

pqboulettin

The London Post-Qualifying Framework July 2008

PQ Shows its Strength

Bambie Maxwell, London Regional Development Officer for Skills for Care (SfC), provides an overview of recent accomplishments and points the way forward for social work post qualifying achievements for the capital.

Welcome to the summer 08 edition of the London PQ Bulletin. I would like to take this opportunity to review the last 18 months since the inception of the Regional Planning Network (RPN) and the RPN Board, established to fulfil SfC requirements in implementing the revised PQ framework.

The PQ network across London now has five sub-regional PQ/Practice Learning sub-groups in place. These groups each have a chairperson who attends the RPN Pan London Board. The Board was established in order to have an overview of the numbers and types of PQ programmes required in the London region.

The Board reports to the SfC London Regional Committee, and in addition also oversees the endorsement process for programmes – a new requirement as part of the revised framework. I am delighted to welcome our new London Regional Committee chair, David Crosbie, who is featured in a separate article in this issue.

The RPN Board recently reviewed its achievements to date, which have included ensuring London successfully secures additional funds through the Innovation Fund. To date, London has secured more than £100,000 in additional resources to develop work around specific areas relating to PQ, such as involving people who use services and Leadership and Management of social care professionals.

As many of you are aware, Cat Ainsley joined SfC last year as a locum PQ/Practice Learning lead. Cat made a huge impact during her time with SfC, from managing all the ongoing activities such as the PQ Information Exchange; the endorsement process, the RPN Board and Board activities; to undertaking new work including the production of the *Business Case for PQ* document for London. This document, together with other key information, is now available to download from the SfC London website.

I would like to sincerely and personally thank Cat Ainsley on behalf of SfC London for her hard work and real dedication to the task of consolidating PQ work across London. The PQ network pan London is in a much stronger position to take the next steps forward as a region as a result of her input – so thank you, Cat!



Bambie Maxwell
London Regional Development Officer, SfC

We are all grateful for that period of consolidation as the future focus for social work moves into an exciting new phase. The sector skills councils (SfC and CWDC) have been given a pivotal role in the revised PQ framework. This role is still evolving and the latest development, The SW Development Partnership Board, is now underway.

The new partnership board has a national remit for developing social work across both children and adult services. There will be more information in the next issue of the PQ Bulletin. However, in the meantime, please visit the SfC London website for a downloadable document outlining the role and work envisaged for the Board.

“The PQ network Pan London is in a much stronger position to take the next steps forward as a region.”

New chair in praise of PQ

Advocates of post qualifying competencies in social work have an ally in David Crosbie, the chair of Skills for Care London, reports Marcia White.

For David Crosbie, who took over from Jamie Easton part way through his three-year term as chair of Skills for Care London, the post qualifying framework is "essential".

However, David cautions: "I still think we have got a long way of winning the hearts and minds of people to see [the post qualifying framework] as necessary and making it the norm for employers and employees in the job."

David began his social work career with the National Institute for Social Work three decades ago, and views the report *People Like Us* by former social work chief inspector Bill Utting, as a pivotal point in social care education and training.

The report proved a watershed for residential childcare and questioned why some of the lowest paid and least qualified social care staff were being relied upon to look after some of the most difficult and traumatised children in society, rather than expert childcare practitioners.

David believes the same argument could be extended to adult residential care where residents and staff face some of the most difficult emotions around death and dying, as well as challenging behaviour around dementia and other illnesses, and the most physical difficulties.

"We need to appreciate how difficult it is to work with people in care and we need the people providing care to be skilled up to senior practitioner level," says David. "We need world class practice leaders as well as service leaders and the PQ framework has the potential to deliver on that score."

Not all social workers would wish to pursue the highest levels of post-qualifying training, observes David. But as is evident in talent shows, such as *Britain's Got Talent*, *Fame Academy*, or *The Apprentice*, he sees a pool of ambitious social care workers with a desire to be taken further forward in the profession.

