



DEVELOPING TOGETHER
SOCIAL WORK
TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

Developing Together Social Work
Teaching Partnership: Business Plan
2020-24



1. Executive Summary

The Developing Together Social Work Teaching Partnership (TP) is a collaboration between local authorities (LAs), private, voluntary and independent agencies (PVIs) and a higher education institution (HEI) in the south west London and Surrey region. It aims to develop relationships amongst partner agencies, strengthen the link between social work academia and practice, and identify common goals to work towards in order to raise the quality of social work. It also aims to identify and promote opportunities for growth and sustainability.

Originally established and funded by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of their Social Work Teaching Partnership programme, the aim was to transform the quality of education and experience received by social work students and practitioners. This followed reviews such as Narey and Croisdale-Appleby¹ which highlighted an urgent need for better social work education and professional development.

The objectives of the programme included:

1. Attracting high quality students into the profession;
2. Ensuring students and existing social workers have the necessary knowledge, skills and values to practice effectively;
3. Improving workforce planning and development to address retention and recruitment issues.

Partnerships were subject to four funding criteria, and were encouraged to develop local responses to a set of stretch criteria focused on governance, admissions, practice placements and support, curriculum, academic delivery workforce development and workforce planning.

The DfE funding was initially awarded over a two year period (April 2018 - March 2020), however the TP was successful in securing sustainability funding for 2020-21 and 2021-22 and a financial plan is in place that will sustain the TP until end March 2023. The sustainability plans were based on a revised two-tier membership model, comprising primary² and secondary³ partners, and have a greater emphasis on recruitment and retention strategies and practice development.

¹ Martin Narey (2014). Making the education of social workers consistently effective. Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of the education of children's social workers. David Croisdale-Appleby (2014). Re-visioning social work education. An independent review.

² Primary partners are: Achieving for Children, Croydon Adults, Kingston Adults, Merton Adults, Sutton Adults, Sutton Children, NSPCC, Welcare and Kingston University.

³ Secondary partners are: Croydon Children, Merton Children, Surrey Children, Richmond & Wandsworth Adults and Wandsworth Children.



Therefore, this business plan reflects aspirations, goals and objectives over a four year period, and is backdated from April 2020 when the new membership structure took effect, until March 2024.

Looking to the future, the priorities of the TP will continue to evolve and be shaped by the national social work agenda and local landscape as well as the needs of the primary partners. The added value of the TP is that the infrastructure, governance and key relationships that have been built mean that it can be flexible and responsive to these emerging needs.

1.1 Our Vision

To leverage the strengths of our partners to create the UK's leading pre and post-qualifying social work education community, capable of attracting, developing and retaining the best and brightest social workers in the country.

This vision is consistent with the overarching purpose of social work teaching partnerships, which is to transform the quality of education and experience received by social work students and practitioners. The DfE⁴ (2019) saw Teaching Partnerships as the vehicle for attracting high quality students into the profession and ensuring students and existing social workers have the necessary knowledge, skills and values to practice effectively. In addition, they expected that they would improve workforce planning and development to address retention and recruitment issues.

We believe that tackling retention and recruitment issues and promoting high quality pre and post-qualifying education and development are not mutually exclusive. In fact, we believe that targeting the initial education and continuing professional development of social workers is essential to the sustained, long-term prosperity of the social work profession. A stable workforce is also fundamental in delivering improvements to practice and services.

⁴ Department for Education. Social work teaching partnerships: An evaluation Interim research report - early findings. (2019). [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809219/TP_Evaluation_Interim_Report_Final_13_June.pdf [Accessed 14 Jan. 2020].



1.2 Objectives

The TP's business plan is centred around 3 overarching objectives, derived from its Labour Market Plan⁵:

1. Improving pre-qualifying social work education;
2. Stimulating recruitment of social workers;
3. Promoting a skilled and stable workforce.

It also acknowledges a 4th key objective:

4. Seeking opportunities for growth and sustainability

Since April 2020, the TP has worked on a set of initiatives that contribute to these objectives, derived from the Visioning Day held in January 2020. These were ratified and refreshed at the Visioning Day held in April 2021. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020 - to date), some initiatives and associated activities were reprioritised, but in the main plans have progressed extremely well under the circumstances and new opportunities have been identified and taken advantage of. All adapted plans are agreed by the Teaching Partnership's Strategic Board and the DfE as project sponsor.

