

Social policy and social work subject centre, higher education academy

Supporting learning and teaching

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## Editorial

2006 seems set to continue the restructuring of the welfare state and in particular the organisational context of social welfare education and services. I recommend social work educators and our social policy colleagues, who research and teach in the social welfare arena, to read the collection in this newsletter that describe the changes in progress in relation to workforce development and planning under the heading "Changing Landscape of the Social Work and Social Care Workforce in the UK." Written by leading academics they provide a road map to the new sets of acronyms that have entered our lives from SFC and CWDC to England's LRNs and Scotland's LNs. If you are still calling LRNs Learning Resource Centres you are so last year!

This issue also brings you a celebration of National Teaching Fellows and an introduction to a new area of SWAP's work 'Supporting New Academic Staff' known in the Higher Education Academy as SNAS. Both the Joint Social Work Education Conference and the Social Policy Association Conference are advertised and although the deadline for abstracts for the social work conference has passed you still have time to consider putting in an abstract for the SPA conference which again this year is featuring a Teaching and Learning stream. The Higher Education Academy Annual Conference takes place from 3rd to 5th July under the title 'Enhancing the Student Learning Experience.' It is a

great conference to see what is happening in other subject disciplines and in relation to pedagogic research.

Take the time to contact Gurnam Singh to get a password to the Diversity and Anti-racism in Social Work and Social Care website (<http://lcrn.net/diversity/>) and explore some of the many resources at [www.swap.ac.uk](http://www.swap.ac.uk). Whilst exploring electronic resources don't forget to use your own creativity and think about entering the E-Learning Innovation in Social Policy competition that has a closing date of 7th April 2006.

SWAP is set to continue to at least July 2009 and as we enter our sixth year we will be undertaking a number of exercises to see whether we are 'fit for purpose' or whether there are improvements we can make in order to support you better. The move into the Higher Education Academy has meant more emphasis on developing our work in line with higher education policy generally and we are pleased to do this where it meets our understanding of the needs of the social work and social policy educators.

As in any organisation staff changes occur and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Mel Ashford our Knowledge Management Adviser who has gone to live in France and also David Colombi our web developer who will be retiring in April. We wish them both well in their new endeavours.

*Jackie Rafferty*



## **The Changing Landscape of the Social Work and Social Care Workforce in the UK**

Hilary Burgess  
Senior Adviser, SWAP

Education for social workers must clearly take account of the context in which they are employed. Given the rapid and myriad changes in the workforce in all parts of the UK, we have brought together a series of short articles to depict the way in which this new landscape is emerging. Inevitably, in view of the pace of change, some of the developments described will have moved on again by time the newsletter is published, but we hope here to give an overview, and an indication of the 'direction of travel.'

In England, a review of social work and social care is under way, entitled 'Options for Excellence' – Professor Michael Preston Shoot summarises the work being undertaken. In the meantime, 2005 saw

the emergence of distinct Sector Skills Councils for adult care (Skills for Care) and children (the Children's Workforce Development Council) – Professors Adrian James and David Stanley, provide overviews for these two organizations respectively. Developments in the mental health social work and social care workforce are afoot, led by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) – as described by Professor Ann Davis. Simultaneously, the regional Learning Resource Networks have developed - Professor Aidan Worsley considers the HEI role in these. Finally, the new framework for post-qualifying awards continues to pre-occupy many HEI staff - Hilary Tompsett, Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee for JUC-SWEC provides an overview.

For Scotland, Professor Bryan Williams summarises the work of the 21st Century Social Work Review and other workforce developments. Developments in the social work and social care workforce for Northern Ireland are scoped by Dr Jim Campbell, whilst Jacquie Lee brings us up to date with developments in Wales.

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### **Skills for Care (SfC): the adult social care workforce strategy body for England**

*Professor David Stanley  
Northumbria University representing JUC/SWEC SfC Director  
and Trustee*

The workforce strategy bodies for social care, including social work, in the UK underwent considerable organisational change in 2005. Mapping the current landscape is not uncomplicated but here is an attempt briefly to explain how Skills for Care (SfC) fits into the new landscape.

With effect from April 2005 SfC was licensed by DfES as the England adult social care workforce strategy body, part of the UK-wide Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Care and Development. SfC's predecessor body was originally established in 1998 as England's part of a National Training Organisation (NTO) called the Training Organisation for the Personal Social Services, which switched to using its initials - TopssEngland - as a name when it registered as an independent company and charity in 2000. The children's services workforce activity formerly undertaken by Topss has been transferred to the newly created Children's Workforce Development Council. The SSC also includes the pre-existing Scottish Social Services Council, Care Council for Wales, and Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

Still led by employer networks and other care interests, and retaining both company and charitable status, SfC is concerned specifically with adult social care, but is additionally responsible for all the non-care staff working in adult social care. It aims to "support employers in improving standards of care provision through training and development, workforce planning and workforce intelligence" through "networks of statutory and independent sector employers in all aspects of social care, alongside representatives of service users, informal carers, staff associations and education and training providers". Nine SfC Regional Committees drawn from local networks form the main vehicles for assisting employers locally to implement the national training strategy for social care "Modernising the Social Care Workforce".

SfC recent and current activities include: a new set of Common Induction Standards (CIS) for people entering social care, and those changing roles or employers within adult social care; the development of Learning Resource Networks; the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care; employer-led aspects of post-qualifying (PQ) training arrangements for social workers. SfC also hosts the prestigious Care Accolades to celebrate outstanding achievement in workforce development across the social care sector in England. Further information on these projects, and much more, can be viewed on SfC's website which currently continues to be found at: [www.topssengland.net](http://www.topssengland.net)

## Children's Workforce Development Council

*Professor Adrian James*

*University of Sheffield, JUC-SWEC link to CWDC*

The Children's Workforce Development Council is the newly-formed Sector Skills Council that has been charged with assuming those responsibilities carried thus far by Skills for Care (SfC) in relation to training and skills development for those who are involved in providing services for children and families. The Council is still at a very early stage in its development but its short-term objectives include requiring each Local Authority to produce a detailed workforce strategy by 2006 to cover all of the children's workforce which, in the context of the Every Child Matters strategy, is now taken to include not just those who are employees of the Local Authority but others working with children such as foster-carers and those in similar positions.

The Council is therefore aiming to clarify its relationship with SfC in terms of identifying their respective responsibilities. At this stage, it is not its intention to duplicate the SfC infrastructure but to piggy-back on existing organisational structures under the co-ordination of a Regional Manager. Arrangements may thus vary between regions, which may cause a degree of confusion and it is not clear at this stage what its role will be in relation to rolling out the PQ Framework strategy, the responsibility for which currently lies with SfC.

The longer-term implications of the work of the CWDC are highly significant for HE since work is already underway between DfES and the CWDC for the development of an Integrated Qualifications Framework for the entire child-care workforce. This is a key part of the Government's commitment to undertaking a total qualifications reform, based on sector-wide National Occupational Standards and built around the accreditation of the Common Core of skills and knowledge outlined in the Children's Workforce Strategy.

This new 'framework for achievement' is intended to be more flexible, responsive and inclusive by recognising a wider range of achievements. The intention is that it will be based upon credit-bearing units that, together with CAT and AP(E)L, will lead to ease of progression and greater ease of movement between different areas of the children's workforce. In this context, it is also intended that the new arrangements will be better articulated with other qualification frameworks, including those in Europe. It intended to start testing and trialling the new arrangements from January 2006, with the development of National Occupational Standards for the sector, based on the common core of knowledge and skills, by 2008, with the Framework being rolled out from 2010.

