

## warm welcome for social work taskforce report

### **Skills for Care welcomes the Taskforce's radical package of recommendations to transform social work and the public's understanding of social workers' crucial contribution to society.**

The Social Work Taskforce report 'Building a safe, confident future' published on 1 December 2009 is a comprehensive review of the social work profession. It highlights the vital role social workers will have in future service delivery. The 15 key recommendations of the Taskforce have wide ranging implications for how social work is led and developed as a profession and how social workers are trained, educated, and supported throughout their careers.

Skills for Care (SfC) Chief Executive Officer Andrea Rowe said "Skills for Care has been closely involved in the creation of this report which is a comprehensive root and branch review of the social work profession that not only emphasises the need for change but also recognises the central role social workers will play in the different ways services will be delivered in the future."

#### **Binding Employer Standard**

SfC's work through the Social Work Development Partnership to improve access to statutory placements, practice educator standards and

quality of placements, was one of the key benchmarks the national reform programme will build on. SfC particularly welcomed the new commitment to a binding Employer Standard focusing on key issues for frontline social workers like time for continuing professional development and manageable workloads. The new standard builds on SfC's existing work including the LeaRNS project to boost the quality of student placements and their work on developing Quality Assurance for Practice Learning toolkits with the GSCC.

The report recommends a licence for all first year social workers which will be based on the best practice offered in the Newly Qualified Social Worker programmes currently underway.

#### **Further recommendations**

Other recommendations include creating a new college for social work, clear career pathways for all social workers (including practice educators) and a more coherent national framework for continuing professional development. These are all areas where SfC has experience



and expertise which will be used to make sure this review achieves its aim of creating a robust and confident social work profession.

A Social Work Reform Board is now being set up, chaired by Moira Gibb, who led the Taskforce. Its role will be to lead and develop an implementation plan for the reforms across children's and adult social work. This plan will outline how reforms will be resourced and delivered in the short and longer term as some of the reforms require legislative changes. The Reform Board will provide a national lead and SfC will continue to play its part and support stakeholders in moving forward with the changes to come.

For a full copy of the Taskforce's report and updates on their work, go to: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/swtf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/swtf)

# new framework for newly qualified social workers

**2009 was the year that saw the development and launch of the framework for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) in adult services. Graham Woodham looks at what the year ahead now holds.**

Skills for Care (SfC) was asked by the Department of Health (DH) to develop a best practice framework in partnership with leading social care organisations. The aim was to give a sound foundation to social workers in their first year of qualified practice in adult services.

Following the recent final report of the Social Work Task Force with its recommendation for an assessed year in employment, the importance of support for all Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) has been reinforced and set in the context of proposals for a clear new professional pathway for social work.

## London Launch

In launching the framework, SfC



Graham Woodham, Regional Liaison Manager – NQSW, Skills for Care

held events across the country where NQSWs, employers and other stakeholders discussed the implementation of the framework.

In London 150 delegates (half of which were NQSWs) attended the event and heard Mun Thong Phung, Director of Adult, Culture and Community Services, London Borough of Haringey, emphasise his commitment as a Director to NQSWs in ensuring they are

supported properly. Reflecting on his own career, he said “If only I could role the clock back! I’m jealous - in my day we were thrown in at the deep end”.

## The framework

The new framework focuses on:

- Entering practice –the transition from student to registered social worker
- Induction – outcome statements, providing detailed guidance on key areas of professional practice
- Supervision – guidance and a check list for quality supervision
- Continuing Professional Development – ongoing and continuous personal and professional development

## Resources

There is a comprehensive resource pack which supports the framework and is available through our website at [http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/NewlyQualifiedSocialWorker/NQSW\\_resource\\_pack.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/NewlyQualifiedSocialWorker/NQSW_resource_pack.aspx). Other resources have been provided to enhance the framework including an action learning programme with elements for employers, NQSWs, and facilitators. Many NQSWs and their supervisors in London are participating in this programme which will leave a sustainable resource with employers in the region.

“...the importance of support for all Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) has been reinforced”

# ahead with the practice educator framework

## Cheryl Wall, Programme Head for Social Work Development at Skills for Care looks at how the new framework for practice educators is shaping up.

