

West Dunbartonshire Council

Social Work Services



Continuing Professional Development Policy



West Dunbartonshire ~ from the banks of Loch Lomond to the shores of the Clyde



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all employees is a principle of good practice for social services departments. As the Scottish Executive's 'National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland' states:

"Developing the workforce is critical to ensuring we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time." (SE, 2005)

- 1.2 As a learning organisation we have in place systems, mechanisms and processes that we use to continually enhance our performance, to achieve sustainable objectives with our customers and staff. We view Continuing Professional Development as a key aspect of the ongoing improvement in our services and this policy is intended to outline our overall approach to CPD and to delineate the roles and responsibilities of those involved.
- 1.3 While this policy concentrates primarily on the CPD issues for Social Services workers the department is equally committed to supporting all other professional and qualified employees to meet their own CPD requirements.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 National Strategies for social work such as the recent Changing Lives Report place a heavy emphasis on the training and development of the Social Services Workforce. Additionally the development of a policy on CPD needs to be seen in the context of the Codes of Practice for employers and employees laid down by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). It also aligns with the registration of the social services workforce and Post-Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) requirements which accompany registration.
- 2.2 The Code of Practice for Social Service Workers states that employees must:
- Be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills;
 - Undertake relevant training to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.
- 2.3 The Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers states that employers must:
- Provide training and development opportunities to enable social service workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge;
 - Provide induction, training and development opportunities to help social service workers do their jobs effectively and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities;
 - Contribute to the provision of social care and social work education and training, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning; and
 - Support staff in posts subject to registration to meet the SSSC's eligibility criteria for registration and its requirements for continuing professional development.
- 2.4 The PRTL requirements currently apply to all social service workers involved in phase 1 of registration. This includes managers of care home services for adults, managers of adult day care services, residential child care workers and social workers. These requirements will be extended, by the SSSC, to phases 2 and 3 respectively dependent upon the future registration requirements of the SSSC. The SSSC has consulted widely

on the qualifications criteria required for social care workers and these are detailed at www.sssc.uk.com as a guide for each section of the workforce.

The PRTL requirements are only a minimum requirement, setting a baseline for CPD for registered workers. It is vital that our approach to CPD not only meets these requirements but also offer scope for wider training and learning. The current PRTL requirements apply as follows:

- Newly qualified social workers are required to undertake a minimum of 14 days (144 hours) of PRTL in their first 12 months of practice (with extended timescales for part-time workers);
- All other qualified social workers, residential child care workers, heads of adult residential care homes and Adult Day Care workers are required to undertake a minimum of 15 days (90 hours) of PRTL over the three year period of their registration; and
- For both newly qualified and more experienced social workers, a minimum of 5 days (30 hours) of their PRTL activity in each registration period must focus on “working effectively with colleagues and other professionals to identify, assess and manage risk to vulnerable people”. This requirement can be satisfied by training and learning in relation to child or adult protection.

As registration progresses to phase 2 and 3 the PRTL requirements are likely to be extended to other groups of social service workers.

These requirements place obligations on both employers and employees.

This policy is intended to clarify the distinctions between these obligations and to outline the department’s approach to meeting its own dates.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Whilst it is clear from both the Codes of Practice for Social Services workers and the registration requirements that CPD is ultimately the responsibility of the employee, it is also clear that the employer has a responsibility to support its staff in relation to CPD. This principal also applies to other professional and qualified employees who are employed by Social Work.
- 3.2 The dividing lines between these responsibilities need to be drawn in relation to a number of different areas.
- 3.3 Our policy sets out how we will meet our responsibilities as an employer and what will be expected to be the individual responsibility of the employee.

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

4.1 Identifying training and learning needs

The main mechanism for identifying training and learning needs for all staff is the Performance and Development Planning (PDP) process. Through this process all staff should be enabled to identify their training and learning needs in relation to the corporate and departmental objectives. Moreover, the PDP policy itself states that, 'PDP should take account of continuous professional development (CPD) requirements and should ensure that a record is kept of all relevant activity.' Hence the PDP process is also the key mechanism whereby the Department can assist employees to ensure that they are individually meeting their CPD requirements and recording them appropriately in order to meet registration criteria.

4.2 The identification of training and learning needs through the PDP process should not be taken to indicate a commitment on behalf of the Department to directly provide or fund the relevant opportunities, other than where this is agreed as an outcome of the PDP process.

4.3 The PDP process will enable the Department to assist employees with the recording of their CPD activity. However, the ultimate responsibility for this recording lies with the individual employee.

5. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRAINING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 The registration rules state that the PRTL requirements can be met through:

- Study;
- Training;
- Courses;
- Seminars;
- Reading;
- Teaching;
- Other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance a registrant's professional development, or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole; and
- Anything else employers can offer.

5.2 CPD can therefore encompass a wide range of activities, self-directed and taught, as well as including both internal WDC courses and externally provided training.

5.2 The Quality Assurance and Training Section will have the lead responsibility in ensuring that information about all available training and learning opportunities is disseminated to all relevant staff, particularly where these staff are subject to registration requirements. This will include the dissemination of information about relevant professional training courses as well as guidance on self-directed learning opportunities.

6. ACCESS TO TRAINING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 There are three main issues around access to training and learning opportunities, namely financial costs, human resources costs and prioritisation of applicants.

6.2 Financial Constraints

Currently 28% of the training budget is spent on supporting our own staff to achieve a social work qualification. 15% is spent on activities related to CPD and a further 9% is spent on post qualifying training for a variety of staff in the middle management posts.

6.3 We expect this to change from 2007/2008 after the current large group of social worker trainees completes their training. From then on, the money released will be used to meet the increased demand for activity that can be identified as meeting CPD requirements. Social Work is unique in that continued registration will be linked to continuing eligibility for certain posts. In addition, the revised post-qualifying framework will be more demanding and more costly. We would expect to continue to support staff through accredited routes.

6.4 Human Resource Constraints

In relation to all training and learning opportunities, including self-directed learning, there is a role for line management, through the PDP process, to take service exigencies into account when agreeing study time. Within this context, managers should endeavour to ensure that all training and learning needs identified through the PDP process are met where possible.

6.5 Prioritisation of applicants

If the financial and/or human resource constraints mean that some form of prioritisation needs to take place then the prioritisation of access to training and learning opportunities will take into account a number of factors:

- the learning needs of each individual member of staff;
- individual registration requirements;
- the need for specialist training to meet service requirements;
- overall budget and/or human resource constraints; and
- the importance of transparency and fairness.

In some types of CPD activity, such as self-directed learning, there is unlikely to be significant competition between staff due to the limited financial and human resource costs involved. However in others, such as specific training courses, there may be considerable demand for limited places available and it is possible that CPD requirements will increase such demand.

- 6.6 As we expect training with a financial cost attached to increase, criteria for prioritising applicants will be made more formal. The current system, which works reasonably well, will be used as the basis and will continue to involve appropriate service managers. This process will be linked to the allocation of available training funds and other demands on the training budget.
- 6.7 The Departmental Management Team has approved an Access to Departmental Training Budget Procedure and managers should have communicated this information to employees.
- 6.8 Managers of all other professional and qualified employees who have CPD requirements will ensure that these employees have clear access to CPD and training and learning opportunities in line with individual's CPD requirements.

7. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Scottish Social Services Council's (Registration) Rules 2003 set down Post Registration Training and Learning requirements that all registered social service workers i.e. Social Workers, Residential Child Care Workers, Heads of Residential Care Homes and Adult Day care workers must meet in order to ensure their continued suitability for registration.
- 7.2 Every registered worker has a responsibility to meet the required number of hours study.
- 7.3 **Each registered worker** should keep a record of post registration training and learning undertaken.
- 7.4 It should be noted that failure by social service workers to meet the post registration training and learning requirements may be considered misconduct by the SSSC.
- 7.5 In order to ensure the effective implementation of this CPD policy, social service workers must cooperate with the WDC performance development planning (PDP) process.
- 7.6 Social service workers have a responsibility to share knowledge and skills gained through learning activities with colleague in order to promote the interests of service users and carers.
- 7.7 In all other professional and qualified positions within the department it is the responsibility of each individual employee to ensure that their CPD needs and requirements are met and relevant records of CPD activity are maintained.

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.1 Managers will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is communicated to employees.
- 8.2 Managers will use the PDP process to identify training and learning needs of employees and will assist them to ensure that they are individually meeting their CPD requirements and recording them in order to meet registration criteria.
- 8.3 At a broader level there is a clear additional role for managers to produce and implement Workforce Development Planning in conjunction with the training section in order to meet the outcomes of the National Workforce Development Strategy.
- 8.4 A learning support centre will be established by the training section which will include a comprehensive library and a specifically designed a Care Knowledge Web site for social work staff.
- 8.5 Access to specialist training will be managed as detailed within the policy.
- 8.6 Whilst this policy currently applies to staff who are registered, the key commitment to supporting employee development applies to all staff.