirements as well as to update information on skills.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
6. Strengthen supervision and management of social service practitioners and improve quality social development services.	6.1 To reduce the number of supervisors and managers posts of social service practitioners filled by individuals with no social service qualification to 0 within the next three (3) years and replace them with qualified and registered SSP supervisors and managers by 2021/2022.	• Standardised organisational structure. • Social service practitioners supervised and managed by qualified and registered supervisors and managers. • Audit report on supervisors and managers supervising and managing social service practitioners without qualification on the social service occupation. • Supervisors and managers without qualifications on the

		social service occupation redeployed.
	6.2 To improve the competency of supervisors and managers of social service practitioners by 2021/2022.	• Competency framework for supervisors and managers of social service practitioners. • Skills audit report on supervisors and managers of social service practitioners. • Workplace skills plan for supervisors and managers of social service practitioners.
	6.3 To implement effective supervision for social service practitioners by 2021/2022.	• A supervision framework for social service practitioners. • Training reports. • Supervision Programme for social service practitioners. • Supervision training manual.
	6.4 To ensure efficiency and effectiveness of social development services by 2021/2022.	• Compliance with norms and standards for social development services.

Retention is increased through a sense of achievement and confidence in one's knowledge and skills. The first months in the workplace can determine the decision of social service practitioners to stay or leave. Social service practitioners' adjustment and integration in the workplace must be facilitated by the allocation of a supervisor who will supervise, and also clarify lines of communication and authority, provide information in a timely manner and provide feedback on progress and performance. This, combined with orientation and induction programs will expedite integration and optimal functioning in the workplace.

Competent and supportive management accompanied by effective supervision is a pivotal instrument in retaining social service practitioners. Supervision is a management tool which enhances the professional functioning of a social service practitioner. This is achieved through skills transfer, mentoring, and professional support. Monitoring the quality of professional services offered to service recipients and motivating social service practitioners so that they can perform at their optimal level when executing their duties to achieve beneficiary and organisational goals.

Trained supervisors from the same social service occupation must provide structured supervision in line with the supervision contract and personal development plan. Which will help the practitioner to integrate theory and practice, and reach the desired level of professional autonomy. The recruitment and appointment of individuals with no qualification in a specific social service occupation as supervisors or managers of social service practitioners may not be allowed. It is therefore, important to ensure that policy guidelines clearly prescribe the competencies required of social service supervisors and managers.

Clear norms and standards for supervision and management must guide effective management, and inform the training required by supervisors and managers. A skills audit of social service supervisors and managers based on a competency framework will further identify training needs.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goals	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
7. Capacitate and enhance the performance of social service practitioners.	7.1 To implement guidelines for workload management by 2020/2021.	• Guidelines for workload management. • Capacity building on guidelines for workload management. • Guidelines for workload management included in the work plans.
	7.2 To review and customise the performance management and development system for all social service practitioner by 2020/2021.	• Customise Performance Management and Development System. • Reports on implementation of PMDS.
	7.3 To recognise and reward excellent performance of social service practitioners by 2020/2021.	• Policy on Recognition of Excellence for social service practitioners. • Implementation Plan for Policy on Recognition of Excellence for social service practitioners. • Social service practitioners' excellence awards.

Perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity, and quality of services rendered by social service practitioners are linked to a varied number of factors. These include: high caseloads, emotional and other trauma experienced by social service practitioners in service delivery, high stress levels due to management and societal demands as well as the lack of resources to deliver on the mandate of the DSD.

The development of the Customised and Performance Management and Development System for social service practitioners, underpinned by a realistic workload management system, and clearly defined norms and standards for social service delivery will ensure effective, standardised and transparent performance measurement. It will empower the social service practitioners to monitor and measure their own performance, and it could nurture their sense of competence and achievement. This organisational tool will enhance the management of performance and allow for unbiased and consistent recognition and reward of outstanding contributions.

It is essential to recognise outstanding performance through awarding excellence. The criteria for such award must be well documented and transparent. The management of practitioners with specialised and scarce skills must be identified and developed through a talent management program. Succession planning to ensure continuity in critical and specialised posts must be integrated with talent management and performance management to ensure the best talent is nurtured and prepared for advancement opportunities.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
8. Improve salary and remuneration packages of qualified social service	8.1 To review the current salary grades and remuneration package for social service practitioners by	• Reviewed salary and remuneration package.

practitioners.	2020/2021.	
	8.2 To review the career path and progression opportunities and time frames by 2020/2021.	• Reviewed career path and progression system, addressing critical time frames of voluntary turnover by social service practitioners. • Clear and transparent guidelines for standardised implementation of the OSD (career path, progression and remuneration). • National and provincial workshop reports on the implementation of the OSD to ensure a common understanding.