After about eighteen months of development work, informal discussions and workshops, work on the Practice Educator Framework came together in early October last year. The framework sets out learning outcomes practice educators should meet to demonstrate they are competent. It was designed to improve the quality of the people responsible for assessing and supervising student social workers in their practice placements and to ensure consistency in standards across the country.

The proposals for the framework were publicised via the Skills for Care (SfC) website and a consultation was launched collating views via an electronic

questionnaire. Partnerships of employers and HEIs were invited to bid to deliver pilot programmes to test out how the Framework works in practice.

### Consultation response

Overall the framework was well received. There were 105 responses to the consultation, although unfortunately only one from London. The vast majority agreed with the framework in principle; 46% strongly agreeing and 49% agreeing to some extent. Most people agreed with a two staged approach (69%), the emphasis on ensuring flexibility in delivery and assessment (84%) and the proposed learning outcomes (75%). Concerns expressed by a minority were that higher standards would result in a contraction of available practice educators and that resources were needed to ensure that a current 'crisis did not lead to chaos'.

### London Pilots

Again, there was a good response to the invitation to run a pilot project. Thanks to some additional

funding from SfC London, we were able to contract with three partnerships in London: The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust with the University of East London and North East London Boroughs; the London Borough of Brent and Goldsmiths College and Royal Holloway with a number of boroughs; and the NSPCC and Barnardos. Most programmes are currently recruiting and will start early in the New Year. A briefing paper giving details of all the 16 projects will be published shortly.

The final report of the Social Work Task Force recognised the work that has been done on draft standards (the Framework) and that these will be tested through the pilots. It is hoped that the Outcomes of these pilots will inform the final definitive national standards that need to be approved by the reform board.

Cheryl Wall, Programme Head, Social Work Development, Skills for Care

“ The framework sets out learning outcomes practice educators should meet to demonstrate they are competent ”

# new chair for SWEG



## **Teresa Gray takes over as the new chair for the Social Work Education Group with a mission to carry on the work of engaging with local stakeholders in London.**

Skills for Care and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) would like to formally welcome and congratulate Teresa Gray, the Learning and Development Manager for the London Borough of Greenwich, in her new role as Chair of the Social Work Education Group (SWEG) in London. Teresa began her social work career with the children and family service in Bexley Council.

In 1987 Teresa went to a generic social work team in Greenwich, working with children, young people, families, adults and older people. She was also an Approved Social Worker. Teresa later specialised in working with children, young people and their families.

In 2002 Teresa became a learning and development advisor for the children's

safeguarding and social care service and in 2008 the L&D manager across adult's, older people's and children's services.

### **Thanks to Michael Williams**

Teresa takes over as chair of SWEG from Michael Williams of Barnados. Skills for Care would like to thank Michael for his commitment and dedication to the group during his time as Chair and his continuous efforts to ensure social work education remains a priority in London.

### **Engagement and partnership**

Teresa believes that engaging in partnership building with HEI's and employers from the statutory, private, voluntary and independent sectors is the key to working effectively; something that Sfc have been very successful in across London.

Teresa also chairs the South East London PL/PQ group which successfully brings together Bromley, Bexley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark and all local HEI's in working collaboratively. South East London ran a very successful conference in January last year promoting practice learning.

### **Practice support**

Skills for Care London have produced an excellent CD ROM to develop and support statutory placements for social work students available on <http://london.skillsforcare.org>.

uk/. A DVD has also been produced to promote the value of practice learning to managers within local authorities. The PQ Innovation fund allowed Greenwich and Bromley to work creatively together with recruiting overseas staff.

### **Crucial role**

The Social Work Task Force report is looking to radically reform social work education. The SWEG is going to have a crucial role to play in contributing to the reformation of social work education and training in London.

In a joint statement, John Nawrockyi, (Director of Adults and Older People's Services for Greenwich and ADASS representative on the Sfc London Regional Committee) and Gillian Palmer (Director of Children's Services for Greenwich) said: "In the light of our commitment to the highest standards of education and continuing professional development in Social Work, we are pleased that Teresa can represent Greenwich Council as Chair of the Social Work Education Group. We encourage the Board to take any opportunities which arise to contribute to the development of a national College of Social Work as recommended by the Social Work Task Force. The Board has an important part to play in supporting the excellence in practice to which we all in London and across the country aspire".

