

## **Effective partnership working**

**Key principles of partnership and collaboration  
between employers and higher education providers**

### **Introduction**

Effective partnership working underpins many initiatives aimed at improving standards of professional practice in social work. This section introduces the information and resources that have been developed to help partnerships meet the high expectations now placed on them. It includes:

#### [Background](#)

#### [Benefits of partnerships – why get involved?](#)

#### [Interdependencies with social work reforms](#)

#### [Achieving partnership and collaboration – the partnership principles](#)

#### [Resources](#)

#### [Challenges](#)

#### [Organisations and stakeholders involved in this work](#)

### **Background**

The Social Work Task Force fully recognised the importance of partnerships between employers and universities, working together in the delivery of good quality training and development for social workers in:

- Initial social work training
- Continuing professional development (CPD)<sup>1</sup>
- Workforce supply

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<sup>1</sup> The new continuing professional development (CPD) approach will provide structure and support for social workers to develop their capabilities throughout their careers; to update, extend and deepen knowledge, skills and analytical thinking to deal with increasingly complex and specialist work and to develop professional identity and confidence.

The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) undertook to develop a national framework setting out expectations, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms to underpin local arrangements and developed four partnership principles, with resources, to support their implementation.

The College of Social Work (TCSW) took custodianship of the partnership principles and resources in November 2011. A partnership Advisory Implementation Group (AIG) was established with membership drawn from across a wide range of stakeholders to provide support, information and guidance and promote the adoption of the partnership principles across the sector. This included the development of additional resources to help raise the level of the debate in local partnerships.

### **Benefits of partnerships – why get involved?**

The case for employers, universities and service users and carers working together in partnership has never been stronger – the training and supply of high quality social workers is their **joint** responsibility. No one partner can achieve this without working in collaboration with the others.

Effective partnerships:

- ensure a supply of well-trained social workers, able to meet the realities of frontline practice
- influence what social workers are taught and how they are assessed
- work together to use funds and resources in a cost-effective way
- provide a shared forum for the implementation of the SWRB's reforms and raising standards of professional practice
- use workforce planning to match the supply of social workers with recruitment needs
- improve the learning environment and development opportunities of staff in all partner organisations and help them meet the expectations of the Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England

### **Interdependencies with social work reforms**

The activities of good partnerships have a major impact on raising standards in social work, and significant aspects of the reforms to social work are underpinned by effective partnership working. These include:

#### **Practice learning**

- Reaching joint decisions about the number of social work students that can be supported, taking into account the availability of high quality placements.
- Developing the joint arrangements for 30 days developing practice skills.
- Jointly recruiting high calibre entrants.

#### **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)**

- Jointly delivering support, mentoring and further training to newly qualified social workers.
- Working together to develop joint local arrangements for the ASYE.

## CPD

- Agreeing priorities for CPD, taking into account employer and workforce needs.
- Joint development of flexible delivery models for CPD.

As workforce planning will be a central concern for partnerships, they are in a position to benefit from the [supply and demand model](#) developed by the SWRB and now hosted by the Centre for Workforce Intelligence. Partnerships can also make an important contribution to organisations meeting the [Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England](#).

The priorities of the SWRB have also been built on by the final recommendations of the Munro Review<sup>2</sup> which stressed the importance of employers and universities working together to provide high quality practice placements, with a view to developing – in the future – designated approved practice settings and special teaching organisation status.

### **Achieving partnership and collaboration – the partnership principles**

The statement of partnership and collaboration, gives four principles of partnership.

