

THE COLLEGE OF SOCIALWORK

Social Work Reform Board

IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY OF INITIAL QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

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Background

At their meeting on 12 July 2011, the SWRB agreed the attached suite of reforms and related products for implementation.

This report contains details of all the proposals and a number of [annexes](#) which were agreed. It provides additional illustrative guidelines developed by the working groups to assist implementation and to improve the quality and consistency of social work degree courses.

These reforms and the accompanying guidelines are now ready to be widely disseminated and passed to The College, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and their employer partners for local implementation.

The College intends to work with the sector to continue to develop guidance to support high quality provision of social work education and training. Further developmental work will need to take into account implementation of relevant recommendations of the Munro Review.

HEI will be encouraged to review and begin to update their programmes based on the proposals in this report ready for implementation by September 2013 at the latest. Courses will continue to be approved under GSCC requirements until Health Professions Council (HPC) requirements and approval processes come into effect in July 2012. The College will be working with the sector to develop criteria and processes to endorse courses as the professional body.

The HPC will communicate with HEIs about their requirements and time-scales for re-approval leading up to and after the transfer of regulation

Executive Summary

This report brings together proposals for implementing three of the four Social Work Task Force (SWTF) recommendations to improve the quality and consistency of initial qualifying social work education and training as follows.

Strengthen the calibre of entrants accepted to study on social work degree courses.

Review the content and delivery of the curriculum.

Establish new arrangements for providing sufficient high quality placements which are properly supervised and assessed.

Together the proposals presented in this paper should better prepare social work students to enter the workforce, develop more specialist learning through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and continue their learning through a new continuing professional development (CPD) framework.

The proposals take into account developments which have occurred since the SWTF made their recommendations in December 2009 and recognise the current uncertain regulatory, delivery and financial context which is affecting Higher Education and social work service provision and the experiences of many service users and carers.

Regulation

The SWTF made a fourth recommendation for more transparent and effective regulation of social work education. Since that time government has decided that the regulation of social work education will transfer from the GSCC to the Health Professions Council (HPC) in July 2012. An earlier paper presented to the SWRB at its May meeting explores the implications of this transfer for the SWTF aspirations and key issues are threaded throughout this report.

Structure of this paper

Section One Introduction

Section One clarifies the objectives for education reform and explores how the different recommendations will work together to achieve the key aim of improving the quality and consistency of social work education. This includes 3 core initiatives which will support all elements of the reform including:

- The new Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)
- Partnership working, and
- The involvement of service users and carers in all aspects of degree provision

It describes how the reforms will be introduced in a different regulatory environment. The HPC as an independent regulator will set threshold standards for the profession based on fitness to practice to protect the public. Programmes will be required to ensure that graduates meet these threshold standards. The College, as the professional body, will set out professional standards for best practice and hold guidance relevant to all aspects of provision. The success of implementing the proposals will rely on guidance, commitment and varying influences across the sector.

Section Two – Calibre of entrants

This section presents a summary of final proposals for strengthening the calibre of entrants to social work qualifying programmes. This includes an holistic approach to selection, based on assessment of the first level of the PCF. Guidance has been developed to assist Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and others involved in admission and selection of students, which, once agreed, will be disseminated and held by The College.

Section Three – Curriculum Framework; content and delivery

SWRB – Final Paper - Initial qualifying social work education and training.

This section presents proposals for decision on a new curriculum framework based on the PCF. This will support programme providers to meet HPC standards and the provision of high quality professional education based on guidance held by The College. It includes guidance on teaching, learning and assessment of students and ensuring that educators are up to date with current practice, policy and research
These proposals have not been seen by the Board previously.

Section Four – Practice Learning

This section presents some new proposals and transitional arrangements **for decision** which are presented alongside a summary of the proposals which have been previously considered and agreed. The new proposals include:

- Transitional arrangements for practice educator framework
- 30 days skills development; assessment of readiness for direct practice
- Placement criteria

Annexes

A separate document of [Annexes](#) to this report is attached for those who wish to see more detail.

The paper reflects the work of representatives of many partner organisations and groups who have been members of the Education Working Group and its work streams during the last 18 months¹ It builds on proposals presented to the SWRB in September last year and comprehensive feedback from to the One year On (OYO) report. The proposals have evolved and been refined by the very people who will be most affected by them and will need to implement them on the ground.

The paper has been signed off by the Co- Chairs Hilary Tompsett (JUCSWEC) and Julia Hassall (ADCS)

¹ ADASS, ADCS, BASW, CAFCASS, The College, HPC, CWDC, SfC, Students, NQSWs, GSCC, Service Users and Carers, employers and practitioners, Learn to Care, Universities UK, HEA Swap, BIS, DH, academics, HEIs, JUCSWEC, Social Care workforce research unit, National organisation of practice teachers, SCIE

SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

1. The proposals for each of the SWTF recommendations need to be considered together to ensure a joined up approach to planning and developing social work programmes and achieving improvement. It is anticipated that implementation of all the proposals presented here will build on the many strong and respected social work degree programmes which are already in place and together achieve the following broad objectives :

Ensure entrants to qualifying programmes have the right mix of intellectual and personal qualities to succeed.

Achieve greater consistency in the content, quality and outcomes of courses.

Improve the employability of social work graduates and prepare them to enter the work force to work safely and effectively with service users and carers according to the HPC Standards of Proficiency² and the qualifying level of the Professional Capabilities Framework.

Establish the degree as the start of a career long journey for social workers to learn continually and develop their own knowledge, skills and understanding through practice and CPD and to assist others in doing so.

Ensure that programmes are based on shared and agreed expectations from employers, practitioners, HEI, the profession and government.

Ensure that employers, service users and carers are fully involved in the design, delivery and assessment of courses.

Background

2. Social Work qualifying courses (the social work degree) are currently offered at both Hons degree level and Masters level. They are approved by the General Social Care Council (GSCC) as enabling students to attain the standard of proficiency to become a social worker, as defined in the Care Standards Act 2000³. These incorporate the QAA benchmark statement for social work⁴, the DH requirement for social work training⁵ and the National Occupational Standards (NOS)⁶.

Achieving reform of social work education at a time of change and uncertainty in the sector

3. These SWRB proposals are being introduced at a time of change to the regulatory, service delivery, policy and financial systems which is affecting the whole sector. The Education Working Group has had to take into account the following issues in developing its proposals :

² These are currently out for consultation and will be published by April 2012

www.hpc-uk.org

³ Sections 63(5) and 63(6)

⁴ QAA subject benchmark for Social Work (QAA 2008)

⁵ Requirements for social work training (DH 2002)

⁶ These standards dating back to 2002 are currently under review by UK wide skills for care and development. These will be replaced in England by the PCF

Changes in funding and resources which are affecting the whole sector. Employers may have less capacity to provide placements and be involved in the design and delivery of education and training. The capacity of HEI and academics may also be affected by proposed changes in HE funding.

Practice Learning funding and Grants to support service users and carers to be involved in the design and delivery of the social work degree, including selection of students, need to be maintained. It has been agreed that The College will take on disbursement and monitoring of these grants and will be consulting on how this funding may be used more effectively.

The impact of changes in HE funding to fee based provision present a potential challenge to the aspirations for improvements to social work education. It is unclear how the proposals will affect the number of applications to courses in the future, particularly of mature students with dependents and of those who currently have their fees paid by employers.

The review of student Bursaries by DH is now expected to begin in September, taking into account these other changes,

The impact of the Government White Paper on HE “Students at the Heart of the System” with respect to the funding, delivery and deregulation of higher education, admissions policies and the student as „consumer“ also adds uncertainty to the future of social work education provision.

The Equality Act 2010 will need to be taken into account as it affects selection of students and course delivery

Policy and practice drivers

4. There are also a number of important policy and practice drivers which have implications for social work education. Some current examples are:

Government proposals on localisation and different models of delivery for social work, i.e. social work practices, mutualities and co-operatives will need to be taken into account in designing courses and supporting students to take up their first employment in the future.

The impact of the Munro review with its emphasis on social workers having the knowledge and skills for relationship building, professional judgement and decision making, communicating with children, young people and families, human development and child protection.

The impact of other policy directives in service delivery, i.e. the personalisation agenda, Allen review; family law review.

5. Social work, both as professional practice and as an academic subject continually needs to contribute to knowledge and evolve, adapt and change in response to social, political and economic challenges. This is accepted nationally and internationally. One of the important themes across these education proposals is that programme providers should have the responsibility, capacity and adaptability to keep their programmes, and staff up to date with policy, research and practice issues. The College as the voice of the profession will play a key role in ensuring that education and training, research and practice are responsive to changing policy and needs, whilst retaining the focus on fundamental social work values and role.

Future regulation

6. From July 2012, the regulation of social work education is to be transferred from the GSCC to the Health Professions Council (HPC) as part of the Health and Social Care Bill⁷. The DH requirements and the NOS for social work in England will no longer apply. The HPC will take on the current GSCC approved list of social work degree courses and the responsibility for approving and monitoring these courses against its Standards for Education and Training⁸ (SETs). These SETs detail what HEIs need to demonstrate to ensure that students who pass approved courses meet the new threshold Standards of Proficiency⁹ for social work required to apply for registration as professional social workers. HPC do not have a statutory enhancement role. Their remit is to establish and regulate against threshold standards to ensure safe and competent practice.
7. The proposals in this paper will support programme providers to meet the HPC's standards, and to further enhance and improve the quality of their courses through the guidance on admissions and selection, proposed curriculum framework and good practice standards for placements and practice educators which will be held by The College.
8. The College is also intending to work with the sector to develop criteria for endorsing courses, alongside the HPC, based on good practice for social work and the agreed SWRB proposals. These could include, for example, the involvement of employers, service users and carers in the design and delivery of courses, and more specific criteria for the provision of practice learning.

Working together to achieve change

9. The SWTF could not have foreseen the impact of a change in regulator or other events which have occurred since their recommendations were made. It is a challenging time to be expecting employers, HEIs and others to work together to provide high quality courses. As Munro points out "in the tough financial climate, investing in the training of social work may seem to be a luxury." The importance of investing in the next generation of social workers to improve the quality of practice in the future is imperative and should be supported by the whole sector.
10. As with other SWRB proposals the success of implementing proposals at this time will be made in the absence of some current levers, such as the DH requirements for social work training, and will instead be based on guidance and influence from a range of sources. These include HEIs themselves, academics, the regulator, practitioners, The College, employers, students, and service users and carers. All the elements of the reform agenda will need to work together to raise the quality outcomes. The need to meet HPC threshold standards, together with the PCF, the QAA benchmark statement and the

⁷ Since Royal assent has not yet been achieved to change the name to the Health (Care) Professions Council the current name of HPC is used throughout this paper.

⁸ <http://www.hpcuk.org/aboutregistration/standards/sets/>

⁹ These are being developed and will be consulted upon this summer and will be published by April 2012

adoption of guidance agreed by the sector and held by The College should effectively work together to improve consistency and quality of outcomes. The greater emphasis on students as consumers and further encouragement for HEIs to engage with employers to give programmes more credibility, as proposed in the recent white paper,¹⁰ may assist this process. Financial support and incentives, such as the grants for practice learning and services user and carers, will also play a part. Ultimately these proposals can best be achieved through the commitment of HEIs and employers to quality outcomes and of The College, on behalf of the profession, to promote good practice, provide information and guidance and disseminate research.

Key initiatives supporting improvement.

11. Social work education is one part of the whole reform agenda which affects and is affected by other parts of the system. The following proposals are all essential to improving social work education.

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)

12. The PCF establishes a framework for the provision of social work qualifying education within a continuum of professional development. It will support HEIs providing programmes and employers to identify and assess learning needs and outcomes and enable students to understand how they can meet and demonstrate these outcomes. These nationally agreed outcomes should:
 - provide the basis for building an integrated, comprehensive and up to date curriculum,
 - clarify shared expectations of what is expected at the point of qualification,
 - establish a clear link between the degree and the assessed and supported year in employment and improve overall consistency in curriculum design, delivery and assessment.
13. The criteria for selection of students are based on PCF statements at entry level reflecting the beginning stage of the nine capabilities; the PCF at qualifying level (PCF-IQ) describes the outcomes expected at point of qualification and the different levels of ability and progression students will have to demonstrate through practice learning.
14. With the support of the „technical group“¹¹, SCIE has taken on work to ensure coherence, consistency of language and understanding of levels throughout the framework. Further work will be undertaken to incorporate capabilities necessary for child and family social work (Munro recommendation 11). Once agreed by the SWRB, the framework will be passed as work in progress to The College, for further consultation and subsequent implementation.

¹⁰ Students at the Heart of the System <http://discuss.bis.gov.uk/hereform/white-paper/>

¹¹ Composed of employers, practitioners, academics and service users

Partnerships¹²

15. The provision of high quality social work courses, in which almost half the time is spent in practice learning, should be a shared responsibility between HEIs and employers. The establishment of effective partnership arrangements as proposed by the SWTF and echoed by the recent Munro report¹³ will be central to achieving the ambitions for reform of social work education.
16. HEI and Employer partnerships, including voluntary organisations, and across adults and children's services, should agree how they can take shared responsibility for up to date and professionally relevant delivery of local social work degree courses. Education and training should be based on a shared understanding of its purpose and expected outcomes. Partnerships determine how employers and practitioners across all settings and sectors will be involved in student selection, design and delivery of the degree and provision of high quality placements and provide a forum for ensuring quality assurance, based on principles which will be held by The College and compliance with statutory requirements set by HPC.

The involvement of service users and carers in the social work degree

17. Since the social work degree was introduced in 2003, it has been a requirement that service user and carers must be involved in all aspects of the design and delivery of courses including selection of students. Government have supported this involvement through provision of a grant to HEIs. Although the degree of participation has varied across courses it has been a successful element of the degree, much valued by students. Service users and carer „visitors" also work with the GSCC in regulating courses.
18. The SWTF recognised the benefit of this participation and recommended that service users and carers should be consistently and substantially involved in the design and delivery of courses¹⁴. The importance of sustaining and improving involvement in selection, teaching and assessment of students is strongly supported across the sector as benefiting student learning and preparation for practice. Service users and carer representatives have been centrally involved in developing these proposals. A briefing paper commissioned by SCIE and written by service users and carers is available on request and will be placed on relevant web-sites shortly.