"The three year degree for social work is a basic qualification. The world is changing, and to meet future demands, we need more knowledge and expertise. We need to ensure that the staff that we employ, who go into social work, have the levels of qualification and expertise to deliver," says David, who believes that NVQs should be grasped as an alternative "springboard" into professional qualifications.

"There's greater complexity to social work now as we need to know how people tick and how the social care part of the world fits into the lives of people who use services, as a whole.



David Crosbie

"More demands are being made upon social care, and PQ offers a way for people to be able to respond to the very complex situations that they have to manage."

Social care professionals need opportunities to put their learning into practice, irrespective of whether they work in a small care home or national organisation.

Social care managers should devote considerable thought to the courses they send their staff on, how their learning will be enveloped within the organisation and what they would like the person to do differently as a result.

For example, he says, service providers such as Mencap and Leonard Cheshire have developed a reputation for being excellent – a reputation they guard jealously as it is good for business.

"If you are going to go for excellence as world class, then you have to have a staff set who can deliver that," adds David.

"Recruiting well, training well and being able to make sure that the facilities they have are up to date, that the course refreshes their skills, knowledge and expertise and understanding that fits into the organisation as a whole."

The road to excellence for everybody to be world class, is something that gives the profession its own credibility and its own self-standing in the local community.

To that end, Skills for Care also needs to be alert to the changing times, he says. "We need to be creating the conditions which will ensure that world class practice leaders and service leaders are in place. We also need to ensure we have leaders who are committed to developing the future leaders across the sector.

"And Skills for Care has to be very aware of how it becomes nimble in developing the qualifications that lead to excellent and good services."

David Crosbie's term of appointment runs until August 2009. Jamie Easton has stepped down due to ill health.

New Partnership to benefit PQ

A multi-million pound investment by central government to improve the quality of social work services will help ensure an adequate supply of statutory placements for social work degree students.

The Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are providing funding of £5.5 million for a Social Work Development Partnership between Skills for Care (SfC) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

The partnership will include representatives from the Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and will be independently chaired by Bridget Robb, the England professional officer for the British Association of Social Workers.

The nine regional committees of SfC and the CWDC will have responsibility for allocating £4.2 million of the funding under agreements with directors of children's services, directors of adult social services and other key stakeholders.

A further £250,000 has been earmarked to support practice learning and social worker development in national organisations.

The Partnership will support the implementation of key workforce strategies including the DCSF's *Building Brighter Futures: Next Steps* and the forthcoming DH adult social care workforce strategy, with a key aim for 2008–09 being an increase in the quantity and diversity of practice learning opportunities.

By 2010–11 the partnership aims to inform the growth and development of social work degree programmes and the provision of post-qualifying courses, amongst wider continuing professional development planning.

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Young people rise to the challenge of PQ participation by people who use services (PWUS)

A joint project to involve more young people in PWUS participation is paying dividends.

The "Training the Trainer" project is specifically for young people with disabilities and teenagers who are asylum seekers or refugees. It is one of three to have won a £10,000 grant from Skills for Care London and the Children's Workforce Development Council for post-qualifying projects involving people who use services. The project is run by children's charity Barnardo's and the Royal Holloway, University of London.

The six-month programme began at Easter and involves a three day training session for young people, leading to accreditation for participants, who then go on to deliver training sessions with post-qualifying social work students at RHUL.

The programme is being led by the Regional Children's Rights and Voice Service (CRVS) – part of Barnardo's. According to CRVS manager, Debi Morgan: "It has been hugely beneficial with young people and it's very important in terms of social workers' learning and development."

"The young people who do the course, quite often haven't finished their education and have very poor qualifications. Most of them have never set foot inside a university in their lives and for them it's quite daunting. But after the programme, they are really engaged, and you see them blossom."

The programme had its roots in the "Total Respect" project promoted to involve more young people in PWUS participation programmes. A recent internal evaluation involving Barnardo's staff has raised enthusiasm for the programme to be rolled out to other universities, added Morgan.

Written by Marcia White



“The "Training the Trainer" project is specifically for young people with disabilities and teenagers who are asylum seekers or refugees.”