#### **Partnerships should:**

- agree joint aims and outcomes, and be clear about the responsibilities and contributions of all those involved
- record their agreement in a Memorandum of Cooperation and keep it under regular review
- be strongly led at a strategic level, informed by workforce planning and key policy drivers
- be based around local, flexible and diverse partnerships, build on existing effective arrangements and ensure the participation of voluntary and independent sector organisations, and service users and carers

The principles are presented in a short document, which can be easily disseminated for employers and universities to discuss, sign up to, and follow. It includes comments from sites that tested the principles for the SWRB.<sup>3</sup>

The principles aim to provide:

- a flexible, national framework, based on key principles known to be effective in partnership
- a framework that allows partnerships to develop arrangements that work locally
- clarity about responsibility for partnerships, emphasizing the joint responsibility between employers, universities and the profession, and a clear statement about their roles

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<sup>2</sup> The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final report – A child-centred system Recommendation 12, paragraph 6.46

<sup>3</sup> See reform resource paper 'Effective partnership working – Partnership principles – Summary' on TCSW website

## Resources

Building on the work of the SWRB, the AIG has produced a range of tools, templates and examples of what works in practice to support employers, universities and service users and carers as they develop and improve local partnership arrangements. These are:

- **Why get involved in partnerships?**<sup>4</sup> This outlines the strategic case for getting involved in partnerships from the perspective of all the stakeholders:
  - Employers - Local authorities
  - All other employers of social workers
  - Universities– faculty level and social work programmes
  - Service users and carers

Each case includes the potential gains and benefits of involvement, what each perspective can offer, the consequences of not being involved and what should be expected of senior managers.

- **Partnership – key drivers to support implementation**<sup>5</sup> This describes six drivers/policies/frameworks that senior managers who employ social workers will need to consider when setting a strategic direction.
- **Developing a good model of partnership**<sup>6</sup> This discusses some of the issues around reviewing and developing models of partnership that work locally, and ensure all stakeholders are fully engaged – not just local authorities and universities, but all employers of social work (including large national and small voluntary organisations) and service users and carers. It also addresses the roles that different partners may take, including the role of lead partner.
- **Effective partnership behaviours**<sup>7</sup> This outlines some helpful behaviours to look for and/or promote when developing agreements with partners, and describes some behaviours that may be encountered in ineffective partnerships.
- **Developing a written agreement**<sup>8</sup> Partnerships will now be asked to record their agreement in a Memorandum of Cooperation. This should be a non-legal document, which sets out the outcomes of the partnership, the activities agreed and the responsibilities of those involved. It

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<sup>4</sup> See reform resource paper 'Why get involved in partnerships? The strategic case for involvement' on TCSW website.

<sup>5</sup> See reform resource paper 'Key drivers to support implementation' on TCSW website

<sup>6</sup> See reform resource paper 'Developing a good model of partnership' on the TCSW website

<sup>7</sup> See reform resource paper 'Negotiating and working with partners: Effective and ineffective partnership behaviours' on the TCSW website.

<sup>8</sup> See reform resource paper 'Developing written agreements – Using a Memorandum of Cooperation' on the TCSW website

should be signed by senior managers which will provide a mechanism for demonstrating that the activities of the partnership are properly authorised. A number of resources are available to support this including a checklist of areas to include and sample agreements.

- **'Health check'**<sup>9</sup> As partnerships have such a pivotal role in implementing the reforms in practice learning, a 'health check' for practice learning has been developed, which summarises the activities that partnerships may need to undertake and how they evidence their achievements. This will help partnerships to both evaluate and demonstrate their effectiveness to their own organisations and outside bodies, such as the HCPC and TCSW.
- **Case examples** A range of case examples were used in the development of these resources. The case examples have been available for some time on this and other websites, but are included here again for reference:

[Qualifying education case examples](#)

[Post qualifying case examples](#)

In the near future, TCSW will be inviting partnerships who have developed their collaboration through these principles and resources, to share their work through one of its Communities of Practice. Further details will be posted on this website when available.

