

The Professional Standards Academy Learning and Development and Career Pathways 2020



The Professional Standards Academy in Adult Social Care has 3 main priorities:

- To design and deliver a clear practice framework and suite of practice delivery models for delivering excellence in adult social care in Bexley
- To deliver effective learning and development opportunities and develop career pathways for Bexley Adult Social Care staff to support them in their work
- To implement effective workforce development review and quality assurance mechanisms within Bexley

Learning and Development and Career Pathways

Bexley takes an Everyday Learning approach to staff learning and development believing in the 70:20:10 approach where 70% of learning happens through experience, 20% through learning from and with others and 10% occurs through formal and structured learning.

Learning and Development and Continuing Professional Learning within Adult Social Care is the golden thread in delivering sound, professional services. We believe we provide a sound framework of opportunities that enables our staff to begin, flourish and excel.

Induction

All Adult Social Care staff benefit from an approach to Induction that spells out what they need to know, understand and do within 6 months of joining us; the approach is jointly owned by the individual and their manager and includes supervision, shadowing, coaching, e-learning and face-to-face workshops.

Our Newly Qualified Social Workers find the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) provides them with a fantastic opportunity to grow and develop in their first year of appointment to Social Work.

Continuing Professional Learning

In-house learning and development opportunities are commissioned and delivered in line with statutory and core learning and development requirements aligned to service delivery priorities and are currently focussed on strengths-based approaches and safeguarding adults.

The Professional Standards Academy publishes an annual guide to all staff and partner agencies outlining the range of workshops, support sessions and online learning available.

All staff have access to a wide range of e-learning modules and resources via EVOLVE (the Council's e-learning system), MeLearning (an e-learning portal also open to providers in the borough) and SCILS (an electronic information hub including individual workbooks, a newsdesk and a discussion forum, to name but a few)

Making Research Count (MRC) is an initiative facilitating the dissemination of research findings between academics, practitioners, carers and users in the social care field. We subscribe to MRC thus enabling all staff to access a number of current and varied workshops throughout the year.

Support workers in our Triage Hub, Rapid Response and Community Assessment and Rehabilitation Teams are expected to be able to assess and procure small aids and adaptations for those they are working with and therefore have access to an accredited Trusted Assessor Award.

Social Work

Bexley Adult Social Care has a history of supporting staff towards professional qualification and a great track record in retaining those we support in this way.

We have Social Work Apprentice roles within Adult Social Care and those appointed will undertake the BA Honours Degree in Social Work (Level 6) with Kingston University; initially open to those already holding Level 3 qualifications we are also looking to create a pathway option for staff to undertake a relevant Level 3 Health and Social Care Qualification meaning those interested in applying to become Social Work Apprentices will have the opportunity to study at the required preparatory level as part of their continuing professional learning.

We also still offer access to the Open University Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work to staff who hold a degree in another subject and who are able to contribute towards the fees for this 18month post qualifying programme.

We partnered the Think Ahead organisation for 3 years from 2017 in a fast-track Diploma in Social Work/MA in Mental Health Services - we offer participants a minimum of 12 month contracts as social workers once they achieve registration with Social Work England with the Post Graduate Diploma and we support them to complete the ASYE alongside their 2nd year of academic study whilst they complete a Masters in Social Work. Success with this programme has supported our recruitment to mental health social work teams in the borough.

Occupational Therapy

We have considerable experience with Occupational Therapy grow our own schemes, currently supporting one Rehab Assistant to undertake the BSc Hons Occupational Therapy Degree and keeping a watchful eye on the emerging Occupational Therapy Degree Apprenticeship.

We are looking forward to working with colleagues in Oxleas NHS Trust in taking forward opportunities to implement the BSc Honours Degree in Occupational Therapy as these develop on a Pan-London basis. As with the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship we would create pathway options for staff to undertake relevant access/entry level qualifications for this programme.

OT Student Placements will provide potential career opportunities to committed, excellent Practitioners and we hope to progress this work together with colleagues in Oxleas NHS Trust within the Bexley Care integrated provision.

