

Occupational Therapists and a National Social Work Agency



BARGAINING BRIEFING

Introduction

The Scottish Government proposes to create a National Social Work Agency (NSWA). This would be set up within government as a unit within the proposed National Care Service.

Early work on the proposal has been undertaken by the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (OCSWA), Social Work Scotland (SWS) and the Scottish Association of Social Workers (SASW). After making representations, UNISON is now represented on the Government's Advisory Group by Stephen Smellie, UNISON's Depute Convenor and Chair of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group.

The NSWA proposal is looking at national arrangements for social workers and para-professionals (social work assistants, family support workers, etc) working in social work fieldwork teams. These arrangements are envisaged as including education and training, governance, quality assurance & improvement, leadership and culture and workforce matters.

Workforce matters includes looking at national pay and terms and conditions.

When asked whether Occupational Therapists were included in the scope of the proposal, the Chief Social Work Adviser to the Scottish Government advised that they would not be, as they were only considering social workers and para-professionals.

UNISON has pointed out that Occupational Therapists are critical to several areas of fieldwork social work and that any considerations need to include them. This point has been taken "under consideration."

It is disappointing that the officials devising the proposal for a NSWA did not recognise the role of Occupational Therapists in Social Work. However, UNISON will continue to highlight that role.

If you are interested in finding out more about the NSWA proposal, please speak to your UNISON branch.

If you are, or would like to become a union representative as an OT, representing OT members, please contact your branch or email Mo Dickson m.dickson@unison.co.uk

For further information on the proposed National Social Work Agency: See the Scottish Government's Policy Memorandum document accompanying the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill - page 16, paragraphs 73 – 82. This can be found [here](#).

Read the UNISON Scotland briefing [here](#).

KEY POINTS:

- **It is proposed to set up a National Social Work Agency within government as part of the National Care Service.**
- **Its remit would include workforce matters and UNISON is engaged with government around this.**
- **Occupational Therapists are NOT currently included in the scope of the NSWA, only social workers and para-professional staff.**
- **UNISON has highlighted the critical importance of OTs in fieldwork social work and will continue to do so.**
- **For more information about the proposed National Social Work Agency and how it is being developed read [UNISON's briefing](#)**

Contact UNISON's Bargaining & Campaigns team:

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