## Challenges

One of the key messages received from the sector by both the SWRB and TCSW concerns the impact on partnerships of time and financial constraints. With no new funding in the system, and funding changes in higher education, local government and the voluntary sector, there are a number of risks to the partnership reforms. These relate especially to the:

- investment of staff time at both strategic and operational levels in developing joint aims, and planning joint activities. This may be particularly difficult for smaller organisations and the voluntary sector
- allocation of funding to support the delivery of jointly planned activities, including high quality placements and flexible CPD programmes
- failure to prioritise the further development of partnerships locally, because a range of reforms have to be managed in the sector, at a time of restructuring and possible redundancies

The sector as a whole now has a responsibility to manage these risks and take the work forward. It will be important to build on the underpinning role of partnerships in raising standards, particularly

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<sup>9</sup> See reform resource paper 'A 'health check' to help to assess the readiness of your organisation to manage new practice learning requirements' on the TCSW website

at a time when Professor Munro has recommended that employers and universities work together on practice placements and 'consider if their relationship is working well'<sup>10</sup>.

The engagement of senior managers at an early stage will be critical to ensure resources are properly allocated to partnership activities. Responsibility for partnerships now needs to be taken at director/assistant director/senior manager level, with key strategic organisations taking a lead.

Priority should also be given to developing innovative ways of involving the voluntary and independent sector, and enabling different levels and types of participation in partnerships.

Many effective partnerships already exist and all partnerships should now begin reviewing their arrangements, to ensure they are robust enough for the challenges ahead. Employers, universities and service users and carers should enter into dialogue with each other about the improvements they may need to make, learning from other partnerships where they can. **This work can begin immediately.**

Whilst the adoption of the principles will be an immediate priority, TCSW will also begin to explore the role of partnerships in other aspects of raising quality and implementing the social work reforms.

In August 2012, the regulation of social work education will be transferred to the Health and Care Professions Council. Partnerships will also need to take into account the Health and Care Professions Council's requirements for regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider. (SET 5.10)

### **Organisations and stakeholders involved in this work**

TCSW gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the following organisations and stakeholders to the work of the partnership Advisory Implementation Group, and their help in developing these resources.

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<sup>10</sup> Recommendation 12

Jo Cleary (Chair), Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS)  
Peter Atkins, Carer, Bournemouth University and Social Work Education  
Participation (SWEP)  
Mary Baginsky, Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)  
Debbie Blackshaw, Cafcass  
Liz Bord, National Organisation for Practice Teaching (NOPT)  
Malcolm Golightly, University of Lincoln  
Bill McKitterick, British Association of Social Workers (BASW)  
Jane McLenachan, Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee  
(JucSWEC)  
Ian Pearson, Family Action  
Louise Purser, Learn to Care  
Graham Woodham, Skills for Care  
Beth Young, Service user

## Appendix

### Good practice examples and models

#### University of Bedfordshire – Amanda Thorpe, Head of Social Work

The university's Strategic Planning Group for Social Work meets four times a year to review and support the development and delivery of the programmes at qualifying and post qualifying level.

Partners represented are: local authorities, students, experts by experience (service users and carers), and employer partners from private, voluntary and independent sectors.

#### Features and benefits

- Awareness of the pressing issues in practice and local/national policy changes.
- Practice and academic issues identified and acted on swiftly.
- Practice learning provision regularly reviewed, quality issues addressed together with matters of sufficiency, timing and need.
- Comprehensive evaluation of our social work education provision as a whole.

#### Other examples of successful partnership working

- A joint venture between the university and Luton Borough Council Housing and Community Living and Children and Learning Departments, builds on a successful history of research and training partnerships between the two organisations.
- We have a successful and effective partnership with service users and carers, which was commended by both the university and the GSCC in our five year review.

Further developments are planned to replicate these successful ventures. Working in partnership ensures the social work programmes we offer enable students to move into qualified practice as well-prepared, competent and confident practitioners.



**University of Sussex – Suzy Braye, University of Sussex and Dianne Baldwin,  
East Sussex County Council**

Aspects of good partnership between University of Sussex and East Sussex County Council:

**Features and benefits**

- Extensive involvement of practitioners and managers in interviewing candidates for the qualifying degrees.
- Consultation over admissions queries relating to CRB checks.
- Regular and in some cases very substantial contributions to teaching on modules by practitioners and managers.
- Provision of high quality placements, training and CPD for those undertaking practice teaching and assessment.
- Extensive involvement in practice assessment panels.
- Full involvement in programme management boards, including chairing of those groups.
- Regular involvement in periodic review, validation and approval events.
- Regular involvement in suitability panels.
- Attendance by practitioners and managers at research-led seminars.
- Strategic level liaison between senior managers and senior members of academic staff.