¹² A separate paper on Partnership Principles is available on the SWRB website <http://www.education.gov.uk/swrb> (employer tab)

¹³ Recommendation 12, p. 98 The Munro Review of Child Protection: a child centred system, (May 2011)

¹⁴ Building a safe, confident future p.26

SECTION 2 - IMPROVING THE CALIBRE OF ENTRANTS TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

Decisions

The Board confirmed approval of these specific proposals and next steps as part of the broader package of education reform. The proposals and the Guidance document¹⁵ will be disseminated to HEI and local partners to support them to begin planning for implementation. All proposals can be adopted within the current regulatory framework of DH and GSCC requirements.

19. The Task Force emphasised the importance of strengthening the calibre of entrants to social work degree courses in raising the standards and status of the profession. Its final report identified that not all HEIs were assessing candidates for entry rigorously enough to make sure that they have the right mix of intellectual and personal qualities to succeed in professional training at degree level. HEIs are responsible for their own admissions policies, within the requirements set by professional bodies, regulators and in some cases government. Currently the requirements for entry to social work courses are set by the DH, but this will no longer be the case when regulation passes to the HPC.

The Proposals

20. The proposals previously agreed by the Board have received a generally high level consensus throughout their development and in the feedback received in response to the OYO report. The rationale for the proposals has been outlined in previous reports and is not repeated here.

21. The proposals have been mapped against HPC standards¹⁶ to ensure that there is alignment and no contradiction with the new regulator's requirements. It should be noted that the HPC standards are flexible and non-prescriptive.

22. The College is considering a plan to endorse programmes of education and training, which could take into account the SWRB proposals. The College will also hold the Guidance for the profession on admissions and selection.

Good practice guidance

23. Guidance on implementation of the proposals has been developed to assist HEIs and others involved in the admission and selection of social work students.¹⁷ This has been supported by a reference group composed of representatives from key organisations and groups. Once endorsed by the SWRB it will be held by the College. An executive summary of the guidance, which includes sections on relevant legislative and policy drivers, widening participation and equalities issues as well as detailed operational guidance and exemplars, is attached at [Annex 1](#). A short version will be produced for Careers" advisors, prospective applicants and others.

¹⁵ This will be available on the College Website from beginning of October, <http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org/>

¹⁶ [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0DSETsguidance\(finalversion\).pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0DSETsguidance(finalversion).pdf) p. 8 - 9

¹⁷ This was funded by the Higher Education Academy- subject centre for social policy and social work (HEA swap),

The holistic approach

24. The overall proposal is for an holistic approach to selection. Candidates should be assessed against agreed criteria, based on the first level of the Professional Capabilities Framework, using a range of methods (such as written tests, individual interviews and group exercises) to ascertain the extent to which they meet the complex mix of intellectual and personal qualities identified as essential. As long as the threshold level is met for all criteria, this allows for triangulation of evidence and selection of a diverse group of candidates with a mix of appropriate skills, knowledge and experience.

Existing requirements for selection

It is expected that HEIs will follow the broad precepts for recruitment and selection contained in the *Code of practice, (section 10: Admissions to higher education (QAA 2004)*

Providers should comply with legislation which requires reasonable adjustments for selecting disabled students where the disability would not prevent the applicant from meeting the outcomes for graduates.

It is important that students are “suitable” and do not pose a risk to service users. This is why the current arrangements to ensure suitability by enhanced Criminal Bureau records and health checks will continue as required by HPC. Successful applicants will be required to have satisfactorily completed the appropriate and relevant CRB checks, (normally at enhancement level) prior to enrolment on the course. (HPC SET 2.3) The admissions process must include compliance with health requirements as detailed in HPC SET 2.4. Decisions about what is „satisfactory” in relation to individual applicants should be agreed by HEI and placement providers with reference to and in line with HPC Guidance on conduct, and ethics for students and Guidance on health and character.¹⁸

Proposals

1. Clear information for applicants HEIs should clearly indicate that the social work degree is a professional course leading to eligibility to register as a social worker, list their criteria for admission, state what selection processes will be used and the need for enhanced CRB and health checks.

2. The Criteria for selection of applicants for social work training is based on statements at entry level of the PCF. These have been mapped against HPC standards and the outcome standards for qualification and will be subject to alignment through the SCIE PCF project group. The draft framework is attached at [Annex 2](#).

3. Written Test. All candidates should complete a written test, regardless of previous qualification or educational background. This should measure the applicant’s ability to write clearly and coherently in the English language. HEI procedures should verify authorship. Some HEIs may wish to use the written test to evaluate the potential to develop reflective, analytical and conceptual thinking. Others will test this in different ways, e.g. through interview.

¹⁸ <http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C16Guidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf>
<http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C17Guidanceonhealthandcharacter.pdf>

4. Interviews

All candidates selected for the social work degree should have performed well in an individual interview to test their communication skills, motivation and commitment, understanding of social work and evaluation of their life and work experience. This includes interviewing of international applicants using equivalent interviewing methods, such as web cams or other video link facilities

5 Group activities. It is recommended that HEIs consider the use of observed group activities/exercises as part of their selection process

6. Thresholds for entry. A minimum UCAS points threshold of 240¹⁹ or equivalents should be applied where applicants come with tariff bearing awards. For those entering via ACCESS routes, HEIs are encouraged to work with colleges to begin to determine equivalence with UCAS points²⁰. HEIs should monitor and analyse their progression and achievement rates against candidate selection and should be required to publish these²¹.

For those applying for Masters level courses who already have a degree, a minimum 2.1 degree classification should normally be required.

7. Basic skills requirements

All applicants must have GCSE grade C or above in English and Maths or certificated equivalences, regardless of previous educational qualifications.²²

All applicants must show an ability to use basic IT facilities, including word processing, internet browsing and use of email

8. Competence in written and spoken English

Successful applicants must meet communicating and comprehension skills to International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) at level 7.²³

9. Involvement of employers and service users and carers in selection processes.

The SWRB and EWG strongly endorsed a proposal that employers and service users are always involved in selection and interview processes²⁴.

DH is asked to ensure that grants to HEIs to support this inclusion are maintained.

Pre-requisite for life/work experience

25. The SWTF „call for evidence“ and feedback from the OYO identified significant concern about the number of applicants entering education and training with limited life/work experience. Following a thorough debate, it is recommended that there should be no **formal** pre-requisite of length of time or nature of life-work experience. However candidates should be asked to demonstrate how life/work experience has helped to prepare them for social work training and demonstrate their learning from their experiences at the appropriate life stage

¹⁹ Based on the 2009 average across SW providers for qualifying undergraduate programmes

²⁰ ACCESS courses are now graded, and Distinction/Merit grades are available to distinguish desirable levels of achievement.

²⁰ In line with recommendations in the Browne review for more transparent information to inform student choice.

²² HEIs should no longer run their own equivalence tests for those who cannot provide this evidence.

²³ www.ielts.org.uk This is already required for lawyers, teachers, nurses, and other health staff

²⁴ This is something which in the future could be arranged through the proposed partnerships

SWRB – Final Paper - Initial qualifying social work education and training.
and an understanding of social work and the helping role at a basic level in order to be selected, (as identified in the Entry level PCF statement)

Minimizing Costs and Maximizing Benefits from Resources

26. It is recognised that admission and selection of students for social work programmes is resource intensive. It is therefore even more important to maximize the resources available on social work programmes from this investment in improved admission and selection processes. There is confidence that more rigorous selection will:

Ensure that students have the intellectual capacity and personal qualities to learn and develop through their courses to the best possible standards and at least to the standard required

Improve appropriate success rates, and reduce the risk of “unsuitable” graduates entering and remaining in the workforce.

Reduce levels of withdrawal and the high level of students who take longer than the expected completion time

Increase the likelihood that less time and public money will be spent supporting “unsuitable” students or those who are having difficulties and provide more equitable support for all students

SECTION THREE – CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Implementation of the social work task force recommendations for “an overhaul of the content and delivery of social work degree courses”.

Decisions

The SWRB agreed these specific proposals and next steps as part of the broader package of education reform

Next Steps

The proposals and accompanying guidance will be passed to The College and will be disseminated to HEIs, employers and service user partners to inform curriculum planning and delivery.

Courses will continue to be approved under GSCC requirements until HPC standards and regulatory processes come into effect after July 2012.

HPC will work closely with HEIs to ensure they are clear about the standards required, the flexibility for introducing change and the time-scale for re-approval. Many programmes will already have a sound basis on which to build their curriculum around the PCF and other proposals contained in this report.

The College will be working with the sector to develop criteria for endorsement of courses as the professional body. They will work alongside the HPC as regulator, to enhance the quality of courses.

A series of curriculum guides on both the overall framework and key topics will be produced by the College (2011 – 2012).

Summary

The paper presents proposals for a revised curriculum framework for the social work degree based on Social Work Task Force (SWTF) recommendations. Together with other SWRB initiatives, such as strengthening the criteria for admissions to courses and improving the quality of practice learning, these should better prepare social work students to enter the workforce, develop more specialist learning through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and continue their learning through a new continuing professional development (CPD) framework. The Professional Capabilities Framework will provide the framework for the curriculum and improve consistency of outcomes and delivery.

The proposals will help programme providers to meet HPC standards with respect to curriculum design and delivery and to further enhance and improve the quality of their courses through curriculum framework guidance and good practice standards for educators which will be held by The College.

The Proposals

1. The College of Social Work will adopt the curriculum framework and guidance to programmes to promote and support the provision of high quality professional education over and above the threshold standards required by the Health Professions Council (HPC). **p. 17 – 19**

2. The curriculum framework will be based on outcome statements outlined in the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) at initial qualifying level (PCFIQ). **p.19 and [Annex 4](#)**
3. Teaching, learning and assessment of practice learning will be undertaken in line with the PCF - IQ progression thresholds identified for „readiness for direct practice“ (prior to the first placement), the end of the first and end of last placements. Expected outcomes for each threshold will be stated in relation to the PCF. **p.19 - 20 and [Annex 6](#)**
4. The framework will include a statement indicating the range of service user groups that should be covered to ensure students are appropriately prepared to work across age and service user groups at an initial level. **p.20 & [Annex 5](#)**
5. A series of curriculum guides will be produced on key topics with indicative content and key resources. These will be held by The College and updated at regular intervals, as agreed, to ensure programmes can access materials to reflect current policy and service delivery contexts. **p. 20 – 21 and [Annex 7](#)**
6. Programmes should adopt a framework to ensure rigorous and valid assessment processes are established. These include an assessment of readiness and safety to undertake direct practice with service users, (i.e. prior to the first placement) and arrangements for appropriate „exit routes“ for students for whom social work is not an appropriate career choice, **p.21 - 23 and [Annex 8](#)**
7. Effective partnerships should be established between HEIs, employers and other organisations to support the delivery of social work education. It is expected that employers, practitioners and services users and carers are involved in the design and delivery of the curriculum. **p.23**
8. Programmes should adopt and implement guidance about the „process' curriculum – to ensure that the delivery of content is appropriate for professional learning and will lead to graduates who are informed, critically aware practitioners, with the skills and resources to acquire, synthesise and apply new evidence and analysis creatively and effectively. **24 + [Annex 9](#)**
9. Programmes should take action in consultation with agency partners to ensure that academics and practice educators have opportunities to keep up to date with current practice, research, policy and knowledge. **p.24 – 25 + [Annex 10](#)**

The paper is supplemented by a number of Annexes which provide more detail about the proposals and will form the basis for future guidance documents.

A background literature review and research paper which looks at the proposals in the context of evidence from published and unpublished sources and the original concerns raised by the SWTF is available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/swrb> (Educators tab)

A summary is attached at [Annex 3](#)

Background

1. In its final report „Building a safe, confident future“²⁵, the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) recommended

An overhaul of the content and delivery of social work degree courses:

A curriculum based on shared and agreed expectations of the outcomes, skills, knowledge, values and qualities expected of social work graduates with standards explicitly tied to robust assessment processes.

Systems for ensuring that course delivery is up to date with current knowledge, policy and practice

Employers and service users are engaged in its design and delivery
Students should be equipped with the knowledge, legislative context and tools for initial work with adults or children and be prepared for more specialist learning through ASYE and their subsequent career

The regulator (at this time the GSCC) should ensure that agreed requirements are met, the curriculum is kept up to date and that employers, service users and carers are engaged in its design and delivery

2. The curriculum for the social work degree is currently determined by the Secretary of State through a combination of the QAA benchmark statement for social work²⁶, the DH requirement for social work training²⁷ and the National Occupational Standards²⁸.

Concerns about the curriculum framework identified by the SWTF

3. The social work task force identified the following concerns about the content and delivery of the Social Work Degree raised by students, policy makers, researchers, practitioners and employers:
 - A lack of consistency in content and delivery across the country,
 - A plethora of standards set by different bodies which are confusing, lack transparency and provide weak levers for driving up the quality of programmes,
 - Different expectations held by academics, students and employers about what graduates should be able to do at point of qualification,
 - Some students are not appropriately prepared to enter the workforce and this is affecting graduate employability and retention of NQSWs.
 - There is a lack of sufficient high quality practice learning opportunities which are supported by good practice educators who can also relate theory to practice.
 - Some important areas of knowledge and skills are missing from the curriculum or are not taught in the right depth,
 - Some social worker graduates lack basic knowledge and skills around communication, assessment and child development.