As these circumstances persist, it has been necessary to take a flexible approach and allow existing priorities to evolve and new priorities to emerge as we all respond to the new challenges and opportunities brought about by the pandemic.

1.3 Keys to success

To achieve our vision we have identified four outcomes that provide the strategic framework that we will use to measure the impact and added value of the TP. These outcomes do not sit in isolation; they are interdependent and they all have an important role to play in meeting our vision:

- a. High calibre graduates;
- b. Efficient recruitment;
- c. Low turnover rates;
- d. Improved practice.

The impact of the TP is measured against a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and an array of quantitative and qualitative information is collected to demonstrate progress towards the outcomes. The KPIs are regularly reviewed to

⁵ Libbi Aldred (2020). A Labour Market Plan: Our Workforce Strategy.



ensure they are still relevant, meaningful and able to be evidenced. This is particularly important since the TP programme involves emergent and responsive strategies and causal processes which cannot be completely controlled or predicted in advance. Although there is an overall goal in mind, the details of a programme can unfold and change over time as different people become engaged (or disengage) and as it responds to new challenges and opportunities. As such, we undertook an audit of our performance and impact measures in April 2021 (as part of the Visioning Day) with key stakeholders. We hope that this will result in more robust and effective measures that better reflect the TP's current and ongoing aspirations.

The TP continues to publish comprehensive and transparent progress and evaluation reports and contribute to all DfE national evaluations. Our TP was recently praised by the DfE for providing particularly detailed case studies that have contributed to the most recent national evaluation report.

Further reading:

- [Internal DTSWTP annual evaluation Nov 2019](#)
- [Independent DTSWTP evaluation Sept 2020](#)
- [Internal DTSWTP annual evaluation May 2021](#)
- [Internal DTSWTP annual evaluation Headline Messages May 2021](#)
- [National Interim evaluation Jun 2019](#)
- [National Final evaluation Nov 2020](#)

For more information, please also see the [Performance Measures & Data Monitoring](#) document. This illustrates what information and performance data we review, what targets we are working towards and what initiatives our successes can be attributed to.

2. Organisation Summary

The TP is a membership based, collaborative partnership between LAs, PVI and a HEI and is based in south west London and Surrey. It serves social work students and practitioners within the region with the aim of raising the quality of social work. It does this through delivery of a number of initiatives, aligned to its 4 overarching objectives.

The central TP team comprises a Project Lead (1 FTE), Social Work Lead (0.2 FTE), two Practice Consultants (1.5 FTE), Events Lead (1 FTE) and Project Support Officer (1 FTE). These individuals are employed by Achieving for Children on behalf of the TP and as such, their office space is usually Twickenham Training Centre. However, the team also spends a considerable proportion of their time at Kingston Hill University Campus. Due to Covid-19, the team has been working remotely from home for over 12 months, however this is under regular review.



Owing to the current pandemic, many stakeholders are also working remotely from home, or only working in the office where this is deemed essential. Therefore, meetings are held virtually using technology such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Given the geographical area across which the TP operates, this has been an unintended benefit of the pandemic; stakeholders can attend meetings more easily due to not needing to factor in travel time.

The pandemic also created the need for the TP to move its entire continuing professional development (CPD) offer online and this has proven to be more effective than face to face delivery in some cases, for a number of reasons. For example, not needing to pay for or attend physical venues has allowed us to offer a greater number of events. We also noticed an improved uptake, particularly during the first lockdown, perhaps due to staff and students not needing to travel in order to attend.

Looking to the future, whilst recognising the value of face to face communication, we foresee that we will continue to host a considerable proportion of meetings and events online in light of the benefits we have identified.

3. Services

The TP provides LAs, PVI's and a HEI within the region of south west London and Surrey with a forum through which they can collaborate on a number of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of social work. All planned initiatives for the upcoming two years are agreed as part of an annual Visioning Day which allows key stakeholders to refresh the TP's priorities and influence key areas of work.

The TP also serves its members by seeking opportunities for growth and sustainability and now generates its own income. For example, through completing additional work for the DfE, selling courses to other organisations, and completing one-off pieces of work for partners upon request.

The long term goals of the TP are to improve pre-qualifying social work education, stimulate recruitment of social workers, promote a skilled and stable workforce, and seek opportunities for growth and sustainability. All activities are aligned to one or more of these goals.

The most up to date Logic Model for 2021-23 can be found [here](#).