We believe our partnerships work because of our strong engagement over the PQCCA (Post Qualifying Child Care Award), and the presence of individual 'boundary spanners' in our respective workforces.

**University of Salford – Steve Myers and Steven Shardlow**

The Directorate of Social Work at the University of Salford has some of the largest programmes in the UK, requiring approximately 550 placements per year. The Directorate is successful in placing the overwhelming majority of these students on time and all are placed in suitable, quality assured work environments.

**Features and benefits**

- The resources required to find 550 placements are considerable, and rely on strong stakeholder engagement and involvement.
- The partnership approach with local, regional, statutory, private, voluntary and independent agencies has been successful in constructing systems and structures that facilitate the identification, support, assessment and quality assurance of the student learning experience.
- Formal meetings are held on a regular basis, at strategic and operational levels, to ensure that the needs of employers and students are met.
- Stakeholder training officers with specific responsibility for social work hold monthly meetings at the university and this is underpinned by a Strategic Development Group.
- A Harmonisation Group has been established within Greater Manchester to ensure that all the HEIs providing social work programmes can standardise practice learning expectations. This ensures that practice educators and supervisors have more consistent expectations of students and associated documentation.

The resources required to identify, support and quality assure placements are a key challenge for all universities. It is only by working closely together that the number and quality of placements has been maintained.

The University of Salford has also developed a new MA in Social Work with four regional partnerships. This has been co-designed with employers to meet their specific local needs as well as academic and regulatory body requirements.

**Kingston University – Hilary Tompsett and Catherine Dove**

Kingston University works with a partner forum of key statutory, private, voluntary and independent sector agencies and a strong service user and carer forum to offer social work education in partnership. We have described a few of the different ways of partnership working with employers at Kingston.

**Interface/exchange of staff and joint student unit**

A joint appointment with a local substance misuse centre, Kaleidoscope, supports a student unit in Kaleidoscope providing 4–6 placements a year, but also funds a post, half time at Kaleidoscope and half time at the university supporting the teaching of professional skills in the Becoming a Professional module.

**Organisational interface for recruitment and research**

Local authority employers regularly send employment based route students to the undergraduate programme and, since 2006, to the Masters in Social Work programme (approximately 15–20 each year in total to all programmes).

These have proved to be a successful route to recruitment of qualified staff with enhanced success and retention rates. Links have extended beyond these with some students undertaking research projects commissioned by the agency.

**Partnership for delivery of programme and placements**

Every student who is offered a place at Kingston University is interviewed by a team, consisting of a university staff member and a practitioner/manager or a service user/carer from our service user and carer forum. This time is given freely by agencies and staff who see this as a development opportunity. Agency staff and service users and carers also contribute to teaching sessions and assessment of students. Reduced fees for practice teaching/enabling learning courses are available for those who take Kingston students on placements. An independent practitioner chairs the practice assessment panels and agency partner representatives are involved in every panel or assessment board making decisions about students, including disciplinary and fitness to practice panels, and course and placement evaluations.

**Access to shared resources**

Practice teachers and work-based supervisors are given access to library and learning resources at the university while taking Kingston students. They and partner forum members receive a newsletter and invitations to free monthly research seminars.

**Links with Directors of Adult and Children’s Services**

A twice yearly directors forum to develop shared understandings, improve placements and recruitment arrangements, and develop potential research bids together.

**University of Kent – Ruben Martin**

At the University of Kent we have good partnership arrangements with Canterbury Christchurch University, employers and local authorities, building on previous DipSW arrangements that have developed since the start of the degree.

