

postbulletin

The London Post-Qualifying Framework

April 2008

Preparing for Innovation

As employers, universities and other stakeholders finalise bids for the next round of Innovation Fund grants Marcia White looks at how the fund is helping to realise ambitions for the post-qualifying framework in social work.

The Innovation Fund is helping to support a range of post-qualifying training and development initiatives to develop a social care workforce fit for the future.

With an extended deadline of April 21 for applications, Skills for Care (SfC) and Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) anticipates the third round of bids will help further meet the current and future training and development challenges for social care staff.

The Innovation Fund aims to develop the post-qualifying framework, and ensure it is closely aligned to employers needs.

Innovation Fund proposals are currently being encouraged for PQ programmes which promote either: leadership and management; the development of first line managers; or awards which cross PQ pathways to meet the learning needs of specific groups of staff. Proposals which span all three outcomes are especially encouraged.

With a greater emphasis being placed upon leadership and management across the social care sector, the themes are being viewed as timely by many of the sector's stakeholders.

"Leadership and management is a priority area but the issue is more about how we approach it and about the right leadership and management skills that you need to lead social workers," says Helen Keville, SfC national project manager. "The PQ framework is contributing to a particular aspect of that."

There is a specific need for management qualifications to link in with professional practice, adds Keville. "Local authorities often have a specific view of the kinds of leadership skills that they want their leaders to have.

"The purpose of the Innovation projects is to find a way that enables the two strands – professional practice and leadership and management – to be blended in a way that's effective to everybody, including local authorities."

A more blended approach would improve the skills of managers of professional practice in areas such as the assessment of risk; and making decisions about removing a child from their home or taking action under vulnerable adults legislation.

The themes for the first two Innovation Fund rounds included newly qualified social workers with six different projects being awarded grants to develop a range of initiatives which considered the kinds of support newly qualified social workers need, or developed materials for their use.

The emerging view is that it is crucial that managers and experienced practitioners alike are encouraged and supported to achieve higher level awards, particularly in children's services.

"The Innovation Fund aims to develop the post-qualifying framework, and ensure it is closely aligned to employers needs."

Preparing for Innovation continued

“Leadership and management is an important element of any workforce,” says Marcia Daigo-Daley, CWDC regional development manager for London.

“If you’re in an organisation where there’s a high staff turnover the emphasis on leadership and management becomes more poignant because you need to make sure these elements are as good as they can be to offset the turnover of staff and ensure the continued delivery of a good service,”

Mixed awards which address the post-qualifying needs of practitioners working across adults and children’s social work is another of the three themes for which IF proposals are being sought in this round.

It is hoped that post-qualifying courses for professionals working in core service areas, such as emergency duty teams which cut across both children and adults services, can be developed through IF funding.

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The development of mentorship roles for first line managers is another priority area for the current funding round. Proposals are also being encouraged for projects which develop varied pathways for mentors and practice experts, which could add to the research and evidence base of social work.

According to Daigo-Daley there is no single focus for mentorship initiatives – larger independent organisations have very good mentoring schemes that have a wide-ranging focus.

Some local authorities prioritise the development of black and ethnic minority staff, while others may address the managerial aspirations of staff members generally, she says.

“There’s definitely been an increase in staff willing to be mentors and practice teachers but improved workforce planning by employers in collaboration with universities will tell us better whether we have enough,” adds Keville.

Opportunities to support creative pathways for post-qualifying training should be readily grasped by all stakeholders says Daigo-Daley if social service provision and delivery is to continue to develop in line with expectations.

“No one borough [or agency] should be complacent when it comes to how their services are managed. It only takes that pivotal person who has been a driving force to leave or changes to an organisational structure, for problems to arise that were previously unforeseen,” she concludes.

Deadline for Innovation Fund bids has been extended to April 21.

Further information from:

Edith Ifekwuna

edith.ifekwuna@skillsforcare.org.uk

Innovation Fund – round three

Bids will need to demonstrate how:

- employers are engaged as active partners in the bid and through strategic planning in the Regional Planning Network;
- programmes developed through the bid will be piloted during 2008/09, how many social workers will benefit and how it will be sustained longer term;
- the bid will contribute to the research element in PQ Awards;
- the bid will contribute to improving services in the future;
- integrated working is reflected in learning, skills and knowledge development within awards particularly those for Children’s Services.

