



Licensed to protect – Social Welfare Professionals in Finland

Jaana Manssila

Senior Specialist

Union of Professional Social Workers Talentia, Finland

Contents



Professional practice rights of highly educated social welfare professionals in Finland: education, licensing, registration and supervision



Safety of the clients and self-monitoring as a source for the quality of services



Division of labour between social welfare professionals in order to promote clients' human rights



Employment and social welfare professionals' careers



Conclusions

Education, licensing,
registration and supervision



Licencing and Professional Practice Rights

- According to **the Act on Social Welfare Professionals (2016)**, Social Workers and Social Service Professionals in Finland are
 - licensed professionals
 - protected professional titles
- Licensing is granted upon application by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health
- Licensing gives them the right to use a protected professional title within social welfare and act as a licensed social welfare professional

Benefits of licensing to practice social welfare professions

Licensing:

- supports professional identity
- guarantees that qualifications, competencies, expertise and
- professional ethics are at the appropriate level



Registering

- Licensed social welfare professionals are registered in the central register of social welfare professionals
 - Maintained by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health
- Professional practice rights decisions are subject to a fee (80 € for newly graduated via e-application)
- Registered by January 2020: approx. 7 300 social workers and 30 500 social service professionals
- The central register is accessible to everyone to verify the professionals' educational backgrounds

Supervision of the Act on Social Service Professionals

Employers

Regional State Administrative Agencies

National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health

Licensed professionals – a way to secure the high quality of social services



Safety of the clients



The best interest of the clients



The clients' right to good treatment and good quality social services

Shared responsibility between employers and employees for the quality of services

Social services must guarantee clients':

- social,
- psychological,
- physical, and
- economic safety

Social welfare professionals are obliged to:

- have the knowledge and professional skills required for the task
- maintain their competencies

Self-monitoring

Statutory self-monitoring of social services should be carried out according to national guidelines and as a part of daily routines

Licensing practices based on education and competences are a crucial element to ensure clients' safety and thus the quality of services

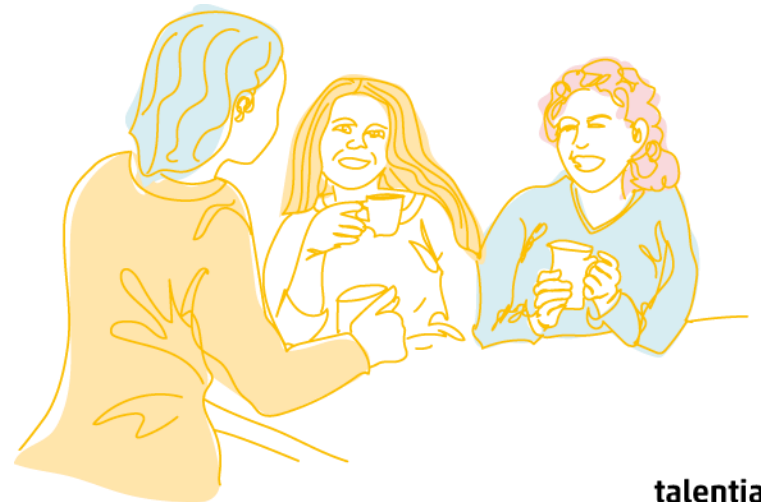
Competency and qualification verification models are needed

Finland's Digital Kanta-Services

Clients will be entitled to have access to their up-to-date social services records in the near future



Guideline for the Division of Labour by Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers



Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers

Promotes its members' wage and professional interests as well as their economic and social interests

Acts both as a professional association and a professional union

Members

Masters of Social Work & Bachelors of Social Services

- 93 % women, average age 30-40
- 70 % work for municipalities

An affiliate of the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals

Guideline for the Division of Labour by Talentia Union of Professional Social Workers



Focuses on and emphasizes the following:

Competencies produced by higher education

Objects of client work

Contents and methods of client work

Relation between clients and their human rights and licensed social welfare professionals

The division of labour in the clients' service path

1. Identification and definition of the needs of the clients

- Right to have a statutory professional evaluation of needs of support and services together with a social welfare professional
- Competencies needed (social worker in cases of special needs)

2. Definition of the key objectives of the client work

- Right to have a statutory client plan that supports the desired changes and participation recorded together with a social welfare professional
- Competencies needed (social worker in cases of special needs)

The division of labour in the clients' service path

3. Definition of the key contents and methods of the client work

- Right to service guidance
- Right to have a designated social welfare professional
- Right to have statutory social services of good quality to promote social wellbeing and human rights
- Competencies needed (social worker in cases of special needs)

The division of labour in the clients' service path

4. Specification of the roles of the social welfare professionals needed

- Right to evaluate the granted and used services together with a social welfare professional (social worker in cases of special needs)
- Right to have an updated client plan to meet the needs

5. Participatory evaluation and re-specification of the division of labour

- Right to participate and influence in the organization and implementation of services
- Right to promote knowledge acquired by experience

Talentia's Guideline for the Division of Labour



Demonstrates the need for both social workers and bachelors of social services

Emphasizes the importance of using social welfare professionals' competencies and expertise according to legislation and thus promoting and protecting clients' human rights

