



Update from the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance

2021 IS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF HEALTH AND CARE WORKERS

The decision to designate 2021 as the [*International Year of Health and Care Workers \(YHCW\)*](#) is in recognition of the dedication and sacrifice of the millions of health and care workers at the forefront of the Covid-19 pandemic. The decision was announced during the virtual 73rd World Health Assembly in November 2020. In listing some of the cadres of workers considered among these frontline workers, WHO references social workers, mental health workers and others providing supportive health services.



Jim Campbell, Director of the Health Workforce Department in the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters said in November, “[The] decision gives clear direction on consensus and the necessary actions on the health and care workforce. WHO urges all Member States, International Financing Institutions, Global Health Initiatives and partners to invest in health workforce readiness, education and learning to manage the pandemic, maintain health services and prepare for a COVID-19 vaccine”.

According to WHO, YHCW is an opportunity to draw attention to the need for greater investments in health and care workforce readiness, education and learning to manage the pandemic, its consequences and roll out the COVID-19 vaccine. Beyond COVID-19, investments are also needed in health and care workers’ ability to deliver primary health care, manage

noncommunicable diseases, and provide mental health services, maternal and child health care, long-term care, and palliative care.

A new guidance document "[Health Workforce Policy and Management in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response](#)" offers specific measures that improve the situation of health and care workers in 2021, with input from social workers:

- improve working conditions
- invest in workers' education
- expand workers' roles
- protect workers' health and well-being.

Throughout the year, WHO plans to advocate for these concerted efforts and energize country governments to take specific actions to support health and social service workers. You, too, can play a role in advocacy at local and regional levels to create sustainable change for social service workers. The Alliance has developed materials to support advocacy efforts. [Review the Call to Action for Strengthening the Social Service Workforce and download key advocacy messages.](#)

Opportunities

Consultancy on the Role of the Social Service Workforce in Social Protection across the Life Course

The Alliance is seeking a consultant to develop a technical note on the role and functions of the social service workforce for social protection through the life course. The technical note is meant to offer practical guidance in a visually appealing way to policy makers and program managers. While the Social Protection Framework references the crucial role of strengthening the social service workforce to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and inclusiveness of social protection programs, in particular through its family outreach and case management functions, a more detailed technical note is required to draw attention to the many and important linkages the workforce makes between social protection and child protection. This project-based consultancy is estimated to be completed during the period of February 15 - March 30. [Please review the full scope of work and how to apply.](#) Applications close February 5.

Consultancy to Prepare the 2020 State of the Social Service Workforce Report

The Alliance is seeking a consultant to prepare this year's State of the Social Service Workforce Report. This is the fifth State of the Social Service Workforce Report. Each report has aimed to better describe, depict and analyze efforts to strengthen the social service workforce (SSW). This year's report will address the 'State of the SSW during and beyond COVID-19', and will specifically answer the questions:

- What role did the SSW play in the pandemic, including in prevention, mitigation and response to its impact on communities?
- How did the pandemic impact the SSW?
- What have we learnt about what should be the future role of the SSW, in preparedness for future pandemics, prevention of negative social impacts and response to needs and risks

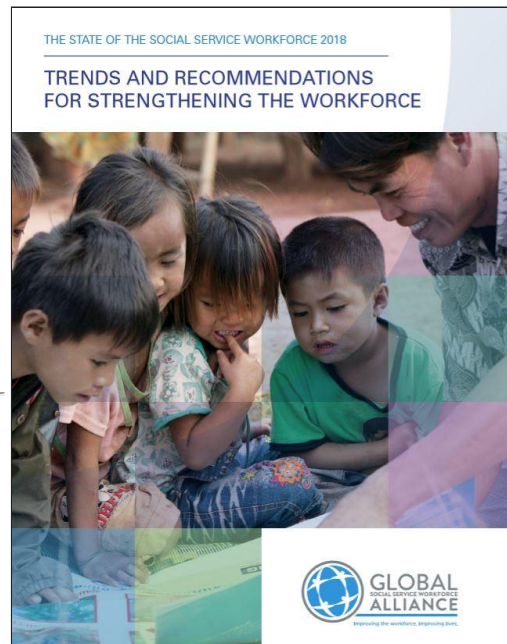
that arise?