Our practice assessment panel (PAP) is an employer/HEI forum. The chair and vice-chair are employer representatives paid by us for PAP work. The PAP has responsibility for quality assurance of placements and monitors the assessment of practice and the placement service for 100+ placements each year. They have direct involvement in placements where there are assessment concerns.

**Features and benefits**

- An established and effective management for processing of placements.
- Joint PAP/HEI biannual day training conferences on practice learning.
- PAP is represented at our active partnership initiative meetings with service users and carers and PI members have attended PAP meetings.
- PAP members and other practice assessors are involved in admissions interviews, interviewing candidates jointly with HEI tutors.

We will continue to work with partners in the planning and development training and research opportunities.

**Hull University – Liz Walker (Director of Social Work) and Nieca Boynton (Social Work Practice Learning Coordinator)**

The partnership arrangements involve the University of Hull and the University of Lincoln working closely with four local authorities and larger providers from the voluntary, independent and private sector as well as smaller agencies.

The partnership has one main forum tackling both strategic planning and operational activities, with subgroups effectively supporting this work.

**Features and benefits**

- Ensuring QA standards are achieved around practice learning and education, including the introduction of an independent practice educators register and the development of a short course 'Introduction to Practice Education'.
- Service level agreements (SLA) which are beneficial to all and enable the maximisation of practice learning opportunities.
- Support visits to agencies within the partnership.
- Universities share working arrangements on specific tasks, i.e. successfully sharing selection and matching of students with agencies.
- Enhanced learning opportunities/partnership placements which provide valuable statutory experiences.

We believe it is important to nurture these working partnerships and ensure that we respond to issues raised by agencies, provide support, advice, guidance and training to meet the growing and changing needs of not only the university's social work programmes but also the partner agencies.

**Middlesex University – Lucille Allain (Principal Lecturer and Director of Programmes – Social Work), Dr. Helen Hingley-Jones (Programme Leader, BA and MA Social Work) and Christine Cocker (Principal Lecturer)**

Middlesex University's social work programmes have long-standing, well-developed and mutually beneficial partnerships with a number of local authorities and voluntary sector organisations.

### **Features and benefits**

A key feature of this partnership is the joint appointment posts between Middlesex University and local authorities. This approach was described by one local authority's Director of Children's Services as highly beneficial as it shortened the lines of communication between the organisations and meant there was a key link between practice and the university with the person 'having a foot in both camps'.

Overall, the rationale for joint appointment posts is to:

- strengthen links with practice
- increase student social work placements
- improve social work recruitment and retention in local authorities through employment route and graduate trainee schemes
- support learning in the workplace with links to post qualifying training and more general training opportunities

This greatly strengthens the practitioner perspective in our courses and our partnerships have also enabled social workers to keep abreast of research and support practice which is informed by knowledge.

In addition, the close partnership working enables academics to maintain strong links with the day to day realities of practice and management in local authorities and in the voluntary sector.

**East Midlands Social Work Network – Roger Smith (De Montfort University)**

The East Midlands Social Work Network has been established for over ten years. It is a collaboration between all those concerned with the education and continued professional development of social workers including employing agencies (adult and children's services and independent providers), strategic workforce bodies (CWDC and Skills for Care), and educational providers (the region's seven universities offering social work programmes).

**Features and benefits**

- A strong spirit of collaboration, resulting in a shared, strategic view of workforce and training needs, and the capacity to respond effectively to changing circumstances.
- Development of important practical tools for addressing common regional issues while avoiding confusion and inefficiency.
- Development of a regional practice timetable which avoids clashes and overloads when seeking practice learning opportunities.

As a result we have facilitated a number of other collaborations across the region, which have underpinned the important principles of establishing common standards and procedures for implementing and guaranteeing quality frameworks and promoting good practice.

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## Summary of CPD test sites

Full reports are available for each site and have additional information on design delivery, accreditation and costs, success factors, barriers and learning linked to the CPD principles proposed in the One Year On report.

