

Bulletin

April 2005

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EASSW holds regular regional seminars to promote social work activities with its member Schools. This Bulletin is the first of a series that will provide information from these seminars to inform our members of new developments across Europe. If you are interested in holding a regional seminar with EASSW support and producing a Bulletin please contact us for more information.

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN THE UK

The contents of this Bulletin is based on a regional symposium 'Making the Connections: social work education in the UK and Europe', which was held at the University of Birmingham, England on April 15th 2005. Those attending the symposium included members of the EASSW Executive Committee and the International sub committee of the Joint University Council for Social Work Education (JUCSWEC). JUCSWEC is a representative body of those UK Universities involved in delivering social work education.

This bulletin provides:

- What is currently happening in social work education in the UK
- A resource list to use to update members of current developments
- A key contacts list for members to make contacts with informed individuals in the relevant country.

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN THE UK- KEY POINTS

- Social Work Education and Training in the UK is in a period of great change. A new qualifying award for social work was introduced in 2003. It is being delivered in over 70 Universities in the UK
- The new qualifying programmes in generic social work can be taken at bachelor or masters level.
- The new programmes have to comply with the requirements of a range of government, employer and university regulating bodies

- The qualifying programmes combine 200 days of classroom teaching with 200 days of assessed practice placements in at least two agencies.
- Students entering social work education in the UK have to undergo police checks to ensure that they are safe to engage in social work
- A framework for post qualifying programmes is being developed for qualified social workers in employment.
- In addition social work research programmes at masters' and doctoral levels are available in UK universities

SOCIAL WORK QUALIFYING PROGRAMMES IN THE UK

Major changes in social work education and training have been taking place in the four countries of the UK since 2000 and are continuing. These changes have been generated by a number of concerns. These include:

- the need to bring the UK in line with European social work education so that UK social work qualifications are recognised in other European countries;
- the major changes that are taking place in UK countries in relation to the organisation base and employment of social workers;
- the current shortage of qualified social workers in the UK.

A new qualifying award for generic social work was introduced in 2003 in England and 2004 in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is now being delivered in over 70 Universities in the UK. The new qualifying programmes are either three year programmes at Bachelor level for non graduates, from the age of 18years, or two year programmes at Masters level for graduates. Some programme also offer routes to qualification for those employed as unqualified social workers. Students receive financial support from government departments or their employers to cover fees and living costs.

PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

The new programmes have to comply with requirements from a range of government, employer and university bodies concerned with setting and regulating standards in education and qualifying practice. (More details of where to find details of these requirements for each UK country can be found in the Resource Section).

The requirements include the involvement of service users and carers in every aspect of qualifying programmes i.e. the recruitment of students; the education of students; the assessment of students and the management of social work education programmes.

The programmes combine 200 days of classroom teaching with 200 days of assessed practice placements in at least two different agencies and with at least two different service user groups. On the successful completion of these

programmes students are qualified to register as social workers with the General Social Care Council (England); the Scottish Social Services council (Scotland); The Care Council for Wales (Wales); the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Northern Ireland).

SAFETY TO PRACTICE

Concerns in the UK with ensuring that social work practitioners are safe to work with vulnerable individuals has resulted in the development of a number of procedures that are designed to check the credentials of those wanting to train as social workers.

Students applying for qualifying social work education in the UK have to undergo police checks to ensure that they are safe to enter social work education. In addition they have to undertake assessed preparation for direct practice before they enter their practice placements. On completion of training and before entering employment as qualified social workers individuals have to undergo a further police check

POSTQUALIFYING AWARDS

Frameworks for developing a range of specialist post qualifying programmes are being developed for qualified social workers in employment in all four UK countries. These are designed to ensure that qualified social workers undergo continuing professional development in respect to specialist areas of social work. Currently specialist post qualifying programmes are offered in work with children and families; mental health; practice teaching and community care. It is envisaged that when the detailed frameworks are agreed employers and social work practitioners will be required to arrange for post qualifying training to take place. This training aims to enhance specialist knowledge and skills and will play a part in the continuation of social workers' ongoing professional registration

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES IN SOCIAL WORK

In UK universities social work research training programmes at masters and doctoral (PhD.) level in are offered. These are designed to develop the research skills of practising social workers as well as social science graduates. These programmes can be taken on a full time or a part time basis. In some Universities professional doctoral programmes are offered to those who are employed as social workers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE UK

USEFUL RESOURCES

The following websites will provide further information for those interesting in keeping up with current changes in UK social work education.

British Association of Social Workers (BASW) A UK wide organisation representing social work and social workers. www.basw.org.uk

Care Council for Wales (CCW) the social care regulator for Wales, registering social workers, regulating their conduct and training and supporting social work education and training. www.ccwales.org.uk

Department of Health (DoH) Government department concerned with social work education its website covers new developments in social work and social care education and practice. www.dh.gov.uk

General Social Care Council (GSCC) the social regulator in England, registering social workers, regulating their conduct and training and supporting social work education and training. It has issued a Code of Practice for social care workers and their employers. www.gsccl.org.uk

Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISC) the social care regulator for Ireland, registering social workers, regulating their conduct and training and supporting social work education and training. www.nisc.info

The Quality Assurance Association for Higher Education (QAA) provides a quality assurance service for UK higher education. They have developed academic benchmarks for social work degrees. www.qaa.org.uk

Scottish Social Services Council (SSC) the social regulator in Scotland, registering social workers, regulating their conduct and training and supporting social work education and training. www.ssc.uk.com.

Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) this Institute, based at the University of Dundee, aims, through a partnership of nine Scottish universities, practice agencies and government bodies, to transformational contribute to change in social work education. www.sieswe.org

SWAP a higher education subject centre for UK social work and social policy. Its main aim is to promote high quality learning, teaching and assessment in social work through activities and a website containing news of new developments in social work. www.swap.ac.uk

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) –funded by the Department of Health this organisation is concerned with developing and evaluating the knowledge base for social work in England. Its publications include knowledge reviews on key topics for social work practice. It hosts the electronic library for social care (eLSC)- www.scie.org.uk

THE TRAINING ORGANISATION FOR SOCIAL CARE (TOPPS) existed from 2000-2005 as an employer led organisation concerned with developing a strategy in England for the training of the social care workforce and setting National Occupational standards for social care. These standards list six key roles for social workers which represent a statement of minimum competence for beginning social workers www.topps.org.uk

TOPPS was replaced in April 2005 by Skills for Care an employer led organisation for those working in Adult Social Care in England.

Responsibility for improving outcomes in services working with children and young people was placed with the Children's Workforce Development Council. www.cwdcouncil.org.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you want to make contact with those involved in social work education in the UK the following may be useful

EXPANDING HORIZONS IN SOCIAL WORK AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS-BASW/VENTURE PRESS. This I monograph series publishes work relating to international social work, social pedagogy and community work. Commissioning editors are Karen Lyons and Brian Littlechild. B.Littlechild@herts.ac.uk

INTERNATIONAL SUB COMMITTEE JUCSWEC a sub committee of the Joint University Committee for Social Work Education (JUCSWEC) concerned with promoting the development of international social work perspectives and activities in the UK. Contact through the chair: Professor Ann Davis, The University of Birmingham. a.davis@bham.ac.uk

SWAP Julia Waldman is a Learning and Teaching Adviser employed by SWAP to develop international perspectives in the UK. jw@socsci.soton.ac.uk