The consultant will prepare the text of the report and offer input for charts/graphs/tables to the graphic design firm that will provide professional editing and layout. The consultancy is estimated to be completed through 14 days of work during the period of February 15 - May 30. [Review the full scope of work and how to apply.](#) Applications close February 5.

New Blog

A Child Rights-Based Approach to the Pandemic

Defence For Children International (DCI) is a child rights focused and membership-based grassroots movement that has been promoting and protecting children's rights on a global, regional, national and local level for 40 years.



DCI conducted a survey in April 2020 on the impact of the pandemic on children and local communities where DCI is present. Through these responses, they compiled a report for experts, practitioners, youth representatives, governments and donors aimed at leveraging DCI first-hand experience to protect and promote a child-

rights based approach to the pandemic.

In this blog, DCI shares how those responses combined with lessons they learned from Ebola are being applied to ensure a child rights and child participation -based response to this pandemic. They offer several country-based examples in preparedness and good practice. [Read how.](#)

Online Learning

MOOC on Care for Children on the Move

The next session of the popular Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Caring for Children Moving Alone will begin February 15. This free online course is designed to engage those working in alternative care and humanitarian response to address gaps in the knowledge, skills and capacities of frontline workers, volunteers, policymakers and others who have



a responsibility and interest in protecting and promoting appropriate care for unaccompanied and separated children on the move. The course will run for six weeks, with approximately two hours of online learning weekly. [Register now](#).

Training Materials for Frontline Caseworkers

The Case Management Task Force, which is part of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, is undertaking an update and expansion of training materials for frontline caseworkers. The project aims to create an updated inter-agency child protection case management training package and supporting competency tools for frontline caseworkers in a range of humanitarian settings, including development and mixed settings. Design, development, piloting and release of the materials is planned over an 18-month period, to be complete in August/September 2022. Individuals involved in child protection case management in humanitarian settings, including caseworkers and supervisors, are invited to provide input into the process through an [online survey](#), available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The survey will close February 12.

INSPIRE Strategy Webinar Series

A series of webinars are planned to review each of the seven different INSPIRE Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. The next webinar in the series will review letter 'N' - Norms and Values. It will be held February 5 from 15:30-17:00 GMT. [Register now](#). The prior webinar reviewed "Implementation and Enforcement of Laws," and the [recording is now available](#) (Access Passcode: .bnW2Ze9).

Recording Available: OVC and HIV Coordination

The recording from the webinar on 'What Works? Effective coordination between OVC and HIV clinical partners to improve pediatric HIV case finding, retention and viral load suppression,' is now available. Held January 13, the webinar was hosted by the OVC Task Force. The webinar featured the experiences of three distinct programs and country contexts to illustrate effective approaches for building strong partnerships between community OVC and clinical HIV programs. Presenters highlighted relevant data-driven solutions that close critical gaps across the pediatric HIV cascade. [Watch now](#).

Recordings Available: Supporting the Virtual Workforce

The US National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) held a series of webinars to support adaptation of existing child welfare activities to virtual programming and as a platform for child welfare colleagues to exchange ideas, innovations and resources. Topics included: virtual supervision; well-being; physical, emotional and psychological safety; converting classroom training; coaching remotely; and using social media and technology to engage clients. The [recordings, participant discussions and supportive resources](#) are available online.

Resources

Resource Database

Visit our website for [COVID-19 resources and tools](#) on topics relevant to the roles of the social service workforce, including mental health and psychosocial support, child protection, case management, alternative care and separated children, gender-based violence, working with

communities, communications/key messages and webinars. If you have a new resource to share, [please contact us](#).

[Guidance for Families to Prevent Violence in Early Childhood in the Time of COVID-19 - Conceptual and Methodological Framework](#)

Jorge Cuartas, Harvard University and Catalina Rey-Guerra, Boston College; UNICEF, 2020

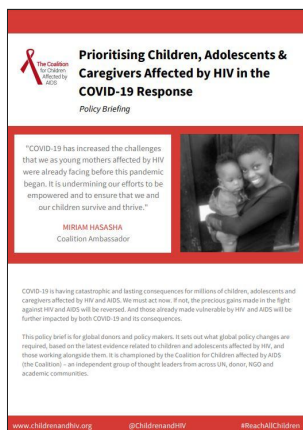
To address increasing violent discipline and child protection concerns, support services are needed for families who promote young children's nurturing upbringing while promoting self-care among primary caregivers. This toolkit contains five main sections with resources for caregivers, parents and social service workers, including guidance services and alternative strategies.

