



**DEVELOPING TOGETHER**

SOCIAL WORK  
TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

**PRACTICE EDUCATION  
INFORMATION AND  
OPPORTUNITIES**



# DEVELOPING TOGETHER

## SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

## Introduction

### **A Brief History**

Our Partnership builds on an existing alliance in South West London and Surrey and aims to create a leading pre and post qualifying social work education community capable of attracting and retaining the best and brightest social workers in the country.

Our HEI Partner, Kingston University, has a history of providing a highly regarded Level 7 Practice Education course which has been supported by this alliance with employer partners for more than 20 years.

The formation of the Teaching Partnership in 2018 has enabled the creation of new Practice Education posts to specifically build upon existing strengths, particularly regarding the provision of high quality practice learning opportunities for our students. Broadly we aim to enhance the quality and quantity of practice learning opportunities across the region through multiple diverse activities targeted primarily at Practice Educators, Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors and Workforce Development leads.



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### Who's who?

#### Practice Education Consultants

Practice Education Consultants (PECs) are key to implementing our vision to deliver well trained, capable and confident social workers who can meet the challenges of practice. This innovative new role has been created to lead work on new approaches to practice learning, specifically enhancing the quality and quantity of practice learning opportunities, by:

- developing new or creative placement opportunities
- co-ordinating placement allocations
- quality assuring placements to deliver the best practice placement experience to all social work students
- creating resources to support Practice Educators, Practice Assessors, Practice Supervisors and students
- supporting Practice Educators to refresh and develop their practice education skills
- supporting Practice Supervisors to provide knowledgeable and skilled supervision of qualifying students

Meet our PECs:

**Paul Lawrence** is a qualified social worker, Practice Educator and Practice Assessor with a Master's degree in social work education. Paul has spent the last decade working with social work change at a regional, London and national level and currently sits on the Skills for Care/DfE ASYE national working group. He has worked with Kingston University for many years as a guest lecturer sitting on various university boards and panels. He is seconded to the Teaching Partnership from Merton where he was Workforce and Practice Development Manager in Children's Social Care with responsibilities including leading on student placements, the ASYE programme, social worker post-qualifying training and the L&D programme.

**Dale van Graan** is a South African qualified HCPC registered social worker with a background in generic and children and families' work. She also has an MA in Professional Education and Training and a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education. She is a very experienced Practice Educator, Assessor, Trainer and Supervisor and has joined the team from her post as a senior lecturer at Kingston University where she leads the PE course. Dale is passionate about all things professional and personal development and is excited about the opportunity to use her skills and knowledge across the partnership, to help develop and support practice learning.



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### **Practice Education Development Workers**

These Practice Educators will be working closely with the PECs to deliver support and development opportunities across the Partnership, through a wide range of activities, for example:

- contributing to the development and sharing of resources
- facilitating support groups for PEs, PSs or PAs
- practice educating students
- supporting Practice Educators or Practice Supervisors

**Josie Newton** started working in the mental health field as a support worker in a residential care home over 18 years ago. She qualified as a Social Worker following successful completion of Msc in Social Work, and subsequently joined New Malden Community Mental Health Team as a Care Coordinator. Josie has been a dedicated Social Worker in Mental Health for over 10 years, with dual diagnosis i.e. mental health and substance misuse, a particular passion. Josie developed in her career, becoming a Practice Educator, supporting, guiding, assessing and enabling social work students and then Newly Qualified Social Workers on the ASYE programme. Josie is a practicing AMHP and a qualified BIA. She is keen to improve the focus on mental health as well as dedicated towards the overall development of standards within Practice Education and Social Work education.

Sarah will be joining the team shortly.



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### Practice Educators

Practice Educators (PEs) are experienced Social Workers who have undertaken specific learning in order to teach, supervise, assess and support students undertaking a practice placement. The role of the PE is crucial in the teaching, support, assessment of all students and in the 'signing off' of qualifying social workers. To be eligible to apply for the PE course you must be:

- A Registered Social Worker with a minimum of two years post qualified experience
- Committed and able to complete both Stage 1 and Stage 2 training to become a fully qualified Practice Educator authorised to sign off a qualifying student
- able to provide two student placements
- Approved by your manager/Workforce Development and meet any local eligibility criteria.