²⁵ Building a safe, confident future, (2009. p.22)

²⁶QAA subject benchmark for Social Work (QAA 2008)

²⁷ Requirements for social work training (DH 2002)

²⁸ These standards dating back to 2002 are currently under review by UK wide skills for care and development. These will be replaced in England by the PCF

- Some HEIs are not producing graduates who are able to transfer learning and skills, be creative and curious.
- Some academics are out of date with the reality of practice and find it difficult to relate theory to practice

27. The literature review and research paper provides more in-depth analysis of these issues is available on request.

The context

28. These proposals are being introduced to address the concerns outlined above and to propose a new curriculum framework based on agreed expected outcomes. Designing and delivering social work degree courses is the primary responsibility of HEIs based on meeting university requirements, QAA benchmark statements, regulatory standards and professional body guidance and working closely with employers and services users and carers. These proposals do not prescribe the detail of the curriculum and its delivery, the learning outcomes and assessment of these. They do provide guidance for a new framework on which programme providers can build best practice.

29. The breadth and depth of knowledge and skills demanded of social work graduates is difficult to cover in a 3 year degree. Moreover, there are continuing demands from interest groups to augment the profile of a range of topics in the curriculum, e. g autism and end of life care. It is not possible to meet all these needs in depth within initial and generic qualifying education, so the focus of these proposals is to define a framework to ensure agreed core outcomes that will be achieved by graduates, and specifically to ensure that graduates learn how to learn, and seek out information, knowledge and understanding to inform evidence based practice for the future.

30. As with other areas of reform these proposals are being introduced in the context of a number of policy, regulatory and financial changes, as outlined in Section 1, p.4 - 6

Assumptions and principles

31. In addition to the general objectives outlined on Section 1, p. 4, the following assumptions and principles have been agreed in developing these proposals.

The degree needs to be delivered with greater consistency and improved quality of outcomes, linking theory to practice more effectively and building on good practice in many programmes. The social work degree is a generic degree, designed to prepare students to enter practice as professionals in a range of social work settings and service user groups. Initial education and training is the start of a journey of developing knowledge, skills and expertise through practice and continuing professional development. The ASYE, and CPD will provide

subsequent opportunities to develop more specialist knowledge and skills to work in increasingly challenging situations.

A balance must be struck between achieving consistency on the one hand, and enabling flexibility and responsiveness of curriculum design on the other.

The proposals aim to achieve:

A curriculum framework based on jointly agreed outcome standards, tied to robust assessment processes

Improved consistency of content and delivery whilst recognising the remit of HEIs to design, deliver and assess their curriculum in different ways.

Greater focus on linking theory to practice throughout the course

Students who are better prepared to enter the workforce

Students who have the opportunity to learn how to learn, think critically, analyse information, develop research mindedness and to continually improve their practice throughout their careers.

Students who are provided with opportunities to learn key knowledge, concepts, values, skills and social work approaches,

A framework which addresses the identified gaps in the current curriculum and challenges to its delivery and enables programmes to remain up to date.

The Proposals

1. The College of Social Work will adopt the curriculum framework and guidance to programmes to promote and support the provision of high quality professional education over and above the threshold standards required by the Health Professions Council, (HPC)

32. In the future HEIs will have to develop the social work degree to meet the standards of the new regulator, the HPC. HPC will not produce a curriculum for the profession, but will assess provision of courses against their Standards for Education and Training, (SETs)²⁹ which include standards for the curriculum, assessment and practice learning.

33. The SETs for the curriculum identify the broad standards which HEIs will need to meet to ensure that students passing approved courses meet the threshold Standards of Proficiency (SoPs)³⁰ required for registration with the HPC. HPC will therefore need to be assured that curriculum design will enable students to meet the HPC Standards of Proficiency by linking learning outcomes and assessment to achieve these outcome standards (SETS 4.1 and 6.1).

34. The SETs include that programmes must:

²⁹ [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0DSETsguidance\(finalversion\).pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0DSETsguidance(finalversion).pdf)

³⁰ These are being developed and will be consulted upon this summer for publication by July 2012.

Reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base of the profession as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance, such as those set by the professional body and QAA benchmark statements,

Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the curriculum

Remain relevant to current practice

Include arrangements to support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking,

Encourage evidence based practice.

Use a range of teaching and learning approaches appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum

35. The HPC standards incorporate many of the proposals being made by the SWRB. As an independent regulator, the HPC has the remit to set threshold standards for the profession based on fitness to practice to protect the public. It is the role of professional bodies such as The College, to supplement regulatory standards by setting out professional standards for best practice.

36. The College will not be a regulator, but the HPC make clear the important role of professional bodies in developing learning and curriculum frameworks and, in some cases, endorsement of courses which is carried out by some of the other professions they regulate. It is envisaged that College endorsement will be of significant advantage to recruitment and reputation for the HEI, as well as being approved by the HPC.

37. The College has expressed an intention to hold the curriculum framework guidance for social work and to support and promote the improved quality and consistency of social work education and training. This will include:

Adoption of the Professional Capabilities Framework, which will inform the expectations of social work students at different stages in their education and training.

Developing cost-effective, feasible mechanisms to endorse education and training provision which meets agreed quality criteria.

Producing and holding information and guidance for programme provision, including access to research.

Developing mechanisms to evaluate the impact of social work education on practice in the future

2 The curriculum framework will be based on outcome statements described in the Professional Capabilities Framework at qualifying level (PCF-IQ)

38. The draft outcomes specified for the PCF-IQ social work set a benchmark for programmes providing social work qualifying education. They have been

developed by a small group of academics, employer representatives and service user representative and have incorporated and cross refer to the HPC's draft standards of proficiency, and the QAA bench mark statement for social work. The PCF-IQ provides an „umbrella“ for other requirements, thus meeting, as far as possible, the criterion set by the Social Work Task Force for a single set of standards. The latest version is attached at [Annex 4](#)

39. The PCF- IQ will support HEIs and employers to identify and assess learning needs and outcomes and enable students to understand how they can meet and demonstrate these outcomes. These nationally agreed outcomes should provide the basis for building an integrated, comprehensive and up to date curriculum, clarify shared expectations of what is expected at the point of qualification, establish a clear link between the degree and the assessed and supported year in employment and improve overall consistency in curriculum design, delivery and assessment.
40. Considerable work has been achieved in developing the PCF - IQ. As described in Section 1, page 7 it is being aligned with other levels of the PCF for presentation to the Board in September. Once agreed this will be passed as work in progress to The College, for further consultation and subsequent implementation.

3. Teaching, learning and assessment of practice learning will be undertaken in line with the PCF - IQ progression thresholds identified for „readiness for direct practice“ (prior to the first placement), the end of the first and end of last placements. Expected outcomes for each threshold will be stated in relation to the PCF to the first placement) and at the end of the first and last placements.

41. Within the broad integrated curriculum framework, clear outcome statements based on the PCF will describe the different levels of ability and progression students will have to demonstrate through practice learning. The interim thresholds, to be assessed are;
- assessment of readiness for direct practice (prior to first placement),
 - end of first placement
 - end of last placement.

These thresholds reflect the different levels of „complexity“ and expectations of degree of autonomy of practice expected as students progress through their programmes and are attached in draft form at [Annex 6](#).

4. The framework will include a statement indicating the range of service user groups and related issues which should be covered to ensure that students are appropriately prepared to work across age and service user groups at an initial level

42. Students need to be prepared to benefit from the opportunities to undertake placements in different settings and with different service user groups as

proposed in the practice learning recommendations and HPC standards³¹ and in line with the delivery of a generic degree. The curriculum framework based on the PCF ensures the development of capabilities common to all social work interventions. Guidance will be issued alongside the PCF (See [Annex 5](#)) which will ensure that learning covers all service user groups, that students are encouraged and expected to transfer learning from one user group or setting to another and that students understand transitions. Students should understand the interconnections between different areas of need and the inter-relationship of individual, family and community concerns. They should learn about specific difficulties arising from a range of different life experiences which lead to children, adults and older people being in need of support.

43. HEIs may also wish to ensure that there are opportunities for students to undertake studies in depth in one or more areas, linked to the focus of their final placement, a dissertation or project.

5. A series of curriculum guides will be produced on key topics with indicative content and key resources. These will be held by The College and added to and updated at regular intervals as agreed to ensure programmes can access materials to reflect current policy and service delivery contexts.

44. As described in the literature review pages 9 - 13 there are differing views about what areas of knowledge should be covered and to what depth in initial qualifying degrees and what should be covered to meet the increasingly specialist and complex work that social workers take on as they move through their careers.
45. The PCF attempts to resolve this issue by identifying different levels and detail of knowledge, skills and values which should be expected at the point of qualification, ASYE and subsequently. The PCF also includes reference to a number of areas not highlighted in previous requirements (e.g. the centrality of relationships, and emphasis on building them). The SWTF report, feedback on One Year On proposals and more recently the Munro Review have identified the need to further define the body of knowledge and skills for both children and families and adult social workers more effectively, including the need for at least basic safeguarding training for all students and the knowledge and skills needed for new ways of working, i.e. personalisation. Communication skills, assessment, relationship building and mental health are all considered essential. The „Think Family“ context provides the appropriate organisational rationale. (See literature review p.16 - 20) Students cannot learn everything, but need to be able to transfer learning to different situations.

³¹ HPC SETs guidance 5.2 ..” we will want to see that all students gain access to a wide range of learning experiences in a variety of practice environments which reflect the nature of modern practice and the range of practice settings they are preparing to enter”.

46. To provide further support to social work programme providers, it is proposed that guidance on the overall curriculum framework will be supplemented by guidance to help define the breadth and depth within key areas („Curriculum“ or „Topic guides“). Publication could commence with key areas about which concern has been expressed and those where it has been identified that some NQSW are not being adequately prepared. These include working with other professions, substance misuse, dealing with hostility and aggression, mental health and time management . Munro has also identified areas such as detailed learning on child development, how to communicate with children and young people and using evidence based methods of working with children and families as crucially missing on some courses.³² Guidance would cover the range of issues that it would be recommended to include on that topic in initial qualifying education, links to key resources for teaching and learning and relevant research. Two exemplars are included in [Annex 7](#)

6. Programmes should adopt a framework to ensure rigorous and valid assessment processes are established, including an assessment of readiness and safety to undertake direct practice with service users, (i.e. the first placement) and arrangements for appropriate „exit routes“ for students for whom social work is not an appropriate career choice.

47. There has been concern that some programmes may not have sufficiently coherent and robust assessment strategies and have passed students who are not competent and/or suitable to become a registered social worker. A particular tension was how some decisions were made about competence and fitness to practice (literature review p.19/20). HEIs develop their own assessment mechanisms under guidance from QAA, the regulator and professional bodies. HPC in the future will require that programme learning outcomes (including taught and placement modules/units) relate to the Standards of Proficiency and that assessment tests these learning outcomes and only allows those who meet them to pass the programme.
48. Comprehensive guidance has been produced on the assessment of students on social work qualifying programmes which is detailed in [Annex 8](#). This guidance builds on the standards for assessment laid down by the Health Professions Council (See SET 6) and further promotes assessment strategies that both support and develop high quality learning, and provide a robust threshold for entry to professional practice. This guidance once agreed would be held by The College. It is based on two key principles as follows:

Assessment should enable the integration of academic and practice learning throughout the course

Final summative assessment of students should be made using the outcome statements of the Professional Capabilities Framework as specified at qualifying level and learning outcomes based on the HPC standards of proficiency.

³² Munro report p. 97

49. Particular concerns about the consistency of assessment of practice learning were identified by the SWTF and SWRB and are further explored in the literature review. This new guidance highlights strategies for improving the assessment of student's practice including giving consideration to ways in which the assessment of practice can contribute directly, (through grading of practice skills) or indirectly (through written work) to final degree classification³³;
50. The SWTF were particularly concerned about the lack of alternative (non professional) routes/awards on some programmes for students who are not able to complete the social work degree, especially where there are questions about suitability or about practice competence. The guidance includes some proposals for establishing "exit routes".
51. The guidance also includes comments on:
- the requirements for External Examiners,
assessment of the accreditation of prior learning and
dealing with professional suitability.
52. HPC will require providers to have in place a process throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession- related conduct, SET 3.16. It is therefore proposed that programmes should retain their procedures for considering student's suitability to practise, and should have in place procedures to end a student's social work training if there are concerns. The existing GSCC requirements about suitability for practice have served the profession well, but will no longer apply. A revision of the „Suitability for social work³⁴“ guidelines to take account of the new context is recommended to be held by the College.

7. Effective partnerships should be established between HEIs, employers and other organisations to support the delivery of social work education. This includes the expectation that employers, practitioners and services users and carers are involved in the design and delivery of the curriculum

53. This proposal is made in line with the recent Universities UK statement of collaboration, HPC SET 5.10³⁵, and Recommendation 12 of the Munro report.

³³ Grading of practice learning, and means by which PL can contribute to degree classification is being developed in a number of programmes. It is also being introduced into some health professions.

³⁴ Suitability for social work (GSCC and JUC social work education committee, September 2007)

³⁵ There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider

“Employers and HEIs should work together so that social work students are prepared for the challenges of child protection work”.

54. The establishment of formal partnerships proposed by the SWRB provide an ideal forum to agree how employers, HEIs and others can together take shared responsibility for up to date and professionally relevant delivery of local social work degree courses. Employers across all settings and sectors have an interest in influencing the improved quality of courses to ensure that newly qualified workers are well prepared to enter the workforce. The SWRB proposals emphasise that strong partnerships and good collaboration between employers and HEIs will lead to a more strategic approach to meeting workforce needs, providing high quality placements and delivering good quality training and development for social workers.
55. The SWTF was impressed by the evidence that the involvement of service users and carers in social work education improved the learning experience of students and proposed that expert practitioners, employers and service user and carers should play a significant and substantial part in the design and delivery of the social work degree. Recent feedback from student focus groups has strongly confirmed that this involvement provides effective learning and enables them to link theory to practice and to understand the reality of the social work role.
56. There is a concern that the participation of service users, carers and employers is not a mandatory requirement of the HPC. The HPC is considering how their contribution can be strengthened in the future.
57. The review of the DH grant paid to HEIs to support service user and carer involvement is to be consulted on by the College. The EWG would urge the continuation of this grant in order that service user and carer involvement be retained. A briefing paper commissioned by SCIE and written by service users and carers is available on request and will shortly be placed on the web site.