The Mental Health Act 2007

The Mental Health Act 2007, which comes into force this October, introduces across England a new role of the Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) which will replace the Approved Social Worker and extend their remit to other mental health professionals.

Government guidance on the new role is set out in the document "Specialist standards and requirements for post-qualifying social work education and training; social work in mental health services".

Below Peter Wright and Cyndy Whiffin answer a few of the more common questions raised by professionals on the new role, with reference to the guidance document.

Q: Will candidates have to complete a PQ Specialist Social Work Award before entry to the PQ Higher Specialist Social Work Award in Mental Health incorporating the AMHP requirements?

A: No. Candidates may enter directly if they satisfy the university entry requirements set out in paragraph 54 of "Specialist standards and requirements for post-qualifying social work education and training; social work in mental health services (revised autumn 2007)".

Q: Will candidates have to complete a consolidation module?

A: No. A consolidation module is part of the Specialist Level of the post-qualifying social work framework. AMHP training is at the higher specialist level. This does not include a consolidation module.

Q: Are there any special entry requirements for non-social work candidates?

A: No. Candidates must demonstrate they already have the level of professional competence, capacity and ability to undertake and complete an AMHP training programme.

Q: How will candidates meet the entry criteria without social work qualifications or training?

A: Admissions officers must ascertain whether an individual can provide convincing evidence of achievements that would indicate they were able to undertake successfully and benefit from AMHP training. The GSCC requirements for AMHP training are agreed and endorsed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Health Professions Council (HPC), the College of Occupational Therapists (COT), and the British Psychological Society (BPS).
[Section 3 par 54 (i)]

Q: Will social workers have to complete the full PQ award to be approved as an AMHP?

A: No. Candidates can be considered by local authorities for AMHP approval. However they are not eligible for the PQ Higher Specialist Social Work Award until they have completed all the required learning outcomes for this award.

Q. Can independent social workers, who do not have an employer to nominate them, access AMHP training?

A: Yes. Under the PQ framework approved universities will determine selection and entry and can recruit independent social workers who meet the other entry requirements, and who can access suitable practice opportunities to meet the assessment criteria. On completion candidates would have to align themselves with an employer who wished to put them forward for local authority AMHP approval and to act as an AMHP on their behalf.

Article continued overleaf

The Mental Health Act 2007 continued

Q: I am currently an ASW. What will be the arrangement for transition from ASW to AMHP status?

A: The GSCC's role is to approve the basic training, so that local authorities have suitably qualified people for approval as AMHPs who also meet other criteria under the Regulations. Approval and renewal of approval is governed by the Regulations.

Q: Are there any requirements or guidance on transition or conversion training for ASWs who are translated into AMHP approved status?

A: The GSCC's role is strictly to approve the basic training, which will render successful completers eligible for consideration by local authorities for approval along with other criteria to be met under the Regulations. The Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) has been commissioned by DH to develop training materials.

Further information

Further information on how the AMHP will be regulated and the implications for practice from: "Specialist standards and requirements for post-qualifying social work education and training: Social work in mental health services":
http://www.gsc.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A3103CAA-C5D0-41B2-966C-17D24108F788/0/GSCC_MH_LR.pdf

Specialist Awards offer "Fast Track" route

London Metropolitan University has launched a "fast track" route to enable candidates to obtain the Graduate Diploma in Specialist Social Work for both children and adults pathways.



Sinclair Coward

Senior lecturer and PQ lead at the university, Sinclair Coward (*pictured*), said the new course was in response to employers seeking practical approaches to the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).

The "fast track" route is targeted at more experienced social workers, with at least two years post-qualifying specialist practice, who are seeking to make their prior experience and certificated learning – particularly from the former PQ framework such as PQ 1 – count towards this award.

The structured approach, which involves four workshops, enables candidates to reflect on their own practice, identify the learning from their experience and gather evidence in order to submit their portfolio.

Successful applicants will be able to gain credit against half of the Graduate Diploma enabling them to choose three specific modules from the new programme.

Candidates are expected to complete the APL process within four months, leading to a further two specialist core modules being undertaken in their chosen pathway, and the "enabling others" module. Alternatively they can opt for a specialist module if their APL includes practice teaching.

The new route is designed to offer a number of benefits, mainly to:

- recognise and accredit the experience of social workers with at least two years post-qualifying specialist practice;
- offer a supportive and structured approach to APL;
- positively promote APL and recognise the importance of both experiential and certificated learning from a wide range of sources can offer;
- reduce both the costs for employers (currently from £2,400 to £1680) and the time demands upon candidates by at least 30%.