At this stage, HE does not have a representative on the CWDC but JUC-SWEC has made representations and a reply is awaited.

## Developments in mental health social work (England)

*Professor Ann Davis*

*Director, Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health, University of Birmingham*

[www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk](http://www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk)

Mental health services in England are experiencing a period of unprecedented change. As a result, mental health social work (MHSW) finds itself in a situation both of uncertainty and of opportunity in relation to its future. The gradual transfer of the mental health social workers from Social Service Departments (SSDs) to Mental Health Trusts (MHTs) has resulted in professional and organisational disorientation. MHSWs, whether members of multidisciplinary mental health teams and/or Approved Social Workers (ASWs) under the 1983 Mental Health Act, are struggling to find support and a valuing of what they have to offer to modernising mental health services. These struggles are the result of:

- Continuing uncertainty about the long awaited changes to primary mental health legislation, which has signalled the opening up of the ASW role to other mental health professionals.

- The marginalisation of social workers as a relatively small professional group within the mental health workforce, with a focus on the interaction between service users and their social environments, that is challenging to the dominant medical orientation of some psychiatrists and mental health nurses.
- The organisational and managerial cultures of the MHTs, which are failing to provide the kind of supervision and support required by social workers.
- The complex problems associated with both financing and improving services for those with severe and enduring mental health problems and, at the same time, funding and developing new, local preventive mental health services through Primary Care Trusts.

These issues have increased the uncertainty and demoralisation of mental health social workers. Recently published research reveals evidence of low morale and growing retention and recruitment problems for England and Wales (Huxley et al:2005).

The National Mental Health Workforce Strategy (DH 2004) of the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMHE) highlighted key areas for future development, critical to the future of mental health social work in England. 'New ways of working' are under development for a range of professions, including psychiatrists (RCP Oct 2005), mental health nurses and psychologists. In order to deliver the strategy, the traditional territory of social work is being opened up to a range of other workers in new roles. At the time of writing, NIMHE is consulting with key stakeholders on 'The social work contribution to mental health services: The future direction', providing an opportunity for those concerned to express their views about what social

work has to offer. Circulation of a discussion paper is expected to be followed by a national conference in the spring. The emergence of the Social Perspectives Network has channelled calls for increased recognition of the social context of service users' and carers' lives and active engagement in working with this. An alliance with those service users and carers who are calling for an increase in the MHSW workforce will be crucial in shaping the profession's future role.

#### References

Huxley, P et al (2005) *Stress and pressures in mental health social work: The worker speaks*. *British Journal of Social Work*, 35, 7, p. 1040-1062

## Learning Resource Networks and HEI's

Professor Aidan Worsley

University of Chester

(Co-chair of the Greater Manchester Learning Resource Network to November 2005; now a member of Cheshire and Merseyside LRN.)

In July 2005, when Liam Byrne, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Care Services spoke about the 'next steps for social care reform', he cited the new social work degree, the social work register and the Learning Resource Networks (LRNs). From a personal perspective, this was good news – as a representative of the four social work programmes in Greater Manchester, I had acted as co-chair for the area's LRN since its inception. However, the level of involvement of HEI's in the development of the LRNs has differed across the country, as the networks have grown in different ways, responding to regional and sub regional demands and interests.

LRNs are, in essence, a project arm of Skills for Care who provide funding and a national co-ordination team. An early role of the LRN has been to work with employers, universities, colleges and trainers to ensure that those 'working towards social work or social care can get the practice experience they need to develop their skills in work settings' (Nadra Ahmed, Skills for Care Vice Chair).

During 2003 and 2004 the LRNs received ring fenced money to facilitate the development of practice learning opportunities for social work students, picking up the work of the Practice Learning Taskforce (PLTF) to address the considerable deficit of placements in many areas. In the North West the LRNs appointed Development Workers to undertake this task, with significant levels of funding, and using a variety of hosting arrangements – including location within HEI's. LRN

members in Manchester included employers across the social care sector; a LA SSD Director, education and training providers and the PLTF.

This initial focus has anchored the practice learning developments, clearly legitimated HEI involvement and helped root clear objectives and targets for the workers. However, the ring fenced funding ran out in April 2005, and the LRNs were reminded of their responsibilities for the training needs of the broader social care sector including registration for the social care workforce. This has led into less comfortable territory for HEIs – NVQ's. Links must be made with a wide range of employers (all with different voices) across the statutory and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors, with whom not all HEIs will be engaged. Furthermore, Skills for Care has added new responsibilities onto LRNs, in respect of workforce planning, managing the outgoing work of the PLTF and, perhaps most significantly for HEI's, the lead in commissioning the new Post Qualifying (PQ) framework. Experiences will differ across the country but in some areas this may mean the re-emergence of the PQ consortia within the LRN framework. The extension of function has troubled some LRNs who find themselves querying their premise and role. However, the leads within Skills for Care are in no doubt of the LRN growth as they report them as:

... becoming increasingly central to the delivery of much of the overall workforce strategy for the social care sector (and)... key to the delivery of the strategic objectives and resources being developed by other national bodies, such as the General Social Care Council and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Despite this love affair with the LRNs, Skills for Care is unable to release funding beyond annual cycles, which inhibits planning, staffing and confidence in future growth. Expectations of direct links with Health and Education workforce strategies are difficult given the significant differences between LRNs. Whilst some areas

have built on existing partnerships— other areas operate in an environment with little history or inclination of collaborative work .It may be that LRNs focus more exclusively on social work education in the future. It seems LRNs are struggling to re-establish themselves and balance local needs with directions from Skills for Care and/or the DH.The split between adults and children is also challenging, given the adult focus of Skills for Care.

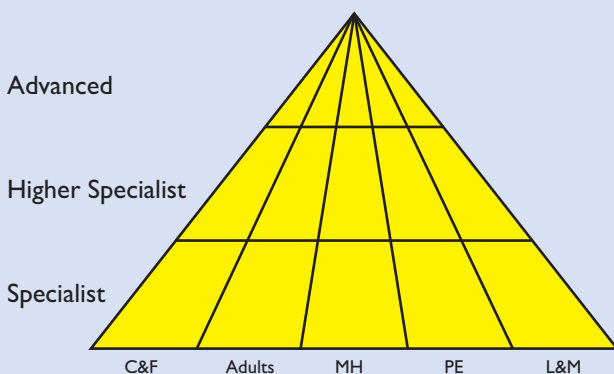
However, what should not change in all these emergent complexities, is the role HEI's have in helping define the local direction of social care training and education. LRNs require the involvement and investment of social work education providers - HEI's should take their place at the table.

## The new postqualifying framework in England

*Hilary Tompsett  
Chair, JUC SWEC Learning & Teaching Sub Committee*

Stephen Ladyman, former Community Minister said in February 2005 “With the introduction of the social work degree, registration of social workers, and protection of title, the new PQ framework will play an important part in raising standards in social work practice” (GSCC 2005). For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), employers, recipients of services and carers, improvements in standards of social work practice also require improvements in standards of social work education, renewed confidence and expertise in social work professionals, the development of places of employment as learning organisations and some evidence that service users/carers notice a difference.