8. Programmes should adopt and implement guidance about the „process' curriculum, to ensure that the delivery of content is appropriate for professional learning and will lead to graduates who are informed, critically aware practitioners, with the skills and resources to acquire, synthesise and apply new evidence and analysis creatively and effectively.

58. In constructing a curriculum framework to meet the outcome statements for the social work degree, social work programmes should pay careful attention to how the content is taught (the „process“ curriculum). Students need to know how to deal with change, how to learn, how to adapt and build resilience. The way in which students are encouraged to engage in a range of learning and assessment activities can help them to recognise and

develop these qualities. [Annex 8](#) suggests a range of approaches to teaching and learning in order to model and develop key important concepts, understanding and skills as outlined in the PCF and to enhance the professional nature of social work education.

59. The curriculum framework should provide opportunities for students to develop research mindedness, enhance their capacity for evidenced informed practice and prepare them to develop their own learning and curiosity. Teaching and learning about social work research clearly plays a significant and distinctive part in achieving these outcomes throughout their initial qualifying courses and throughout their career. The development of research literate students is key to promoting quality practice that can support change for children families and vulnerable adults and lay the foundation for some future careers in academic social work.

9. Programmes should take action, in consultation with agency partners to ensure that academics have opportunities to keep up to date with current practice, research, policy and knowledge,

60. Educators are expected to deliver high quality critically reflective learning, to be research minded, to integrate research into their teaching, to be connected to contemporary practice and to have a robust knowledge of the relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

61. Proposals are made to encourage HEIs, in partnership with local employers, to ensure that their staff are up to date and responsive to the changing realities of practice by building on some existing examples of secondments, joint appointments, collaborative research opportunities and the new CPD framework. Detailed suggestions can be found in [Annex 10](#).

62. The proposals are supported by HPC requirements that there must be:

- a programme for the continuing professional development and research of staff,
- that staff should have relevant specialist experience and knowledge, and that
- the person with overall responsibility for course provision must be appropriately qualified and experienced and (normally) be on the HPC ³⁶register).

63. The Browne review of Higher Education ³⁷(October 2010) proposed that all new academics with teaching responsibility would be required to undertake a teacher training qualification accredited by the HEA and that all teaching staff should have the option to achieve this. These initiatives would be especially helpful for social work practitioners making the transition into higher education.

³⁶ HPC SETS guidance 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7

³⁷ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs>

Conclusion

64. These proposals will work together to promote more consistency in curriculum content, delivery and outcomes based on the agreed expectations outlined in the PCF, HPC standards and College guidance for good practice. These mechanisms will provide the infrastructure for a new curriculum framework in the broader context of deregulation and lack of regulatory and legislative levers currently in place. Successful implementation will depend on a range of strategies and influence as described in Section 1, page 6

SECTION FOUR – PRACTICE LEARNING

Implementation of the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) recommendation that arrangements should be put in place to „provide sufficient high quality practice placements, which are properly supervised and assessed for all social work students“

Background

1. These guidelines describes the arrangements for practice learning agreed by the SWRB at its meeting on 12 July 2011. It is expected that these reforms will be implemented from 2013 at the latest, to achieve the aspirations of the SWRB to better prepare social work students for the realities of front line practice, to meet the standards of HPC as the regulator, and to achieve endorsement by The College of Social Work.
2. The quality of practice placements is critical to raising standards in social work education. The SWTF recommended that new arrangements should be put in place „to provide sufficient high quality practice placements, which are properly supervised and assessed, for all social work students“ (Recommendation 3) and the final report of the Munro Review of Child Protection stressed the importance that „HEIs and employing agencies should work together so that practice placements are of the highest quality“ (Recommendation 12).
3. Through the Education Working Group of the SWRB and its work streams, substantial debate has taken place, and these requirements are supported by a consensus in the sector that the standards are desirable and achievable in the future.
4. The quality of placements depends on an inter-relationship between a number of important elements. No single element is more important than others, but taken together they provide a strong response to the challenge of improving the quality of practice placements.

High quality practice placements - overview of elements

Placement guidelines	Detailed guidelines/further information
<p>Partnerships between employers and universities will be responsible for developing high quality placements</p>	<p>Full details of partnership principles agreed by SWRB can be found at www.education.gov.uk/swrb (employer tab)</p>
<p>Agreed thresholds for progression and outcomes will apply at the end of each placement, linked to the PCF</p>	<p>Work in progress, available end September 2011</p>
<p>Quality Assurance framework for Practice Learning (QAPL) will be met by all placements</p>	<p>Full details can be found on the Skills for Care website http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/practiceplacements/sw_quality_standards_for_practice_placements.aspx and in future will be held by The College</p>
<p>The Practice Educator Framework will be required from 2013/14. All last placement practice educators should be qualified to Stage 2 and a RSW. All first placement practice educators should be qualified to Stage 1 and ideally a RSW, but transitional arrangements will allow non-RSWs to practice until 2014/15.</p>	<p>Full details of the Practice Educator Framework can be found on the Skills for Care website http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/practiceeducation/sw_development_of_practice_education_for_social_work.aspx and in the future will be held by The College</p> <p>Transitional arrangements guidelines – Section A (p. 29-31)</p>
<p>All programmes will use a consistent model of 200 days practice</p>	

<p>learning which will include:</p> <p>30 days for development of practice skills</p> <p>70 days first placement</p> <p>100 days last placement</p>	
<p>Arrangements for: 30 days for developing practice skills</p> <p>Readiness for direct practice assessment</p> <p>- will be delivered collaboratively by employers and HEIs.</p>	<p>Guidelines Section B (p. 32- 33)</p>
<p>Placement criteria 1 – different practice experience</p> <p>Students will have different practice experience in the first and last placements.</p>	<p>Guidelines Section C. (p.34)</p>
<p>Placement criteria 2 – statutory interventions/last placement</p> <p>Students will undertake tasks to prepare them for statutory interventions in the last placement.</p>	<p>Guidelines Section D (p.35 – 36)</p>

Next steps

5. These requirements, agreed by the SWRB in July 2011, will be developed by The College of Social Work and incorporated into its quality assurance and endorsement of social work programmes.

Section A

Practice Educator Framework - Transitional arrangements

A1 Issues and background

1. The SWRB agreed in September 2010 that the Practice Educator Framework should be introduced from 2011 and required from 2013, including the SWTF recommendation that all practice educators should be registered social workers.
2. Analysis and modelling of numbers of Stage 1 and 2 practice educators available by 2013 was completed by the GSCC in May 2011. This indicates there will be a significant shortfall of practice educators available to meet the standard³⁸.
3. HPC guidance states that practice educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed (SET 5.9). This allows practice educators who are not registered social workers to continue on an „exceptional“ basis, but the standards laid down by the profession may exceed this.
4. There is strong support in the sector for implementation of higher standards for practice educators, including the requirement that they should be registered social workers. However, this is balanced by ongoing concern about the reality of the current supply of trained practice educators and the impact this might have on the availability of placements.
5. These transitional arrangements for the implementation of the Practice Educator Framework will ensure that from 2013, all last placements are supervised by a Stage 2 practice educator who is a registered social worker, but that until 2014-15, first placements can be supervised by a Stage 1 practice educator who is not a registered social worker, where necessary.

A2 Transitional arrangements for Practice Educator Framework

Principles

Transitional arrangements are underpinned by three principles:

Stage 2 practice educators, who are registered social workers must be channelled into the last placement, to ensure students are signed off by a registered social worker, but all placements should aim to provide trained and skilled practice educators, who able to support the learning of students.

The criteria for the statutory interventions/last placement (See Section D) mean that last placements are less likely to take place in settings where non-social work registered practice educators are located.

³⁸ Practice Educator Professional Standards: Implementation issues and models for consideration. (GSCC, May 2011)

Practice educators who are not registered social workers will have a total transition period of five years from 2010, when the new arrangements were agreed by the SWRB. After that, ways should be found to continue incorporating their skills in the training of social workers: this particularly applies to the essential contribution of service users and carers.

Last placement

From academic year 2013-14, all practice educators must meet Stage 2 requirements or equivalent, including the requirement to be a registered social worker.

First placement

From academic year 2013-14, all practice educators must meet Stage 1 requirements or equivalent, including the requirement to be a registered social worker, where possible.

Practice educators who are not registered social workers but able to meet Stage 1 requirements or equivalent may continue to practice until the **end** of academic year 2014 - 5.

Summary – Transitional arrangements

2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Placement 1/2 (Normally) Qualified Practice Educator/Teacher and/or Enabling Learning and/or working towards Stage 1	First Placement: Qualified Practice Educator (Stage 1) and (ideally) RSW* * Non-RSW may continue to practice	First Placement: Qualified Practice Educator (Stage 1) and (ideally) RSW* * Non-RSW may continue to practice	First Placement: Qualified/Exp RSW & Qualified Practice Educator (Stage 1 or 2)
Final Placement Qualified/Exp RSW & (normally) Qualified Practice Educator/Teacher and/or working towards Stage 2	Last Placement: Qualified/Exp RSW & Qualified Practice Educator (Stage 2)	Last Placement: Qualified/Exp RSW & Qualified Practice Educator (Stage 2)	Last Placement: Qualified/Exp RSW & Qualified Practice Educator (Stage 2)
Current practice teaching/education requirements (and working towards new standards)	New Practice Educator Standards (+ transitional arrangements for non-RSW)	New Practice Educator Standards (+ transitional arrangements for non-RSW)	New Practice Educator Standards

Role of partnerships

These transitional requirements will enable employer/university partnerships to plan how to effectively use the fully qualified Stage 2 practice educators they have. This might include considering the number of students they are expected to take in a year and their role in supporting on-site supervisors.

They will also enable partnerships to plan to train sufficient practice educators at Stages 1 and 2 to meet their future needs, including replacing practice educators who are not registered social workers and will be unable to supervise placements after the **end** of academic year 2014-15.

Section B

30 days for developing practice skills

Readiness for direct practice assessment

B1 Issues and background

1. SWTF recommended that „serious consideration should be given to reducing the minimum number of placement days ...from 200 to no less than 130“ (1.45). Following work undertaken by the practice learning work stream, SWRB agreed in September 2010 that the number of practice learning related days should not be reduced, but 30 of the 200 days should be used for developing practice skills.
2. A key purpose of the days allocated to developing practice skills is likely to be preparing students to undertake a „readiness for direct practice“ assessment, prior to going on the first placement. This assessment checks a student’s suitability for practice, before they come into direct contact with service users and carers on the first placement.
3. The days can also contribute to developing practice skills in a range of other ways, and some can be reserved for the second and/or third years to develop more advanced practice skills. The use and content of the days will be determined locally by partnerships of employers and universities.
4. Through the feedback received to the One Year On report, including feedback from students and service users and carers, it is clear that there is substantial support in the sector for the introduction of 30 days for developing practice skills, as part of a consistent model of practice placements.

B2 Guidelines

30 days for developing practice skills

30 days for developing practice skills will provide an opportunity for social work programmes to develop creative and flexible approaches to the development of practice skills in a safe environment.

The structure and content of the days should be planned by local partnerships of employers and universities. It is an area that should be flexible and responsive to the specific learning needs of individual students.

The 30 days could be divided between input at university, observing/shadowing practice and preparation for the readiness for direct practice assessment. While the majority of days are likely to be used in the first year prior to the first placement, there will be no requirement that all 30 days must take place prior to the readiness for direct practice assessment. Days that are reserved for the second and/or final years could be used to develop more advanced skills, such as communicating with difficult to

engage families. These days would count as additional practice learning days for the first or last placement, to be assessed at that level.

Developing practice skills may include:

- Developing skills of observation (of people and of practice)
- Developing communication and interviewing skills
- Direct communication with service users and carers, thus enabling students to understand social work values in practice, prior to entering frontline services
- Developing understanding of the social work context and social work practice through work shadowing opportunities

Readiness for direct practice assessment

An assessment of readiness for direct practice should take place prior to the first placement. It should be assessed through a structured process whereby a student demonstrates their communication skills and ability to engage safely and effectively with service users. This could include a „live“ demonstration of a student's practice skills and a reflective commentary.

The decision that a student is ready for direct practice should normally be made by an assessment panel composed of university staff, employers and service users, agreed by the local partnership. Their role will be to decide whether the evidence submitted by the student meets the criteria for readiness to practice.

A student should demonstrate readiness to practice in:

- Communication skills with service users and children, and other professionals (PCF 1-9)
- Awareness of social work values and own value base (PCF 2)
- Awareness of own biases and impact on working with diverse groups (PCF 3)
- Professional behaviour, basic knowledge of social work role and context of social work practice (PCF 1 and 8)
- Skills in reflective practice (PCF 6)
- Awareness of the legislative framework of social work, including human rights (PCF 4)
- Awareness of the knowledge base and models of intervention used in social work (PCF 5 and 7)

Section C

Placement criteria 1 – different experience in first and last placements

C1 Issues and background

1. SWTF recommended that „students should continue to gain practice experience and learning in two practice settings and with two different service user groups“ (1.46). Contrasting settings/service user groups was a feature of social work training prior to the SWRB reforms and has always been considered an important element of a generic degree.
2. The HPC’s draft standards of proficiency for social work are based on the principle that a social worker trains and qualifies with a broad experience and understanding of the profession i.e. a variety of settings and service user groups, (although of course, not all). This means that programmes which allow students to have a limited scope of practice experience will not be able to meet the standards of proficiency.
3. The SWRB endorsed the view that students should develop generic practice skills at qualifying level, which could be later developed through specialist experience and training after qualification.
4. Students should have access to different experiences in the first and last placements, across a range that includes settings, service user groups, ages and methods. This should contribute to all students developing a „Think Family“ perspective.
5. Offering flexibility in the range of different placement experiences will mean that matching with learner needs can be considered, although it will continue to be difficult to allocate placements on the basis of student choice alone.

