

# Trainee Social Worker Scheme Guidance



# The Scheme

Ceredigion County Council works in partnership with the Open University to offer the opportunity of a sponsored Traineeship route to train as a Social Worker.

The Scheme allows the Local Authority to:

- Invest in its workforce of the future
- Ensure a local supply of qualified Social Workers
- Offer employment opportunities to the citizens of Ceredigion
- Work to increase the number of Welsh speaking Social Workers

The scheme may recruit on an annual basis however recruitment decisions will be made by Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers and be based upon workforce need and financial considerations.

## The Traineeship

The Traineeship consists of a combination of assessed practice and distance learning. Trainees will be hosted by a social work team for the duration of the traineeship whilst also undertaking a BA Honours Degree in Social Work via the Open University. This is normally over a three year period however the duration may be adjusted to take account of any previous social work academic modules the Trainee may already hold.

Trainees will be required to undertake assessed practice placements within a social work team or agency. Practice placements will **not** be undertaken within the students host team. Alternative teams will be identified for placements and an identified Practice Educator will work with the Trainee to assess their practice.

Trainees will be provided with a fixed term contract of employment as a Trainee Social Worker and a Legal Agreement/Learning Agreement.

Existing employees of the Local Authority who apply and are offered a place will be required to resign from their existing position to take up a fixed term contract as a Trainee, this may require a change in salary for some internal staff. Existing employees will also be entitled to accrued annual leave and benefits.

Trainee Social Workers will be paid at salary Grade 7 for year one of the 3-year programme. On successful completion of the first year and attainment of the Certificate of Higher Education in Social Care Practice, the salary will increase to Grade 8 for year 2 and year 3. A new job description reflecting the progression from Grade 7 to Grade 8 will be issued to the Trainee.

In exceptional circumstances a Trainee may apply for an extension of this contract, any decision to grant an extension will be subject to Corporate Lead Officer approval. During placement periods trainees will normally be on placement within a team for 4 days of the week and on study leave one day per week in order to meet the requirements of the programme.



## Recruitment onto the Scheme

Vacancies will be advertised via the Council's careers site and social media channels and will be open to both internal and external applicants. Recruitment will be timed to enable the Trainees to take up post and commence the Open University academic programme in October. The recruitment process will incorporate the guidance, regulations and requirements of the Open University and Ceredigion County Council. Service Users/Carers will also be involved in the recruitment process which will comprise of some/all of the following:

- An application form
- A written exercise
- A formal interview
- A group exercise and/or presentation

As a 'disability confident' employer, Ceredigion County Council will make any reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and delivery of the trainee scheme to ensure the inclusivity of people with disabilities.

Upon offer of a Trainee position, all applicants must meet the requirements of Local Authority's pre-employment checks and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), an Enhanced DBS will be required.

## Registration with Social Care Wales

All Trainee Social Workers will be required to register as a Trainee Social Worker with the Regulatory Body, Social Care Wales, if for any reason they are unable to do so then they will be prevented from taking up the position. It is a requirement that all Trainees and qualified Social Workers work to and uphold the Social Care Wales Codes of Professional Practice.

## Academic programme and milestones

The academic programme consists of 3 different levels each comprising of 120 academic credits. Trainees will be required to complete each stage successfully prior to moving onto the next stage. Additional support will be offered if required however Trainees will be subject to the Ceredigion County Council's Managing Performance Policy. If a Trainee is unable to demonstrate the level of competence required to meet either the practice or academic programme, reasonable additional support will be offered. However, if the level of competence is not attained within an agreed timescale the Council reserves the right to terminate the Trainee contract. Depending upon the individual circumstances and the availability of other suitable vacancies an alternative offer of employment may be made.

## Study leave

Study leave of 1 day per week will be granted for the duration of the academic programme, this will be agreed in advance by the Team Manager and Practice Educator.

## Annual Leave

Trainees who are new to the organisation will receive the standard annual leave allowance. Any existing employee who becomes a Trainee will also be entitled to accrued annual leave and benefits. Annual leave should not be approved or taken during practice placement periods.

Upon qualifying, any Trainee who wishes to attend their Graduation Ceremony may do so using annual leave.





## Mileage and expenses

Trainees will be able to claim mileage and expenses whilst undertaking visits in the course of their duties. They will be entitled to claim mileage to and from University workshops/tutorial venues. During the placement periods the trainee will **not** be entitled to claim mileage from home to the new placement location.