Further information about the next programme starting this autumn can be obtained from Sinclair Coward: s.coward@londonmet.ac.uk

PQ Funding Streams

A range of funding sources are available to support candidates in taking Post-Qualifying awards in social work within the revised PQ Framework.

These include:

Local Authority Grants

From April 2008, the Adult Social Care Workforce contribution (Department of Health) and Children's Social Care Workforce contribution (Department for Children Schools and Families) will form part of local authorities non-ring fenced Area Based Grant. These grants are to assist with the training and development of the social care workforce, and it is recommended that local authority employers support post-qualification training via these grants.

“Small grants up to £300 are available for social workers with at least two years post-qualifying practice.”

These funding streams replace the National Training Strategy and Human Resource Development Strategy grants previously provided.

Post-Qualifying Bursary Fund

Skills for Care and the Children's Workforce Development Council jointly offer bursaries for PQ Awards in social work for candidates who do not have an employer including locum, freelance or independent social workers. Further information from edith.ifekwuna@skillsforcare.org.uk Mark the subject field 'Bursary Information'.

Career Development Loans

Social workers can apply for an interest-free Career Development Loan (CDL) of between £300 and £8,000 to fund vocational, work-related courses. These are available through Barclays Bank, The Co-operative Bank and The Royal Bank of Scotland as a result of an arrangement with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for candidates who are unable to pay for the course themselves; are not eligible for any other funding; and are intending to work in the European Union upon completion. See www.direct.gov.uk/cdl for details.

Educational Trust and Grant Funding

Educational trusts are charitable organisations that award grants for educational purposes to organizations or individuals. Eligibility criteria for funding are varied with limited criteria, such as only assisting study for a particular profession; at a specific academic level; or relating to a specific geographical area. Further information from public libraries.

Social Workers' Educational Trust (SWET)

SWET aims to assist qualified social workers to develop their knowledge and skills; encourage research into social work practice; and educate the public about the nature of social work. Small grants up to £300 are available for social workers with at least two years post-qualifying practice. The Trust also grants more substantial annual research scholarships. See www.socialworkerseducationaltrust.org.uk

London PQ Conference

Delegates take up leadership challenge

Advanced practice in social work can be a driving force in meeting the expectations of people using services, delegates at the recent conference on professional leadership heard.

Speaking to more than 100 delegates, Fiona Hill, director of Brent Mental Health User Group (BUG), said constructive partnerships can be formed with people using services who have appropriate knowledge and skills in service development and improvement.

Such partnerships can yield creative and modern approaches to the challenging agenda of service provision, commission and delivery, she added. The use of a multi-disciplinary approach and the incorporation of the recovery approach offer opportunities for advanced practice.



Tony Newman – Barnardos

The one-day conference entitled “Professional Leadership – The Challenge for Advanced Practitioners” was jointly organised by Skills for Care (SfC), the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Advanced Practice Social Work Network (APSWN).

Hill said that mental health users want to be recognised as part of the multi-disciplinary team involved in their care, with social care and health professionals prepared to use a range of creative approaches.

People receiving services often want to be enabled to identify for themselves the factors which help them deal with their mental illness and improve their wellbeing and health.

Mental health users are not often encouraged to develop their strengths and resilience or to take creative risks that are positive as people who use services are more likely seen as “isolated individuals” rather than in the context of their lives, she added.

Positive change can be achieved by professionals working together with people using services to pro-actively gather information about evidence-based practice and seeking out opportunities to modernise service provision which is focused on outcomes of those using services.

Areas for Development

The development of organisational commitment to, and ownership of, evidence-based practice; increased use of evidence-based approaches amongst staff; and greater access to research evidence and evidence-based practice materials are three key areas for development in social care.

Addressing delegates on developing evidence-based practice in a UK children’s charity, Tony Newman, assistant director of research and development at Barnardos outlined several proposals for senior management to help stimulate organisational commitment.

Staff should be provided with time and opportunities to develop critical thinking, discussion of research should form part of staff supervision and appraisal sessions; and research competencies included in job descriptions.

“Experienced professional practice requires an ability to juggle and apply knowledge from a range of sources.”

Jan Fook

He also suggested that social care management should maintain strategic links with research institutions, as well as build evidence into service planning and review and support effective evaluation of outcomes of practice.