C2 Guidelines for different experience in first and last placements

Students should normally have different experience in their first and last placements. This is likely to mean **different settings, service user groups, ages or methods**. It should contribute to all students developing a „Think Family“ perspective, and form the foundation for developing specialist skills once qualified.

Section D

Placement criteria 2 – statutory interventions/last placement

D1 Issues and background

1. The SWTF recommended that „mechanisms should be introduced to make sure that all social work students eventually benefit from at least one placement in a local authority, mental health trust or national organisation undertaking statutory work...” (1.44) and that this should build on work on the definition of statutory social work, carried out by the Social Work Development Partnership.
2. The SWDP recommended in March 2010 that preparation for statutory social work should be defined by the tasks undertaken by students on placement and not the setting (e.g. local authority) or type of placement (e.g. statutory). This would maximise the availability of placements across statutory and non-statutory sectors, where formal assessment of risk and safeguarding takes place.
3. The SWRB agreed in September 2010 that criteria for the last placement should be produced, which addressed preparation to undertake statutory duties.
4. The HPC’s „Guidance on conduct and ethics for students” places expectations on students to act within the limits of their knowledge and skills, recognising that they are not yet autonomous practitioners but should work with the appropriate level of supervision.

D2 Guidelines for statutory interventions/last placement

a) Tasks

The setting selected for the last placement (100 days) must prepare students for the statutory aspects of a social worker’s role by offering them opportunities to demonstrate engagement with:

Formal assessment processes (observation, gathering of information, analysis, reporting, use of evidence base, development of clear recommendations) to include:

- formal processes considering risk and/or safeguarding for child protection, mental health or vulnerable adults
- opportunities to reflect on, discuss and analyse appropriate use of authority (PCF 7, PCF 6)

Application and understanding of legal framework relevant for social work practice (PCF 5, 6)

Organisational policies and decisions and their impact on service delivery to service users (PCF 8)

The demands of a high pressured environment, where time and competing interests have to be managed effectively (PCF 1)

Multiagency working, including planning interventions with other agencies, and analysing and managing tensions (PCF 7)

Presentation of outcomes of formal assessment processes, including analysis of risk/recommendations in line with organisational policy /procedure at e.g. panels/meetings/courts. (PCF 9, 6)

Use of formal agency recording for assessment/risk. (PCF 1)

b) Role of student and support needed

Access to the recommended learning opportunities should be on the basis that students are working under the supervision of a practice educator* and provided with appropriate levels of support. Students should be expected to learn from their experiences on placement, including any early set-backs.

If the practice educator is not on-site, the student will work alongside a social worker, who must be in a post requiring social work registration. This social worker will take day-to-day responsibility for the supervision of the student. In order to support the development of professional identity, students should not be the sole social work representative in a setting.

Students will not hold case responsibility for formal assessment processes, including risk/safeguarding/child protection. Last placements should incorporate a blend of activity which reflects the fact that the student is still learning. Students will be able to participate in the opportunities outlined above through:

- co-working with the practice educator or on-site social worker/supervisor
- undertaking specific pieces of work in a case under supervision
- observing/shadowing work carried out by other social workers and/or professionals in the team or through spending time in other agencies
- accompanying team members to panels/meetings/court relating to their cases
- sharing responsibility with social workers for presentation of recommendations to panels or formal recording

*Students should be supervised by a qualified Practice Educator. For the final placement from 2013, the practice educator should have achieved at least Stage 2 of the Practice Educator Framework and be a registered social worker.

ANNEXES FOR Social Work Education report

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ANNEX 1 Selection of Social Work Students: A Summary of Guidance

1. Introduction

This summary provides an overview of the key elements of the full Guidance document for the selection and admission of students in order to demonstrate how the Reform Board proposals have been incorporated. The full document is available on request. The summary highlights the key issues addressed within the Guidance document and provides the rationale for some elements of the proposals and guidance, particularly in relation to the more commonly misunderstood or controversial aspects of this challenging task.

2. Purpose

Development of the Guidance has been funded by HEA/swap, and drafted following extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders. It provides information regarding good practice in the selection of social work students and will be used by those involved directly and indirectly in this process. The Guidance will be made available electronically to allow readers to access the most relevant sections, including examples of good practice and tools to be used in the design and review of selection processes, as needed. This format will also enable amendments to be made as required given the changing context in which the document has been drafted. A shortened guide will also be produced for applicants, Careers advisers and other relevant parties. The Guidance identifies the roles of various bodies involved in the design, monitoring and review of selection processes and the changing context in which these will be implemented. It clarifies the roles of HPC as the new regulator and The College of Social Work.

3. Content of Guidance document and role of appendices

The Guidance includes sections addressing the following issues:

- Key legislative and policy matters
- Key principles in the selection of social work students
- Partnership working in the selection process
- Assessing academic and intellectual ability and potential
- Assessing personal and professional suitability and readiness
- Modes of assessment used in the selection of social work students
- Specific issues affecting seconded or sponsored students

In addition, appendices are provided as follows:

- PCF (latest draft)
- Summary of Equality Act (2010) Good practice examples relating to the involvement of stakeholders
- Self-declaration form for English, maths and IT competence

Examples of interview and other tools used in the selection process

Criminal convictions and suitability declaration form example

Cross-referencing of admission requirements to modes of assessment

Sample pre-interview screening tools

Admissions tutor checklist for design and review of selection processes

4. Selected issues addressed

Given the significantly changing context in which the Guidance has been drafted, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders with diverse views, some key elements are reproduced here for the Board's information.

4.1 Key principles underpinning the selection of social work students

- a) Quality of „output“ is critical and the role of the selection process should be to select those who are most likely to become effective and safe practitioners who are able to uphold a positive image of the social work profession
- b) Assessment of academic and personal suitability for entry to social work programmes should take place in a **holistic** manner
- c) **Transparency is critical** throughout the selection process
- d) The minimum standards set by the SWRB/College and HPC must be **applied consistently**
- e) Design of selection processes and the actual selection of students should take place in **partnership with service users and carers and employers.**
- f) **Diversity** of applicants is welcomed
- g) Adhering to good practice highlighted here will help programme providers to ensure the necessary **compliance** with relevant legislation

Identifying key principles that underpin the processes of selecting social work students should help to ensure a shared understanding of the nature of the task. The primary aim must be to select those most likely to become the confident and competent practitioners referred to in the Task Force report and later documents. Additional principles aim to support that primary goal and to ensure compliance with broader requirements. In the full Guidance document, each of the above points is addressed in some detail with suggested ways in which the principles may be demonstrated and put into practice

4.2 Assessing academic and intellectual ability

The complex and challenging nature of social work requires a particular **combination** of personal qualities and intellectual ability

Whilst a wide range of academic qualifications are welcomed, **intellectual capacity is a crucial requirement** for effective social work practice

Applicants offering recent A levels or equivalent qualifications should achieve a minimum of **240 UCAS tariff points** from 3 A levels (or courses equivalent to 3 A levels)

Where applicants offer **non-tariff bearing** academic qualifications, admissions tutors will need to liaise with their central admissions team to set an appropriate minimum standard

Where qualifications offered by applicants are „old“ or lower than the usual standard required, programmes will need to assess current academic performance of such applicants

Applicants for M level training should normally have obtained a 2:1 in their first degree

In addition to level three entry requirements, all applicants must have **GCSE mathematics and English language** at grade C or above (or certified equivalent) prior to the start of their programme

All applicants must possess appropriate **basic IT skills** prior to the start of their programme

IELTS 7 (overall score) must be achieved prior to the start of the programme by applicants for whom their previous language of instruction has not been English.

In line with the wider HE practice, programmes should develop their own AP(E)L procedures (this is also in line with HPC requirements)

The use of UCAS „Clearing“ is to be avoided so far as possible

The strengthening of academic entry requirements for social work training is important for quality, consistency and public image reasons. The Guidance details ways in which this necessary element of the selection process may be implemented in respect of applicants from a diverse range of educational, work and life backgrounds.

4.3 Assessing personal and professional suitability and readiness:

Although important for a range of reasons, **academic qualifications are not in themselves sufficient** for entry to social work training

Programmes must ensure that appropriate information about the criteria they select against is available to applicants

No personal characteristic or attribute should be deemed essential if doing so results in direct or indirect unlawful discrimination

All applicants must take part in an individual interview prior to being made an offer of a place on a social work degree

A satisfactory CRB disclosure (Enhanced) must be received prior to registration on the programme

A satisfactory health check must be completed prior to registration on the programme

HEIs must ensure that they have in place fair and robust processes for dealing with the evaluation of sensitive information on CRB and health disclosures, and processes for making decisions regarding suitability

Whilst academic entry requirements are important for reasons identified above, they are not in themselves sufficient. For this reason, the full Guidance document identifies ways in which personal and professional suitability for training should be assessed through the careful design of selection processes.

The Guidance highlights ways in which elements of the entry level of the PCF should be assessed during the selection process.

It is important to note that there is no formal requirement for previous work experience. Some programme providers identify this requirement as helpful in assessing the motivation and commitment of applicants to the social work profession and others identify the fact that such experience may help applicants to demonstrate an understanding of social work roles and tasks. However, in the absence of research evidence regarding the correlation between previous experience and later performance, and given concerns about the possibly discriminatory implications of any such requirement, the Task Force and the Calibre of Entrants work stream have not proposed this as a requirement. Instead, programmes are advised to assess motivation and commitment and understanding of social work roles through other means but to continue to place importance upon applicants' abilities to demonstrate learning from their own experiences (defined more broadly than work experience) as appropriate to their life stage.

4.4 Modes of assessment for selection processes

HEIs should **develop holistic approaches to the design** and implementation of selection processes for social work programmes

Tests and **selection tools must be fair and valid** and should not unfairly advantage or disadvantage particular groups within society, particularly applicants with protected characteristics

Selection materials and test materials should be **updated and revised on a regular basis** to prevent plagiarism and collusion

The design of the selection process as a whole should be **reviewed on a regular basis** on the basis of applicant and selector feedback

References should be checked for authenticity and be evaluated with care

Individual interviews are mandatory prior to receipt of an offer and programme providers should ensure that the interview process is designed to be as reliable and valid as possible by ensuring that interviewers are trained and supported

A **written „test“ is required** in order to ensure that all applicants receiving offers are able to write accurately in English at an appropriate level.

Programme providers are **encouraged to consider the use of additional** selection tools such as the use of group exercises or the completion of other tasks where this adds to the information already available and where the task is relevant.

The **modes of assessment should be adjusted for disabled students** where not doing so could lead to the applicant experiencing substantial disadvantage.

Programme providers will need to be able to **articulate clearly the nature** of the assessment process and identify the appeals and complaint routes open to applicants in respect of procedural irregularity.

SWRB-Final Paper- Initial qualifying social work education and training.

The Guidance provides detailed information to inform the fair assessment of applicants for social work training. Content of the main document is supported by 'good practice exemplars' in appendices in order to further assist the implementation of selection processes that ensure so far as is possible that the most suitable applicants are offered places on professional training programmes.

Annex 2 (Draft - updated August 2011)

The Professional Capability framework at entry to education and training level

These statements identify the expected outcomes/criteria for applicants to be assessed against when applying for entry to social work initial qualifying training. How these criteria could be assessed and what is expected of HEIs in their assessment procedures is outlined elsewhere.

In addition to these criteria successful applicants will be required to have met appropriate academic standards, satisfactorily completed CRB checks, (normally at enhancement level) and complied with health requirements as required by HPC.

Introduction

The following documents have been used to develop these outcomes:

- PFC at qualifying level (v.5)
- HPC draft Standards of Proficiency for social work (SoPs)
- Criteria for Selection as agreed by SWRB
- HPC standards for programme admission (HPC Standards of education and training guidance, July 2009)*

The draft is based on the assumption that, whilst assessment for entry should focus on **potential** for qualifying training, there are certain qualities, skills, knowledge and values which should be present at the point of entry which make it likely that the student will be able to reach the required outcomes on completion of the course. This draft will be aligned with other elements of the PCF by the SCIE project group

Not all the outcomes, described in the Qualifying Level Outcomes draft paper, are suitable for entry level

The number of outcomes has been kept to a minimum to avoid over-bureaucratisation of entry processes and procedures

Outcomes are applicable to both post-graduate and under-graduate courses on the understanding that the capabilities framework provides a standardised set of professional outcomes. Academic criteria will be different.

SWRB – Final Paper - Initial qualifying social work education and training.

*HPC standards for selection and admission are output -focused rather than input-focused and are flexible and non-prescriptive.

HPC standards on admission and selection include the overarching standard that:

Admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria including appropriate academic and professional entry standards (2.5), and that

Providers must apply selection and entry criteria including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

PCF Heading	Capability statements at entry level	Criteria agreed by the SWRB
Professionalism	Demonstrates an initial understanding of the role of the social worker Demonstrates motivation and commitment to qualify and practice as a social worker Identifies own potential strengths and weaknesses in relation to the role of social worker Demonstrates an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work. Demonstrates the ability to take responsibility for own learning and development	Initial awareness of what social work is Self- awareness Emotional resilience Motivation and commitment to qualify and practice as a social worker
Values and ethics	Recognises the impact their own values and attitudes can have on relationships with others Understands the importance of seeking the perspectives and views of service users and carers Recognises that social workers will need to deal with conflict and use the authority invested in their role.	Self awareness Understanding of the nature and need to use professional authority in social work" Initial awareness of what social work is. Demonstrates what they have learnt from own experiences. Respect for others.
Diversity	Demonstrates an initial understanding of difference and diversity within society and the implications of this	Openness to views of others .