### 1. West London Alliance (West London Social Work Project)

#### Names of partner organisations providing the CPD

The West London Social Work Project was a two year project (2009–11) funded by the Department of Education (previously DCSF) and supported by the CWDC. It was a partnership of eight West London boroughs – Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and, Chelsea and Westminster. These boroughs worked with twelve universities.

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#### Main features of the CPD

- Three programmes – in advanced child protection, domestic violence and parental mental health – were commissioned by Career Pathway work stream of the project, with representatives from eight London boroughs, led by an assistant director from one of the boroughs.
- They were designed to provide specific skills needed by staff, and identify gaps in their knowledge, particularly awareness of issues around risk and assessment.
- Each programme had a course leader, a recognised expert in the area, who could arrange to bring in other expert guest speakers with a range of specialisms and relevant practice expertise. The programmes included mixed teaching methods, and provided up to three opportunities for work shadowing relevant to subject.
- The project worked with Royal Holloway on PQ accreditation of the programme. The content and learning outcomes were checked during the development of the programme to ensure they could be accredited to the PQ Higher Specialist Award. Students have the option of producing a written assignment for assessment to achieve an award.

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#### Summary of key learning points from test site to be taken forward in further development of the CPD framework

- The 'power of partnership' in joint commissioning of programmes and cost-effective use of resources.
- The value of sustained and integrated programmes with a strong focus on skills and professional knowledge and behaviours.
- The importance of commissioning integrated programmes with the close involvement of operational managers and practitioners, who have a key role in identifying skills gaps.
- The need to ensure that programmes are creditable to the PQ framework and/or other qualification/endorsement frameworks, so that the skills and knowledge gained are transferable between employers.



- The need to find ways of enabling front-line managers to take more responsibility for the continuing development of their staff.
- The importance of developing nationally consistent and more in-depth appraisal systems which move away from HR-led tick box annual appraisals.
- The value of encouraging and enabling staff to take responsibility for their own CPD, as in other professions.

## **2. University of Sussex**

### **Names of partner organisations providing the CPD**

University of Sussex, working with Brighton and Hove, East Sussex County Council, and West Sussex County Council (main partners) – also Surrey County Council, Kent, Cafcass, and voluntary sector organisations.

### **Main features of the CPD**

- The aim of the University of Sussex programmes is to offer a flexible, modular approach to PQ awards that can be built up over a period of time.
- The university delivers a series of modules at both Specialist and Higher Specialist levels of the PQ framework. Modules can be taken as freestanding, but 60 credits obtained at Specialist level can be taken as advanced standing towards a Higher Specialist Award.
- The programmes are designed in consultation with employers to ensure the modules fit local workforce planning needs. However, it is important that employers indicate their willingness to sponsor staff to attend the courses.
- Most teaching, seminars and individual tutorials are delivered at the university. A student is likely to attend university for 4–6 days for 15 credit Specialist level modules and 8 days for 30 credit Higher Specialist level modules. In addition, there is directed reading and other learning activities.
- For the Higher Specialist and CPD programmes, students are able to decide at what point they want to register for a full programme – this allows them to undertake some freestanding modules and delay the start of the five year time period for completion of a full PQ Award.

### **Summary of key learning points from test site to be taken forward in further development of the CPD framework**

- This CPD test site demonstrates the possibilities of a flexible modular approach to PQ/CPD within the current framework, which can be built and extended during the development of a single Masters' level award under the new arrangements.
- It provides evidence for the development time likely to be necessary to develop the Masters' level award – to work with employer partners to design relevant, viable programmes and work with universities to gain support for the flexible award of academic credits.
- It reinforces the need for a national framework and consistency.

### **3. The Open University (OU)**

#### **Names of partner organisations providing the CPD**

The OU has no formal partners but there has been full involvement of a number of employer representatives (depending on the stage and task) throughout the development of the programme from Islington, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire and Kent Children's Services.

