

The Social Work Diamond

State

Social policy, social work and other social professions as parts of the machinery of state support and control.

Key factors: Roles of central government and local authorities. National policies, legislation, taxation and government spending. Roles of Parliament, courts, regulatory bodies. Overlaps and tensions between these different parts of the state. Political conflict about the proper role of the state.

Profession

Social policy, social work and other social professions as 'top-down', expert-led activities.

Key factors: Professional attributes such as training and expertise, standards and skills, service ethic, self-regulation. But there are criticisms of elitism, self-interest and status, and the disabling effects of professionals.

Service users

Social policy, social work and other social professions as 'bottom-up', user-led activities.

Key factors: Roles of individuals, families and neighborhoods; campaign groups and self-help groups. Concepts of participation, inclusion, empowerment, control. But there are tensions between different service users, and questions about how much power and choice they really have, or should have.

Organisation

Social policy, social work and other social professions as activities that are shaped by their organisational setting.

Key factors: Type of organisation – statutory (e.g. local authority), voluntary or business. Inter-agency working. Processes for user involvement. Bureaucracy, regulation and managerialism. Budgets and prof



