



# DEVELOPING TOGETHER

## SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

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Welcome to July's newsletter,

In the same month we saw the England men's football team make history and the Olympic Games kick off in Tokyo, we have also been enjoying the greater freedoms that have been in place following the latest lifting of restrictions.

For most, this has meant increased face to face interaction with colleagues and those we support, all so important for strong relationships with people and working towards positive outcomes. As a team, we have been making more frequent trips to the office for collaborative working, and we've also had FOUR birthdays amongst us, meaning lots of cake, cards and presents!

We hope you enjoy the latest edition of the newsletter,

The TP Team

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## Practice Consultant Update

Josie and Sharon are in the process of developing some new PE Workshops aimed at more experienced Practice Educators. Look out for the dates in the coming months!

Of course, the Practice Education Workshops that are already planned are still going ahead so please come and join us. [See here](#) for the flyer.

As we continue to develop our community of practice the Practice Educators and Onsite Supervisor virtual drop in sessions started this month on **20 July**. The flyer can be found [here](#). Just click on the date and you will virtually drop in to the zoom call, no need to book. The drop in sessions last from **2 pm to 4 pm**. We can talk about whatever you want to, stay for the whole session or come for a shorter period, it is up to you. Together we can develop our practice wisdom, share ideas and learn from each other and support each other at the same time. **We are looking forward to seeing you there.**



# Continuing Professional Development

June saw the launch of two exciting new frameworks, designed to support social worker continuing professional development (CPD) and career progression in our region. We were delighted to showcase these to the workforce at a launch event on 18th June.

## **Career Pathways & CPD Framework**

Demonstrating the region's commitment to improve social work practice through CPD and career progression, this framework supports social work practitioners and those involved with workforce learning and development by outlining indicative social work job roles/responsibilities and associated CPD opportunities at each career stage. It also supports practitioners to meet Social Work England (SWE) CPD requirements and identify learning opportunities.

The Framework was created through consultation with partner agencies during 2020-21 and continually evolves as new opportunities are developed. The Framework is mapped against the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and the Post-Qualifying Standards (better known as the KSS).

## **Early Professional Development Framework**

The transition from Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) can be a challenging one and the metaphorical 'cliff-edge' post the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) is often referred to within the social work sector. After the ASYE, social workers find themselves negotiating new terrain, managing an increased caseload and often taking on additional responsibilities, sometimes without sufficient support or training.

However, the transition period is also a hugely rewarding one, representing the end of a significant period of study, with most social workers having studied for two or three years at University before going on to complete an intensive ASYE programme with demanding portfolio requirements.

Taking some of the learnings from the Department for Education's (DfE) pilot Early Professional Development programme (2009-2011), and working closely with local employers and our academic partner, we have developed an Early Professional Development (EPD) Framework for social workers in the second and third years of their career. This Framework dovetails the overarching Career Pathways & CPD Framework.

You can access both Frameworks on the TP website [here](#). We recommend accessing the Frameworks directly via the website as they continually evolve as new opportunities are created - that way you can be sure you're accessing the most up to date version!



## Strengths Based Approaches Training

We have been working in partnership with Kingston University and our adult partners in Kingston, Merton, Sutton and Croydon to develop and deliver a training course on strength-based social work practice. The Department of Health promotes strengths-based working in adult social work, which is underpinned by the Care Act 2014, to support social workers to focus on individuals' strengths and social and community networks and not on their deficits.

Lecturers from Kingston University, Sue Lansley, Aga Buckley and Clive Simmons, delivered the first training course over June and July and were joined by a fantastic group of adult social workers and managers to consider, explore and reflect on strength-based practice and approaches. The course aims to refresh participants knowledge of strengths-based theory and person-centred theory and looks at a variety of tools to support carrying out strengths-based conversations and assessments. On the third day of the course the group returned, after putting the tools into practice and reflected with their peers from across the four Local Authorities on the positives and challenges of the approach. Time was spent thinking about working with loss and trauma and how we can use the approach to support people in their lived experience of loss. Finally, the course explores writing analytical strengths-based assessments and how we can best use Supervision to support our practice in using strength-based approaches to ensure best outcomes for those with which we work.

Sue, Aga and Clive want to say a big thank you to the group who showed so much energy and enthusiasm and brought their practice wisdom to share. The feedback for the course was excellent with participants appreciating being able to come together with other social workers from across the region to reflect on and develop their practice. We are looking forward to running the course twice more this year, in September and November!