The development and implementation of the new post qualifying framework for social workers, which started early in 2004, is now reaching a critical stage in England. HEIs were invited in November 2005 to inform the GSCC of their intention to offer programmes in 2006/7 (“early starts”): 17 have responded. Many more plan to introduce programmes from 2007. For Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, the pace and shape of change is different, with the new PQ awards being introduced from 2008. In Northern Ireland the Care Council intend to retain the right to offer awards, and will also require a probationary year of service before confirmation of registration. In Wales the proposal is for a unified approach to the structures of awards. The three new levels of award are, however, shared across the UK: Specialist, Higher Specialist and Advanced. Take up of awards is likely to be strongest at Specialist level, as shown below:



Working together, JUC SWEC and SWAP convened two workshops (November 2005 and March 2006) to develop a shared approach to the new awards. Following stimulating debate there are promising signs of informal agreement on the size, levels and scope of awards, and on possible regional, subregional and local collaborative arrangements for HEIs with employers. For example, there seems to be consensus that recognition for APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) for PQI from the old framework, and the consolidation phase of new Specialist Awards might equate to 15/20 credits at level 3.

### Plan of the PQ framework structure and expected take-up in England

- Legend**
- C&F Children & Families
  - MH Mental Health
  - PE Practice Education (not available at Specialist level as a separate award)
  - L&M Learning & Management (not available at Specialist level except for residential managers)

(See attached diagram for a flowchart of career progression through Social Work awards)

The Learning Resource Networks (LRNs) in England are defined as the planning network for workforce development and planning, including PQ provision from HEIs in all the pathways and levels. LRNs must have plans in place by November 2006. A key message for employers and HEIs is to work together and reap the benefits of joint development.

Unknowns continue to generate anxieties, for example, future funding arrangements (the Department of Health will report the findings from their commissioned consultation by March 2006). The likely emphasis will be on employers taking responsibility for both ensuring availability of PQ programmes and financial responsibility. Representation has been made by many groups to ensure there are sufficient incentives, appropriate levels of funding for effective backfilling and remuneration, and workload relief to ensure uptake and completion of the new awards. The impact on HEI providers of uncertain funding may be to jeopardize Social Work schools and programmes, if PQ programmes are not seen as viable HEI earners.

Whilst the standards for 'Children and Families' and

'Leadership and Management' have now been published, and those for 'Practice Education' are due by the end of January 2006, those for Mental Health and Adult Care are still being developed. How the awards will deliver shared interprofessional learning alongside specific social work professional requirements remains a challenge, whilst also a great opportunity.

Stephen Ladyman noted the current political context for social work, drawing attention to recent major changes for the profession, and suggested a bright future for a profession whose worth and value, in the public eye, has often seemed under-rated and under-funded. Alongside the DH/DfES review, Options for Excellence, the PQ framework offers a real opportunity to promote the standards of social work education; if we can inspire and motivate professionals to celebrate and promote excellence in post qualifying social work, we stand a chance of improving the quality of practice and life for service users and carers.

*References*  
GSCC (2005) *Building Professionalism and Quality Annual Report 2004/5*

<b>The Revised PQ Framework (GSCC 2005)</b>			
<p><b>Degree in Social Work</b> (CQSW, CSS, DipSW, or International qualification) GSCC registration as "Social Worker"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generic qualification</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Post Qualifying Award in Specialist Social Work</b> (Minimum honours degree level) Pathways</p>			
Child Care	Adults	Mental Health (MH)	Leadership & Management*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidating and extending initial competence</li> <li>• Developing competence in depth in a specific area of practice</li> <li>• Enabling learning, mentoring and practice education</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(* for Residential Care Managers only)</p>			
<p><b>Post Qualifying Award in Higher Specialist Social Work</b> (Post graduate diploma level) Pathways</p>			
Professional practice (Child Care/Adults/MH)	Leadership & management	Professional Practice Education	Applied Professional Research**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For complex decision making and high levels of responsibility</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Post Qualifying Award in Advanced Social Work</b> (MA degree level) Pathways</p>			
Professional practice (Child Care/Adults/MH)	Leadership & management	Professional Practice Education	Applied Professional Research**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking a leading role in promoting good practice and applied professional research</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(**No awards yet in Research pathways)</p>			

## Workforce developments in Scotland

*Professor Bryan Williams*

*Director, Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education*

At the time of writing, the eagerly-awaited report of the 21st Century Review of Social Work is set for launch in early February, unusually together with its Ministerial Response. There seems little doubt, that this report (alongside a parallel review of early years services) will set in train fundamental long-term changes in the nature of social work and social care services in Scotland. Fundamental questions about the nature, scope and resourcing of public care and welfare services have been raised and, when seen in the context of anticipated demographic challenges over coming decades, we can expect to see a radical re-appraisal of the current social care landscape. Ministers overseeing the Review are likely to place emphasis on the identity and distinctiveness of social work, the importance of its full integration with health, education, justice and community development, and a requirement for more targeted use of scarce resources. Professional autonomy, authority and accountability, robust processes of risk management and leadership development are also expected to be principal themes. An implementation plan, identifying lead responsibilities among relevant educational, professional and employer organisations, together with key targets and expectations, will be developed and one or more new national bodies established to support the implementation process.

Things have, however, not stood still during the eighteen months of the Review process and efforts have been made to maintain Scotland's distinctive joined-up approaches across children's, adult care and justice services, between service improvement, workforce planning and workforce development agendas and involving local authority, voluntary sector and independent service providers. The recently published Scottish Executive document National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A Plan for Action 2005 – 2010<sup>1</sup>, the culmination of multi-stakeholder engagement over many months, sets out this vision.

The sector skills work of Skills for Care and Development is being taken forward under the aegis of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)<sup>2</sup>, an arrangement that offers the chance to ensure that it links closely to other workforce planning and development agendas. In similar vein, Scotland is developing post-qualifying (and post-registration) education for social workers within the broader context of social care workforce development and it is hoped that this will ensure better links to issues covered in the Review such as recruitment and retention, development of practitioner career pathways and the possible introduction of 'para-professional' roles. The Council has agreed rules to govern approval of specialist courses and the first of these are likely to be the new Practice Learning Qualifications, developed collaboratively by an Institute-led group<sup>3</sup>. These qualifications will underpin work, begun in Institute projects and being taken forward by the Scottish Practice Learning Project (SPLP - a joint project of the Institute and the SSSC), to ensure greater diversity and flexibility in the provision of practice learning at all levels.

The SPLP<sup>4</sup> has overseen the establishment of four new Learning Networks - collaborations of all key interests distributed geographically across Scotland - which will be the principal means of taking forward the specific objectives of the project, as well as contributing to broader workforce development aims to develop learning cultures and evidence-based practice. Project officers are also supporting roll-out of the new funding arrangements, working towards sound demand/supply matching, assisting specific developments in the voluntary and independent sectors, linking with health and early years, designing and utilising a quality audit toolkit and engaging with employers in carrying out initial 'learning organisation capacity' audits, using materials from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and others.

In addition, the Institute<sup>5</sup> is engaged on work agreed with Scottish Ministers as part of a new funding package running to March 2008. There are three strands: viz. continuing to pursue the objectives of the new honours degree (shortly to be published by the Scottish Executive); helping to strengthen the evidence base for social care practice (in partnership with SCIE and others); and contributing to implementation of a CPD, or employee development, strategy for the social care workforce. These broad-ranging tasks probably require changes in the structure, membership and governance of the Institute itself and work is underway to investigate this. The new Learning Exchange<sup>6</sup> (formerly the Stòr Cùram project) was launched in November and is now operational for the Scottish HEIs teaching the new degree. Plans for roll-out to Scotland's Colleges later this year and employers in 2007 are being actively pursued and it is anticipated that the Exchange will play a significant part in the implementation of the Review.

All in all, this is an exciting time to be involved in social work education, research and practice in Scotland and we look forward to reporting further developments in a later edition of this newsletter.