# the london social work education network

## Formerly known as the PQ/Practice Learning Information Exchange, SWEN is now clearing its deck to forge ahead in pursuit of its new purpose statement.

The most recent London Social Work Education Network (SWEN) meeting took place on 25th November 2009.

At this meeting the terms of reference for the network were discussed and agreed including the following purpose statement:

'It is a pan London forum for discussion, benchmarking, consultation, information giving, influencing /advocating, sharing and promoting of good practice and support. It covers all aspects of social work education - the continuum from pre- qualified, NQSW, through to post qualified. It spans adults and children and enables cross dissemination and sharing of key information and collaborative working. It has representation from other key stakeholder /strategic partners eg Skills for Care, CWDC, GSCC, Department of Health and key PVI sector representatives'

The network will meet quarterly with

the SWEN session in the morning followed by separate meetings for HEIs and LA practice learning coordinators in the afternoon. Dates of future meetings are:

24 February  
18 May  
14 September  
November date tbc.

### Presentations given at the SWEN meeting

A presentation by the West London Pilot (see pages 6-7) for the recruitment and retention of social workers was given. This project which is working with 8 NW London boroughs, is one of two pilots nationally supported by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). It aims to develop good practice across 5 work streams to promote the education and career pathways of social workers, in order to build permanent staffing arrangements in front line assessment and child protection services. The findings and good practice from the pilot will be shared at future SWEN meetings.

The report on piloting the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) tool and research (developed by SfC) was introduced and discussed. The QAPL benchmarks and tool will be mandatory for all HEIs and Local Authorities to use in 2010/11.

### Information Exchange

The session included an information exchange where local authority representatives and higher education institution representatives raised issues and shared good practice relevant to social work education.

## Events

### SfC London practice learning and post qualifying training workshops.

SE London – 3 March  
SW London – 30 March  
NE London – 29 April  
NC London - 26 May

### West London Pilot - team manager events

22 and 26 February  
Exploring how the pilot (see p6) will impact the work of frontline team managers in children's services. Limited places only, available to children's services team managers in: RBK&C, Westminster, Hounslow, Brent, Ealing, LBH&F, Hillingdon and Harrow. Invitations have been circulated via assistant directors.

### PAN London conference

20 April  
Open to all 33 London authorities to share the work of the West London Pilot.

# west london pilot for the and retention of social w

**Divided into five workstreams, this new pilot project aims to radically improve the recruitment and retention of social workers across a number of London boroughs.**

The West London Pilot for the Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers is a two year project, being undertaken with the 8 boroughs in the West London Alliance: Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, and Westminster. The pilot is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Childrens Workforce Development Council (CWDC). It represents an innovative and creative approach to addressing recruitment and retention difficulties in front line child protection services.

The vision for the pilot is to promote a framework, where well trained social work graduates are effectively

recruited into frontline child protection work, supported through a clearly defined career structure in order to further develop their social work skills in demanding areas of children's services. The pilot is divided into 5 work streams, each headed up by a senior manager from one of the 8 boroughs involved in the project.

#### **Work stream 1: Partnerships with Higher Education Institutions**

This is aimed at creating a working partnership between the 8 boroughs and 12 local Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in order to develop a shared ownership and responsibility for social work learning and education. This will include the targeted growth of Practice Learning Opportunities in frontline child care services, assessment within HEIs, course content and delivery and workforce planning.

#### **Work stream 2: Development of Leadership and Skills in Front Line Managers**

The aim is to develop the leadership and staff development skills

and abilities of team managers and equivalent first line practice management posts across the boroughs. This will involve the development of a specific programme, using a variety of teaching methods, to increase the competence of managers and prepare new practitioners who wish to become managers in the future.

#### **Work stream 3: Framework for Induction of NQSWs**

Building on the existing CWDC framework, this work stream sets out what NQSWs can expect in terms of support in their first year in a social work post. This will include the development of a shared induction programme across all 8 boroughs, benefitting from economies of scale.