## Teaching Consultants

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of five new Teaching Consultants, who will work alongside Kingston University module leaders and the existing Teaching Consultants who have been in post since 2018-19. Together they will co-develop, co-deliver and contribute to teaching within the social work programmes at Kingston University through lectures, seminars, small groups and skills workshops. They will also be involved in the recruitment of students onto the qualifying programmes and support students to develop their employability skills as they near the end of their course.

We look forward to their valuable contributions to teaching and learning, as well as other departmental activities within the new academic year.

Welcome on board Mary Scarlett, Ulrike Nebel, Cherelle Francis, David Nwokedi and Michael Radley!



## Research Project



Look out for the dates for the new Research Hub. This project will be facilitated by Sharon Evans, Practice Consultant, in collaboration with key individuals from across the partnership.

Social Workers will come together on a monthly basis to develop their confidence in applying research to practice by understanding how to critique research and choose the right piece of research to support your case planning. The research hub supports both children's social workers and adult social workers in developing their thinking in relation to research.

By looking at research together in a group an individual social worker can develop their understanding of a particular piece of research and use these reflections for CPD, a requirement of Social Work Professional Standard 4.

You might be interested in a particular piece of research, have used this in your practice and then want to share your practice wisdom with others. Come to the Research Hub and present this research to others and develop your presenting and critiquing skills. Similarly you may come along to the hub and hear about some interesting research that has supported a colleague's intervention with a person of lived experience.

Come along to a regular research practice group called the Research Hub and together we can learn and support each other in applying research to all areas of practice. As the group develops there may be scope for individual social workers to undertake research that they are interested in and share the learning across the partnership. Together we can develop practice in research which will be really useful to us as social workers and the people of lived experience that we work with.

## Step Up To Social Work



In Partnership with Kingston University, London Borough of Sutton and Achieving For Children, the Teaching Partnership is pleased to announce that we are running Cohort 7 of the Step up To Social Work Programme for the first time. The Step Up to Social Work Programme is developed by the Department for Education (DfE) and is an accelerated entry route into children and family social work.

The 14 month full-time programme is aimed at high calibre, experienced graduates who will gain a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work. The course and assessment process has been designed in consultation with people with lived experience of social work services, with Kingston University delivering 1200 hours of teaching and learning. In addition, students will complete 170 days of practice learning working directly with people with lived experience of services under an assessed, supervised caseload. Students will be required to study and complete academic pieces of work to gain the necessary credits alongside the practice learning in the workplace.

Following successful completion of the two day assessment centre process in June, we have 12 outstanding candidates who will be starting the course in January 2022. We would like to thank all of those who participated in the assessment centre process and very much look forward to welcoming the 12 candidates onto the course in January.





# Interview Top Tips

We have recently developed some Top Tips for both interview candidates and interviewers to support you to be as prepared as possible before, during and after your interview!

The full infographics can be found on our website [here!](#)



## BEFORE...

Respond to the invitation to confirm your attendance as soon as you can. Or, inform them if you are no longer able to attend, or wish to withdraw your application.

Read through the interview instructions thoroughly. If the initial information doesn't cover key information, find out key information about the interview.

- Interview process and structure (written test, group exercise, face to face, psychometric)
- Virtual or in person? If the latter, location (parking)
- Name of key contact

If you need reasonable adjustments to be made, let the interviewer or key contact know. Don't be afraid to ask for this.

If you haven't already, research the organisation, e.g. Google, 'Insider information', press coverage.

Re-read your application form, the job description and person specification.

Be as prepared as you can! Have some examples of situations where you have demonstrated the criteria they are looking for. Ensure you can talk about key legislation or theory.

Get together any documents you might need to bring.

Think about what questions you would like to ask the interviewer(s). These can show your interest in the organisation and development.

If the interview is virtual, test your technology and software you can access the platform. Consider your environment and whether you need to go somewhere quieter, or blur your background for privacy.

Dress appropriately.  
Arrive or log on early.

## DURING...

Answer the questions to the best of your ability. If the question has multiple parts, answer each part separately. Don't be afraid to take your time, make a note of the question, ask for clarification or for questions to be repeated if needed, especially if there are multiple parts to the question.

Most interviews are scored to set criteria based on the person specification, so use your prepared examples to talk about your knowledge, skills and experience. Be clear and precise in your answers.

You might be asked a clarifying question, or to expand on a given example. These are to help you and your reply will give more depth to your answer.

Talk about social work theory and good social work practice.

Feedback relevant information you know about the organisation and the post.

Show enthusiasm about the job, organisation and profession.

Avoid negativity or criticism about your current and previous experience and organisations.

Take ownership of your answers and try to say three rather than one(s).

Ask your questions at the end of the interview, or when prompted to do so. You do not have to ask them all, especially if the answers have been discussed already as part of the interview.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS...