The development of the occupational specific dispensation (OSD), for specific occupations makes provision for a set of salary grades with career progression opportunities within the grades. It allows for accelerated grade progression based on outstanding performance. It recognises experience and the contribution of experienced social service practitioners. Perceived inconsistent implementation of the OSD across provinces and occupational groups had a negative impact on the morale of social service practitioners and it lost the potential positive impact it could have had on retention.

One of the main concerns raised by social service practitioners against the OSD is the level of the salary grades. The nature of remuneration awarded to employees impacts on the retention of social service practitioners. A good salary is essential for employee satisfaction. Remuneration is the best and most tangible form of recognition of an employee's worth in an organisation. It is an indication of the value and status of the occupation which in turn improves job satisfaction and the quality of service delivery. Inadequate salaries and compensation-related benefits must be addressed if the country and the profession are to retain their social service practitioners.

Retention allowances, such as scarce skills allowance and the rural allowance in the public service are available, but must be implemented in a transparent and consistent manner. The latter allowance is critical to facilitate the recruitment and retention of social service practitioners in rural areas, as these communities are under-serviced and under-resourced. Transport and overtime allowances are critical to ensure retention and job satisfaction of those working in rural areas.

Employee benefits are defined as elements of remuneration provided in addition to various forms of cash payments offered by the DSD. They are not necessarily restricted to remuneration, and may comprise of pension, medical aid, car allowances, housing subsidy, study bursaries and others. Although several of these benefits already exist, implementation is not standardised and it is not perceived as fair across provinces.

Although career progression within the salary grades is provided for in the OSD, the time frames are the other main concern for social service practitioners. Developing career paths for social service practitioners must take cognizance of critical voluntary turnover points, such as when practitioners transition from supervision to consultation after about three years. Another critical point is after 5–7 years when research indicates a high voluntary turnover. It must include progression opportunities for generic as well as specialised practice parallel to progression into supervisory or management practice. Experience and additional qualifications must be considered for career progression.

The success of the OSD is dependent on consistent, just and fair implementation on a national and provincial level for all occupational groups. The implementation of initiatives to address retention must be communicated clearly and must be standardised across all provinces to optimise the positive impact on retention. If implementation is perceived as fair and transparent, the initiative will have the desirable impact on the retention of social service practitioners.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
9. Improve working conditions for social service practitioners.	9.1 To provide and improve suitable infrastructure for social development services by 2021/2022.	• Technical infrastructure and facilities audit report. • Progress reports on infrastructure improvement. • Progress reports on infrastructure improvement.
	9.2 To provide sufficient resources to social service practitioners to render efficient and effective social development services by 2021/2022.	• Resource policy prescribing the minimum ICT, transport and office resources. • Standardised office tools and tools of trade. • Audit report on office tools. • Office tools procurement and improvement plans.
	9.3 To promote Occupational Health and Safety in the Workplace by 2021/2022.	• Norms and standards for OHS. • OHS compliance audit. • OHS progress reports and Improvement plan.
	9.4 To Implement fully resourced employee health and wellness programs in all the DSD office by 2021/2022.	• Employee Health and Wellness Units in national, provincial, and district organisational structures. • EHW service delivery reports.

Working conditions of social service practitioners emerged over the over the years as the single organisational factor which influenced the decision of social service practitioners to leave their occupation. Working conditions include: infrastructure, office equipment, resources to provide social development services, occupational health and safety, and employee health and well-being.

An infrastructure development and maintenance plan must be embedded in the DSD infrastructure plan. Offices and facilities from where social development services are provided must be sufficient, safe and conducive for

social service delivery. Infrastructure audits must inform the infrastructure plan and priorities. Compliance must be monitored against the spatial norms and standards, and blueprint architectural designs.

This must be complemented by the provision of sufficient office equipment and other resources that enable service delivery. This must also be based on a resource policy that describes the minimum requirements for resource allocation to offices as well as a standardised minimum package of tools of trade.

The DSD is obliged to maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of its employees. It must ensure that its organisation complies with the 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 are more amenable. This will assist in reducing the undue loss of workers to other fields of work because of occupational risks and stress.

A comprehensive employee health and wellness program must be institutionalised on all organisational levels and should include employee assistance to prevent burnout and reduce occupational stress as well as debriefing.