#### **Work stream 4: Social Work Career Pathway**

To provide explicit career pathways for social workers to help develop complex casework skills or specialist expertise within a structured framework linked to salaries. Some examples of the specialisms include substance

“The vision ... is to promote a framework, where well trained social work graduates are effectively recruited into frontline child protection work...”

# recruitment workers



misuse, domestic violence and parental mental illness.

### Work stream 5: Enabling the Social Work Role

The final work stream aims to reduce the constraints on the social work role, promote professional autonomy and minimise the bureaucratic processes which take social workers away from

spending time with children and families. Through an analysis of work flow, accountability structures and decision making processes, the pilot may lead to changes in management priorities for staff and promote different ways of working.

The pilot has 5 project officers who will be responsible for each of the work streams. Even though the

project is specifically concerned with West London, we would welcome thoughts and comments from people working across London.

**For more information please contact: Shauna Guinn, HEI Partnership Officer Shauna. [guinn@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:guinn@lbhf.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8753 5003.**

# london's PQ champions

## An article in the January 2008 PQ bulletin called for PQ Champions to step forward in London, and volunteer they did!

A PQ Champion is someone who has undertaken post-qualifying training and is keen to champion the post-qualifying and continuing professional development agenda. Following the call for volunteers, PQ champions are now helping managers in London to understand the framework and the range of benefits to be derived from enabling staff to undertake PQ courses.

### Champions instrumental

The champions have been instrumental in convincing employers to incorporate on-going staff training and development into strategic plans and encouraging organisations to devote greater resources to PQ training and continuing professional development (CPD). They have also been able to advise workers interested in doing one of the PQ courses from the perspective of having gone through it themselves. The PQ Champions spoke about their experiences at the London sub-regional PQ seminars for managers and senior practitioners in 2009 as well as at sub-regional PQ meetings.

### Case studies

Jan Hill (until recently PQ Champion for the North East London sub-region), has collated a series of eight case studies, each of which is a composite of real social workers. They are intended to give an insight into why social workers decide to do PQ courses, their potential value and the impact they have.

The case studies include a summary of work history, PQ courses undertaken and the impact this had on future possibilities. The case studies cover social workers in different situations:

1. NQSW - Adults,
2. DipSW Social Worker – Adults / Learning Disabilities
3. Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP) – Adults / Mental Health
4. Registered Manager – Adults / Day Centre for Older People
5. Community Services Manager – Adults / 3rd sector
6. NQSW – Children's
7. Social Worker (PQ1) – Children's
8. DipSW Social Worker (PQ1) – Children's