	<p>for social work practice. Is receptive to the views of others .</p>	<p>Demonstrates what they have learnt from own experiences (broadly defined) Ability/ willingness to change views</p>
Rights Justice and Economic well-being	<p>Recognises the contribution of social work to promoting social justice, inclusion and equality Is receptive to the idea that there may be conflicts in the social work role between promoting rights and enforcing responsibilities</p>	<p>Initial awareness of what social work is Potential to think analytically and critically Demonstrate what they have learnt from their own experiences.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Identify how own learning (formal, informal and experiential) contributes to understanding the social work role.</p>	<p>Potential to think critically and recognise some of the knowledge base of social work</p>
Critical reflection and analysis	<p>Demonstrates an ability to reflect on and analyse own experience (educational, personal, formal and informal Demonstrates curiosity and critical thinking about social issues</p>	<p>Demonstrates what they have learnt from own experiences Self awareness Reflective capacity Ability to think critically , intellectual ability and curiosity</p>
Intervention and Skills	<p>Communicates clearly, accurately and appropriately to the level of training applied for, in verbal and written forms Demonstrates an ability to engage with people with empathy") Recognises that different forms of communication are needed for practice</p>	<p>Communication skills Ability to write clearly</p>
Contexts and organisations	<p>Demonstrates understanding of importance of working as a member of a team and an organisation</p>	
Professional Leadership	<p>Recognise how own learning, behaviour and ideas can influence and benefit others</p>	<p>Motivation and commitment</p>

Annex 3 Curriculum framework

Summary of Findings of Literature Review

This literature review was undertaken in order to inform the proposals for a review of the curriculum to be presented to the Social Work Reform Board. It uses a mixture of published and unpublished resources to compare the issues raised by the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) with what is known from published research looking at the way that the current *Requirements for Social Work Training* (Department of Health, 2002) operate.

The review found that the evidence base on which the key issues relating to the concerns about the curriculum in initial social work qualifying programmes was very variable.

The issue raised by the SWTF about a mismatch between employer and educator expectations is probably the area on which there is the greatest amount of research evidence. This reflects longstanding debates about whether the purpose of social work education is to prepare students to work in regulated social work settings („fitness for purpose“) or if there is a wider repertoire of transferable skills and understanding that social work graduates will need to work in a rapidly changing policy and service environment.

Although the review questions whether the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) (Social Work Reform Board, 2010) could in itself be enough to assuage these differences, the published literature does suggest strong support for revising the existing outcomes framework for social work education.

The SWTF called for greater consistency in the quality of social work qualifying education. Here, there is a clear gap in the literature in terms of what we know about the effectiveness of differing methods of assessing students and the operation of professional suitability procedures. We also know very little about the process of accrediting programmes beyond how many programmes are considered to be operating satisfactorily. These are important areas in which more information is needed in order to transfer successfully responsibility for regulating social work education to the Health Professions Council (HPC).

The transition into the workplace is always challenging for any newly qualified professional and whether or not it is successful is dependent both upon the quality of the qualifying programme that students have undertaken and the learning and support provided by their employer. On the whole, while most newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) feel satisfied with how well their qualifying programmes have prepared them for this transition, they would value more help in areas such as dealing with aggression and hostility, time management, communicating with children, and report writing. While there is considerable overlap between the views of NQSWs and employers about which skills are needed, there are some differences – most strikingly in terms of dealing with hostility and conflict.

Acquiring such skills as these is an incremental process and the emphasis on the development of expertise in the Munro review (Munro, 2010a) highlights the need to look beyond qualifying education in terms of the skills that social workers will need. Debates have taken place about the establishment of a „core curriculum“ in order to ensure that NQSWs do not enter the workplace lacking certain basic skills. Given that many students report that they develop skills such as these in practice settings, the SWTF's emphasis on the shortage of high quality practice educators and practice placements is an important issue and one that is similarly reflected in the literature. A number of studies have looked specifically at how well certain topics such as communication skills and assessment are covered in the curriculum. These have broadly found that examples of good practice exist but are rarely

written up. An important caveat is that many of these reports were written at the time that the social work degree was introduced and it is not clear if their findings would be equally true today.

There is very little published research about social work educators. While developments that help educators to update their practice, teaching, and research skills exist, these are rarely formally evaluated or written up.

Comparing the outcomes of qualifying programmes in the same country is challenging enough, let alone comparing internationally qualified social workers with those qualifying in the UK. The evidence suggests that most internationally qualified social workers move to the UK after acquiring some time in practice and so are not directly comparable with NQSWs in their first year of practice. However, the resources required to conduct cross-national research – the only fair way to compare the quality of qualifying education in the England with elsewhere would be considerable.

An important message from the review is the interconnectedness of many of the issues raised by the SWTF – for example, a shortage of practice placements has implications for students' chances to learn about partnership working or assessment skills.

The other key message from the review is the need for greater precision in describing the difficulties identified in the current social work curriculum. Descriptions such as „unsuitable“ or „unprepared“ need unpacking in order to identify more clearly where changes may need to be made.

Overall, it must be acknowledged that the timescale and resources available to complete the review were limited. Given the variability of the evidence base, the review aims to highlight where more information is needed.

Annex 4 Curriculum Framework

Professional Capabilities Framework (20 June 2011)

Work in progress to draft expected outcomes at qualifying level in relation to the Professional Capability Framework for social workers

Notes:

- The PCF Qualifying Level Drafting Group was convened to provide a first draft to specify the outcomes to be achieved in relation to the social work capabilities by the end of initial qualification.
- The group is made up of 3 academics, 2 LA representatives and a service user
- The aim is to produce a full first draft for refinement and development through wide-ranging consultation
- When complete consideration will be given to the need for annotation or exemplars to provide further guidance

Interdependencies:

- Parallel work by the Reform Board to draft capabilities at ASYE level and mapping work for the current PQ against the PCF.
- Parallel work by the Reform Board on admissions criteria, practice learning and curriculum content
- Development work on children and families" social work capabilities for the Munro Review of Child Protection
- The HPC work on developing social work Standards of Proficiency and Standards for Education
- The revision of the National Occupational Standards in the rest of the UK
- The QAA benchmark statement for social work
- Other relevant specifications such as the Common Core and the Ten Essential Shared Capabilities for mental health

Notes on language:

- Where it is stated „people“ it is understood to encompass:
 - children and young people;
 - adults;
 - families and carers; and
 - communities
- Text will specify groups (e.g. children) where there is a particular need
- Where possible, the framework will point to existing agreed definitions and terms rather than duplicate work here (e.g. supervision, codes of ethics)
- Where it is stated „lifespan“ it is understood to encompass the span from pre-birth to death
- Where it is stated „people who use services“ or „service users“ it is understood to mean:
 - Children and young people
 - Adults, including older people
- The outcomes are written generically to cover all user groups wherever possible. In places it might be necessary to annotate to specify a particularly issue in relation to one user group or age group. Please see Annex A which is the position statement on user groups in the qualifying curriculum.

- Glossary required

Draft PCF Outcome Statements at Qualifying Level

1. Professionalism: Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development	
1.1	Be able to meet the requirements of the professional regulator
1.2	Be able to explain the role of the social worker, in a range of contexts, and uphold the reputation of the profession
1.3	Demonstrate an effective and active use of supervision for accountability, professional reflection and development
1.5	Demonstrate professionalism in terms of demeanour, reliability, presentation, honesty and respectfulness
1.6	Take responsibility for managing your time and workload effectively, and begin to prioritise your activity, including supervision time
1.7	Recognise the impact of self in interaction with others, making appropriate use of personal experience.
1.8	Be able to recognise and maintain personal and professional boundaries.
1.9	Recognise your professional limitations, and how to seek advice.
1.10	Demonstrate a commitment to your continuing learning and development.
1.11	Recognise the need to manage and promote own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience
1.12	Identify concerns about practice and procedures and with support begin to find appropriate means of challenge
2. Values and Ethics: Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice.	
2.1	Understand and apply the profession's ethical principles, taking account of these in reaching decisions.
2.2	Recognise impact of own values upon professional practice.
2.3	Be able to manage potentially conflicting or competing values.
2.4	With guidance, recognise, reflect on, and work with ethical dilemmas.
2.5	Elicit and respect the needs and views of service users and carers and promote their participation in decision-making wherever possible.
2.6	Promote and protect the privacy of individuals within and outside their families and networks, recognising the requirements of professional accountability and information sharing.
2.7	Demonstrate respectful partnership work with service users, carers and professionals.
2.8	Understand the ethics underpinning the law and guidance and recognise how and where the law promotes and constrains people's rights.
3. Diversity: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice.	

3.1	Understand how factors such as culture, economic status, disability, gender, ethnicity, age, faith and sexual orientation inform identity
3.2	Respect and take account of differences of people’s cultures, experiences and life histories, questioning cultural assumptions where necessary.
3.3	Identify, promote opportunities for, and address challenges to, social inclusion.
3.4	Recognise personal and organisational discrimination and oppression and with guidance make use of a range of approaches to challenge them.
3.5	Recognise and manage the impact on people of the power invested in your role
4. Rights, Justice and Economic Well-Being: Advance human rights, and promote social justice and economic well-being.	
4.1	Understand and apply in practice the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality.
4.2	Recognise that the law may be used to promote people’s rights.
4.3	Work within the principles of human and civil rights legislation to understand whether interventions are lawful and proportionate and to question where necessary.
4.4	Appreciate the impact of poverty and social exclusion and promote enhanced economic status through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits.
4.5	Recognise and promote individuals’ rights to autonomy and self determination.
4.6	Recognise the value of, and aid, access to independent advocacy.
4.7	Differentiate and begin to work with absolute, qualified and competing rights, and differing needs and perspectives.
5. Knowledge : Apply knowledge of human growth and development, psychological, social sciences, law and social work practice theory	
5.1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the application to social work of research, theory and knowledge from sociology, social policy, psychology and health.
5.2	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice, recognising the scope for professional judgement.
5.3	Demonstrate a working knowledge of human growth and development throughout the life course.
5.4	Recognise the short and long term impact of psychological, socio-economic, environmental and physiological factors on people’s lives, taking into account age and development, and how this informs practice.
5.5	Recognise how systemic approaches can be used to understand the person-in-the-environment and inform your practice.

5.6	Acknowledge the centrality of relationships for people and the key concepts of attachment, separation, loss, change and resilience.
5.7	Understand forms of harm and their impact on people, and the implications for practice, drawing on concepts of strength, resilience, vulnerability, risk and resistance.
5.8	Demonstrate a critical knowledge of the range of theories and models for social work intervention with individuals, families, groups and communities, and the methods derived from them.
5.9	Demonstrate a critical understanding of social welfare policy, its evolution, implementation and impact on people, social work, other professions, and inter-agency working.
5.10	Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methods.
5.11	Recognise the contribution, and begin to make use, of research to inform practice.
5.12	Recognise the need to extend own knowledge through the expertise of service users, carers and professionals.
6. Critical Reflection and Analysis: Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making.	
6.1	Apply imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice.
6.2	Inform decision-making through the identification and gathering of information from multiple sources, actively seeking new sources; with support, question and evaluate the reliability and validity of all information.
6.4	Demonstrate a capacity for logical, systematic, critical and reflective reasoning and apply the theories and techniques of reflective practice.
6.5	Know how to formulate, test, evaluate, and review hypotheses in response to information available at the time and apply in practice.
6.6	Begin to formulate and make explicit, evidence-informed judgments.
7. Intervention and Skills: Use judgment and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse.	
7.1	Identify and apply a range of verbal, non-verbal and written methods of communication and adapt them in line with people's age, comprehension and culture.
7.2	Be able to communicate information, advice, instruction and professional opinion, so as to advocate, influence and persuade
7.3	Demonstrate the ability to engage with people, and build, manage, sustain and conclude compassionate relationships
7.4	Demonstrate an holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks.
7.5	Select and use appropriate frameworks to assess, give meaning to, plan, implement and review effective interventions and evaluate the outcomes.

7.6	Use a planned and structured approach, informed by social work methods, models and tools, to promote positive change and independence and to prevent harm.
7.7	Recognise how the development of community resources, groups and networks enhance outcomes for individuals
7.8	Maintain accurate, succinct and timely records and reports in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines, and use them to support professional judgement and organisational responsibilities.
7.9	Begin to demonstrate skills in sharing information appropriately and respectfully.
7.10	Recognise complexity, multiple factors, changing circumstances and uncertainty in people's lives, and be able to prioritise your intervention.
7.11	Understand the authority of the social work role and begin to use this appropriately and confidently as an accountable professional.
7.12	Recognise the factors that create or exacerbate risk to individuals, their families or carers, to the public or to professionals, including yourself.
7.13	Identify, with support in supervision, appropriate responses to safeguard vulnerable people and promote their well being.
<p>8. Contexts and Organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional settings</p>	
8.1	Recognise that social work operates within, and responds to, changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts.
8.2	Understand the roles and responsibilities of social workers in a range of organisations, lines of accountability and the boundaries of professional autonomy and discretion.
8.3	Understand legal obligations, structures and behaviours within organisations and how these impact on policy, procedure and practice.
8.4	Begin to work within an organisation's remit, and contribute to its evaluation and development.
8.5	Understand and respect the role of others within the organisation and work effectively with them.
8.6	Take responsibility for your role and impact within teams and be able to contribute positively to effective team working.
8.7	Understand the inter-agency, multi-disciplinary and inter-professional dimensions to practice and demonstrate effective partnership working.
<p>9. Professional Leadership: Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management</p>	
9.1	Recognise the importance of, and begin to demonstrate, professional leadership as a social worker.
9.2	Recognise the value of, and take responsibility for, supporting the learning and development of others.