#### References

*21st Century Review of Social Work* – <http://www.21socialwork.org.uk/reports.php>

#### Endnotes

1. *National Strategy for the development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A plan for action* – <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/76169/0019065.pdf>
2. *Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)* – [www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com)
3. *Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education, Practice Learning group* – <http://www.sieswe.org/work/practicelearn.html>
4. *Scottish Practice Learning Project* – <http://splp.uk.com>
5. *Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education* – <http://www.sieswe.org>
6. *Learning Exchange* – [www.sieswe.org/learnx](http://www.sieswe.org/learnx)

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## The social work and social care workforce in Northern Ireland

*Jim Campbell*

*Senior Lecturer, Queens University Belfast*

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Although the Northern Irish workforce is relatively stable by UK standards, there continue to be problems of retention and recruitment across the social work and social care sectors, according to workforce surveys carried out by CCETSW (NI) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in the early 2000s. A range of factors may account for these problems, including stress associated with additional demands and organisational change, perceptions of low pay and value and limited opportunities for career progression and professional development. Some of these issues appear to effect workers who deal with specific client groups, in particular family and child care services.

On a more positive vein, it is hoped that new qualifying and postqualifying programmes will help address such deficits and concerns. The first cohorts from the new degree programmes at Queens University Belfast and the University of Ulster are due to graduate this summer; uniquely in the UK context, there is a requirement for an additional assessed year in employment before full registration is achieved. The assumption is that this package will ensure a more prepared and competent workforce, which is better informed and supervised, and less likely to become disenchanted with the role.

A key issue for retention in any organisation is a commitment to continuous professional development. The new Northern Ireland PQ framework will build on the foundation of existing, well resourced and managed programmes. It will be modular to allow for greater choice and flexibility. The modules will be aligned against a number of professional groupings: specific area of work, specialist area of social work and leadership and strategic area of social work. The requirements of each of the professional groupings, when combined, will go to make up a professional award, some of which will have academic accreditation. The PQ framework will begin at postgraduate academic level ‘M’, and progress through the following continuum: postgraduate certificate; postgraduate diploma; masters, doctorate.

As in the rest of the UK there is intense pressure by government agencies in Northern Ireland to reconstruct professional roles and quality assure the provision of services. Even at the early stage of the degree, students become registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and university curricula are expected to reflect National Occupational Standards for Social Work. Agenda for Change is being applied to the workforce and continuous professional development and career advancement, it is argued, is a key to its success. The future looks optimistic for social work education, training and employment in Northern Ireland, but only as long as there is a commitment by central government and operational managers to a well resourced service which facilitates life long learning.

## Social Work Education and Training in Wales

Jacquie Lee

Head of Centre of Social Work, Programme Director

– BA (Hons) Social Work, UWIC

The first degree Programme in Wales began delivery in September 2004 at University of Wales Institute Cardiff and Bridgend College, rapidly followed by University of Wales Newport in January 2005, the Open University in February 2005 and Bangor University, University of Glamorgan, North East Wales Institute and Bangor all commencing in September 2005. The Cardiff University qualifying programme at Masters Level also commenced in September 2005. A total of 8 social work qualifying programmes in Wales with a target set by the Welsh Assembly Government of an intake of 380 students by 2007.

The overriding distinctive feature of social work education and training in Wales is an All Wales co-ordinated and collaborative approach to commissioning and delivery. Some of the other distinctive features of qualifying training specifically are a prescribed curriculum; the integration of workforce planning and development; and the 'linking' of students to host Local Authorities.

- A prescribed curriculum that combines the Quality Assurance Agency's subject benchmarks and the National Occupational Standards and Code of Practice. This determines the academic and practice learning outcomes at each level. The intention being to integrate academic and practice learning in a way that is clear, consistent and measurable across Programmes in Wales and provide an element of transferability across programmes in Wales.
- The ongoing development of a workforce planning and development infrastructure currently comprised of four regional groups which bring together Educational Providers and Employers on a regional rather than just Programme level.
- 'Ensuring consistency in Learning to Practice' encourages the 'linking' or adoption of individual students by Local Authority Agency's who host the student through the course of their studies. The linked Authority is responsible for the management and co-ordination, although not necessarily the provision, of the students practice learning throughout the course of their studies.

With the exiting of the first degree cohorts in 2007 planning is well underway for a co-ordinated All Wales approach to the commissioning and delivery of Postqualifying education and training. The Social Work Postqualifying Partnership for Wales is a consortium of 22 Local Authorities and 8 HEIs developing a framework for flexible modular delivery with the aim that it will be equally accessible to all candidates across Wales and transferable in terms of academic credit.

As the Programmes embed it will be interesting to see the impact these initiatives will have on social work education and training in Wales and the effect that has on the quality of practice and service delivery to meet service user and carer needs.

### SWAP workforce update

Jackie Rafferty, Director, SWAP

Whilst on the subject of workforce development – I acknowledge on page one the contribution that David Colombi and Mel Ashford have made to SWAP's work and wished them well as they leave at the beginning of April. I have more changes to report. I am delighted to welcome Julia Waldman as Deputy Director from 1st April. Julia, who is a Learning and Teaching Adviser with SWAP, and has been appointed after a national recruitment exercise. I also welcome Marc Cole-Bailey who is our new

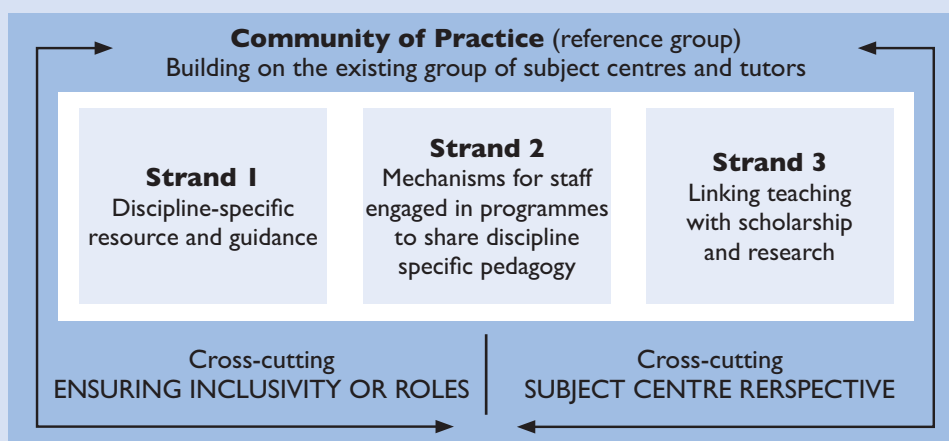
Communications & Project Officer as from 16th March and Dan Melluish joining us as Information Systems Developer, and starting on 23rd March.

One of our Learning and Teaching Advisers who has been with SWAP since its inception in 2000, Sue Orton, is moving on to a new post at the University of Sussex, where she is already based. Her new role is related to e-learning developments within the university. I am sure those of you who have worked with Sue will want to join me all of SWAP in wishing her success and happiness in her new post.

## Supporting New Academic Staff (SNAS)

Sue Orton  
 Learning and Teaching Adviser s.orton@swap.ac.uk

A new area of SWAP's work is Supporting New Academic Staff (SNAS). For SWAP 'new staff' may well include colleagues working in practice, post graduate students, service user educators as well as academic colleagues. A Higher Education Academy SNAS community of practice has been established of subject centre staff and colleagues in HEI's teaching Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Teaching Programmes (PG Cert HE) in universities and to assist developments. SNAS also links to the standards framework being created by the Academy showing the link to research and scholarship. There are three strands of activity and SWAP is developing contributions to all three. The diagram below illustrates the areas of work and how they are linked.