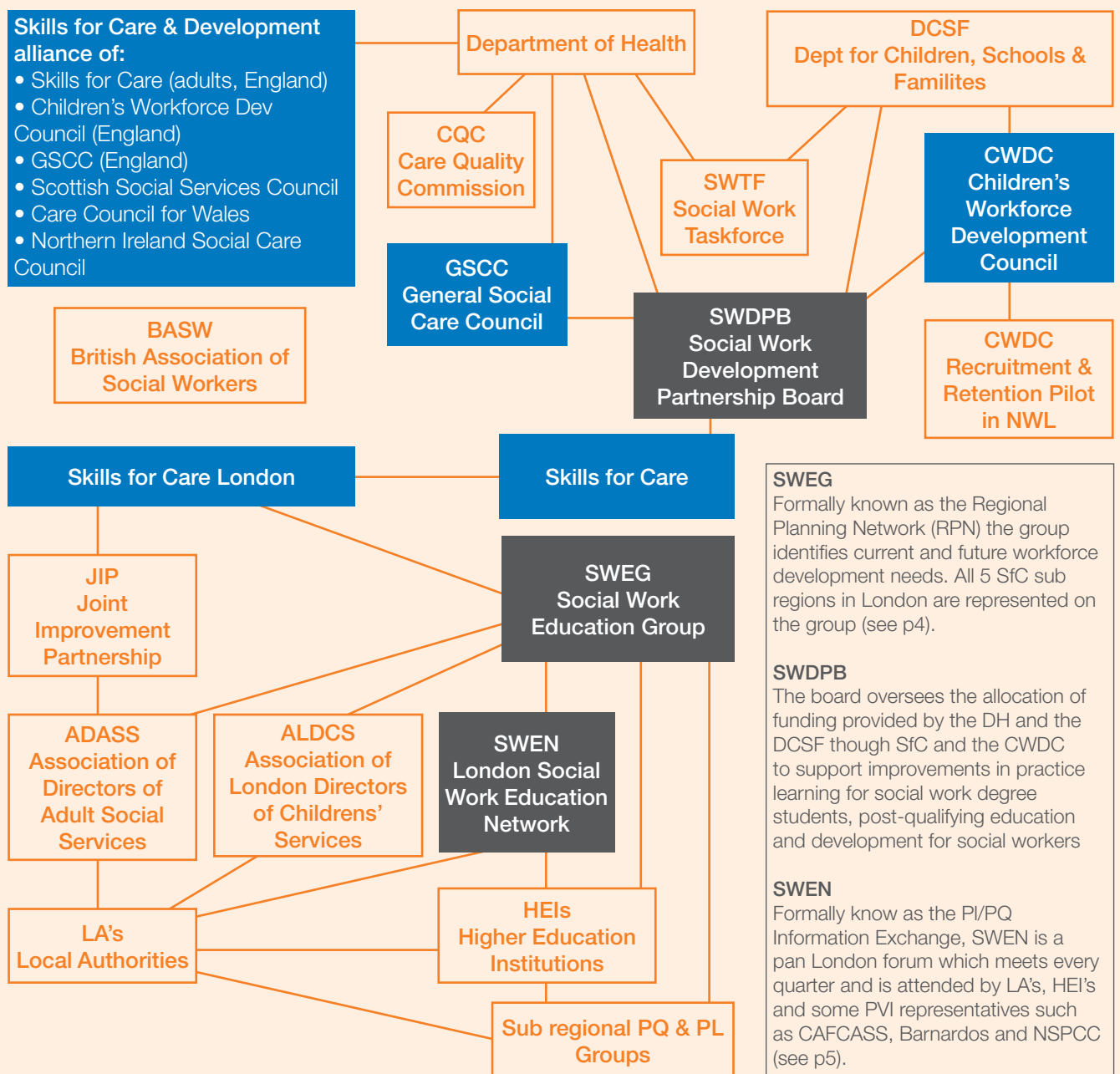
Please contact your Skills for Care PL/PQ sub-regional co-ordinator for a copy of the case studies or alternatively visit [www.skillsforcarelondon.co.uk](http://www.skillsforcarelondon.co.uk)

To date there has been only a limited amount of research about the impact upon practice of completing a post qualifying award in social work. However, the findings consistently affirm the value of the awards in developing advanced practitioner skills and knowledge. High quality social work requires high levels of professional expertise – this has been known for many years.

Promoting PQ therefore remains important and if you are interested in becoming a PQ champion, please do get in touch with one of the Skills for Care London PL/ PQ sub-regional co-ordinators (see back cover).

“...champions have been instrumental in convincing employers to incorporate on-going staff training and development...”

# map of social work education in london



# north central london 'practice learning matters' conference

## Reporting on the North Central London practice learning group's full day conference for practice educators in the sub-region.

The North Central London sub-region includes Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington and the HEIs Middlesex University and London Metropolitan University as well as Skills for Care (SfC) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

The aim of the conference was to show appreciation to the practice educators in the sub-region and to provide an opportunity for them to network, share good practice and find out about new developments in social work.

### Keynote speakers

The sub-region were very pleased to have Hilton Dawson, Chief Executive of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) who is a former Labour MP and qualified social worker, as keynote speaker. Hilton has been undertaking a Listening Tour of the UK and spoke positively about the profession and his plans for BASW.

Paul Webster, Education Inspection. Manager for the General Social Care Council (GSCC) gave an



People on panel are: from left - Hilton Dawson, Paul Dugmore, Paul Webster, Bambie Maxwell.

informative overview of the current challenges within practice learning and social work education, its regulation, quality assurance and links with workforce planning.