Alternative interventions, such as flexi working hours can be used to create a more supportive and enabling working environment, but should be implemented consistently across occupational groups and provinces.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
10. Ensure compliance with professional and ethical standards.	10.1 To monitor compliance with regulatory framework for the SSP by 2021/2022.	• Record of annual registration of all the SSP employed in the DSD, students and learners.
	10.2 To promote and monitor adherence to the professional code of conduct of the SACSSP by 2021/2022.	• Guideline for the management of incidents of unprofessional/unethical conduct by the SSPs. • Reports on incidents of unprofessional/unethical conduct.
	10.3 To ensure compliance with the Continued Professional Development (CPD) policy by 2021/2022.	• Implementation of the CPD policy. • Annual CPD reports.
	10.4 To ensure compliance to the code of good practice by employers by 2021/2022.	• Organisational specific activity plan on the CGPE. • Progress reports.

The DSD must work in collaboration with the SACSSP, to ensure compliance with the professional and ethical standards of the different occupational groups. Registration with the SACSSP for those occupations for which professional boards have been established should be monitored annually and no practitioners should be appointed without proof of registration.

Supervisors and managers plays a critical role in monitoring professional conduct in the workplace. They are also responsible to provide an enabling environment which will allow social service practitioners to practice ethically and competently, which in turn improves the quality service delivery. This should be done through supervision; office facilities that respects confidentiality; and a workload that allows the practitioners to provide effective and quality services.

Practitioners must be provided with opportunities for continuing professional development to ensure that they can stay abreast of developments in their occupation and adhere to the requirements of the SACSSP.

The SACSSP code of good practice provides a guide to employers and thus the DSD on good practice by employers that will support professional and ethical service delivery.

Strategic Outcome-Oriented Goal	Strategic Objectives	High Level Outputs
11. Empower social service practitioners to express their views on work-related matters.	11.1 To establish forums within the DSD for social service practitioners to express their views by 2021/2022.	• Networking and engagement forums for social service practitioners. • Terms of reference. • Reports/ Minutes.
	11.2 Encourage participation in labor unions and professional associations by 2021/2022.	• Guidelines on participation in organised labour activities.

Despite many efforts to establish unifying associations, and to promote participation in associations and labour unions, social service practitioners have not succeeded in developing a unified voice. The facilitation of a forum for all social service practitioners in the DSD can provide the momentum needed to develop a unified voice which can impact on the sector. The involvement and engagement of social service practitioners should be supported, but also guided by a policy document to protect the rights of communities and practitioners.

This document describes goals for both recruitment and retention strategies. If implementation is coordinated and synergised better outcomes will be realised. Implementation must be governed by an action plan in which responsibilities are divided at national, provincial and district level. Implementation will be dependent on availability of resources. Thus, it is imperative that strategic priorities are set and budgeted for in advance through the budgeting cycle.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Implementation Plan

The recruitment and retention strategy must be operationalised through a comprehensive implementation plan aligned with the DSD strategic plans 2017–2022. The plan must describe the actions to be taken to achieve each of the recruitment and retention goals. It must have a logical framework and permanent national and provincial units/teams that will monitor, track changes and review the outcomes in the system. The provincial implementation plans for the recruitment and retention strategy must be included as a core component of the provincial annual performance plan.

There are broad outcomes against which the success of the recruitment and retention implementations plans at all levels should be measured, namely:

- Buy-in from all internal and external stakeholders;
- Implementation plans must be province specific, time bound, well-resourced and project managed;
- Dedicated national and provincial units/teams must be appointed with a clear and measurable mandate.
- A well-designed communications strategy must be developed and implemented that clarifies the components of the strategy to all the DSD staff.
- A clear monitoring, evaluation and reporting system must be established.

7.2 Implementation Phases

The implementation of the strategy will be rolled out through the following four phases:

Phase 1 (2018/2019): Ensuring that a planned system for retention and recruitment is in place.
Rationale: The strategy will be implemented at national, provinces, districts and local service points/offices, and it is imperative to ensure that synergised planning takes place.

Activities:

- The establishment of national and provincial units/teams responsible for the implementation of the strategy.
- The adoption of the overall implementation plan.
- The development of a monitoring and reporting plan.
- Improvement of the social development database to track the workforce.
- The development of district plans of action.
- The development of provincial plans of action.
- The development of the national plan of action.
- The development of the communication strategy.
- The training plans that includes training of managers and supervisors.

Phase 2 (2018/2019–2020/2021): Ensuring that the appropriate funding model has been approved.
Rationale. Once all the provincial and district implementation plans have been received, the DSD will have a more accurate indication of the actual costing for implementation and can thus develop the appropriate funding model.
Activities:

- Costing of the strategy.
- Conducting a funding analysis.
- Approval of the financed implementation plan budget.
- Ensuring that funding is available at all levels to fund activities as per the implementation plans.