4. Market Analysis Summary

The DfE's Social Work Teaching Partnership programme was developed in direct response to reviews such as Narey and Croisdale-Appleby⁶ that highlighted the urgent need for better social work education and professional development. Croisdale-Appleby's report outlined twenty-two recommendations and many of the TP's activities are mapped against these.

For example, three of the aforementioned recommendations relate to HEI entry selection processes for social work qualifying programmes and the TP has been responsible for the introduction of enhanced point of entry tests and increased entry criteria.

Similarly, four recommendations refer to the sufficient provision and quality of practice placements and the TP has worked collaboratively to ensure placements are allocated efficiently and are of the highest quality, through introduction of an improved Placement Allocation Strategy and enhanced quality assurance processes.

In terms of the existing workforce, there are also a number of recommendations that refer to continuing professional development (CPD), including the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and beyond. Again, the TP has a number of projects in flight that aim to improve the consistency of ASYE programmes across our region, introduce an enhanced level of support for those practitioners who are 2-3 years post qualification and adequately train and develop high quality managers.

There currently exists a lack of longitudinal robust and reliable evidence on recruitment, retention and progression within the social work sector, however we do know of a number of workforce challenges facing our region and these further influence our priorities:

1. The majority of leavers in children and family and adult social work leave within 2 and 3 years respectively. This is a national trend but is significantly more pronounced in our region with 46.3% of leavers in children and family social work leaving within 2 years and 23.2% of leavers in adult social work leaving with 3 years;
2. The turnover rate in children and family social work in our TP (24%) is considerably higher than the national average (16%) and rising;
3. The use of agency staff in our TP is particularly notable, with the agency worker rate double the national average for children and family social work

⁶ Martin Narey (2014). Making the education of social workers consistently effective. Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of the education of children's social workers. David Croisdale-Appleby (2014). Re-visioning social work education. An independent review.



(at 28.4%) and four times higher than the national average for adult social work (31%);

4. At 25.3%, the vacancy rate for children and family social work in the TP is higher than the national average of 16% (although consistent with the London average of 26%). In adult social work within the TP, the vacancy rate is apparently lower than the national average at 5.1%, however this is puzzling given the agency worker rate is reportedly 4 times the national average.

Further reading:

[A Labour Market Plan: Our Workforce Strategy](#)

5. Financial Plan

5.1 Finance startup summary

The TP has largely been financed by the DfE to date, however primary partners made a financial contribution in April 2020 (for 2020-21) and April 2021 (for 2021-22) and have committed to do so for a further year (in April 2022 for 2022-23).

Financing from the point of the TP's inception in April 2018 through to March 2021 is shown in the table below:

Income	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
DfE TP funding	£532,519	£709,748	£270,000
DfE Step Up funding	£0	£0	£0
Membership fee from primary partners (excluding PVIs)	£0	£0	£70,000 (£10k per partner)
TP sustainability fund	£0	£0	£0
Rollover from underspend	£0	£0	£0
Other income ⁷	£0	£0	£7,795
Total	£532,519	£709,748	£347,795

⁷ Represents income from externally sold courses and provision of services for individual partners and external bodies.



5.2 Funding forecast

The table below demonstrates the expected breakdown of funding the TP between 2021 and 2024, assuming the delivery model and operating budget remain the same and that the DfE provides no further sustainability funding beyond 2021-22.

N.B. Budget is only agreed until March 2023. 2023-24 is indicative.

Projected Income	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
DfE TP funding	£118,000	£0	£0
DfE Step Up funding	£48,000 ⁸	£0	£48,000
Membership fee from primary partners (excluding PVIs)	£60,000 ⁹ (£10k per partner)	£70,000 (£10k per partner)	£182,000 (£26k per partner)
TP sustainability fund	£0	£180,000	£0
Rollover from underspend	£30,000	£0	£3,000
Other income	£53,000	£30,000	£50,000
Total	£309,000	£280,000	£283,000
Projected Expenditure	£309,000	£277,000	£280,000

The current delivery model means that a significant proportion of the TP's expenditure is salaries for the central team and, as a result, our costs are relatively predictable. The majority of activities are delivered and/or coordinated by the central team in collaboration with leads from each partner agency and, as such, there is a modest operating budget of approximately £40,000 per annum. The model of using our own staff to deliver the majority of work is much more cost effective than commissioning third parties or bringing in external facilitators.