Broadening the e-learning potential

Martin Webber reports on a small-scale study into the viability of e-learning methods for advanced social work studies.

Social workers are increasingly encouraged to become research minded and integrate research findings in their practice. This is particularly the case for those working in multi-disciplinary teams alongside health colleagues, who have a much stronger tradition of evidence-based practice.

There is a paucity of high-quality accessible training for social workers in research methods and critical appraisal skills to enable practitioners to evaluate the evidence base for their practice.

The Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, offers an MSc in Mental Health Social Work with Children & Adults programme, which is accredited by the General Social Care Council at the advanced level in the post-qualifying framework for social work.

In order to widen access to research methods and the critical appraisal module of the MSc we have developed an e-learning version.

Funded by a grant from the Skills for Care Innovation Fund, we designed e-learning materials, recruited a group of social work practitioners to study the innovative online module, and evaluated the process and outcomes. We also tested the effectiveness of the e-learning environment in delivering research methods and critical appraisal skills training to social workers in comparison with a classroom group.

We adopted a mixed methods approach to the evaluation, which comprised concept mapping exercises, semi-structured group interviews and evaluation questionnaires for the pilot group of three e-learners and a classroom comparison group of 12 students. We also conducted a small marketing survey amongst 26 respondents.

Our analysis of the students' concept maps reveals no conspicuous differences in the quality of student knowledge change as a consequence of the mode of teaching delivery. This meant that the e-learning students were not disadvantaged in their learning by the absence of the small group seminar undertaken by the classroom comparison group.

Further, the e-learners met the learning outcomes of the module to the same extent as the classroom group and were highly satisfied with the mode of delivery. Minor technical problems did not appear to affect the learning experience of the e-learners. The marketing survey indicated that there is a sufficient demand for this course to make it viable.

Although this was a small pilot, there is good evidence to suggest that this e-learning course is fit for purpose and that social workers can effectively learn about research methods and critical appraisal skills using this method. E-learning has the potential to widen access to this training to help practitioners to become more evidence-based in their work.

Martin Webber is Programme Leader for the MSc in Mental Health Social Work with Children & Adults at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London.

Further Information

The full report of the evaluation of this module will shortly be available from Skills for Care. The course materials for this module have been published as part of a book: Webber, M. (2008) *Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Mental Health Social Work, Exeter: Learning Matters* (now available from www.learningmatters.co.uk).

The e-learning module is currently being approved by King's College London and should be online in January 2009. For further information about the module, please contact Martin Webber (martin.webber@iop.kcl.ac.uk).

Overseas social workers offer two-way learning

Social workers trained abroad need to be prepared by employers and others in the sector for the levels of hostility directed at social workers in England, according to the findings of an Innovation Fund project.

The evaluation of a specifically adapted Consolidated Module to ensure internationally qualified social workers were ready and safe to practice in the UK context, has yielded interesting food for thought for social work practice and education.

The pilot was a joint partnership between the London Borough of Bromley Children and Adult Care Services, London Borough of Greenwich Children and Adult Care Services, AIMHS (Advisors in Mental Health Services) and the University of Greenwich School of Health and Social Care.

The module was offered by the University of Greenwich School of Health and Social Care from September 2007 to January 2008 and resulted in successful completion at first attempt by 13 of the 15 qualified social workers recruited from Spain by the London Borough of Bromley who undertook the course. Of the two students who did not pass – one has an opportunity to resubmit and the other did not submit a portfolio.

Further Information

The Final Project Report and Evaluation of the Provision of a PQ Consolidation Module to a group of internationally qualified social workers will be available shortly from Skills for Care.

In addition to the general requirements of a PQ Consolidation Module, the course aimed to provide candidates with the opportunity to:

- Understand the policy context of UK social work;
- Appreciate the values and anti-discriminatory principles of social work practice;
- Hear the voices, views and perspectives of people who use services to support their practice development;
- Further reflect on contemporary theory and its impact on practice; and
- Develop their knowledge to support an evidence based approach to practice.