Bambie Maxwell, Regional Development Officer for Employer Engagement, Leadership and Management, PQ and Practice Learning for SfC London, spoke about the Social Work Partnership Board, national social work team initiatives, London activity, research and the proposed national framework for practice educators.

Hilton, Paul and Bambie then joined Paul Dugmore (Head of Practice Learning, Haringey Council, PQ

programme leader and principal lecturer in social work, Middlesex University and also chair for the day) for a panel question and answer session.

### Workshops

In the afternoon, conference delegates attended one of four workshops: 'The student's perspective'; 'The University's perspective'; 'The Skills for Care Practice Learning CD Rom'; and 'New models in the assessment of social work practice'.

Finally, delegates heard from Marion Ingram of Barnet Children's Services, and Val Evans of Camden Adults Services. Marion spoke

# building on strengths – ensuring quality practice learning

about Lord Laming's reports, 'Every Child Matters', the Children Act 2004, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006', the baby Peter case, Lord Laming's review and recommendations, the government's response and the SW taskforce.

Val spoke about the big agendas currently taking place in adult social care such as transformation, personalisation, self-directed support, adult safeguarding, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, deprivation of liberty safeguards, and the National Social Work Task Force.

The day was incredibly informative and enjoyable and evaluations from delegates highly positive – including many requests for these kind of events to occur more frequently. Over 60 practice educators from the sub-region attended the day. If you would like to receive a copy of any of the presentations that were shown at the conference, please contact Juliet Hammond, North Central London Skills for Care / CWDC Practice Learning / PQ Co-ordinator (see back cover).

The North Central sub-regional group will be holding their next Practice Learning Conference in May 2010.

## **Last year a practice learning event in the North East London sub region bought together local practice educators from statutory services, private, schools, voluntary and independent sector organisations for the first time.**

The event was well attended and participants valued the chance to share ideas and discuss the practicalities of assessing students with people from other boroughs and sectors. There were inputs on enabling students to put theory into practice and knowing whether a student was 'good enough.'

Bambie Maxwell gave a presentation on new developments such as the work of the Social Work taskforce and the development of the practice educator framework. The practice educators said they valued knowing about what was happening as they were sometimes the last to hear about new developments.

### **Innovation and difference**

The afternoon session concentrated on consideration of different models for student placements and innovative ways of providing practice learning opportunities which prepare students for statutory work. An example of collaborative

multi-agency and cross-sector working with students was given by Barking and Dagenham and local area based groups discussed the possibilities of developing their own links.

Preparing students for statutory working and ensuring they leave university fit for practice is of primary concern at the moment. The importance of students spending at least half of their practice learning in a statutory setting does not take away the value of placements in the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector – where 42% of placements take place. There was agreement that if links were stronger it would benefit everyone. Students on placements in PVI sectors could play a useful role in linking the organisation with the relevant statutory team(s) and those teams in turn would develop more understanding of the organisations delivering services. If students were enabled to spend time with statutory colleagues whilst in the PVI sector this would in turn prepare them for their final statutory placement.

Participants went away committed to continue local discussions about making links. Evaluations from the conference showed that practice educators really value these sub regional events for networking, sharing good practice and generating ideas.

# your post qualifying and practice learning co-ordinators

London has five sub-regions and your first point of contact is the PQ and Practice Learning Placement Co-Ordinator.



## Social Work Education Group (SWEG)

- Sonia Andrew** • LB Tower Hamlets (NE PQ rep)
- Toni Mitchell** • RB Kingston (SW PQ rep)
- Bambie Maxwell** • Skills for Care London
- Heidi Rossetter** • LB Islington (NC PQ rep)
- Martin Webber** • Institute of Psychiatry & Advanced Practice Social Work Network
- Michael Williams** • Barnardo's
- Ben Arnold** • Amicus Recruit (co-vice chair)
- Anna Dias** • LB Brent (NW PQ rep) (co-vice chair)
- Linda Christian** • General Social Care Council
- Marcia Daigo-Daley** • CWDC
- Stephen Fox** • London Metropolitan University
- Teresa Gray** • LB Greenwich (SE PQ rep) (chair)

**North West** covering Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster

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