#### **Main features of the CPD**

- This national distance learning programme is based on the PQ Higher Specialist Award in children, young people, their families and carers.
- The curriculum aims to offer maximum choice for students and employers as they select either three (PG Cert) or six (PG Dip) topics from a menu of nine currently available.
- One of these options enables students to negotiate the content so that they can study a specialist area relevant to their employment.
- Learning guides are provided online and contain practice focused activities supported by guided reading and audio visual stimulus materials. Each 20 points of learning involves undertaking three practice focused 'investigations' which prepare students to undertake two assessed written tasks.
- Support is provided both through online groups and individually online and by telephone. Students are encouraged to embed learning into their current practice through activities involving their line manager or supervisor.
- Students have considerable flexibility over their own study pattern. Registration is in October but there are then 3 assessment points per year and students may submit none, one, two or all three assessments at any of these points. This will enable them to complete each 60 points in anything from a minimum of six months and up to a maximum of two years.

#### **Summary of key learning points from test site to be taken forward in further development of the CPD framework**

- This programme will not be delivered until October 2012, but provides initial feedback on developing a flexible approach to work-based learning that can lead to a qualification.
- The OU has long-standing expertise in the development of high quality, distance learning resources that can be 'given' to students to support learning whilst they remain in practice.
- The programme is based on a combination of investigations in the workplace, reading resources that have been provided and developing research skills, with the aim of learning/CPD becoming better integrated into practice.
- Negotiating with the university to keep the programme low cost has been a priority, as it is likely that many students will be self-financing.
- As a national, UK-wide programme, the OU has not been able to respond effectively to more local/regional workforce development needs. The programme has therefore been based on broadly common needs across the nations with flexibility to localise learning through the

teaching and learning strategy used (such as extensive online resources and supported individual research).

- This CPD reinforces the need for national framework and consistency, and the importance of CPD being linked to a career framework.

#### **4. Nottingham Trent University and East Midlands partnership**

##### **Names of partner organisations providing the CPD**

Nottingham Trent University working with Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire, Derby City, Derbyshire Children's Services Departments.

##### **Main features of the CPD**

- The BA (Hons) and Postgraduate Diploma in Child Care Practice is a PQ Specialist Award which leads to 120 credits at level 3 (BA Hons) or 120 credits at M level (Postgraduate Diploma).
- The whole programme was designed by co-creation with the agency partners, who continue to have a pivotal role through the stakeholder board.
- Consolidation (Module 1) is delivered in agency premises, with input from agency trainers. Assessment for the consolidation module is through the university processes, with the level of university input dependent on whether the agency has full or partial involvement.
- Consolidation is a stand alone module, and many candidates exit after taking it. From September 2011, all modules will be stand alone.
- Modules 2–6 are delivered on university premises. Teaching takes place on one day a week. The programme consists of 25 teaching days, 2 induction days, 15 private study days and 3 practice development days (total 45 days).
- Study days are integral to the course and 100% attendance is expected.

##### **Summary of key learning points from test site to be taken forward in further development of the CPD framework**

- Strong commitment from both university and agencies to joint working and acknowledgement that working together in a meaningful way takes work on all sides.
- High academic standards but acknowledgement that some practitioners cannot study at this level.
- Strong level of support to candidates from agency through the practice mentor assessor role.
- Protected time for study built into the programme, but acknowledgement that undertaking study while working is a challenge and study in own time is needed.
- Fully modular, to enable practitioners to meet learning needs without necessarily undertaking full award.

## **5. University of East Anglia**

### **Names of partner organisations providing the CPD**

University of East Anglia working with Norfolk, Suffolk, Peterborough, Thurrock, Southend, Cambridgeshire, Essex, NSPCC, Barnardos and some small local voluntary agencies. (Child Care Award has been run jointly in the past with Anglia Ruskin University).