## Post Qualifying

Upon successful completion of the Traineeship newly qualified social workers (NQSW) will be required to complete an Expression of Interest for vacant social worker positions, these may be located within any social work team within Ceredigion. Should a newly qualified social worker choose not to accept a position offered then they may be liable for full or partial reimbursement of their academic fees.

In the event of there not being any social worker vacancies available then the newly qualified officer will be offered a 'holding post' as a 'Social Work Assistant' which will be paid at Grade 8. The maximum period that anyone will be employed in a holding position will be 2 years.

There is an expectation that any newly qualified social worker who has received sponsorship will remain within the authority for a 3 year period post qualifying.

Should the newly qualified social worker choose to terminate their employment during the 3 year period then they may be liable for full or partial repayment of their academic fees. This decision will be at the discretion of Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers.

Once appointed, newly qualified social workers will be required to meet Social Care Wales requirements for their first three years in practice. This includes mandatory completion of the Graduate Certificate in Consolidation of Social Work Practice, which is a requirement of the 3 year registration renewal with Social Care Wales.

## Working conditions

Trainees will be subject to the Council's policies and procedures. Trainees will be required to maintain timesheets and will be eligible for flexible working which will require prior agreement with Team Managers.

Trainees will be provided with relevant computer access and may be required to 'hot desk'.

## Further information

For further information on the requirements of the BA Honours Degree in Social Work please visit the Open University Wales website.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/social-work/degrees/ba-social-work-wales-q42>

For further information on the Trainee scheme please contact the Learning and Development Team on Tel: 01545 572670 or email [dysgu@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:dysgu@ceredigion.gov.uk)

## Trainee Social Worker Learning Agreement

This Learning Agreement covers the 3 year fixed term period of the social work traineeship for which a contract of employment will also be issued to the Trainee Social Worker.

This agreement outlines the responsibilities of all parties and should be agreed and signed by the Trainee Social Worker, Team Manager of hosting team, Learning & Development Manager and Practice Educators for each placement.

### **The People & Organisation Service (Learning & Development Team) agrees to:**

1. Support the Trainee with their application and enrolment onto the Social Work Degree Programme with the Open University in Wales
2. Fund the academic tuition/module fees as and when required
3. Identify and allocate suitable placement opportunities for periods of assessed practice
4. Identify a Practice Educator (and where relevant an onsite Practice Facilitator) to support the Trainee and assess practice placement periods
5. Provide access to resources (library)
6. Provide student support sessions and in house training opportunities
7. Work with senior managers, team managers, practice educators and university staff to resolve any problems should they arise

### **The Trainee Social Worker agrees to:**

1. Complete all registration and enrolment forms and processes by the stated deadlines
2. Complete all requirements of the academic programme of study, meeting deadlines for the submission of work
3. Complete all practice placements demonstrating the required level of competency to meet the standards required
4. Attend all workshops/tutors meetings and meetings with Practice Educators/Team Managers
5. Inform their Practice Educator/Team Manager/Learning & Development Manager of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that impact upon their ability to meet the requirements of the Traineeship
6. Uphold the Social Care Wales Codes of Professional Practice at all times and maintain their registration with Social Care Wales

### **Host Team Manager agrees to:**

1. Familiarise themselves with the requirements of the Social Work Degree programmes
2. Support the Trainee for the duration of the programme
3. Allocate work to the Trainee based upon the stage requirements of the programme and level of ability of the trainee.
4. Provide any progress reports as and when required

5. Notify the Learning & Development Manager of any issues relating the trainees performance at the earliest stage and work with all parties involved to resolve any issues
6. Support and liaise with the Practice Educator to assess and feedback on the Trainees performance and allocate the nature and level of work required
7. Agree with the Practice Educator and Trainee the most appropriate day for study leave and approve annual leave requests

**The Practice Educator agrees to:**

1. Ensure they are fully aware of the requirements of the social work degree, national occupational standards and progress reporting of the University programme
2. Provide the trainee with weekly formal supervision meetings and ensure these meetings are recorded
3. Support the trainee by providing planned work opportunities and plan and undertake observations of the trainees work with service users
4. Assess the trainees practice and complete progress reports including pass/fail recommendations in line with the University requirements
5. Assist the trainee to develop their practice through the provision of feedback
6. Notify the Team Manger and Learning & Development Manager of any issues relating to the trainees performance at the earliest stage and work with all parties involved to resolve any issues
7. To attend any training relevant to their role
8. To attend Practice Assessment Panels as required

Signed:

Trainee Social Worker: ..... Date.....

Team Manager: ..... Date:.....

Practice Educator: ..... Date:.....

Learning & Development Manager: ..... Date:.....