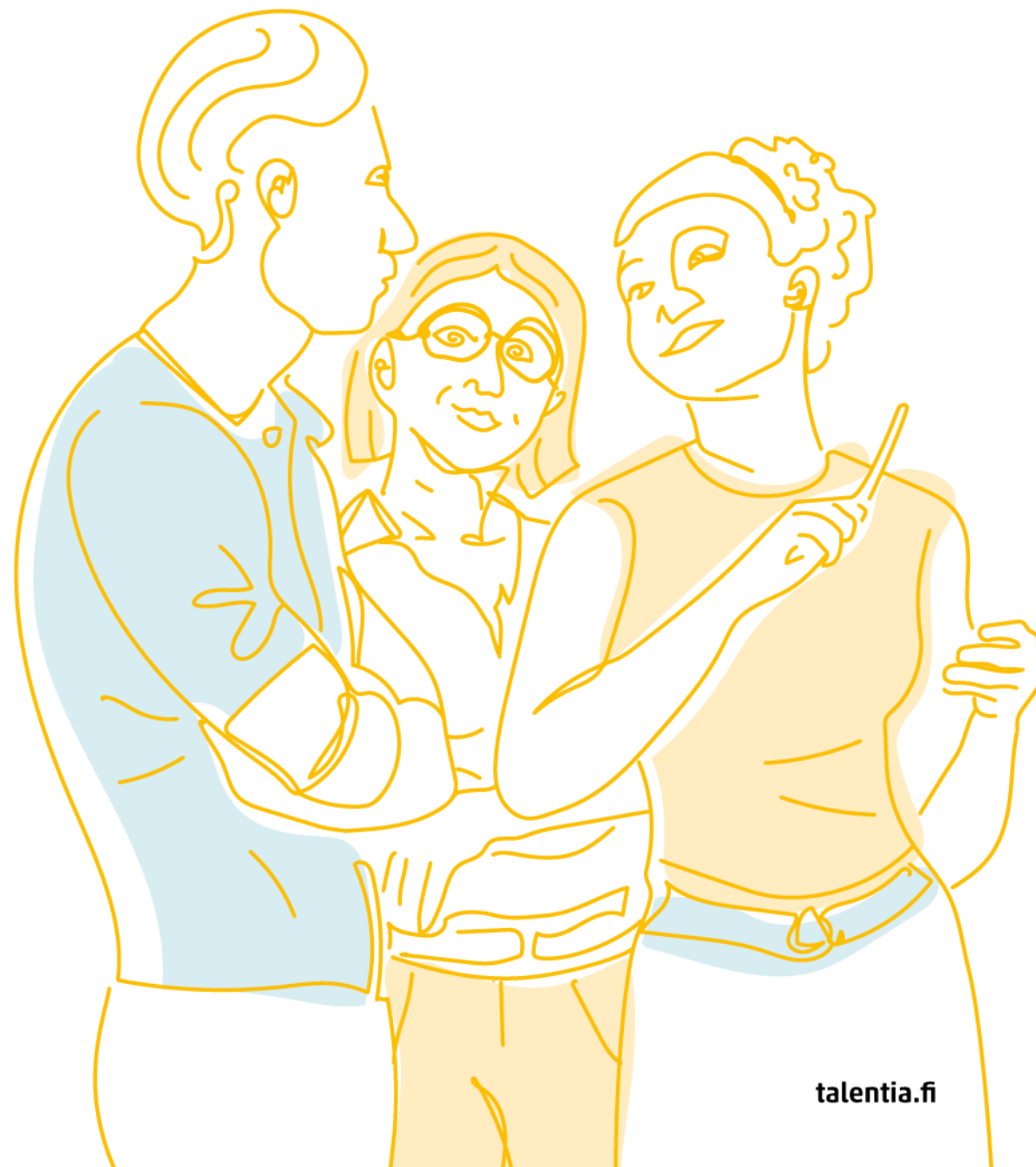


Focuses attention to the growing demands to secure clients' social, psychological, physical and economic safety



Supports and requires both collaboration and co-creation between professionals and clients

Employment and careers



From higher education to working life



The degree programs of social welfare professionals are very popular: the number of applicants is multiple vs. the number of intake



However Talentia's recent report indicates that several professionals would not study the same degree as such anymore.



The withdrawal from studies is at a low level



Why so?



The employment rate is at a high level

Salary

The level of earnings
is lower than it is on
the equivalent
national age and
educational level



Task-specific average
monthly salaries of
newly graduated

Bachelor of Social Services:
2447 € /mo

Social worker: 3210 € /mo

Career success



Female gender
undermines the
objective career
success



Professional
mobility seems
to be at a
moderate level



Identification
and verbalization
of competencies



Career
counselling



Cross-disciplinary
studies

Working conditions



The work is perceived as responsible, diverse, meaningful and challenging



The amount of work, psychosocial strain and perceived poor leadership have a negative impact on wellbeing at work



The societal value of work is perceived as weak



About 20 % of recently graduated are considering moving to another sector

31 % of social workers (vs. lack of availability)

Talentia's career surveys in Finnish

Landgrén, Saana: The Career Paths of Recently Graduated Social Welfare Professionals, 2019

<https://talentia.e-julkaisu.com/2019/vastavalmistuneiden-urapolut/#page=1>

Rauma, Jenni: The Careers of Social Welfare Professionals, 2019

<https://talentia.e-julkaisu.com/2019/tyouraselvitys/#page=1>

<http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2019112522194>



Conclusions



**The Act on
Social Service
Professionals
is crucial in
promoting
professional
rights and
interests**



**Continuous
dialogue is
needed between
higher education
institutes and
working life
-> Talentia's
educational
policy program**



**Demand for
continuous
education based
on learning
needs**



**Statutory self-
monitoring
should be taken
seriously**



**The Guideline
for the Division
of Labour by
Talentia
supports the
participatory
impact
assessment of
social work**



Wage development



Career development

Opportunities to participate in research and development projects

Opportunities to participate and influence the development of social work



**Psychosocial wellbeing
at work**



**Reasonable number
of clients**



Physical security



**Managerial skills for
occupational
wellbeing**

Thank you for your interest!

Jaana Manssila

jaana.manssila@talentia.fi

+ 358 45 7881 3880