Annex 5 Curriculum Framework

Statement of opportunities to learn about different user groups in the curriculum for initial qualifying programmes (May 2011)

1. The initial qualification for social work is generic, preparing students to work in a range of settings and with a wide range of user groups. The curriculum framework based on the Professional Capabilities Framework ensures the development of capabilities common to all kinds of social work intervention. „Specialist“ CPD is undertaken after qualification.
2. Although the initial qualification is generic, and not intended to provide specialist knowledge in one particular area, programmes should ensure that there are opportunities for students to undertake studies in depth in one or more areas. In some cases it may be possible to link the focus of a final placement to „specialist“ modules (e.g. children and families, adult care or mental health), or to a dissertation or project. This might in turn link to the area the student hopes to work in for their ASYE. However, the realities of availability of both practice placements and employment vacancies make it unlikely that this will be possible for all students.
3. Programme providers must ensure that students learn about social work with a range of age groups, namely
 - Children and young people
 - Adults, including older people
4. Students should also learn about the transitions that need to be considered when service users and their families/carers receive support from more than one social work agency or move from one service to another (e.g. disabled young person,„s care moving from children“s services to adult services).
5. Programmes must also ensure students learn about the specific difficulties that may arise from
 - Relationship stress and/or breakdown
 - Behavioural and/or parenting problems
 - Neglect, violence and abuse (of children and vulnerable adults, and domestic violence)
 - Mental distress and ill health
 - Substance misuse and addictions
 - Disability
 - Physical ill-health, dementia and dying/end of life
 - Immigration, especially for refugees and asylum-seekers
6. Programmes should find ways to ensure that there are learning opportunities in relation to all these issues (and other „emergent“ user groups) through named, focussed modules, or by embedding learning within other modules (e.g. through case studies and learning resources).
7. Opportunities for learning in each of the areas listed above should be identifiable and regularly reviewed. Furthermore, programmes should ensure that students are encouraged and expected to transfer their learning from one user group or setting to another, and to understand where differences in practice might exist. Students should understand the interconnections between different areas of need, and the inter-relationship of individual, family and community concerns.

ANNEX 6 Curriculum Framework

Practice learning outcomes linked to the PCF – thresholds for progression and outcomes . NB the details of these are work in progress and will be issued as part of the agreed PCF in October.

Issues and background

The SWRB agreed in September 2010 that further work should be done to develop practice criteria and learning outcomes for each placement, linked to the curriculum review and Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

A task group has now developed draft guidance. This covers key descriptions of the thresholds and outcomes. These have been mapped to the PCF capabilities, with samples developed for each capability. This is summarised below.

This work has now been passed to SCIE for inclusion in the overarching PCF project.

Further work will take place to ensure coherence with the full qualifying level capabilities and those for the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

Recommended outcomes for practice learning

	Developing practice skills	First placement	Last placement
Description of thresholds between levels	Describe basic elements of the social work context, knowledge and values, and try out social work skills in a learning environment	Able to apply understanding of social work context, values and knowledge, and practise social work skills with support	Moving towards more autonomous application of social work values, knowledge and skills, and into ASYE
Implications for complexity of cases/autonomy/support	Undertake assessment and demonstrate ability to meet criteria for readiness for direct practice	Demonstrate ability to use social work skills in predominantly less complex* situations. Expectations of students' abilities to practise autonomously should be limited**	By end of qualifying programme - demonstrate ability to use social work skills in increasingly complex* situations Expectations of students' abilities to practise autonomously on the final placement should increase significantly**

* **Complexity** of cases should be reflected in dynamics of families and organisations, number of agencies involved, the need to manage different viewpoints and tensions

including the views of service users, the use of authority and challenge, and the need to provide, analyse and present information.

**** Expectations of students' abilities to practise autonomously** should be reflected in the type and level of support and teaching provided by Practice Educators and on-site supervisors, and communicated clearly to operational teams and their managers. Options such as observation, shadowing, directed reading, joint visiting and co-working should support a student when working in situations beyond their current level of development..

Each PCF capability has been mapped to these thresholds and outcomes, with examples developed. As an illustration, communication, a key theme embedded in all the PCF capabilities, would move through the following levels of progression.

Initial skills development	Communicate with service users, including adults/children of different ages and stages, using basic theories of communication
First placement	Communicate with service users (adults/children depending on setting) effectively and employ a range of techniques/strategies to obtain service user views and views/wishes of children
Final placement	Communicate with services users (adults/children depending on setting) around complex issues/safeguarding and work with resistant adults/children

Overview of elements relating to high quality practice placements

Thresholds for progression are just one element that contributes to the quality of practice placements. The full range of measures is:

- Consistent model of practice learning days
 - 30 days development of practice skills
 - 70 days first placement
 - 100 days last placement
- Partnerships between employers and universities
- The Practice Educator Framework
- Assessment of Readiness for Direct Practice
- Placement criteria
 - Different practice experience in first and last placements
 - Tasks to prepare for statutory interventions in last placement
- Quality Assurance framework for Practice Learning (QAPL)

Annex 7 Curriculum Framework

DRAFT Exemplars of key guidance to support the curriculum framework .

Curriculum guide for qualifying social work education - mental health

Good mental health has been defined as „a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community“ (WHO, 2010)ⁱ. Social work aims to promote „social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being“ (www.ifsw.org). This guide is intended for social work educators tasked with delivering teaching on mental health, for those teaching other areas of the curriculum who wish to think about how issues of mental health and distress intersect with those areas of learning, and for course directors.

Notes on terminology

This guide is not about teaching „how to do“ social work in mental health, but about what social workers need to learn in order to become capable practitioners (see 10 ESCs). Language reflects our understanding of mental health and will influence what students learn and take into practice. Here, the term „mental distress“ is used to refer to a significant departure from a state of well-being. This term reflects the experience without denoting causation as would be the case with „illness“ or „disorder“. The term „expert by experience“ is used, rather than „patient“, „client“ or „service“ user which define people in relation to services rather than their lived experience.

Key curriculum issues

Mental health is an interdisciplinary field of study which draws on psychology, sociology, social policy, philosophy, ethics and medical sciences. Mental health practice is an interdisciplinary activity that involves experts by experience and profession, or both.

1. Educators can help students develop confidence in social approaches through understanding how these differ fundamentally from biomedical approaches as described by Tew (2011:9)ⁱⁱ in the adjacent table.
2. Students need help to learn to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty. This is an issue for all aspects of the curriculum of course, but is particularly acute in mental health where the biomedical approach, although privileged, is contested.
3. Educators can help students to orientate themselves within the wider landscape of knowledge and to engage critically with other approaches through:

Biomedical	Social
Mental Illness	Mental Distress
Symptom	Experience
Diagnosis	Meaning
Treatment	Action Planning
Cure	Empowerment
Care	Self-Directed Support

Equipping students with an understanding of the limits of knowledge claims and of the methods used to construct them;

Drawing on the literature within the fields of critical clinical psychology (Bentall, 2009ⁱⁱⁱ; Read *et al.* 2008^{iv}), critical (Moncrieff, 2008^v) and social psychiatry (Romme and Escher, 2000^{vi}) in addition to the wide variety of literature on social work and mental health.

Drawing on first-hand accounts of mental distress and madness, using arts based approaches, literature, cinema and digital resources.

4. „There can be a tendency amongst those not attuned to the subject of mental health to marginalise it, failing to take into account at least some aspects of mental health which are more or less universal to us all, let alone to those vulnerable people in need of services“ (Maas Lowit, 2011^{vii}). Educators can counter this tendency by ensuring that mental health is integrated in all areas of the curriculum and acknowledged as an issue of personal, as well as professional, relevance. This might involve a wellbeing approach to all aspects of the curriculum, along with a focus on the development of emotional intelligence and resilience.
5. Learning about mental health takes place not only in the university and on placement, but also within the context of our personal lives. Experts by experience are usually involved across the social work curriculum and they can have an important role to play in helping students connect these different sources of their learning.

Topic guide: key content areas

1. Conceptualising health and illness, mental health and mental illness
 - a) Lay, experiential and professional knowledge
 - b) Changing paradigms of mental health
 - c) Ambiguity and uncertainty
2. Vulnerability and resilience factors
 - a) Inequality – wealth and poverty, culture and ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, health and disability
 - b) Life experiences, e.g. trauma; education, occupation and retirement; friendships; partnerships and parenthood; substance use; migration; chronic illness
 - c) Life course – infancy; childhood; adolescence; early, middle and late adulthood; death and dying
3. Professional responses
 - a) Mental health promotion and prevention of mental distress
 - b) Organisation of services – interdisciplinary working, role of social work, personalisation, safeguarding, recovery
 - c) Positive risk taking and creativity
 - d) Working with individual, groups and communities
 - e) Social support – housing, benefits, education, employment, access to public services
 - f) Psychological therapies
 - g) Pharmacological treatments and effects
 - h) Wellbeing and support for self and colleagues
4. Societal responses to mental distress across time and space
 - a) Stigma and discrimination
 - b) Dangerousness and control
 - c) Identity politics – self definition; spirituality
 - d) Service user led approaches, advocacy and peer support
5. Rights, coercion and professional ethics
 - a) Mental Health Act 1983
 - b) UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
 - c) Human Rights Act 1998
 - d) Advocacy and empowerment

Links to other curriculum areas

Regardless of its organisation, educators should build consideration of the key issues in to each area of the curriculum. For example,

Children and Families – understanding links between childhood trauma and adult mental health; appreciating the impact of parental mental distress

Disability – debates around the relevance of the social model of disability to mental health; learning disability and mental health; psycho emotional disablism

Drug Use – links between substance use and mental health; substance use as a trigger for mental distress; substance use as self-medication

These should be addressed both within the educational institution and in practice contexts. How are students helped to think about how to safeguard their own mental health and to support that of their colleagues? How can learning about mental health be fostered within placements with other service user groups?

Ten key resources

1. SWAPBox [Mental Health Curriculum Resources](#)
2. [Promoting wellbeing in the curriculum](#) - Higher Education Academy guide
3. Resilience resource sheet
4. [Ten Essential Shared Capabilities for mental health practice](#)
5. [Mental Health in Higher Education](#) website
6. [Everybody's Business](#) – National CAMHS support service resource
7. [Bibliography of First-Person Narratives of Madness in English](#)
8. [The Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health](#)
9. [Critical Psychiatry Network](#)
10. [Learning from Experience](#): involving service users in mental health education and training

Curriculum Guide – Substance use

This guide is designed to help you develop social work education on the subject of substance use at qualifying and post qualifying levels.

Terminology

There are many terms used to describe alcohol and other drug use as well as the people who use them. Some are drawn from medical models of substance use, e.g. alcoholism, others are pejorative and judgemental, e.g. junkie. Care needs to be taken over the language used as this conveys values and attitudes. The following terms are recommended:

- ⌘ **Substance use**: the use of alcohol and other drugs – licit and illicit.
- ⌘ **Problematic substance use**: substance use that has become problematic in some way, for example, contributing to or exacerbating mental distress or physical ill health, preventing individuals from fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to others in their care, legal or financial problems.

Key curriculum issues

- ⌘ Substance use is a behaviour that cuts across all service user groups and overlaps with a full range of social problems for which people seek support.
- ⌘ Problematic substance use is particularly prevalent among the service user groups of social workers working with children and families, young people, and people experiencing mental distress. Research evidence shows that social workers working with older people and those with disabilities are also reported increased use of substances (Galvani et al. 2011³⁹).
- ⌘ Social workers repeatedly encounter substance use in their practice and report feeling ill equipped to deal with it. Some report feeling angry and frustrated that they have not been adequately prepared by their social work training for *assessing* and *responding* to substance problems (Galvani and Forrester 2011⁴⁰, Galvani et al. 2011).
- ⌘ Importantly, social work education needs to convey to social workers that engaging with substance use is a legitimate part of their role and responsibility to service users. This does not mean they have to become specialists.
- ⌘ Given social work's principles and values, social workers are well placed to engage with a person's problematic substance use and the social problems that stem from, or lead to, substance problems.

Curriculum fit

- ⌘ Core education on substance use is needed for all social workers at qualifying levels to ensure they are prepared for practice realities and understand how it relates to their specialist area of practice.
- ⌘ Specialist pathway teaching at Q and PQ levels should develop knowledge specific to that specialist area of practice.

1. Core teaching

Learning about substance use can be integrated into core teaching through inclusion in teaching and learning on values, communication and assessment skills in particular. These are areas that social workers highlight as presenting particular difficulties in practice with people with substance problems, particularly in relation to risk assessment and the types of intervention available (Galvani and Forrester 2011, Galvani et al. 2011). Other relevant modules include social exclusion/inclusion, theories and methods, diversity, human development, research skills to name a few.

2. Adults and children's pathway teaching

Modules focussing on practice with adults or children offer ideal opportunities to develop more focussed understanding of substance use in relation to particular service user groups. Examples include the impact of parental substance use on children and how to intervene where it raises concerns about child welfare. Teaching on older people could include what is different about older people's use and particular issues to consider when working with older adults using alcohol. Teaching on young people could explore their substance use as part of maturation and risk taking vs. using to forget negative experiences and escape problems at home. At PQ level using students' practice examples is also a good way forward

³⁹ Galvani, S., Dance, C. and Hutchinson, A. (2011) *From the front line: alcohol, drugs and social care practice. A national study*. Draft final report. Available from the authors.

⁴⁰ Galvani, S. and Forrester, D. (2011b) 'How Well Prepared are Newly Qualified Social Workers for Working with Substance Use Issues? Findings from a National Survey in England', *Social Work Education*, 30: 4, 422 - 439

3. Specialist modules/half modules

As a subject that is relatively new to the qualifying social work curriculum, it might be easier to allocate specific teaching time to focus on alcohol and drugs. This allows for the full involvement of practitioners and service users as well as leaving time for reflection and discussion and hands-on role plays focussing on communication, assessment and intervention.

4. Other

- ⌘ Maximise practice placements within alcohol and drug agencies.
- ⌘ Include case studies or exercises in practice learning documentation or portfolios.
- ⌘ Consider including substance use as a focus in assessed work, for example with elective essay titles, dissertations, case study based assignments or tasks for research skills training.

