

December 2010



Training

Social Work Services Training Section Training Team News



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"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." Harry S Truman, US President

[The PDA PLQ \(SS\) in Practice Learning](#)

The Professional Development Award in Practice Learning qualifies individuals as Practice Teachers who can then support and assess social work students on placement, although anyone who supports the learning of people in the workplace can undertake this award.

The PDA is available at SCQF levels 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, with the most appropriate award being determined by the level of learning being supported. For individuals wishing to support Social Work Students in East Ayrshire Council, level 10 has been identified as the qualification level required to assess social work practice.

I was fortunate enough to be offered a place on Cohort 9 of the PDA run by Learning Network (West.) This was a block cohort which means that instead of attending classes on single days spread over a period of months, most of the teaching of the course is done over two, five-day blocks. I felt this model fitted best with my commitments as a Training Officer although people may prefer a less condensed approach or find it easier to be released from their operational duties on single days.

The award is based on the SVQ model of individual units which are assessed and verified to form a group award; for the level 10 PDA there are eight units in total, the first two of which have to be successfully completed before the individual can be allocated a student. As I work in the Social Work Training Section, and not an operational team, I will act as the student's Practice Teacher on a peripatetic basis.

The teaching took place in Paisley during August and October and was very comprehensive, giving lots of opportunity for information gathering, discussion and...yes...the dreaded role play! Even training officers sometimes cower under their desk when those words are spoken! The class was made up from a wide range of authorities and organisations and with a couple of participants who intend to do freelance practice teacher work once qualified. The main benefit of being in the group, apart from being able to support each other, was the opportunity to discuss and reflect on practice in a safe environment.

The best part of the second week, although it caused some consternation in the lead up to it, was where each member of the class had to prepare and deliver a short presentation on a social work subject of their choice. To make it slightly less intimidating, the class was split into three smaller groups so that colleagues could act as the audience for each presentation. In my group, colleagues delivered excellent presentations on subjects such as risk assessment, restorative justice and adult protection with the discussions which followed being very informative.

If you have an interest in supporting people to learn, then this PDA is excellent, not just as an accredited award (always good for you CPD!) but as a developmental opportunity. For me, doing this award has allowed me to revisit a lot of the theory I have learned over my time in social care and to reflect on how it informs my practice and that of others.



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Social Work is a very demanding role and for students it is vital that they get every opportunity to have a positive experience on placement while having their practice guided, assessed and supervised. As one of the course tutors put it at the end of the second week, "Practice Teachers are the gatekeepers to the profession." If you think this is a role you could contribute to, why not have a chat with your line manager or the Team Manager (Training) about opportunities on the PDA Practice Learning course? Further information is also available on the SQA website at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4895.html>

[Partnerships in Practice Event](#)

On 3rd November in the Park Hotel, Kilmarnock, the 'Partnerships in Practice' event was held by the Learning Network (West.) The East Ayrshire Local Practitioner Forum had significant input in the development, content and actual coordination of the event and it was billed as an opportunity for all organisations and workers interested in partnership working across Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway's social services to come together.

The organisers had catered for approximately one hundred delegates and were delighted that by the time it got underway, they were not far short of that figure. The event was facilitated by Lynda Galloway of Alpha Homecare, and chairperson for the Local Learning Network, and included many excellent speakers.

Henry Campbell of Coatbridge College gave an excellent presentation on a new PDA in Risk and Resilience. This was followed by Caroline Sturgeon from the Voluntary Services Social Services Unit, who spoke on another hot topic of the moment, 'Workforce Planning.'

Alpha Homecare and Loretto Care then gave different perspectives regarding the quest for the 'Elusive 6.' This relates to the top mark that can be awarded by the Care Commission carrying out service inspections.

The final speaker of the day was Alistair Finlay, a former Social Worker who has written two books of poems mainly with regard to the social worker role. He read some particularly poignant, but entertaining poems from his first book, "Dancing with Big Eunice."

In the afternoon, delegates were afforded the opportunity of attending two 'themed conversations' of their choice based on some of the hot topics of the moment, i.e. Partnership Working, Sharing Effective Practice, Stress Tips for the Workplace and Workforce Planning. These were well attended and involved some interesting discussions.

All in all the organisers were delighted with how the day went and with the enthusiasm shown by the delegates. They hope this event will help encourage workers from all sectors and geographical areas to actively support their Local Learning Networks and Local Practitioner Forums.

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An SVQ Assessors Lament...

An Assessor's work is never done
Sometimes we rise before the sun
Oor day begins wi' S.V.Q.
A slice o'toast an' a coffee or two

The shower's runnin', fur a quick wee waash
Nae make-up fur us, cos we huv tae dash
Where ur' ye the day, oor hubbies 'ill wunner
Whit they really mean is will ye be in fur the dinner??

