

## **Social Services Workforce Training and Development Overview**

### **University Partnerships**

We are currently in a formal partnership with the Open University (OU). The OU deliver the Social Work Degree for our in-house seconded students. We have considered an additional formal partnership with another University, however the time commitments needed to enter into an additional partnership mean that this is not currently a viable option, (a partnership requires a commitment of around 25-30 days per year due to requirements around interviews, assessment panels, moderation, exam boards and partnership meetings).

Although our formal partnership is with the OU we regularly take students from other Universities at the request of their hosting local authority. In the last twelve months we have provided placements to students from Glyndwr, Bangor, and Chester Universities.

The OU in Wales are considering piloting a Master's Degree in 2020 and I have stated that Powys would be interested in participating in this pilot as I am aware of staff who would qualify for this route.

### **Seconded Students**

Powys County Council has historically seconded two students onto the degree each year so long as they meet the qualifying criteria and gain the minimum points score required by the OU selection process. This was increased to three students in 2018 due to recruitment pressures within the local authority. Due to the high number of applications meeting the criteria, the fact that all applicants had already completed level 1 of their studies (1 level 2), and a lower number in some previous years six were actually put through. This is creating additional pressure on SCWDP funding for the next two years.

We are currently in discussion with HR in regards to our seconded scheme in the local authority. HR are in discussions with legal in regards to the formalities of a mandatory agreement to work for the local authority upon completion of the degree. The current scheme does state this, however is not legally binding. This is why there has been a delay in our traditional recruitment process to date. This will not affect registrations as these do not need to be submitted until August 2019. We have already confirmed with the OU that we would like to reserve three places.

Current:

Level 1: 0, however we do have staff across the local authority undertaking the K101, and the KZW113 (these being the two courses which make up level 1 of the degree), as these are classified as 'open' courses. Undertaking Level 1 as an open student allows staff the opportunity to check out their commitment to University study. Completion of the K101 and KZW113 provide staff with the new 'Social Services Practitioner' Award. The OU are considering making Level 1 a mandatory requirement before students can apply for the SW Degree.

Level 2: Children's Services as a substantive role – 2 students, 1 based Brecon, 1 based Newtown.  
Adult's Services as a substantive role – 5 students, 2 based Newtown, 1 based Llandrindod/Brecon, 1 based Brecon/Ystradgynlais, 1 based Ystradgynlais. All of these students are due to qualify in Autumn 2020.

Level 3: Children's Services as a substantive role – 1 student, based Brecon. This student is due to qualify Autumn 2019. There are no other seconded students currently on Level 3, this is due to students starting points in previous years e.g. joining the degree at either Level 1, 2, or three due to personal / sponsored study already undertaken.

**Previous seconded Students (last five years) and current destination:**

Qualified 2018: Children's Services – 4, 1 in Bannau / Camlas, 1 in Brecon Locality, 1 in Radnor Locality, 1 on maternity leave, due to take up a SW post in YJS South.

Qualified 2017: Childrens Services -2 – 1 now working in Fostering South, 1 now working in Adults Disability.

Adults Services – 1 – working in Older People - North

Qualified 2016: Childrens Services – 1 – now working for Powys CAMH's.

Adults Services -1 – worked in Powys CMHT, now in Adults Disability.

Qualified 2015: Childrens Services – 2 – 1 worked in Newtown CS, now in CWD North, 1 worked in Newtown CS, now in Adults Older Peoples Team.

Qualified 2014: Childrens Services – 1 – working in North Assessment Team

Adults Services – 1 – working in Older People – South

**Current Practice Learning Opportunities**

We currently have eleven students who have recently commenced placements with Powys. We also have one student who has just completed (January 2019) their placement with us from Chester University and is now in a Social Work role with the Adult's Disability Team – North.

In addition to our eight in house seconded students on placement we have an additional three students on placement with the local authority. All are final year students, 1 from Bangor University and 2 from Glyndwr. I have provided these students with the recent e-mail about the Children's Services vacancies.

**First Three Years in Practice incorporating the Consolidation of Social Work Award – Porth Agored**

All Newly Qualified Social Workers complete an in-house portfolio of work in their first year of practice, this portfolio is based on the exemplar provided by Social Care Wales. Completion of this portfolio allows staff to move from a Grade 10 to a Grade 11 in respect of their salary. We are now in receipt of a number of portfolios, there is a general theme within the portfolios in regards to our 'in-house' seconded staff receiving either a limited or no induction. This is a concern in relation to staff morale and retention. Feedback has shown that staff value the opportunity to attend support groups with colleagues across the county.

Numbers for first year in practice:

Childrens Services – 6 members of staff in their first year in practice

Adults Services – 1 member of staff in their first year in practice, awaiting SCW registration for one additional SW (equivalency and return to practice submitted)

Porth Agored Award:

Childrens Services: 6 started October 2018 due to submit October 2019, 1 started their award in February 2019 – Submit February 2020.

Adults Services: 1 Member of staff has submitted this month, 3 started October 2018 due to submit October 2019, 3 started their award in February 2019 – Submit February 2020.

Historically we have a poor completion rate in regards to staff completing their Consolidation Award, many request extensions due to work pressures and then withdraw. This is a significant risk area due to the new registration requirements. All Newly Qualified Social Workers who qualified after April 2016 must complete their consolidation award in order to re-register with Social Care Wales.

### **Practice Assessors Course**

There are 19 qualified Practice Assessors within Powys Social Services, 8 are in Adults Services and 11 in Children's Services. Out of these 2 in Adults and 3 in Childrens are regular (had more than 1 student in the last three years) Practice Assessors. There are a high proportion of staff with their Practice Assessors Award that have moved into positions of management and are no longer able to commit to the requirements of having a student. A number of resignations over the last twelve months has seen a number of regular practice assessors leave the local authority. Two of these staff are currently providing services as an off-site Practice Assessor for current students.

We currently have seven staff members undertaking their Practice Assessor Award. Two undertaking the course in Swansea – 1 Adult Disability Team – South, and 1 Radnor Locality Team. Five members of staff are undertaking the North Wales Practice Assessors course, 1 Older People North, 2 Adults Disability North, and 2 IFST Mid / North. The higher than normal number of recruits is creating additional pressures as these staff need to have observations of practice and supervision by a qualified Practice Assessor who has assessed a minimum of three students.

### **Recruitment and Awareness**

I have attended all of the Social Care recruitment events across Powys and outlying areas, two in Oswestry, 1 in Hay on Wye, 1 in Ystradgynlais. I will be attending the Compass Careers Event in Birmingham. I also attend the annual Powys Careers Day and meet with the students on the Health and Social Care Course at NPTC Group at least once a year.

I have recently supported a Social Work from Denmark to undertake work experience within the local authority and assisted with their qualification equivalency and return to practice portfolio. This individual has gained a SW position with Adults Disability Team so long as their equivalency and portfolio are approved by SCW.

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**20<sup>th</sup> February 2019.**