Links to other curriculum areas

Evidence from social work practice shows substance use overlaps with many other behaviours or areas of people's lives in which they need care and support. These may be addressed in other areas of the curriculum providing an excellent opportunity to highlight overlapping issues and the need for holistic assessment and joint working in practice. In addition to the more general areas of education identified in „Core teaching“ above, these additional areas of the curriculum may address:

- ⌘ Child abuse and neglect (including harm to unborn children)
- ⌘ Adult domestic and sexual violence (including abuse of older adults, adult dependents or abuse of carers)
- ⌘ Young people who are looked after or who are experiencing problems at home
- ⌘ Mental ill health (including psychological problems such as fear, loss, trauma as well as psychiatric concerns, such as depression or schizophrenia)
- ⌘ Physical health problems (including heart conditions and some cancers but also blood borne viruses)
- ⌘ Anti-social behaviour and crime

Key resources

1. **SWAP Box.** Search „substance use“ as keywords for materials on substance use teaching and learning. <http://www.swapbox.ac.uk> including:
 - ⌘ SWAP (2009). Learning and teaching digest: *integrating substance use teaching into the social work curriculum*. http://www.swapbox.ac.uk/770/1/35868_SWAP_guide_Iss7_WEB.pdf
 - ⌘ SWAP (2009). *Help sheet: involving alcohol and other drug specialists in social work education*. http://www.swapbox.ac.uk/771/1/hs_substancemis1.pdf
 - ⌘ SWAP (2009). *Information sheet: Key resources for teaching substance use*. http://www.swapbox.ac.uk/255/1/is_keyresources.pdf
2. Galvani, S. (2012) *Supporting people with alcohol and drug problems. Making a difference*. Social Work in Practice series. Bristol: Policy Press
3. Petersen, T. and McBride, A. (2002) *Working with Substance Misusers. A Guide to Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge
4. Miller, W.R. and Rollnick, S. (2002) *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People for Change* (2nd edition.) New York: Guilford Press
5. Shapiro, H. (2007) *The Essential Guide to Drugs and Alcohol*. London: Drugscope
6. **Websites**
 - ⌘ Alcohol Concern - national alcohol charity with factsheets to download, alcohol and families section, service directory and lots of other useful information on policy and practice issues. www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

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- ⚙ DrugScope – national drugs charity. Lots of good information on drug facts and effects, and related health, criminal justice and social issues. Also offers an online library, bookshop and a directory of services across the UK („Helpfinder“).
www.drugscope.org.uk
 - ⚙ Adfam - website for national charity that works with families affected by someone's alcohol or drug use. www.adfam.org.uk
7. Specialist journals: There are good specialist journals available within university libraries; these include *Addiction*, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, *Addiction Research and Theory*, *Journal of Substance Use, Drug and Alcohol Dependence* and *Drugs: Education, prevention and policy*.

Annex 8 Curriculum Framework

The assessment of students on social work qualifying programmes

1. Introduction and aims of guidance

It is recommended that guidance on assessment is issued by the College of Social Work to build on the standards for assessment laid down by the Health Professions Council (See SET 6). The aim would be to promote strategies for assessment in programmes that both to support and develop high quality learning, and provide a robust threshold for entry to professional practice.

The principles would be that:

Assessment should enable the integration of academic and practice learning throughout the course

Assessment of students should be made using the Professional Capabilities Framework as specified at qualifying level.

2. Key aspects of assessment strategies to be included:

A coherent and robust overall assessment strategy, across all modules and years of the award.

Appropriate use of different formats for assessment

Assessment criteria

Standards about feedback

Standards for marking, including standardisation workshops for all markers (including practice educators and service users and carers)

Timing of assignments to support student progression

Balancing student choice of assignment with the need to ensure different topics and modes of assignment are used

Ensuring assignments encourage the transfer and application of learning between different user groups and ages

Student attendance, and its link with professional practice

The use of self-assessment to develop as a reflective autonomous professional

Ensuring assessment is appropriate for the professional requirements for social work

The participation of service users and carers in assessment, with appropriate training and support

3. Aspects of assessment of practice learning to be included:

An assessment point managed jointly by the HEI and partner agencies prior to first practice placement (specified in relation to the Professional Capability Framework) to be put in place (see Annex 2 for further details.)

Assessment of practice placements using the „thresholds“ recommended in relation to the Professional Capabilities framework;

Consideration to be given to ways in which the assessment of practice can contribute directly or indirectly to final degree classification, and/or grading of practice learning⁴¹;

⁴¹ Grading of practice learning, and means by which PL can contribute to degree classification is being developed in a number of programmes. It is also being introduced into some health professions.

A robust mechanism for marking, moderation and review of practice learning, especially where there are difficulties or where a borderline or fail might be recommended, (e.g. a Practice Assessment Panel);
Assessment to include elements to which service users and carers can contribute;
Collaborative arrangements within regions (or possibly nationally) to enable coordination of assessment of practice in between programmes.

4. Assessment of Prior Learning

With the transfer of regulatory function to the HPC, the existing prohibition on APEL for practice will not apply. However AP(E)L for practice is very rare in HPC approved programmes. AP(E)L arrangements need to link to the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency for social work. Guidance should ensure that robust and fair arrangements are put in place for APEL, with reference to the QAA Code of Practice. Programmes can decide that they do not want to offer AP(E)L as long as the reasons and rationale are clear. Programmes should consider with their partner agencies the maximum credits acceptable for social work qualifying programmes.

5. External Examiners

The HPC specify that HEI's must ensure that at least one EE is a qualified and registered social worker. Guidance from the College might include the „Handbook for External Examiners: Guidance for the Degree in Social Work Guidance on External Examining“⁴²

6. Suitability for social work

With the transfer of regulatory function to the HPC, the GSCC requirements about suitability for practice will no longer apply. It is proposed that programmes should retain procedures for considering student's suitability to practise, and should have in place procedures to end a student's social work training if there are concerns. A revision of the „Suitability for social work“ guidelines to take account of the new context is recommended.

7. „Exit Routes“ from qualifying social work programmes

Exit routes provide opportunities for students

- to transfer to other programmes if they decide that social work is no longer their preferred career choice

- to transfer to other academic, rather than professionally qualifying programmes, should they fail the practice component of a social work programme (e.g. BSc Health and Social Care)

- to accrue academic credits and be awarded an alternative degree title without the social work qualification (e.g. Ordinary degree; BA Social Studies; „Post-Graduate Certificate in Applied Social Welfare“)

- to be awarded academic credits or interim academic qualifications (e.g. Certificate in Higher Education on completion of the first year, or Diploma in Higher Education on completion of the second year) should they choose to withdraw from academic study

The provision of exit routes on current social work programmes is diverse. Exit routes and transfer arrangements depend on a variety of factors, including the range of programmes offered in the School/Faculty/Department, the procedures for transferring credit (Accrediting Prior Learning) and the regulations for awarding degrees. The complexity and specialist nature of the social work degree can make mapping units onto other programmes difficult.

⁴² http://www.swap.ac.uk/docs/examinerhandbook_300309.pdf (4 UK CC, SWAP, JUC-SWEC)

The practicalities depend in part on the processes and regulations of each university and the range of programmes offered in the faculty/school.

With the emphasis from the Social Work Reform Board on the importance of assessing for readiness for direct practice prior to first placement, provision also needs to be made for students who are not successful at this point.

Recommendation

In addition to interim awards, all programmes should establish, wherever practicable:

- a) exit routes onto other programmes, allowing for student choice and flexibility
- b) provision for the opportunity to accrue credits and be awarded an alternative degree title in situations where a student has failed to meet the requirements of the social work degree.

Programmes should ensure that students are supported to make an appropriate choice, whilst ensuring robust assessment of suitability and fitness to practice.

8. Transcript of Learning/Higher Education Achievement Record

All HEIs should have in place a student „Transcript of Learning“ and/or a Personal Development Portfolio, compiled over the course of each programme, to communicate information about a student’s record (e.g. module marks, and focus of project work) to prospective employers, directly or indirectly (through references). Some HEIs are developing the use of a Higher Education Achievement Record (incorporating the transcript and PDP). Wherever possible these processes should ensure that the student’s progress in relation to the Professional Capability Framework is recorded.

ANNEX 9 Curriculum Framework

The „Process“ Curriculum Enhancing the professional nature of social work education:

1. Introduction and aims

The curriculum framework for social work education consists of the outcome statements for qualifying education in relation to the Professional Capabilities framework (which are cross-referenced to the HPC Standards of Proficiency and the QAA Benchmarking Statement), with accompanying guidance on a range of issues. In constructing a curriculum to meet these, social work qualifying programmes will also need to pay careful attention to the „process curriculum“: that is „how“ the content is taught. All programmes should consider the ways in which they can

- Positively shape professional identity
- Develop students“ confidence, self-efficacy and resilience in the social work role
- Develop skills of active learning and critical thinking
- Develop students“ ability to transfer knowledge from one setting or user group to another
- Develop student“s abilities to identify their own learning needs and professional development
- Lay the foundation for social workers“ future active use of professional supervision
- Enable students to learn from and get support from their peers as a basis for team work
- Enable students to learn from and with service users and carers
- Model anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice
- Enable students to manage personal and professional boundaries
- Understanding and developing their own and social work values
- Encourage reflection on performance
- Promote continuing professional learning in order to meeting changing and future and needs and contexts

2. Methods of enhancing professional identity and development

Programmes will use a range of approaches to teaching and learning using both didactic and interactive methods (lectures, discussions, workshops, seminars, tutorials, role-play and simulations, presentations, projects, reading, self-directed study, research, writing in a variety of formats and practice experience). Some will be delivered face-to-face, some through e-learning or a combination (blended learning). In order to deliver an effective „process“ curriculum, programmes should use a combination of approaches and:

- Balance conceptual understanding with awareness raising, skills and knowledge acquisition and practice skills and experience
- Recognise and maximise the use of students“ prior learning and experience, and that on placement
- Provide opportunities for students to review and discuss their own biographies
- Use approaches that boost motivation for and engagement in learning

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- Ensure there are opportunities for small group discussion of case examples and/or experience
- Ensure that there are opportunities for learning with and from service users and carers
- Ensure that practitioners play a role in teaching and learning
- Ensure adequate one-to-one and/or group tutorial time for students
- Plan other models for learning and support such as buddying, peer support and mentoring.
- Plan the curriculum in a way that is developmental and incremental as the programme progresses (particularly important for areas like communication skills, and also areas that are complex or challenging)
- Ensure that students take on progressively more responsibility for their learning
- Reflect the values and ethical principles of social work in the modes of teaching and learning, modelling professional behaviour by educators
- Ensure that assignments support learning as well as testing knowledge, skills and values and are spaced appropriately.

It is also recommended that programmes develop ways of enabling students to track and log their learning in relation to the outcomes for qualifying social work of the Professional Capabilities Framework. Many HEIs have evolved paper or web-based tools for Personal Development Planning (see [QAA Guidance on HE Progress Files](#)); whilst some of these may be generic across all HE programmes, there may be scope for customising tools for social work education.

Annex 10 Curriculum Framework

Supporting Continuing Professional Development for Social Work Educators

The need for social work, both as occupational practice and as an academic subject, to evolve, adapt and change in response to social, political and economic challenges is accepted nationally and internationally. This guidance starts from the premise that all social work educators and practice educators should be able to „take responsibility for their own further and continuing acquisition of knowledge and skills“ (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007, para 5.18) and that their employers should support them in their professional development in line with the revised UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). It should be recognised that practice can be highly specialised and that the level of knowledge social work educators require will depend on the extent to which they are engaged directly in that aspect of practice.

Programmes should:

Recognise and support the full range of activities in which social work educators keep in touch with practice:

Monitor how they invest in continuing professional development so as to identify how effective it is in terms of outcomes for educators, students, employers, people using services and carers.

Work in partnership with employers in implementing well established ways of improving the connections between university-based education and practice in agency settings, such as joint appointments, sabbaticals, and collaborative research.

Support social work educators in maintaining informal arrangements that enhance their practice, such as undertaking independent practice as a therapist, counsellor, or independent social worker, providing there are no conflicts of interest.

Consider the role played by other educators and professionals involved in delivering the curriculum, such as other academics from other disciplines and other professionals. This will help ensure that these aspects of the curriculum are also kept updated.

Partnerships should:

Review together how they can best manage the resources they invest in continuing professional development for educators and practitioners.

Demonstrate their commitment to providing updating opportunities for educators and practitioners, for example by including this topic as a regular agenda item in partnership meetings. This will contribute towards reaching shared agreements over priorities for updating.

Seek to establish where updating is needed by working towards achieving agreement over what is „best practice“ together. At the same time, partnerships should acknowledge the contested nature of some social work practice and ensure that students have the opportunities to learn about different ways of practising social work.

Students value inputs such as workshops delivered jointly by practitioners and social work educators. Practitioners need access to continuing professional development to

help them deliver teaching and learning most effectively. Arrangements for jointly delivered learning and teaching needs to be formalised in partnership agreements.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2007) *Subject Benchmark Statements: Social Work. Draft for consultation September 2007*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Retrieved 16 November 2009 from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/drafts/SocialWork07.pdf>.

ⁱ WHO (2010) *Mental health: strengthening our response*, Fact sheet 220, [www.who.int].

ⁱⁱ Tew, J. (2011) *Social Approaches to Mental Distress*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bentall, R. (2009) *Doctoring the Mind. Why Psychiatric Treatment Fails*, London, Allen Lane.

^{iv} Read, J., Fink, P., Rudegeair, T., Felitti, V., and Whitfield, C. (2008) Child maltreatment and psychosis: A return to a genuinely integrated bio-psycho-social model, *Clinical Schizophrenia and Related Psychoses*, 2, 235-254.

^v Moncrieff, J. (2008) *The Myth of the Chemical Cure: A Critique of Psychiatric Drug Treatment*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

^{vi} Romme, M. and Escher, S. (2000) *Making Sense of Voices*, London: MIND.

^{vii} Maas-Lowit, M. (2011) Addressing questions of definition, in J. Anderson & B. Penson (eds) *Burning Issues in Mental Health*, London: Higher Education Academy.