In identifying the various challenges for the UK social care sector which would help to strengthen the research capacity, Newman said, creating and sustaining management ‘buy in’ was important, as was linking what social work professionals do with why they do it.

The sector needs to go beyond dissemination of evidence and instead increase its focus on how evidence can be applied in practice application to practice.

A challenge also exists in addressing the perception that some practitioners have towards research and to tackle the shortfall in the skills and knowledge of the social care workforce, added Newman, who told delegates that what was required was sustained support and follow through from senior management within organisations.



Jeanette Copperman – City University

Opportunities exist in competitive tendering, “New Philanthropy” and an increased emphasis on evidence; existing expertise and resources; links with social work training and PQ requirements, and a demand by government for policy focused research.

Transcendent knowledge

Experienced professional practice requires an ability to juggle and apply knowledge from a range of sources, in what is often complex and changing situations, Jan Fook, professor in social work studies at the University of Southampton, told delegates.

Speaking on the role of the advanced practitioner in integrating knowledge in practice, Fook said the implications for knowledge were transcendent.

Professional practitioners had the skill to negotiate meanings in context, to invert knowledge hierarchies, and to engender a sense of professional integrity.

Fook heads the Southampton Practice Research Initiative Network Group (SPRING), to develop and resource practice research initiatives in partnership between practitioners and academics, and to profile the use of innovative methods in practice research.

Joan Orme, professor of social work at the University of Glasgow, chaired the conference. Other speakers included John Nawrockyi, director of adult social care at the London Borough of Greenwich, who presented an employer perspective on PQ higher awards & the contribution that advanced practitioners make to social work practice.

Malcolm Payne, director of psycho-social and spiritual care at St Christopher’s Hospice; spoke on the role of the advanced practitioner in integrating knowledge in practice; and Christine Holland, consultant social worker, North Essex Partnership NHS Trust gave a first-hand account of her role as a consultant social work practitioner, and its implications.

Article continued overleaf

Delegates take up leadership challenge continued

A range of professionals from health and social care settings conducted workshops on a number of issues covering inter-professional practice, leadership and management, practice education, mental health, and children and young people's services.

Delegates were able to have key questions on the higher awards in the PQ framework addressed by a panel of social care experts including – Amanda Hatton from Skills for Care; and Jan Hill, Skills for Care London sub-regional PQ lead for the north-east.

The conference took place on January 31 in London.



From L to R Jan Hill, Amanda Hatton and Jan Fook

Advanced Practice Social Work Network

Employers, higher education institutions, practitioners and other stakeholders are being invited to join the Practice Social Work Network (APSWN), a non-partisan collective, which offers a collective voice for the professional leadership of social work in the UK.

The APSWN seeks to support advanced practitioners in social work and specifically aims to:

- Advocate for improved funding structures for Post-Qualifying (PQ) education to support the professional development of advanced practitioners;
- Engage employers in discussions about the training needs of their advanced practitioners and encourage them to continue supporting advanced level PQ programmes;
- Engage employers and other stakeholders in the design of advanced level PQ programmes;

- Support HEIs in developing new advanced level PQ programmes;
- Advocate for advanced practice positions such as Consultant Social Workers;
- Develop the research capacity of advanced social work practitioners;
- Engage with organisations to help bridge the gap between research and advanced practice in social work;
- Engage with the workforce development agenda and policy initiatives such as the White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care'

Further information from Martin Webber at: martin.webber@iop.kcl.ac.uk

Business Case for PQ

The General Social Care Council's review of post-registration training and learning could offer an opportunity to link Post-qualifying awards with registration requirements, the recent PQ Information Exchange heard.

Skills for Care national project manager, Helen Keville, told delegates that while PQ awards in social care have a positive impact upon staff, organisations and services users, employers often lack incentives such as performance indicators or targets to help them support the PQ business case.

A review of the endorsement role of Regional Planning Networks; an agreement to introduce national framework; and a focus on endorsement as confirmation that 'meaningful engagement' has taken place, could help to better engage employers and make PQ more relevant to them.

Meaningful engagement by employers could be realised in a variety of ways such as greater participation in regional planning networks; having their needs identified through workforce planning; a commitment to work-based assessment; and contribution to the content planning of post-qualifying courses, delegates heard.

A move to ring-fence PQ funding streams and a review of the PQ Bursary criteria, as well as a drive to encourage more applications for PQ Innovation Fund Round Three money – with bids of up to £75,000 – are all means of making PQ possible, she concluded.