“Managers were often cited as a key source of support for internationally qualified staff.”

Independent evaluation of the project, funded by Skills for Care, resulted in key learning around several issues, including the view that students should have at least 10 months professional practice in England under their belt before embarking upon a consolidation module.

The pilot also found evidence of the need to improve social workers' knowledge about the rationale and requirements of the PQ framework, as some students did not understand what they had committed to in starting the programme.

Overseas qualified students should also possess a higher level of fluency in English than standard undergraduate programmes for the module; and universities should consider offering “home fee status” to non-EU students on credit rated continuing professional development courses as a way of encouraging more employers to allow greater access to the GSCC PQ framework by international social workers.

Managers and employers alike could benefit from learning about overseas approaches to social work from internationally qualified staff, who in turn would help them feel more valued, said the evaluation report by Jane Lindsay from Kingston University.

The evaluation also found that a specialist course provided by social work agencies may provide a more supportive environment for social workers trained internationally than a separate course which could restrict students' opportunities to learn with and from social workers who have trained in England.

Managers were often cited as a key source of support for internationally qualified staff, who may well benefit from informal support groups and mentoring from agencies in the early stages of transition to work in England.

The evaluation also concluded that international social workers should be supported to continue at the standard PQ Specialist level rather than undertake an additional module, in order for them to learn more about the English policy context of social work practice.

Written by Marcia White

New overseas workers guide for employers

The Skills for Care (SfC) study “Supporting the continuing professional development needs of internationally qualified social workers” has resulted in the publication of a new employers guide.

The new guide is the product of the same research team of Keith Brown, Natalie Bates and Steven Keen, who undertook the SfC study published in September 2007, which recommended the publication of a resource of this nature for employers.

The employers guide brings together the experiences of internationally qualified social workers who have moved to, and are working in the UK, as well as input from researchers, employers and policy makers. A framework for an induction programme is provided along with practical guidance and resources to smooth the transition to life and work in the UK.

“Supporting the recruitment of international social workers in the UK: a guide for employers” by Keith Brown, Natalie Bates and Steven Keen is available from Bournemouth University priced £15.

Employers Forum: the Mental Capacity Act

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 came into effect from April 2007 in England. The Act provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions.

The provisions of the Act directly affected a great many people. The training of Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP), and Best Interest Assessors and the new role of Responsible Clinician have particular relevance for social work.

There is a major challenge ahead for local authorities and health authorities because it would seem that there are insufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff to undertake the roles of Approved Mental Health Practitioners and Best Interest Assessors. From November 1, all current Approved Social Workers (ASWs) will become AMHPs.

However, AMHP training can only be offered by universities who have been approved by the General Social Care Council to deliver the Approved Social Worker training or the Post Qualifying Award in Specialist Social Work (Adults Mental Health).

A search of the post qualifying courses directories produced by Skills for Care London and nationally indicated the limited number of available programmes.

So far Kingston, Bournemouth and Hertfordshire universities are all providing Best Interest Assessor courses, with plans afoot for London Metropolitan University to do so shortly.

The Care Services Improvement Programme (CSIP) has a dedicated website to disseminate further information as it becomes available. Training materials are to be developed and CSIP will be jointly hosting road shows to share more detailed information.

There are a number of useful resources to download from this site, including a best practice tool to help statutory services assess their state of readiness for the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act.

Robert Brown, visiting Fellow, and Keith Brown, director of the Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work at Bournemouth University, have published a useful paper on the “Impact of Recent Changes in Mental Health Law and their Implications for Workforce Development” (May 2008). The paper identifies the legal changes and the impact of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Mental Health Act 2007 for those working in the mental health field.

