

Workforcenews

Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit
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Welcome to the 17th edition of Workforce News, the newsletter of the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit.

Focus on Sharing Practice

In this issue, contributors focus on the launch of the new Workforce Unit website, and a range of sharing practice stories

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Sharing Practice - what's it all about?

This edition of Workforce News focuses specifically on sharing practice and looks at some approaches to creating a successful team, continuous professional development and preparing for registration. But, what is sharing practice?

*"Successful innovation comes from a creative conversation between people who combine their different skills, insights and knowledge to explore a problem"*¹

The whole point of identifying and sharing practice is to learn from others and to re-use knowledge - so that we can help create a culture where we learn from experience. And besides, it just makes good sense - why start from scratch, when you can learn from others' experiences?

The Workforce Unit team are always interested to hear about your approaches to workforce development - please get in touch.

¹Richard K. Lester and Michael Piore, *Innovation: The Mission Dimension* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2004)

Website Launch

The Workforce Unit is pleased to announce the development of its new and improved website.

The website has been re-launched with a vibrant new look, new content and significant layout updates to provide visitors with interesting and informative information at their fingertips.

The new website has a dedicated sharing practice section focusing on areas such as continuous professional development and induction.

We have also created an advocacy section that will provide you with more information about how the Workforce Unit promotes your views within the national policy agenda (see information table below).

There is also an enquiries area where you can get to the bottom of any of the queries that have been troubling you. With a click of a button your query will be sent to our team who will quickly get back to you with the information you need. You can also sign up to our RSS news and event feeds to ensure that you don't miss out on the latest updates.

We want our new website to be everything you want it to be, and are always interested in hearing from our stakeholders. So, please visit us at:

www.ccpscotland.org/workforceunit

and tell us what you think! We look forward to hearing from you.

We provide a voluntary sector voice on the following strategic groups:

- Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS)
- Continuous Learning Framework (CLF)
- Procurement Reference Group
- National Workforce Group for Social Services
- Practice Learning Qualification Delivery
- Supporting Voluntary Action (SVA) Think Tank
- Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations (ACOSVO)
- Learning Networks
- Managed Knowledge Network
- VSDF Advisory Group
- Workforce Information Group

Care Accolades for Cornerstone!

Cornerstone was the only voluntary sector organisation finalist at the 2009 Care Accolades, nominated for an award recognising the 'Best Social Services Team or Unit in Scotland'. The organisation successfully received the award, which recognised the inspiring and well deserved efforts of its Forensic Services team based in Aberdeen. Lisa Pattoni from the Workforce Unit caught up with the team's Service Manager, Doug Moyes, to find out what makes his team and service stand out from the crowd...

Hi Doug, congratulations on receiving your award!

Thanks. We are delighted!

So, tell us a bit about your services in Aberdeen....

The service aims to help adults with learning disabilities or mental health issues that have a history of offending behaviour get stability back in their lives. We generally develop a multi-agency package around the individual, but the care and support we provide is very dependant on the individuals themselves, and also the different legal constraints they may have. This is all made possible by having well trained staff and setting strict guidelines for each individual to ensure that they enjoy a valued life.

The service itself started back in 2003 when we were working to support an individual who was being released from prison. We successfully supported this individual in their own tenancy for 2 years. Since then, we opened a 5 person housing support project in 2005 which has been running well for 6 years. We are now making preparations for the development of a further 7 person housing unit and another 1 person unit – so we are getting excited about that.

How many people are in your team and what do you think makes them different?

Just now we have about 30 staff. We are constantly recruiting though, especially with the new service development. I suppose the ultimate thing has been the consistency of staff. There is generally a high turn over in this field, especially in forensic services. However, we have a core of around 10 people who have been here for six years, which is generally unheard of!

But I think that people stay because of the challenge and rewards that the job has to offer, coupled with the relationships they build with the people we support and each other. The staff team really supports each other well.

We also get given a lot of guidance from Criminal Justice; Psychologists; Psychiatrists; Courts and Lawyers etc who help inform staff how to work with each of the individuals we support. The team are really excellent at putting that into practice.

Sounds like a really dedicated team!

Yes – they are very dedicated. I think our open door policy really helps too, because we encourage staff to talk to us about any issues they are having, and they know they can always come to talk things through with us. What is also really good is that they can rely on each other for support.

We also have sessions with staff on a 6 weekly basis which is considerably more than the arrangements for staff at other services. I really think this has been beneficial at promoting open communication and ironing out any issues as and when they arise.

Are staff working towards qualifications for registration with SSSC at the moment? What kind of training do they do?

Our new recruits will need to go through SVQ Level 3, and we have lots of social work students coming on board at the moment. However, 90% of our staff team are qualified or working towards their qualification.

When we are recruiting new people, we know that they are bringing with them a host of learning from their previous employer, and we try to make sure that they can use this, and share it with the team.

Our induction process is pretty intensive too – new staff shadow experienced members of the team for at least two weeks, and engage in a week long induction course at head office. Following this, staff generally will receive forensic awareness training, personality disorder training (through NHS), forensic mental health training and, obviously, will go through the SVQ process.

But what's really important is the informal learning; staff are a tremendous support to one another and acknowledge that people have different strengths and abilities.

What about Continuous Professional Development (CPD)?