If you're a final year student applying for your first social work post, you should consider when your final board of graduates.

Have your final placement report & University PDP ready.

Are you already or when will you be registered with Social Work England?

Are you a member of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW)?

Do you have a car and are you willing to use it for your job? If so, is it insured for this purpose?

If no interview is offered, it is worth making contact to ask for feedback. This will help you learn and improve for the future!



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## BEFORE...

Send the candidate all of the key information and instructions for the interview in good time, including:

- Interview timings, process and structure (written test, group exercise, face to face, psychometric)
- Virtual or in person? If it is the former, include joining link and instructions. If the latter, the venue information.
- Name of key contact

If this will be sent out by the recruitment team or HR, make sure that they have all of this information.

Bear in mind that not all candidates will have access to newer technology, and may have connectivity issues.

Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments for candidates that may require them.

Ensure that your interview panel is as diverse as possible (age, gender, race etc.) and has appropriate representation from those with lived experience, or those with relevant experience to the role.

Agree the questions that will be asked to all candidates and ensure that they address the critical needs of the role and the organisation.

Plan with the other interviewers who will ask each question, introduce any tasks and who will open and close the interview.

Check any policies and expectations for recording interview notes - e.g. what must be done for recording virtual interviews, including obtaining consent from the candidate.

Be prepared - ensure you have read through all relevant documents and that all panel members have a copy of the candidate's application and CV.

## DURING...

Welcome the candidate and begin the interview with more personal/small talk questions and introductions to put the candidate at ease.

Restate the structure of the interview.

When candidates are answering questions, give them feedback to encourage them, even if you are busy making notes at the same time. Prompt them a little if necessary. If they have not fully answered the question.

Ask for specific examples of social work practice and legislation.

If you would like to ask any additional questions to the candidate, make it clear that you would like to do so while avoiding talking over them or the other interview panelists. Jumping in this way can be confusing for everyone.

Consider any biases you may have, and ensure you keep an open mind regarding what you think the ideal candidate may be.

Be prepared to answer the candidate's questions and give them an opportunity to ask questions. This can show their overall interest in the position, organisation and their own development.

When closing the interview, let the candidate know what the process will be for finding out the outcome and when the next steps may be. Provide them a timeline if possible.

When making notes, keep in mind that a candidate should request a copy of these in future. Try to ensure that the interview notes are constructive and offer feedback that can help the candidate to improve their interview technique, address any skills gaps, gain further experience or improve their knowledge base.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS...

Do contact all candidates to inform them of their outcomes, whether successful or not.

Offer unsuccessful candidates the opportunity to ask for feedback. When providing this feedback, be honest and constructive - rather than saying they just didn't make it, give examples of how they could have improved their answers or demonstrated the required skills.

If you are the hiring manager, remember that this is only the beginning of the relationship with any successful candidate(s). Continue to keep in touch with them and inform them of updates ahead of their start date.



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Research in Practice is an organisation that brings together academic research, practice expertise and the experiences of people accessing services. We have been working with them to collate some of their open-access resources, which do not require membership to access!

### Resources

- New [Dedicated Supporting Parents who have Experienced Recurrent Care Proceedings website](#) brings together research, practice knowledge and lived experience to better understand the issues facing parents and to ensure they are better supported to access services. The resources include short videos, published papers, links to relevant websites or practice aides, as well as resources developed by parents who have themselves experienced losing their children through care proceedings.
- **Promoting anti-racism in social work:** A new [presentation](#) and [podcast](#) examines key issues around racism and inequality, which invites us to reflect on our own thoughts, feelings and behaviours as practitioners, leaders and allies.

### Blogs

- [Relational learning in and for practice: the PSDP community of practice approach](#)
- [Services for parents who have experienced recurrent care proceedings: Where are we now?](#)
- [Developing effective practice panels for social work education](#)

## Wellbeing Resources



The lifting of restrictions earlier this month may have been a relief to many, but may cause feelings of post-lockdown anxiety for others. We have compiled a few articles and resources that may be helpful for coping with these anxieties.

[11 tips to cope with anxiety about coming out of lockdown](#)

[From lockdown to relaxation of covid rules: tips on looking after your mental health](#)

[Managing feelings about lockdown easing](#)

[How can you combat re-entry anxiety now all restrictions are being lifted?](#)





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**Thank you for reading!**

If you have any good news stories, examples of excellent practice, or helpful resources that you'd like to share, please send these through to us at: [admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk](mailto:admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk)

We would also be grateful to receive comments or suggestions on the newsletter, including any topics you'd like to see covered in future editions.