Written by Shirley Ayres

Useful Resources

Skills for Care London PQ Directory:
<http://www.skillsforcarelondon.org.uk/downloads/PQ-Directory.pdf>

National PQ Directory:
[http://www.practicelearning.org.uk/Post_Qualification_\(PQ\)/PQ_Directory.html](http://www.practicelearning.org.uk/Post_Qualification_(PQ)/PQ_Directory.html)

Care Services Improvement Programme:
<http://www.cat.csip.org.uk/index.cfm?pid=231>

“Impact of Recent Changes in Mental Health Law and their Implications for Workforce Development” from:
<http://www.shirleyayresconsulting.com/post/2008/06/The-Mental-Capacity-Act-2005---Useful-Resources.aspx>

GLPQ Residual Arrangements

Residual issues relating to students completing awards and qualifications which they embarked upon with the Greater London Post-Qualifying Consortium are as follows:

Claiming awards

- Candidates who wish to claim their PQ1, PQSW or AASW certificates need to send evidence of meeting the requirements for the award to: GLPQ Consortium, c/o 26 Moyser Road, London SW16 6SA.
- Such evidence can be in the form of a copy of a course transcript; a certificate; or a personalised letter of confirmation from the course provider.
- All award claims must reach GLPQ with enough time to be processed and sent to the General Social Care Council (GSCC) before the final deadline for nominations on September 27, 2008.
- **The GLPQ will process all award claims received before Friday September 19, 2008**, but cannot guarantee that claims received after this date will get to the GSCC in time for the award nominations deadline.

Withdrawal from the current framework

- Any candidate who registered under the current PQ framework, but who has not claimed will automatically be considered to be withdrawn from the current PQ framework from September 27, 2008.
- During June 2008, the GLPQ will be sending letters to all registered candidates informing them of their current award status and explaining that those who do not claim the award for which they were registered before September 27, 2008 will automatically be considered to be withdrawn upon final closure of the current PQ framework.
- A candidate's withdrawal from the framework will have no effect on a candidate's Social Care Registration, nor on any registration they may have undertaken for courses in the new PQ framework.

Completion funding

- The GLPQ Consortium still has some monies available for candidates who have fees outstanding for courses accredited in the current PQ framework.
- The GLPQ will only be able to offer funding to candidates who are **completing** their courses this year before the award nominations deadline of September 27, 2008.
- For an application form for completion funding, please go to the GLPQ website www.glpq.com and select Resources and then Library.

Residual Function

- The GLPQ Consortium will continue to process all award claims and funding applications until the end of September 2008.
- During October and November 2008, the GLPQ will be issuing the remaining certificates to candidates and then closing down the organisation.
- Contact details will remain the same until closure: info@glpq.com tel: **07903 800082**.

Prepare now for PQ Bursary Awards

Social workers considering pursuing post qualifying studies this year are being reminded that they can apply for a bursary award of up to £750 a year.

The PQ Bursary Award is available to independent, locum or freelance social workers and is payable for up to three years towards the cost of a course programme.

The joint award from the Children's Workforce Development Council and Skills for Care is available to candidates who:

- Do not have an employer or work on contracts of 12 hours or less;
- Are working for small voluntary or not-for-profit organisations with 50 or less registered social workers; or
- Use services and are formally supporting social work education.

Candidates must be resident (and have been) in the UK for the last three years and undertake the majority of their work in England. The award is available to those working towards either a GSCC approved PQ Specialist Award in Social Work, the PQ Higher Specialist Award in Social Work, or the Advanced Award in Social Work.

The PQ Bursary payments for successful candidates will be made directly to the programme provider. The award is not available to candidates who source their work via recruitment agencies.

All applicants, with the exception of people who use services, must provide a valid GSCC Social Care Register number and an acceptance letter from the university, in the case of tuition fees.

Retrospective applications are welcomed from candidates whose studies commenced this academic year and from candidates with confirmed places for programmes beginning in September/October 2008.

A provisional date of **November 7** has been set for the next round of funding.

Further details on the PQ Bursary Award and application forms are available from: edith.ifekwuna@skillsforcare.org.uk Please mark the subject field "Bursary Information".



SUB-REGIONAL NEWS: NW Prepares for Leadership

For the next generation of social workers, leadership preparation will begin earlier in their careers together with an expectation that they will reinforce professional leadership, and have ownership of professional standards.