### Strand 1 – Discipline-specific resources and guidance

HE Academy has developed a database of resources <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/snasdatabase.asp> SWAP has contributed resources to the first three areas: Approaches to learning and teaching, Assessment and Lecturing. There is a continuing debate concerning the efficacy of a central database on top of the resources currently available through [www.swap.ac.uk](http://www.swap.ac.uk). An evaluation of the use of the data is being considered. The topics currently represented arose from new academic staff and their course tutors, and knowledge of the experience and expertise in subject centres. The following topics are being considered for inclusion in 2006-07: eLearning, employability and enterprise, linking research and teaching, research supervision, developing skills (study skills, transferable skills) and widening participation. The latter is supported by the recent call by SWAP for case studies highlighting good practice in widening participation in the BA Social Work: <http://www.swap.ac.uk/about/caserequest.asp>

### Strand 2 – Mechanisms for staff engaged on PG Cert programmes to share discipline specific pedagogy.

An online community will be piloted in 2006 for PG Cert programme Leaders to develop strategies for providing subject specific support, networking and resources for new academics on these courses. Selected subject centres will be invited to contribute to the community in the summer of 2006

### Strand 3 - Linking teaching with research and scholarship

*'Universities need to set as a mission goal the improvement of the nexus between research and teaching. The aim is to increase the circumstances in which teaching and research have occasion to meet.'* Hattie, J. and Marsh, H.W. (1996, 533)

SWAP is seeking to develop resources illustrating good practice in linking teaching and discipline research and scholarship and is therefore inviting colleagues to provide case study examples. We are beginning with a call to colleagues teaching Social Policy and we will commission an essay to illustrate the Social Policy subject communities approach to this area. This work will provide examples for 'new' colleagues teaching on accredited courses, of how research is linked to their learning experience. This is not a call for pedagogic research case studies, important though it is; it is not the focus here.

## Plagiarism: Do national statistics and discussions have anything to offer social workers and social policy lecturers?

Jude Caroll, Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development

I work at Oxford Brookes University where we initiated many of the approaches for dealing with cases and implementing a broad-ranging collection of actions designed to inform students of their responsibilities and deter them from breaking academic regulations, intentionally or unintentionally, covering appropriate citation and attribution. What we started at Oxford Brookes in 2000, we are now evaluating and rethinking whether the new approaches have been effective. This piece allows me the opportunity to outline some of what I have learned in the last six years of talking and writing about student plagiarism, to mention institutional practices used around the world to confront the growing number and severity of student plagiarism cases, and to consider the specific context of social work and social policy<sup>1</sup>.

Park's (2003) summary of the then-available literature concluded "plagiarism is doubtless common and getting more so." (p. 271) so I assume that means your students, too. Social work and Social Policy students, like all students, undoubtedly plagiarise. Plagiarism is usually defined as either submitting (or in some cases, as passing off) work as one's own which is actually someone else's. Some definitions of plagiarism stress the impact on the receiver rather than the actions of the producer. In these definitions, plagiarism happens through creating a false impression in an assessor's mind that the work he or she is reviewing is the student's own when in fact, the work is more correctly attributed to others.

### Reasons for plagiarism

Students claim the work of others as their own for three different kinds of reasons. They do it because they misunderstand the rules for attributing others' work. They also do it because correct citation and weaving together others' ideas and words turn out to be very difficult. Students require practice and feedback to do well. Finally, students plagiarise with the direct intention of deception and fraud though the number who do so is hopefully quite small. It can be argued that practice-based or work-related assessment is relatively easy to authenticate via mentors and placement. Nevertheless, there will be some students who take others' work and resubmit it, paying others to write work for them, making up the results of studies, and/or buying others' essays off the web.

So, the reasons for students' actions are many and varied and so, too, are the responses that have any impact on what students decide to do when confronted with the requirement that they generate some coursework. Students plagiarise from misunderstanding when they continue to assume the rules and requirements in their new setting mirror those in whatever setting they studied in prior to tertiary study. For example, few A-level studies require in text citation and many do not insist on the nuanced differentiation between the student's ideas and that of others. Students arriving from a practice setting are unlikely to have met academic citation requirements before starting study. Many students learned their skills in academic cultures that valued finding someone else's ideas and reproducing them verbatim. Work I undertook with Chinese students' previous training showed that many were punished for changing others' words or having opinions about them. Yet in the new UK HE setting, failure to change others' words will be plagiarism and failure to have views about others' ideas will be unacceptable. Some students seldom write more than a few hundred words before suddenly being asked to write a sustained academic essay. So, why does this matter? Unless we signal very clearly to students entering programmes, that this is a different game with new rules, the student is at risk. They might go on approaches to generate their coursework that had previously served them well.

### Preventing unintentional plagiarism

Suggestions for helping students avoid plagiarism through misunderstanding include being very clear what the new rules are; providing them with opportunities to see, read and analyse the structure of acceptable pieces of work; and taking action as soon as the rules are broken. Often, this does not happen. I regularly meet teachers who say, 'Oh, I do nothing about plagiarism in the early stages because they are learning' or 'I teach xx, not writing. Let someone else do that.' Either approach means the student continues to act in tried and trusted ways, however unacceptable.

Clear, specific 'pulling up short' is also a way to help those students who plagiarise through misuse of the rules. Early, safe feedback may help them avoid the more punitive kind of reaction they might encounter when the situation changes. For example, I often hear of cases where students' unacceptable technique is tolerated in Years 1 and 2 then, when students are asked to generate an honours thesis or a paper for an external audience such as a conference, they are labelled as plagiarists. It is claimed they should have been learning correct attribution in the previous two years. In fact, the lack of feedback meant they were learning that correct attribution is unimportant and does not deserve attention. This is especially risky in social work contexts as an accusation of misconduct (rather than continued misunderstanding)

as often happens at an advanced stage can be connected to a student's right to practice. Students are done no favours by turning a blind eye to their early efforts to comply.

Attentive, reactive supervision helps all students but may be essential for some, especially those who must write complex documents such as a thesis in what for many is the unfamiliar language of English. If these students persevere without early, focused guidance they may be unable to generate the work in any other way than through plagiarism. Certainly, this is what the growing literature on plagiarism amongst international students has shown. It's not that they do not know what must be done; it is that some lack the skill and confidence to do it and fall back on tried and tested approaches such as copying.

Turning to the third cause of plagiarism, intentional deception and deliberate fraud, these are unlikely to be common but will probably be causing concern amongst teaching staff because of the growing number of resources and opportunities your students encounter. For example, there are thousands of essays available to download on the web for relatively small amounts, bespoke 'ghostwriting' sites for social policy essays and dissertations can be bought from Ebay. To check this out, I typed 'social policy essays' into Google and found several asking £9.95 per page. To see what's current, type 'dissertations' in the EBay search facility. If you know where to look, a key-word search on almost any topic or task can probably be found 'ready made' or in a state that can be fairly easily modified to suit requirements with a bit of canny Google 'research'. Other activities that constitute creating a false impression in the assessor (which is one definition of plagiarism) include making up references to appear a more diligent researcher; falsifying or creating data; and seeking extensive editing that verges on ghost-writing.

### Deterring deliberate cheating

Suggestions for countering deliberate misconduct by students need to focus on deterring the act rather than catching the perpetrator and ensuring the student has the skills to comply with academic regulations. Deterring is probably easier where staff and students know each other, often a feature of social work programmes, though one interesting study found that students with a good relationship with their teacher said they were more likely to plagiarise (Bennett, 2005) At Brookes where we cannot assume close tutorial contact, requiring students to retain evidence of the process by preserving drafts and retaining research documents adds an additional way of checking authorship should this need to be questioned.