The PQ Information Exchange is a quarterly forum for social care professionals in London. Future dates are:

- **June 25** at the Holiday Inn, 97 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4DN
- **September 24** (venue to be confirmed).

Further information from edith.ifekwuna@skillsforcare.org.uk

Funding Wins for People Who Use Services

Three HEIS in London have each secured £10,000 funding for post-qualifying projects involving people who use services and carers.

- **London South Bank University:** to further develop learning and teaching materials for people who use services involved in PQ programmes at the university through arts-based approaches developed by PWUS students to more effectively communicate their experiences.

- **Barnardo's and Royal Holloway University of London:** to build upon an existing project to involve more young people, particularly with disabilities or from refugee and asylum seeking families, and to ensure appropriate training and support exists to assist their involvement; and developing their role to include reviewing course materials and evaluation of the impact of their involvement.

- **London Metropolitan University:** is to develop two training packs to support people who use services to deliver learning sessions on PQ programmes. The materials/resources will identify core knowledge, practical skills and appropriate values needed for effective learning and teaching across a range of PQ modules.

Gaining Credit for Self-Directed Support

A new post-qualifying module specific to direct payments is to be offered by London Metropolitan University from this autumn.

Self-Directed Support has been developed in conjunction with the London Borough of Brent – part of the north west London sub-region – as an element of a specialist pathway, and includes in-house learning and development programmes for candidates.

The “stand alone” module was created following interest from Brent and Barnet councils in a PQ module which would address the changing role of social workers specialising in community care services, with service users contributing explicitly to the teaching and assessment of candidates.

Initial interest expressed at a PQ Information Exchange meeting last autumn led to the development of the framework of the module by Rohan Burke, former chief officer at the Greater London Post-Qualifying Consortium.

“The module aims to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the principles underpinning the national drive and perspective on personalisation.”

Professionals from different disciplines can undertake the module as part of their continuous professional development once it is launched in October.

The Self-Directed Support module will combine theoretical depth, breadth and critical analysis within the context of a range of recent work undertaken by ‘In Control’ and policy drivers including “*Putting People First*”, “*Valuing People-Now*” and “*Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*,”

The module aims to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the principles underpinning the national drive and perspective on personalisation.

Candidates will also be able to use the module towards a PQ Specialist Award or as credit transfer with other universities, explained sub-regional lead for London north west, Anna Dias. “As the module provides 15 Level 3 academic credits, we hope this will be attractive to practitioners.”

Other employers are also considering incorporating the qualification as part of their PQ strategy. “The SDS is a good example of a joint university-employer collaborative arrangement and accords with the General Social Care Council’s vision of a flexible approach to the revised PQ Framework,” added Dias.

Further information from:
anna.dias@brent.gov.uk

North East

- The north east London sub-region is anticipating a boost in the number of social workers undertaking post-qualifying Advanced Awards in coming months following a concerted effort to recruit a team of PQ Champions. PQ leaders from the sub-region - which covers Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Havering, Barking & Dagenham, and Newham boroughs – took advantage of the Advanced Awards Conference held in January to elicit interest from a number of delegates to act as PQ Champions. The champions will attend forthcoming forums in a bid to explain and discuss with attendees the benefits of taking the award.