Phase 3 (2020/2021): Launch and training.
Rationale: The launch of the recruitment and retention strategy for social service practitioners should take place after the project plan and financing are in place.
Activities:
- National and provincial launch of recruitment and retention strategies, and implementation plans.
- Coordination and synchronisation of program development. District implementation plans to province, and province to national.
- A developed training plan that includes training of managers and supervisors.

Phase 4 (2021-2022): Implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy.
Rationale: Implementation starts when all the building blocks and systems are in place.
Activities:
- Project implementation.
- Structured performance management, monitoring and evaluation.
- Annual program and financial reports.
- A national and provincial picture of progress or lack of progress developed as part of quarterly feedback to the stakeholders.

7.3 Institutionalisation

The implementation of the Recruitment and Retention strategy requires a collaborative approach of dedicated teams and/or units to drive the process, and ensure oversight and monitoring of the implementation thereof. A national unit and/or team with provincial representatives should lead the process. This team should include representatives from human resource management, welfare services, community development and must include representatives from both national and provincial level.

Provincial units/teams must include representation from the district level and should drive, coordinate and monitor provincial and district level interventions.

The recruitment and retention units/teams will be responsible for social service workforce intelligence, and must monitor and report workforce statistics on an annual basis. Crucial to the success of the recruitment and retention strategy is the annual release of data/information depicting progress, gaps and challenges.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is 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 on an ongoing basis. There are also elements that would not require allocation of resources and relate to a change in attitudes and ways of working.

To successfully bring about the desired changes as described in this strategy, careful consideration must be given to the funding model. The funding implications are anticipated to be considerable as they include infrastructure, training, remunerations, benefits, incentives and allowances.

An analysis of the funding, funding gaps and sources of finance should address the following:
- The estimated cost of the recruitment and retention strategy and implementation plan.
- Cost implication of the appointment and coordination of the recruitment and retention units/teams.
- Revision of the remuneration and other benefits of social service practitioners.
- Infrastructure development and maintenance.
- The cost implications should be cascaded to and be considered for national, provincial and district level implementation. The government departments which employ social service practitioners and provide resources to training institutions must be included. These include but are not limited to the DSD, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and other departments who provide services and or infrastructure to the DSD such as the Department of Public Works.
- Financial gaps must be identified, such as the funding gaps related to the proposed objectives and activities as per the implementation plan.
- The analysis should aim to provide sustainable financing opportunities as well as indicating cost-effective measures which should be implemented.
- The annual cost of recruitment should be tracked, hence the importance of ascertaining the baseline recruitment cost at the start of the project.

9.   MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A successful monitoring and evaluation plan must address the following:

- The monitoring and evaluation plan must be embedded in the implementation plan to ensure the monitoring of the achievements of the strategic outcome goals, objectives as wells as the evaluation of the impact of the strategy.
- Each intervention must include monitoring of the progress of implementation and the identification of which interventions make a difference in terms of recruitment and retention.
- The implementation of focused interventions such as the OSD must be evaluated in terms of implementation, consistency, and outcomes.

The implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy is complex and undertaken at national and provincial levels, covering nine provinces consisting of 52 districts, including eight metropolitan municipalities and local service points/offices. The success of the recruitment and retention strategy will be measured in terms of achieving the overall strategic goals. Hence, the indicators and baseline information must be clearly noted. Indicators should include:

- Increase in the number of available social service practitioners.
- Increase in the availability of specific skills.
- Increase in the number of social service practitioner posts.
- Increase in the employment rates of social service practitioners.
- Increase in the number of under-represented groups.
- Increase in the use of best practices.
- Decrease in the number of vacant posts and job turnover rates.

The recruitment and retention units and or teams must on an annual basis in order to monitor the progress against the time frames and expected outcomes, and adjust/correct the trajectory of the implementation of this strategy. Crucial to the success of the recruitment and retention strategy is the annual release of data/information depicting progress, gaps and challenges.

10. CONCLUSION

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy aims to address the increasing demand for social development services provided by a range of social service practitioners, to contribute to the wellbeing of the citizens of South Africa. It requires an increase in the availability of social service practitioners and expansion in post structures, as well as a decrease in the voluntary turnover rate of social service practitioners.

It addresses the personal, work, organisational and external factors that impact on recruitment and retention in a holistic, and integrated manner through outcome-oriented goals, and objectives focused on improved recruitment and retention.

This strategy provides the direction for national, provincial and district implementation plans which are geared towards the recruitment and retention of skilled social service practitioners who can positively contribute towards the attainment of South Africa's development goals.

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