- Early childhood development and violence
- Protective and risk factors for violence
- Current situation: Erosion of protective factors and exacerbation of risk factors as a result of COVID-19
- Remote assistance for caregivers: Opportunities and limitations
- Conceptual foundations of the operational tools



[Prioritising Children, Adolescents & Caregivers Affected by HIV in the COVID-19 Response - Policy briefing](#)

The Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS, 2020



This policy brief is for global donors and policymakers. It sets out what global policy changes are required, based on the latest evidence related to children and adolescents affected by HIV, and those working alongside them. It calls for action in nine areas including to integrate biomedical, social and economic support. Social protection, support for mental health, nurturing care for early childhood development, and child protection are especially needed alongside biomedical interventions. Investment is encouraged in these areas as well as in the invisible architecture behind multi-sectoral collaboration such as information sharing, joint planning and monitoring, and broadened funding and programming parameters.

[Health Workforce Policy and Management in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response - Interim guidance](#)

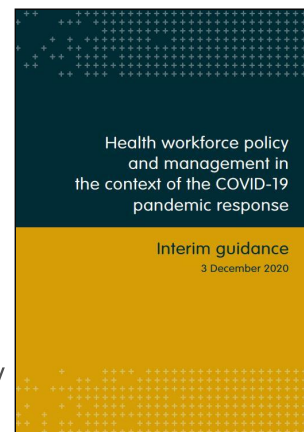
World Health Organization, 2020

This guide consolidates COVID-19 guidance for human resources for health managers and policymakers at national, subnational and facility levels to design, manage and preserve the workforce necessary to manage the COVID-19 pandemic and maintain essential health services. The guide identifies recommendations at individual, management, organizational and system levels. Lessons and guidance are applicable to the social service workforce delivering essential services during COVID-19.

The guidance covers the following domains:

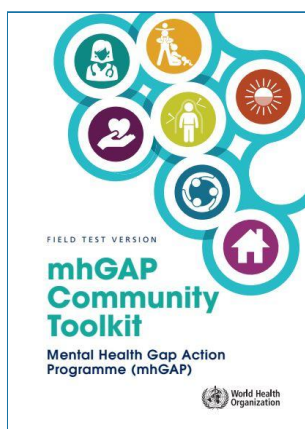
- Supporting and protecting health workers
- Strengthening and optimizing health workforce teams
- Increasing capacity and strategic health worker deployment
- Health system human resources strengthening

The specific needs of female health workers and of those with greater vulnerability due to age, ethnicity, social determinants of health or disabling conditions should be addressed, including in relation to safety issues, decent working conditions and equal opportunities. The costs involved in scaling up and appropriately supporting the health workforce for the COVID-19 response represent an investment in building health workforce capacity that will not only support health systems in the immediate response, but also form a foundation for global health security in the future.



[mhGAP Community Toolkit: Field test version](#)

World Health Organization, 2019



This toolkit has been developed as part of WHO's mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP), which aims to ensure that people with mental health conditions receive high-quality, evidence-based mental health services that promote human rights, dignity and equity. It also aims to achieve universal health coverage through integration of mental health services throughout primary, secondary facility-based and community-based care.

This toolkit is divided into two parts: Part 1 is an informational guide for programme managers or service planners in either the governmental or nongovernmental sectors who are interested in developing community-level mental health services. Part 2 is a practical manual for people wishing to promote and address mental health within their community.

[Social Work during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Initial findings](#)

British Association of Social Work (BASW), 2021

During 2020, social workers were operating in new circumstances resulting from the global spread of the Covid-19 virus. As part of its response, BASW conducted two surveys exploring the impact of working during the pandemic for social workers. This report presents the initial findings from the second of these two surveys.

Statements covered issues such as access to PPE, employer support, the impact of working during the pandemic on the social worker themselves, and ethical and rights



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concerns. In total, the survey received 1119 responses from across the UK. Findings show that more people are requiring social services, with 67.6% of respondents who work in children's services agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had seen an increase in the number of referrals and/or their caseloads since the return to schools and colleges in Q3 2020. Against this backdrop, 77.7% agreed or strongly agreed that their experience of working under lockdown restrictions had increased their concerns about the capacity to safeguard and protect adults and children.

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