### **Main features of the CPD**

- The aim of the UEA programme is to provide a flexible, modular and 'mix and match' approach to PQ Awards that can be built up over time.
- The university offers modules at Consolidation (1 x 40 or 2 x 20 credits) and Specialist levels (4 x 20 credits), adults' and children's pathways, which lead to a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Practice (120 credits). This award can be built on with modules in all specialisms, apart from work with adults, at Higher Specialist level (3 x 20 or 6 x 20 credits), leading to a PG Certificate or PG Diploma in Higher Specialist Practice/MA in Specialist Practice (180 credits).
- A key feature of the CPD is the option of undertaking some or all of the modules by distance learning – with a 'mix and match' approach between distance learning and taught modules permissible. This option was developed at the request of employers.
- A large proportion of the newly developed teaching sessions and group support sessions are held in the agencies, to reduce travelling time in a large geographical area. These elements are quality assured by the university. Some teaching days are held at the university.

### **Summary of key learning points from test site to be taken forward in further development of the CPD framework**

- This is a long-standing partnership, with all parties able to maintain good dialogue with each other and challenge each other if necessary.
- All agency partners contribute to employing a coordinator to support the early professional development (EPD) funded aspects of the programme.
- The new NQSW and EPD linked programmes, with a high volume of student numbers, have been negotiated outside the normal HEFCE subsidised funding structure and not charged at full costs. This has been achieved through making the case to the university for the high level of agency contribution to teaching and demonstrating the programmes' connection with wider university strategies such as lifelong learning and social inclusion.
- The reputation of the programme leads to high levels of applicants.
- Flexible delivery options respect the fact that students are also workers.
- The elements delivered by agencies are well supported by the university, which helps to reduce the drop-out rate. Failing students are offered one-to-one support.

## 6. Coventry and Solihull partnership

### Names of partner organisations providing the CPD

Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. The partnership aims to engage with other local authorities in the West Midlands region and secure the support of a HEI partnership by going out to tender.

### Main features of the CPD

- Encouraged by the SWTF recommendations, Coventry and Solihull developed a new CPD framework to further develop the learning opportunities provided by the GSCC PQ Awards.
- There are five key themes to the CPD Framework:

- Professional identity and leadership
- Safeguarding
- Child observation
- Critical analysis and assessment
- Intervention and skills development

- These were agreed as key areas of skills and knowledge required by social workers to become effective and safe practitioners.
- The framework allows for work-based assessment activities to ensure learning is closely linked to achieving good outcomes for children and young people. There will be formal work-based learning activities to meet requirements of the NQSW/ASYE period and EPD, and in addition, there will be the option to undertake Masters' level accredited work as set by the partner HEI.
- The framework is aligned to both the Career Pathway and to the proposed Professional Capability Framework. There is sufficient flexibility for modifications to meet future requirements or proposals.
- At the end of each career stage, there will be a review of the learning and a new plan developed which follows the same thematic pathway. This would follow every year/stage thereafter, gradually lifting the level from NQSW/ASYE through EPD, advanced social work professional, practice educator or manager.

### Summary of key learning points from test site to be taken forward in further development of the CPD framework

- The Coventry and Solihull CPD framework is designed to:

- be affordable and sustainable
- recognise the learning achieved in training and other work-based activities
- be aligned to the theories, approaches and methods used in local teams
- support the required change of culture towards PQ learning by being employer-led, supportive of operational demands and providing a thoughtful progression of skills and knowledge for social workers to advance through the Career Pathway
- have a higher take-up and submission by social workers than was experienced using the GSCC PQ framework

- Partnership working is particularly significant with limited funding. Coventry and Solihull have developed a shared training programme to meet the learning needs of social workers.
- Coventry and Solihull have worked in consultation with social workers and young people to develop the programme, in particular to identify the preferred model of delivery. The majority of social workers prefer a training-based model rather than a HEI, academic model. However, there is still significant demand for academic accreditation which will be met by working in partnership with a HEI to develop and deliver this.

- Further work is required regarding the method of assessment, to ensure the CPD framework is aligned to local appraisal systems and feeds in to induction, probationary and supervision processes.
- This piece of work requires significant commitment and clarity from partnership members, however it aims to provide a cost-effective and robust CPD model.