

Social Service Practitioners Advocacy Network



A network to promote a co-ordinated response by social service practitioners to the Social Service Professions and Occupations Bill

A new law to regulate the social service profession has been in the making since January 2008, when the Department of Social Development published the first draft Bill for public comment. The latest draft, from November 2008, is called the Social Service Professions and Occupations Bill.

Due to the need for input by social service practitioners on the draft law, the Children's Institute facilitated the establishment of a Social Service Practitioners Advocacy Network (SSPAN) to promote practitioners' participation and to ensure a co-ordinated response to the Bill. The network also aims to build relationships between social service practitioners, government departments and Parliament.

In 2010, there were two significant developments in the process of drafting the Bill. The Department of Social Development announced that it will write a Social Service Professions Policy, in line with a new directive that all new laws must be accompanied by a policy document that outlines the vision and intended impact of the legislation. This meant that the work on the Bill was postponed until the policy is completed.

In response to these developments, the project team drafted a discussion paper²⁵ to help practitioners understand what should be in a policy and the kinds of questions that this particular policy should respond to. A number of short articles have also been published in popular journals (see p. 51).

A SSPAN meeting in November 2010 convened representatives from the following sectors: child and youth care, community care work, early childhood development, probation, and social work. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the new policy, and to devise a strategy to ensure that the different sectors write submissions. Drafts of the submissions that will be sent to the department will be circulated to network members in 2011.

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