To date, the operating budget has been largely utilised on CPD and workforce development initiatives and it is expected that this will continue to be the case. For example, in 2020-21, the TP put 52 managers from primary partner agencies through an Early Career Managers' Programme. It also offered over 90 unique CPD opportunities such as Action Learning Set Facilitation Training for 32 practitioners and workshops for hundreds of staff on various topics, including, but not limited to:

⁸ Represents the total amount of administrative funding for the Step Up programme during financial year 2021-22.

⁹ Adjusted to reflect that there will be no financial contribution from Croydon Adults in 2021-22



- Trauma Informed Practice
- Engaging Service Users when Working Virtually or Online
- Child to Parent Violence and Abuse
- Culturally Sensitive Assessments and Interventions
- Anti-Racism in Social Work
- Wellbeing

5.3 Fundraising strategy

The TP's fourth objective focuses on sustainability and growth with a view to generating a stable income that will sustain the TP, reduce the dependency on partner agencies to make financial contributions and position the TP as a provider of choice.

The TP will endeavour to generate additional income using a variety of approaches. These have been categorised under the following four areas:

- 1. Responding to invitations to tender** (ITTs) released within the sector. For example, in 2020, the TP has received ITTs for a number of projects including Step Up to Social Work, a Practice Education Programme, and an ASYE Assessor Programme.
- 2. External consultancy work** for the DfE, other Teaching Partnerships and external organisations. For example, in 2020, the TP was asked to host the national TP network intranet and was granted additional funding for this piece of work.
- 3. Internal consultancy work** for partner agencies. For example, developing a workforce development strategy for a partner local authority or designing and delivering a post qualifying module.
- 4. Selling courses and events** externally. For example, in 2021, the TP was commissioned to deliver its Early Career Managers' Programme to another regional teaching partnership and generated an income from this. Moving forward we will look to target agency workers who have an annual CPD allowance of £500 and will be required to evidence CPD as part of Social Work England's new registration requirements.

Any additional surplus income generated by the TP will be refunded to those partners who have financially contributed, or reinvested in the TP, at the discretion of the Strategic Board.

5.4 Non-cashable savings

Organisations within the TP are jointly responsible for identifying cost savings and business efficiencies that have resulted from the TP so that these can be offset against any annual financial contribution and demonstrate that being a member of the TP provides good value for money.



It is relatively straightforward to calculate the return on investment of TP membership when it comes to the provision of learning and development opportunities. For example, if places are funded on training or post qualifying modules, this can be directly offset against each partner's financial contribution.

However, it is more complex to quantify non-cashable savings, such as outcomes that have been achieved as a direct or indirect result of the TP and what savings or efficiencies that has or will generate for the organisation in the short, medium and long term.

5.5 Personnel plan

The central TP team comprises a Project Lead (1 FTE), Social Work Lead (0.2 FTE), two Practice Consultants (1.5 FTE), Events Lead (1 FTE) and Project Support Officer (1 FTE).

The TP also draws on the expertise of various stakeholders who provide advice, oversight and strategic direction of planned activities. These usually come from the following groups: Directors and Assistant Directors, Principal Social Workers, Workforce Development Leads/Learning & Development Managers, Heads of Service, Social Work Academics, and People with Lived Experience.

On occasion, the TP will commission external personnel or organisations to deliver specific pieces of work or training. For example, commissioning an independent evaluation or a facilitator to conduct specialist training.

5.6 Important assumptions

We are assuming:

- That the membership of the TP remains stable, with the same number of agencies engaging and contributing
- That the personnel in the central team remain relatively consistent
- That the HEI remains in the financial position to offer discounts on post qualifying courses
- That we do not reach saturation in terms of people entering the profession
- That a reasonable number of opportunities for income generation present themselves
- That the Step Up programme is successful and we receive funding for cohort 8 in 2023-24
- That the CPD offer continues to appeal to internal and external stakeholders



6. Marketing & Communication

A summary of the marketing and communications plan:

- Strong awareness and reputation via word of mouth
- Consistent branding of internal and external communications, including the website and social media channels as well as newsletters and other publications
- Production of a regular newsletter
- A comprehensive CPD offer that appeals to the target market
- An up to date website with rich resource library
- Attendance at high profile events and national meetings
- Excellent service and high quality results
- Achievements of the TP are clearly articulated to internal and external stakeholders
- Capitalising on connections with key government departments, i.e. DfE, DoHSC, the regulator, Social Work England, and other professional bodies, i.e. BASW, Community Care etc.
- Promote studying and working within the TP
- Trailblaze innovative initiatives and be seen as market leaders
- Publish research articles in well known journals
- Cascade relevant information in a timely and effective manner