A final aspect of deterrence from deliberate plagiarism might require something as simple as rethinking how a topic is set or agreed for a piece of work. For many assignments that asks a student to show knowledge about a broad or common topic ('What is Social Policy?' 'Care in the community: why is it a difficult?') the Web will probably have all the essential facts. In contrast, if essay questions require comparative or evaluative responses the chances of finding ready-made solutions diminish considerably. This suggests that careful framing of essay questions may help to diminish the opportunity for block grabbing of web-based information.

### The place of detection in deterring plagiarism

One indicator of the prevalence of unattributed web-based borrowing amongst UK students is derived from use of a text-matching tool called Turnitin, now widely used around the world and recommended for use in all UK Higher Education institutions by the government-funded Plagiarism Advisory Service (for more information, see [www.jiscpas.ac.uk](http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk)). In 2005, the Plagiarism Advisory Service used Turnitin to check 30,000 UK undergraduate assignments over three months. In 13% of these three quarters of the text matched that already found on the Turnitin databases<sup>2</sup>. This does not necessarily mean plagiarism - only a person could judge whether the writer correctly attributed the text or used items that are common knowledge. Nor is the use of Turnitin without its controversies and difficulties. However, the result does confirm that UK students in general are using large chunks of others' words, at the very least, in generating what they claim to be their own work.

The same cannot be said about the amount of detecting that is going on. One study (Barrett, 2004) found that over 50% of staff reported regularly ignoring plagiarism in the form of collusion with various reasons for doing so ranging from 'at least they are learning something by copying' to decisions about avoiding additional demands on marker's time. Institutions where ignoring and under-detection have been tackled have reviewed their policies and procedures for student plagiarism to cope with changing circumstances in the last five years. Though many worry that rising use of Web-based resources, the nature of our student cohort, and changing assessment practices threaten higher education, I don't think this is true - if teachers and institutions take notice of the changes and adapt their practice.

Detection will improve if markers are alert to a range of signs besides changes in the student's writing style, a clue that has a differentially harsh impact on international students. Detection will also improve if the marker him or herself does not suffer the consequences of alerting others to the possible plagiarism. At my own university, we have developed a system where designated academics are responsible for dealing with cases once identified<sup>3</sup>. These specialists are authorised to award a stated set of punishments with carefully chosen criteria for allocating the one most appropriate to the case circumstances. We now deal with an ever growing number of cases at Brookes with the number doubling every year despite all our efforts to redesign assessment, train students, decrease the temptation for markers to ignore examples, use electronic detection tools, and handle cases quickly. Our numbers are still well below what studies show we should be identifying. So, have we made any difference? I think this is as difficult as asking those in preventive medicine to account for their success. Dealing effectively with student plagiarism is not an easy task but I am now confident we can say that we take the matter seriously, can defend our practice should it be challenged, and most importantly, that we can point to changes made to deter plagiarism that are also clear enhancements of students' learning opportunities. One unexpected benefit of student plagiarism at Brookes is that it has changed and enhanced how many think about teaching, learning and assessment.

### A final word

Plagiarism is a complex issue and requires an inter-related series of reactions to deal with it effectively. This article has tried to address the usual questions people bring to the workshops I run: what is plagiarism and why do students do it? What might I do as a teacher to make it less likely that students will submit others work as their own? How can I spot it when they do and what kinds of policies and procedures might help deal with cases once they are confirmed? By tying all these actions together (and more), teachers and institutions can take a holistic approach to the issue of student plagiarism and feel confident that their efforts will deal with (though never prevent) student plagiarism.

### Endnotes

1. I gathered together ideas about what those steps might be a book in 2002, A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education, available on [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/4\\_resource/4\\_resource.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/4_resource/4_resource.html).
2. Turnitin has three places to look: the visible Web, all previously submitted scripts which now number over 40 million, and a text-based database of journals, textbooks, archived web pages etc that has been growing by 20,000 pages a week since 1998.
3. For more information, about Academic Conduct Officers see <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/publications/bejlt/volume1issue2/perspective/carroll.html>!

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### 2nd International Conference on Plagiarism

The JISC Plagiarism Advisory Service is holding the 2nd International Conference on plagiarism on 19–21 June 2006 at The Sage Gateshead  
<http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/conference2006/index.html>

# JSWEC 2006 - 8<sup>TH</sup> UK JOINT SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION CONFERENCE



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## **‘CROSSING BOUNDARIES: PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, POLITICAL’**

JSWEC 2006 will focus on strategic attempts to further develop and enhance social work education, training, practice and research in relation to the following themes:

- ❖ Professional/political boundaries
- ❖ National/international boundaries
- ❖ Creativity and spirituality
- ❖ Moving beyond labels
- ❖ Research and teaching
- ❖ Discipline and profession
- ❖ Professional boundaries
- ❖ People on the move

### **Organised by SWAP HE Academy Subject Centre in partnership with:**

- Association of Teachers in Social Work Education
- Association of Professors of Social Work
- Joint University Council – Social Work Education Committee
- National Organisation for Practice Teaching
- UK Standing Conference of Stakeholders in Social Work Education
- UK Care Councils
- Social Care Institute for Excellence
- Scottish Executive
- Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education
- ‘SureSearch’ and ‘Advocacy in Action’ Service User Organisations

For updated information/bookings:

<http://www.external.swap.ac.uk/jswec2006/jswec1.asp> or contact:

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## Evaluating the Outcomes of Social Work Education (OSWE)

John Carpenter and Hilary Burgess

Recent reviews for SCIE have identified a scarcity of evaluations of the outcomes of education and training in social work. In a discussion paper written by John Carpenter for the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) he proposed various approaches to measuring outcomes and their evaluation, one of which was the establishment of an action learning set for social work educators and user or carer trainers/evaluators. This project has now been funded by SCIE for 3 years from 1 September 2005, subject to annual renewal, with additional support from SIEWSE and SWAP.

### The aims are:

- 1 To test the feasibility of research designs and approaches to the measurement of outcomes
- 2 To identify the factors which enable and hinder efforts to evaluate social work education
- 3 To build capacity and capability amongst social work educators, including service users, in the evaluation of education for social work and over the course of the project to:
- 4 To generate high quality evidence about the effectiveness of methods of teaching and learning.

### Invitations to join the learning set were issued in July 2005. The advertised selection criteria were:

- Evidence of programme-wide commitment to the aims and objectives of the project as a whole, as well as to the evaluation of their own programmes;
- A curriculum development committee comprising staff, user and carer consultants and students which would support the evaluation;
- A lead local evaluator with some experience of curriculum innovation and evaluation;
- A user/carer educator researcher;
- Geographical and sector representation.

The six successful applicants were from social work programmes at Anglia Ruskin, Bournemouth, Oxford Brookes, Southampton, Sussex, and York Universities.

The facilitated learning set will provide for group reflection, learning and action. Each participating university is represented by a lead evaluator (a member

of the academic staff) and an affiliated user or carer engaged in social work education. There will be four meetings in the first year, supplemented by electronic discussion, and the facilitators will also visit each participating university to discuss plans with a wider team and provide telephone consultation. The plans being developed by participants to date include:

- Evaluating the impact of service user and carer involvement on students' learning and practice, and the impact of this process on staff and service users and carers themselves
- How do students apply their learning from a module preparing them for practice during their first practice learning opportunity?
- How do students acquire competence (in relation to the National Occupational Standards) as they progress through their degree?
- What teaching and learning strategies are successful in enabling students to learn anti-racist practice?
- What are the processes and outcomes of learning about partnership with service users and carers and interprofessional practice using a problem-based approach to learning?
- To what extent and how effectively do students learn about communicating with children?
- Are the learning approaches used in a module about communication and interviewing skills effective?