This is the perspective of employers in Hackney, Brent and Islington on the issue of leadership development at post qualifying specialist level, according to Anna Dias, Skills for Care North-West London PQ representative and Sharon Lambley of London Metropolitan University.

Future social workers will also need to be qualified to make the transition to supervisory and managerial roles earlier in their careers than at present. Dias and Lambley presented their thinking to delegates at the June PQ Information Exchange in London.

North-West London employers and London Metropolitan University have risen to these challenges by developing a *Leading Practice* programme to support senior social worker practitioners' access to managerial roles to fill the current and emerging managerial skill gaps.

The programme will also support newly appointed senior social workers and managers, who have not completed PQ modules, to access professional and leadership development opportunities.

The programme will focus on: a service in transition; the changing roles of people who use services and professionals; the leadership role; leading effective teams and groups, leading professional practice, and; making practice count.

Written by Marcia White



PQ Information Exchange

Employers and social care professionals from across the capital shared good practice and new innovations at the recent PQ Information Exchange.

The free quarterly meeting provides a forum for discussion on matters relating to post qualifying social work, and addresses issues of interest for anyone involved in post-qualifying training of social workers in London.

The June meeting was facilitated by Michael Williams, chairperson of the London Post-Qualifying Regional Planning Network (PQRPN) and Bambi Maxwell, London Regional Development Officer for Skills for Care.

To obtain an overview of post qualifying activity in London, all participants were invited to share what was happening in their organisations. A number of new post qualifying programmes are in the process of being approved by the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

Audrey Harmer, national lead for the LeaRNS database, provided an update of developments and the next phase, which includes piloting the programme across England prior to the planned rollout in 2009/2010.

Nasreen Hammond, national lead for the Social Work Development Partnership Board, gave an overview of the role and remit of the Board and the implications for regional activities. The funding available in the London region will be announced shortly. The inaugural meeting of the Board was held on June 26.

Jan Hill, of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, talked about the development of an Advanced Practitioner social work role in adult services. Information was requested about the development of this role in other local authorities.

The selection procedure for post qualifying courses will be an agenda item at the next PQ Information Exchange which will take place on **September 24**. Further details from edith.ifekwuna@skillsforcare.org.uk

Useful Resources

Developing the Business Case for Post Qualifying Awards in Social Work: A Resource for Learning and Workforce Development Managers is available the Skills for Care London Website.

Your Regional Representatives

Sub-Regional Co-ordinators (SRCs) are working alongside PQ Leads in the five sub-regions of London to ensure that all social care stakeholders are aware of new developments affecting care provision in the capital. This vital role includes:

- having an awareness of the types of PQ programmes being developed;
- being aware of all post-qualifying activity on a pan-London and national level;

- participating in the PQ Information Exchange;
- attending Regional Planning Network (RPN) meetings;
- supporting their Sub-Regional PQ lead; and
- liaising with Skills for Care London Regional Development Officer, Bambie Maxwell.



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Regional Planning Network Board

The next meeting of the network is due to take place on **September 16**.

The London Post-Qualifying Regional Planning Network comprises statutory and independent employers, higher education institutions and representatives from key organisations including the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

RPN board members

- Michael Williams** • Barnardo's (chair)
- Ben Arnold** • Amicus Recruit (co-vice chair)
- Anna Dias** • LB Brent (NW PQ rep) (co-vice chair)
- Stephen Fox** • London Metropolitan University
- Linda Christian** • General Social Care Council
- Marcia Daigo-Daley** • CWDC
- Teresa Gray** • LB Greenwich (SE PQ rep)

- Jan Hill** • LB Tower Hamlets (NE PQ rep)
- Katie Law** • RB Kingston (SW PQ rep)
- Bambie Maxwell** • Skills for Care London
- Heidi Rossetter** • LB Islington (NC PQ rep)
- Martin Webber** • Institute of Psychiatry Kings College London & Advanced Practice Social Work Network