Regional Planning Network (RPN) news

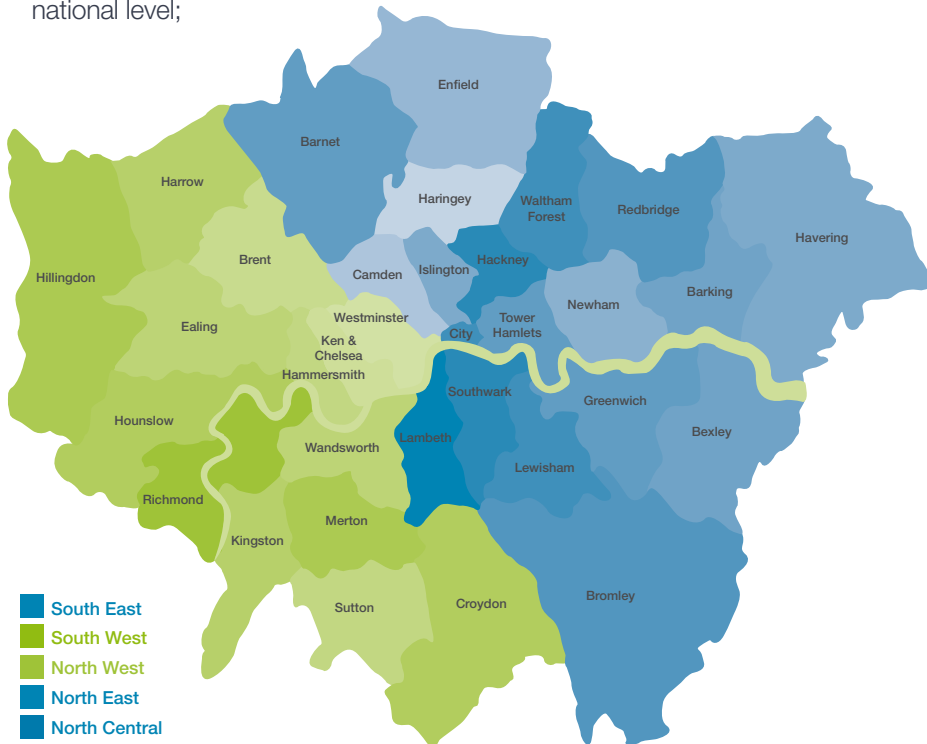
- A new PQ Award at Adult Specialist level is among a range of post-qualifying Awards developed as a result of successful collaboration between employers and higher education institutions (HEIs) in the north east sub-region. Tower Hamlets council helped to develop the module content and learning outcomes for the award being offered by Middlesex University to reflect impending changes in adult social care. Contact Jan Hill jan.hill@towerhamlets.gov.uk for further information.
- The East London Mental Health Training Partnership – made up of Newham, Hackney and Tower Hamlets councils – hopes to further convert its newly validated Approved Mental Health Practitioner's (AMHP) award to a level 4 course by this autumn as a result of ongoing collaboration with Middlesex University. The AMHP award was converted from the partnership's earlier approved social worker (ASW) award and validated by the university to run from this spring (see *PQ Bulletin January 2008*).
- Joint work between HEIs and employers is currently underway to evaluate the impact of PQ training as part of the development of an effective business case or Learning and Development Managers to help persuade organisations of the value of supporting PQ training and development.
- The Regional Planning Network praised the contribution of out-going board member, James Blewett of the Royal Holloway University of London, who resigned recently. A new board member representing employers in higher education institutions is to be announced shortly.
- Approved Social Workers (ASWs) who have undergone refresher training within the last five years will automatically become Adult Mental Health Practitioners, under new guidelines issued by the General Social Care Council (GSCC). As consultation on the training of the new role continues, it is expected that all other ASWs will be required to retrain as an AMHP.
- Meanwhile, as the GSCC completes a scoping exercise on the take-up of PQ courses nationally, Skills for Care (SfC) is to ask the regulator for clarification about whether the role of newly qualified social workers will be established in a similar way to that of newly qualified teachers.
- A service user forum and a SfC regional network for service users are the likely recipients of a £30,000 fund, earmarked for people who use services in London. The three proposals are being discussed as the means of consolidating and extending service user engagement and participation in the PQ development process through partnership ventures jointly led by employers and HEIs.
- RPN has also agreed to increase the maximum limit for successful PQ Bursary applicants to £600 this year. Amidst concerns over the decline in number of PQ Bursary applications nationwide, SfC nationally leads are in discussion with the Department of Health, considering extending bursary criteria.

“The three proposals are being discussed as the means of consolidating and extending service user engagement and participation.”

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 officers, Bambi Maxwell and Cat Ainsley.



North West

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Regional Planning Network Board

The London Post-Qualifying Regional Planning Network (RPN) board includes statutory and independent employers plus representation from universities and other key organisations such as the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

RPN board members

Cat Ainsley • Skills for Care London

Ben Arnold • Amicus Recruit (co-vice chair)

Rohan Burke • GLPQ

Linda Christian • GSCC

Marcia Daigo-Daley • CWDC

Anna Dias • LB Brent (NW PQ rep) (co-vice chair)

Stephen Fox • London Metropolitan University

Teresa Gray • LB Greenwich (SE PQ rep)

Jan Hill • LB Tower Hamlets (NE PQ rep)

Katie Law • RB Kingston (SW PQ Rep)

Bambi Maxwell • Skills for Care London

Chandana Sanyal • LB Barnet (NC PQ rep)

Martin Webber • APSWN

Michael Williams • Barnardo's (chair)