Practice Educators:

- plan and manage the placement
- teach and enable learning and professional development
- assess the social work student against the Professional Capability Framework
- ensure the provision of a range of learning opportunities that allow students to have an appropriate level of responsibility and demonstrate the necessary skills, knowledge and values required to be a Social Worker, at the relevant level of the PCF
- support and enable students to integrate theory into practice and help them explore their values
- provide the student with regular formal supervision
- where based off-site, collaborate with the Practice Supervisor to ensure a co-ordinated assessment approach
- lead on the completion of placement documents, such as the PLA, midway and final reports
- liaise with the student's tutor as necessary
- attend regular support workshops and learning events at the university or inhouse
- contribute to the quality assurance and evaluation of the placement



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### **Practice Supervisors**

A Practice Supervisor, (also known as a work based or on site supervisor), is based in the same team as the student, usually has line management responsibility for the student's work and is available for day-to-day support. This role is ideal for those wanting to contribute to, but not take full responsibility for assessing a student. It may be the first step towards undertaking the Practice Educator course or progressing your career through gaining experience in supervising and managing staff.

Practice Supervisors:

- are jointly responsible for planning and managing the placement, including the induction for the student; allocating work; providing day-to-day support and formal supervision focusing on cases
- contribute to the holistic assessment of the student's learning and development by regularly sharing information with the PE and contributing to the midway and final reports
- attend placement meetings and PS training and support days before and during placements
- contribute to the quality assurance and evaluation of the placement

There are some specific requirements for this role:

- for a final placement student it is essential for the PS to be a qualified Social Worker
- the PS must be competent to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students
- the PS must be located in the same team as the student's practice learning setting



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### **Students**

Within the Partnership students could be drawn from one of two qualifying programmes: a three year BA in Social Work or a Masters in Social Work. There is absolutely no difference between the practice components of the two courses, however:

- BA first placements (70 days) take place from November to March and final placements (100 days) from September to March each year
- MSW first placements (70 days) take place from May to August and final placements (100 days) from January to July each year
- All students are required to pass their placements AND academic modules before progressing to the next academic level and where a placement is failed, students may be offered only one repeat opportunity

### **Tutors**

Each student has an allocated personal/academic tutor in the University who is the first point of contact for Practice Educators, Supervisors and students during placements, thereby providing a bridge between University and placement.

Tutors will:

- participate actively throughout the practice learning experience through ongoing contact with the student, Practice Educator and/or Practice Supervisor, through visits, meetings and other communication, such as telephone and email contact, as required
- support all involved in the student's practice learning experience, to ensure that University procedures are followed and the placement meets suitability requirements
- contribute to the learning and development of trainee Practice Educators by providing them with developmental feedback



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### **Practice Assessors**

Practice Assessors are Stage 2 qualified, experienced Practice Educators who work with trainee Practice Educators as their assessors, mentors and enablers of learning and development, during the social work student placement.

Practice Assessors:

- are usually appointed within the employing organisation and will be required to observe the trainee in live supervision with the student, review and provide feedback on all placement documents and make a holistic assessment of the trainee's capability against the Practice Educator Professional Standards domains
- assess practice as Pass or Fail; it is a requirement to pass this assessment in order to pass the PE course
- will have no direct role to play in relation to the social work student, will not attend Learning Agreement meetings or midway reviews and will not intervene in the student's learning plan or if there are difficulties. However, they will support the trainee Practice Educator in following process, in assessing the student and in addressing difficulties
- are supported by the University PE team through 1:1 contact and regular support groups





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## Support and Development Opportunities

These are numerous and include

- a two stage Practice Education course culminating in a Postgraduate Certificate in Practice Education at Kingston University
- 'Preparation for placement' days for students, Practice Educators, Practice Supervisors and tutors
- Practice Learning workshops for PEs and PSs during placements
- Practice Assessor workshops during placements
- Employer based or PEC facilitated PE groups and/ or student groups
- One day PE Refresher events: opportunities for 'dormant' PEs who have not worked with a student or a Newly Qualified Social Worker for more than two years to refresh their knowledge and skills to enable a return to practice education practice
- Half day 'Becoming a PA' events: for experienced PEs interested in developing their knowledge and skills by becoming a PA
- Practice Supervisor 'info-mercials': find out what the role entails
- Practice Supervisor development workshops/programmes: a developmental and support programme during practice
- Individual development plans
- A range of university based assessment and teaching opportunities
- Monthly research seminars at Kingston university
- Annual Departmental conference
- PE conference

For further more personalised information or to let us know what you are doing to enhance or support practice learning in your setting, please contact

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