Whilst it may be possible to pilot some measures during the latter part of this academic year, the main objective will be to set up evaluations to be run in 2006/7. The project will run for 3 years to enable the study of longer-term outcomes and comparison of different cohorts of students, and allow approaches to be refined in subsequent cohorts.

The aim will be to increase awareness of evidence-based education and promote the use of evaluation methods within the programme as a whole. In this way, the project will have an impact beyond the lead evaluator and user.

Alongside the work of the learning set participants, the project will also be undertaking a process study, to identify the factors that enable and hinder efforts to evaluate social work education. We will also consider how users and carers can engage successfully in programme evaluation and the experiences of the participants involved in evaluation.

Outputs and summaries from the project will be disseminated through the SWAP web-site (<http://www.swap.ac.uk/research/evaluatingSWEd.asp>) and newsletter, through the Joint Social Work Education Conference and other conference presentations and publications.

## National Teaching Fellowships 2006 Individual Awards

### About the scheme

The Higher Education Academy's National Teaching Fellowship scheme now comprises two strands, Individual Awards and Projects. The scheme aims to:

- Raise the profile of learning and teaching
- Recognise and celebrate individuals who make an outstanding impact on the student learning experience
- Provide a national focus for institutional teaching and learning excellence schemes 50 individual awards of £10,000 will be made in 2006. An institution may nominate up to three individuals, who need to demonstrate excellence in three areas:
- Individual excellence - evidence of promoting and enhancing the student learning experience.
- Raising the profile of excellence - evidence of supporting colleagues and influencing support for student learning in (and if appropriate beyond) your institution, through demonstrating impact an engagement beyond your immediate academic or professional role.
- Developing excellence - commitment to ongoing professional development with regard to teaching and learning (and/or learning support).

The scheme is open to all those involved in supporting the student learning experience in higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The closing date for submission is noon on Wednesday, 5 April 2006 (for electronic version) and noon on Friday, 7 April 2006 (hard copy).

The scheme has been a great success but SWAP would like to see more winners from within Social Work and Social Policy. Previous winners have given us their views on the benefits and opportunities of winning an NTF. Here is what some of them told us about different aspects of the scheme.

### Nominations

"My experience of being nominated felt like a validation and recognition of my approach to teaching and learning. I also benefited from having to put together my philosophy on teaching and learning and I learned much from the collation of evidence from students about the impact and outcomes for them of my approach."

*Professor Michael Preston-Shoot, Professor of Social Work, University of Luton.*

### Selection

"I was nominated in 2001 through a strong internal competition at Sheffield Hallam and I then received all the help available to finally put the submission together. Much of this help was trying to get me to say more about what I commonly do and take for granted."

*Professor Anthony Rosie, Professor of Applied Social Science, Sociology and Social Policy, Sheffield Hallam University.*

### Preparing an Application

"Study the selection criteria carefully and be prepared, just for once, not to be modest. Remember that NTFS is not all about being a brilliant classroom performer. If you think you and your colleagues can provide a range of evidence that you are good (or better) on a broad front, go for it!"

*Bob Rotheram, eLearning Development Manager, Nottingham Trent University.*

"I agreed to be nominated when I realised that of the four broad criteria I would be judged on, only one was about my actual teaching. Putting the portfolio of evidence together was challenging as the criteria were so broad that it was unclear what evidence might be most relevant. I was aware that, compared with the quality of research evidence systematically documented for the RAE, 'evidence about teaching can look flimsy and unconvincing' (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2002, p. 7). I selected a reflective approach to presenting my submission, consistent with my approach to teaching and research (Taylor, 1997). However, reading Skelton's (2004) study following my own success was disconcerting as he criticises the NTFS model for being informed strongly by a model of 'reflective practice'. Did I 'win' because I had inadvertently played a game?"

*Professor Imogen Taylor, School for Social Work and Social Care, University of Sussex.*

### Winning

"A smile on my face for ages - masses of emails and congratulations with a special commendation from the Vice Chancellor who was genuinely delighted and mentioned this as a keynote speaker in a HEA conference - fantastic networking opportunities - sense of having ones career and achievements validated and celebrated - opportunities for joint working - feeling a pioneer still in a HEI in which I am still the only NTF- proud that social work has been recognised and celebrated."

*Bernard Moss, Principal Lecturer in Social Work, Institute of Social Work and Applied Social Studies, Staffordshire University.*

## The Award Ceremony

“Winning a National Teaching Fellowship was exciting. The Award ceremony is a prestigious event and is probably as close as UK academics come to the Higher Education Oscars. I briefly felt like a minor celebrity. Before the ceremony, the Fellows had a private meeting with the then Minister for Higher Education, his first public appearance soon after his appointment. The copious press coverage resulted in complete strangers writing to me. My Fellowship was timely. In common with other universities competing in the market place, my research-led university was radically overhauling its public image and promotional materials. I became public property and joined the performance of the university.” *Professor Imogen Taylor.*

## Benefits for colleagues and the institution

“For my institution benefits include contributions to a CETL and the opportunity to contribute to staff development work. NTFs can easily become even busier people. Holding onto my teaching - or rather a small amount of it - has allowed me to develop ideas and practices I have talked about and shared with others - probably the best outcome of all.”  
*Professor Anthony Rosie.*

“Winning the NTF (2004) has enabled the Diversity and Achievement National Teaching Fellowship Project to expand to include the uptake of a visiting fellowship at the University of Sydney and collaborative, international comparative research opportunities with several Australian Universities and the expansion of research studies. Case study material illustrating the achievements of participants will provide positive role models to inspire and encourage future non-traditional entry students. Publication of findings will contribute both to Manchester Metropolitan University’s widening participation and inclusion strategy, to the development of progressive and inclusive learning and teaching and support for learning strategies and to the further development of inclusive policies and practices in HE.”  
*Kate Kirk, Senior Learning and Teaching Fellow in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education, Manchester Metropolitan University.*

## Career benefits

“Becoming an NTF is easily the most significant ‘event’ of my professional career. My career since winning in 2001 has connections back to NTF. As an NTF one of the most enjoyable outcomes has been to work with other NTFs and I am looking forward to contributing to the Association for NTFs.”  
*Professor Anthony Rosie.*

“The NTFS award has easily been the best thing to happen in my professional life. It boosted my confidence on learning and teaching matters, and lifted my career onto a higher plane. I have been able to pursue a special interest and travel to conferences I couldn’t previously afford. From the moment I began to meet other Fellows, I was struck by their diversity, talent, enthusiasm and generosity of spirit. I got a real buzz from being amongst them. Many of us are keen to collaborate, especially on interdisciplinary topics, and the newly-established Association of National Teaching Fellows aims to help with this.”  
*Bob Rotheram.*

## So?

Why not nominate a member of your staff for the Award, encourage your managers to nominate colleagues or sing your own praises?