Wur on top o' the road, East Ayrshire beware!
Fae the hills o' Muirkirk, tae Drongan (near Ayr)
The miles that we cover, nae problem ye see
We've converted wur caurs tae run oan caul tea.

Personal Carers we support, thur S.V.Q. tae gain
They cry "Gonnae no dae that, jist leave us alane!"
But Assessors are fickle, wur funny but fair
We say — "Yur the Pride o' East Ayrshire an' S.V.Q's no sair!"

They shake thru Induction, an' look petrified
Efter six months wi' us two, they'll get certified
By the end o' the week, they stert tae relax
An' want tae send work—by e-mail or Fax!

Grange Street is oor office, the hub o' work life
We only ca' in, tae cause mayhem an' strife!!
Ann Marie's at the helm, wi' nae worries tae seek
She's delighted tae see us—but jist once a week !

Noo Caroline's oor mentor, oor next in command
If she had hur way, we'd be in remand
She'd *like tae* compare us tae thon Einstein or Vardi
But Caroline wiz thinkin' - mair Laurel an' Hardy!

Oor pair Assessor's Charlie, tae dae oor V 1.
The tools o' his trades' changed, fae a pen tae a gun
He hawds us baith tae ransom, wur quakin' in wur shoos
The only way tae calm us doon is lace wur tea wi' booze.

Susan's the training wummin, she learns us whit tae dae
When we appear at oany course, '*Split they two up!*' she'll say
Wan at a time is bad enough but baith the githers hell
It's hard enough tae control a group without that pair as well !

Without Lorna an' June they could shut the place doon
They're the main pivot that we aw' birl aroon
'*Ma computer's no workin!*' is ma favourite cry
June says '*It's o.k. wee hen, I'll gie' it a try!*'

Thur's markin' tae dae, as day turns tae night
The last we watched telly, it wiz aw' black an' white !
Methuselah wiz a boay in fact, so wiz Gandhi...!
So thur's nae chance fur us — Maureen an' Andi



This poem's another fine mess you've got us into Andi!

The old ones are the best...

What is Santa's favourite pizza? **One that's deep pan, crisp and even**
What do you call people who are scared of Santa? **'Claustrophobic'**
Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? **A mince spy!**
What comes at the end of Christmas day? **The letter 'y'**
What do you get if you cross Santa with a gardener? **Hoe! Hoe! Hoe!**



ESS Departmental Achievement Event

East Ayrshire Council celebrates the achievements of members of staff on an annual basis with a '*Recognition of Achievement*' event.

This year the event took place at St. Joseph's Academy on 29th September 2010. Staff members of all departments were invited along to have their hard work and dedication acknowledged by the Executive Director and Elected Members of the Council. Recipients had achieved qualifications ranging from SVQ's level's 2 and 3 in Health & Social Care, Children's Care Learning and Development, Playwork and Cookery, to Teaching qualifications, OU courses and a BA. These qualifications are testament to the Lifelong Learning undertaken by employees while also managing their employment and family lives.

All achievers were recognised through the speeches of dignitaries and presented with certificates to mark the occasion. The valued contribution which social care workers make to the lives of vulnerable residents within East Ayrshire was recognised and applauded by the Executive Director, Graham Short, on behalf of the Department and Elected Members.

Below is a photograph of Councillors Kathy Morrice and John MacKay, Spokespersons for Improving Community Health & Wellbeing with staff members from Social Services who gained qualifications in Health & Social Care.



Research into Practice.

Increasingly, Social Workers are being questioned and made more accountable for their actions related to social work practice. There is now a requirement to relate work activities more directly to research findings. This raises a number of questions:

- * What are the key issues and concerns about making social work more of an evidence-based profession?
- * How is it possible to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of specific research projects?
- * How can research findings be applied in social work practice?

Following on from the successful '**Portfolio Building**' half-day course, this will be reviewed and in 2011 a one-day course will be offered to incorporate building research application into effective social work practice. Look out for this featuring in the 2011/2012 social work training calendar.

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We would be interested to hear any comments you may have about this newsletter. Please contact:

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Health & Social Care

SVQ achievements since last newsletter:

SVQ Level 2

Ann Gilmour
Wilma Thomson
Jean Morrison
John Nisbet
Elaine Muir
Julie Craig
Frances Berry
Beryl Goudie
Mary Steele
Michelle Goudie
Martha Templeton
Maureen Coyle
Mary Rogers
Lillias Miller
Dionne Pretswell
Jane Green
Gail Alfonso
Christine Hanlon
Malcolm Kelly
Lucille Dinning
Lorraine Davidson
Yvonne Strachan
Sheila Whiteford
Debra Scott
Anne Mullen
Frances Airley

SVQ Level 3

Margaret Wilson
Marlene Loy
Thomasina Brown
Liz Burns
Claire Smythe

SVQ Level 4

David Carrigan