The team itself is really enthusiastic about learning and development and its something that our organisation as a whole really values. The new service provision we are looking at will bring many management opportunities, as well as the potential for staff to move around different sites and different staff teams, which I'm sure they will be interested in.

I also think our forensic services are best placed to provide different opportunities for continuous professional development. Because forensic community services are new there are a wide variety of options for training etc that people in generic services might not have access to.

What would your advice be to other providers?

A consistent approach is fundamental, and consistency is something that only comes if you fully invest in your team. It's really important to give staff opportunities to develop and move forward (if they want to). If you get the staff on board, then you are more than half way there.

Professional Development Awards in Autistic Spectrum Disorder

The Scottish Society for Autism (SSA) is an independent Scottish charity and is now the leading provider of services for persons of all ages living with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Scotland.

They have recently announced the first group of 37 Autism Practitioners to successfully complete PDA (Professional Development Awards) in Autistic Spectrum Disorders (SCQF Level 7). And another 36 staff are currently working towards this award.



These Professional Development Awards (PDAs) are designed to provide participants with the competence and confidence to critically evaluate their practice in supporting individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, to be reflective practitioners and to engage in continuing professional development.

The SSA was interested in staff completing the course to give them a broader range of knowledge about Autism and to gain the confidence to put this knowledge into practice. David Harkins, SVQ Development Manager, said,

“We were really keen to promote the course amongst staff, and developed a mini ‘road show’ to help publicise it. People then volunteered to take part – there was a huge demand for spaces.”

The response was so high there were over 100 staff applications.

As with most voluntary organisations, finding funding for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) can be difficult. However, the Scottish Government awarded the SSA a Social Work (Scotland) Act, Section 9 Grant of £301,813, for the three year period 2008-11.

The SSA has also secured additional funding (for SVQ) to continue the training, from which many staff will benefit. The training team have used the learning from the first round of training to tailor the course a little better by streamlining different sections. They have also ensured that new staff completing the course this time round will be mentored by another member of staff who has already completed the qualification, so that they can more effectively share experiences. David said,

“The Section 9 funding really has been a god send, without it, it just wouldn’t have been possible to provide this opportunity for so many of our staff.”

Although there was a lot of interest in the training, one of the main perceived challenges was the expression of anxiety from staff that the course requirements and work involved would be beyond their capabilities. Also, the idea of CPD and helping people to take ownership over their learning was difficult at the beginning.

However, in response to this, learning and development trainers at SSA developed a knowledge manual for staff to work through alongside their tutored sessions. This was a useful preparatory measure that staff successfully used to read up and complete sections in advance of each tutorial/session.

The training has made a real difference, even now, to the performance and the quality of services at SSA, and this is something that is likely to permeate throughout the organisation,

“the feedback from staff to this course was really positive; they all seemed to really enjoy both learning about the different theories of Autism, and learning how to improve the care planning for people with autism.”

The Scottish Society for Autism is planning to deliver the Professional Development Awards to external organisations that are interested in developing their staff in Autism Specific Awards.

For Further Details Contact: David Harkins (SVQ & CALM Development Manager) 01259728425 or Email: david.harkins@autism-in-scotland.org.uk

TUPE Guidance for Social Care Managers

Guidance from the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit

In 2008/09 The Workforce Unit carried out a significant piece of research into the effects of retendering exercises on the voluntary sector social services workforce.

Among many others, one of the key findings of the report; 'A Gathering Storm', was that voluntary sector social care providers had difficulties in interpreting Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) and that employees received inconsistent information regarding their rights under 'TUPE'.

In partnership with Maclay Murray and Spens LLP and The Housing Support Enabling Unit, the Workforce Unit commissioned a number of day courses across Scotland covering an essential guide to TUPE.

The demand for information has been so great that we have written a guidance document for Social Care Managers covering the basics of 'TUPE' legislation.

The guidance document draws from the commissioned training and case studies from 'The Gathering Storm' report and covers the following topics:

- What is TUPE?
- When does it apply?
- Who does it cover?
- What do I do if I am a manager transferring out staff?
- What do I do if I am a manager transferring staff in?

We hope that you find this guidance useful, you can find it on the Workforce Unit Website, or request a hard copy from vswu.admin@ccpscotland.org

Tools to help Practice Sharing

Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) was developed by IRISS and NHS Education for Scotland and is the knowledge portal for social services staff

SSKS is a valuable tool to assist you to find high quality information and learning resources, online journals, and a range of tools and guidance to help you share knowledge and put it into practice. While published information and evidence is important, so too is professional knowledge and experience.

My Community Space (accessible from the SSKS homepage) provides an exciting way to link people and share resources, with the potential to create communities of people with a shared interest. The SSKS 'Shared Space' tool provides virtual workspaces where communities can:

- Share local and personal knowledge
- Work collaboratively
- Share dialogue and interpretation
- Keep up to date with developments

Working as a Community of Practice helps people to come together to identify and employ specialised personal knowledge more effectively. Other potential advantages are:

- creating a knowledge sharing and learning culture
- support organisational development
- reusing information
- learning from previous mistakes
- promoting Continuous Professional Development

Visit SSKS and My Community Space at:

<http://www.sskss.org.uk/home.aspx> and <http://www.mcs.scot.nhs.uk/home.aspx>

Or to get involved in the future development of SSKS, visit: <http://www.sskss.org.uk/user-group.aspx>.

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