Application details of both the individual and project awards can be found on the Higher education Academy website at  
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/NTFS.htm>

## New Online Resource

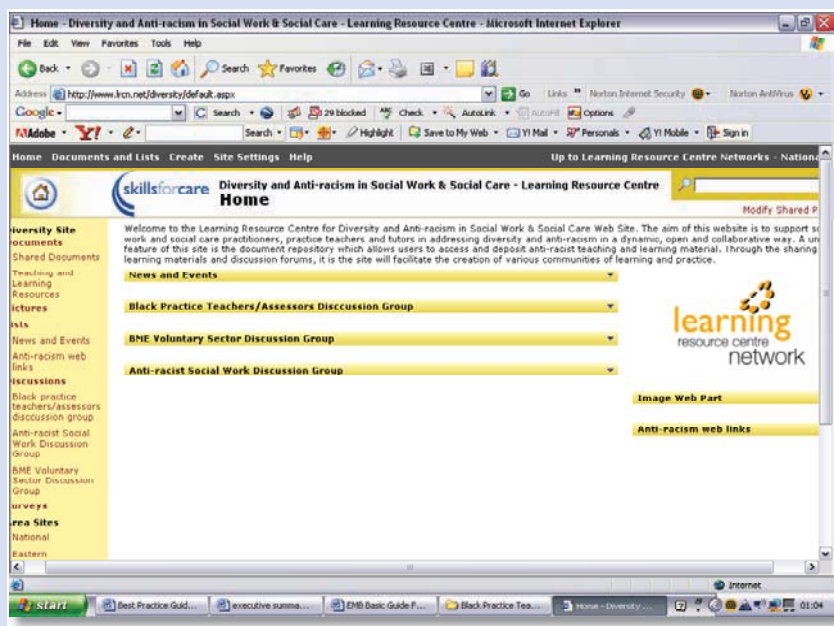
The Diversity and Anti-racism in Social Work & Social Care Web Site ([www.lrcn.net/diversity](http://www.lrcn.net/diversity))

A diversity project initiated by the Practice Learning Taskforce has included the establishment of a website in order to:

- Provide opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Practice Teachers/Assessors in statutory, voluntary and private sectors to build online support networks.
- Provide a means by which information regarding learning and development opportunities can be shared.
- Provide a means for establishing and developing a resource bank of teaching and learning materials relating to diversity, anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice in social work.
- Facilitate the ongoing development of communities of learning and practice in relation to anti-racist social work.

It was decided to initially house the website within the Learning Resource Network website for simplicity, interactivity, and confidentiality. The site has four main features:

- A Discussion Board
- A Teaching And Learning Resources Repository
- Web Links
- Announcements



Whilst presently the focus has been on BME practice Teachers/Assessors, in reality the website is open to anybody who is interested in developing & promoting best practice in relation to diversity and anti-racism in social work and social care practice and education. It is hoped that over time as the community of learning develops eventually various interest groups might emerge.

This is the beginning of building this online community of learning and practice, and just like the 'real world' this takes time and commitment. Particularly so at this very early stage there will be a need for committed individuals to both contribute to the website and promote it amongst fellow professionals

For further details and to obtain a password to access the site please contact the Project Leader  
**Dr Gurnam Singh, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences,**  
**Coventry University Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB Tel 024 7679 5823 Email [g.singh@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:g.singh@coventry.ac.uk)**

## Report of SWAP E-learning Think Tanks

*Julia Waldman, Learning and teaching Adviser, SWAP*

Funding from the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) to the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres enabled a range of activities to be undertaken to explore the further development of distributed e-learning, i.e. how to share content and tools between learners and educators. A one of three strands of SWAP work two E-learning Think Tank events were held in 2005. The first event was held in June 2005 and brought together a range of individuals from organisations and institutions involved in e-learning for social policy and social work across the UK. A report of the event is available on the SWAP website <http://www.swap.ac.uk/elearning/jiscprojectthink.asp>

The second event was held in Winchester in December and focused upon how technology may support practice learning in social work. 18 participants signed up for an intense 24 hours of immersion into a virtual learning world. Many of those present had attended the first residential Think Tank in June, but others attended from Learning Resource Networks and other academic institutions. The focus of the event was on ways in which e-resources, tools and activities may support practice learning. The event was shaped around a range of presentations combined with hands-on activities. The event provided an opportunity to explore and discuss a range of issues related to technology supported practice learning in social work; to try out different tools and software such as web conferencing and to enjoy lively conversation between those sharing an interest in the advancement of e-learning.

A number of suggestions and recommendations were made at the end of the event for advancing the promotion and embedding of e-learning to support practice learning. These included the need for highlighting of resource issues for Northern Ireland and lobbying of key agencies to move e-learning higher up the agenda, for example by running a national conference on the themes from the event. It was also felt that more dialogue was needed to understand better what 'national' solutions are possible within the context of individualised institution and LRN approaches. Staff development was also seen as key to encouraging and enabling more individuals to engage with e-learning. This might be supported by dissemination of good practice; by offering consultation sessions and regional road shows run by enthusiasts to inspire and inform staff on the ground in both agencies and academic institutions; by using events such as the Joint Social Work Education conference and by commissioning programmes for social work educators in areas such as e-moderating. It was felt that blended learning approaches should be integral to new educational developments, such as the new Post Qualifying framework, not left as an after thought. Creating more opportunities to share curriculum materials online was also seen as a priority, with support from SCIE and linking to initiatives such as the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the work of Skills4care and the Learning Exchange for Scotland. The challenge is to maintain the momentum and ideas generated from the event to impact on the wider social work education community.

## Competition: E-Learning Innovation in Social Policy

### Background

SWAP undertakes a range of work related to e-learning and as part of this work is inviting entries for a competition that aims to identify and disseminate good practice in e-learning for Social Policy modules or courses. This has become possible through funding support from Bob Rotheram, National Teaching Fellow, Nottingham Trent University, using money from his Fellowship Award.

### Overview of the competition

Two prizes are on offer: **First Prize: £1,000 Runners-up Prizes: 2 x £250**

The prize money will be paid to individual winners through their employing institution or organisation.

Closing date: 7th April 2006. Notification of winners: 23rd May 2006

### Conditions of Entry

The innovation/materials/student learning tools must have been used as part of a course in 2005 or be scheduled for use in 2006 and must have been delivered in whole or part using ICT for a higher education social policy course delivered in HE or FE

### How to enter

Email [swap@swap.ac.uk](mailto:swap@swap.ac.uk) for an entry form and further detail or view and download from the projects list at <http://www.swap.ac.uk/about/activities.asp>

# Call for Papers

The 39<sup>th</sup> Social Policy Association Conference  
To be held at the University of Birmingham 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006



## The State of Welfare: Past, Present and Future An International Social Policy Conference

Papers are invited which address the overall theme and the following sub themes

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Poverty and Social Exclusion | 8. Health and Social Care              |
| 2. Older people and Later life  | 9. Housing                             |
| 3. History of Social Policy     | 10. User Perspectives                  |
| 4. Labour Markets               | 11. Inter-Professional Working         |
| 5. Children and Families        | 12. Refugees and Asylum Seekers        |
| 6. Crime and Criminal Justice   | 13. Teaching and Learning              |
| 7. Environment                  | 14. Research Methods and Methodologies |

Papers presenting a comparative, European or international dimension are strongly encouraged. We additionally welcome papers from outside the traditional social policy disciplines

### **Abstract submission**

Abstracts of no more than 200 words should be submitted either on paper or by email in rich text format

All abstracts **must** contain the following information.

Title of paper, your name, affiliation, postal address including post code, contact number (including country and area dialling code) and email address.

Please indicate the relevant sub theme for your paper.

### **Abstracts should be sent to arrive by 21st April 2006 to**

SPA 2006 Conference,  
Institute of Applied Social Studies,  
University of Birmingham,  
Edgbaston, Birmingham  
B15 2TT or  
Email [SPAConf@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:SPAConf@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Enquiries can be made by email to [SPAConf@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:SPAConf@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

Once your abstract has been received it will receive a standard email confirmation. If you do not receive a confirmation by end of February 2006 please contact the SPA conference office.

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