In addition to accessing all in-house courses, Occupational Therapists receive mandatory annual Moving and Handling Training and attend Practice Forums specific to Moving and Handling equipment and practice updates.

Professional Progression Options

We expect all our professionally qualified workers to undertake Best Interest Assessor Awards and /or relevant Practice Education Awards and to operate as BIAs and Practice Educators on a regular basis.

Progression and practice in these areas will enable staff to demonstrate how they meet the requirements for progression in both Social Work and Occupational Therapy roles.

Qualifying and Post-qualifying courses

All staff are encouraged to review their personal development needs and where they identify an external qualification programme that supports their needs and equips them with skills and knowledge to invest back into the service it may be possible to provide support or assistance in enabling them to register for such awards.

Placements

We have a very strong culture of providing social work student placements within Bexley Adult Social Care Teams, firstly for our own staff on qualification training, then for external students from the University of Greenwich and sometimes with space for one or two students with strong links to the borough. On average we provide 10 placements per annum to a range of students often identifying talented, committed practitioners along the way who are subsequently successful in applying to work for us.

In line with requirements, Social Workers providing formal placements undertake Practice Educator Professional Standards qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 as part of their own professional development. Part of the preparation pathway towards this will include social workers participating in readiness for practice assessments at the University and/or providing shadowing opportunities to social work students. Formalising Practice Education is one of the requirements for progression as a Bexley Social Worker.

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

We are delighted with the excellent progress of many of our Newly Qualified Social Workers in Adult Services and we are particularly proud that the evidence of the support and development journeys of some of these NQSWs has been identified within South East London as exemplar material for the sub-region. Adult Social Care piloted the introduction of the ASYE Process back in 2012 with the first person completing this being one of our early grow our own social workers. Whilst implementation remains a management responsibility with successful achievement of the ASYE a condition of confirmation of employment, Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) in Adult Social Care benefit from a clearly structured process that is led and closely managed by a Professional Practice Development Officer (PPDO) and Senior Practice Educator. Feedback from all our NQSWs rates this support very highly indeed. The

PPDO, SPE and Organisational Development (OD) Consultant for Adult Social Care staff work closely with colleagues in Children's Services to ensure consistency of approach, to share best practice and access to learning opportunities and to jointly moderate ASYE outcome decisions.

Commissioners

Many of our Commissioners and Care Brokers within Bexley have benefitted from undertaking Institute of Public Care programmes in commissioning and contracting care services. More recently our Commissioning Programme Lead for Safeguarding Adults has completed the new Level 5 qualification in The Principles for Commissioning for Wellbeing qualification with a Senior Manager training as an Assessor. It is expected that this will provide a sound foundation for future commissioning qualifications for those in these roles and functions.

Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)

We operate a single Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) Rota in Bexley. Access to the AMHP qualification is open across all eligible adult social care staff, with a clear expectation that all Mental Health Social Workers will progress their development in this way. There are specific academic pre-requisites to this exacting Masters Level Qualification, including the BIA Award, a Developing Professional Specialist Practice Award or previously having studied at Masters Level and holding sound mental health services experience. We have a clear succession plan in place to support staff applications to undertake this award towards appointment as an AMHP within the borough.

Masters Qualifications

A number of staff express interest in further qualifications and may apply for individual sponsorship or support towards a full Masters Award, for example in areas such as Practice Education, Mental Health or Leadership and Management. Applications are considered on a case by case basis having regard to the specific job role and the benefits to the organisation.

Value for Money

We believe investing in our staff development reaps many rewards, not least in delivering an excellent service to Bexley residents but also for individual staff members and for the organisation as a whole. We also believe in value for money and are keen to achieve a return on this investment in the shape of well-rounded, confident, skilled and knowledgeable workers who put their skills to good use once qualified; for this reason, we enter fee/learning agreements with all our staff in whom we invest support for a transferable and portable qualification.

We consider both our offer and our expectations are sound and fair, leading to clarity and success amongst our dedicated workforce.