

Becoming part of the Social Work Learning Team

Professional Development guidance
for Social Workers

Mailing List

If you would like to be kept up to date about learning and development opportunities, [please complete this form by clicking on this link](#) or scanning the QR Code on this page.



Foreword

Becoming part of a student's Learning Team is an excellent way to develop your skills, knowledge, values and behaviours. As you become more experienced in supporting with student learning you will see your own professional leadership being developed.

This guidance is for all Falkirk Council and Partnership colleagues to better understand the process for becoming a part of a student's Learning Team.

What Falkirk's students say

"My PE has been amazing in supervision with encouraging myself to have expand on professional conversations, and how to move forward."

"The team have been very supportive in my professional development with great opportunities."

"Supervision sessions supported me throughout my placement by ensuring I was managing and felt supported. It helped me in developing the use of theory in practice and enhanced my reflective thinking."

"From the minute I started I have felt welcomed into the team and I'm truly sad to be leaving such an amazing group of people."

"My practice educator has been amazing. He has been so supportive, encouraging me and pushed me to be the best practitioner I could be."

"I have loved every minute of this placement. The initial response team have been the most supportive team that I have ever worked in over the last 16 years."

"The placement was amazing."

"The open and warm environment amongst the staff which allowed me to ask for help when required."

"This team is an incredible placement for any student to have and I'd highly recommend it for future students."

Social Work Degree Options

BA Hons Social Work

- 4 years study
- 2 placements

MSc Social Work

- 2 years study
- 2 placements

The SSSC require all Social Work Students to complete two Practice Learning Placements as part of their qualifications. The dates and times for these placements vary between Universities and all requests will be arranged through the Practice Learning Coordinators (Dean McGrandles & Vivian Fitzsimmons).

Student Placements take place throughout the year depending on Universities:

Stirling University has their placements in May and August, and Open University have theirs in February and November.

Other Universities have theirs in October and March etc.

Becoming Part of the Learning Team

It is very important to highlight the important role that the whole team has in the learning and development of students while on placement. Students will absorb learning from all members of the team and will be supported to reflect on this.

The following sections will outline the process of supporting you to develop as a Mentor, a Link Worker and as a Practice Educator.

Mentoring & Shadowing for Students

Students will be encouraged to spend time with colleagues while on placement and should have access to a variety of shadowing opportunities.

[Shadowing Opportunity](#) requests may be sent to Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers to support Students and Colleagues with opportunities to develop by spending time with experienced workers.

We would encourage all colleagues to reflect on their practice and what learning opportunities they could offer to students.

Whether or not staff are considering becoming Link Workers or Practice Educators, if you have an interest in shaping the learning and development of students, we would encourage you to attend the Link Worker Training and book a place via [CPD Manager](#).

Becoming a Link Worker

Link Workers are an essential part of a student's Learning Team as not all Practice Educators are based within each service. Link Workers provide an essential role in supporting students day to day.

if you would like to consider becoming a Link Worker we would ask you to discuss this in Supervision with your Line Manager in the first instance and include this as part of your career planning in your [Good Conversations](#) (Annual Development Review).

Please book a place on the Link Worker Training on [CPD Manager](#). Dates are arranged throughout the year and a reminder will be sent to those who join the waiting list at the beginning of this document.

All Link Workers will be supported with a Practice Educator to support Students while on placement in Falkirk.

Becoming a Practice Educator

Practice Education is a Post-Qualifying Award that is gained through further study at University and is funded by Falkirk Council. It is a vital step in the assessment of Students in completing their placements.

If you would like to consider Practice Education we would encourage all applicants to have completed their Link Worker training to get familiar with the process of hosting student placements and learning from other Practice Educators.

If you would like to apply for this course please discuss initially with your Line Manager and ensure you have had a [Good Conversations](#). More information on the pathway can be found [here](#).

When you are ready to apply for this course please submit an External Course Request on [CPD Manager](#) and submit a [Further Education Study Request](#) and a [Sponsorship Agreement](#).

You will be given 2 study days per module to support you with your studies.

When is this available?

If you would like to discuss your professional development as part of the Learning Team please get in touch with [Dean McGrandles](#) or [Viv Fitzsimmons](#).

Link Worker Training is held throughout the year and is held in-person. Please register your interest [here](#).

Applications for Practice Education are held yearly in the early Summer and begin in February. We currently sponsor colleagues to complete their qualification with Napier University but would advise if another University is being arranged.

Please ensure you have read all guidance. All Sponsored employees are required to remain employed by Falkirk during their studies and for 2 years after gaining their qualification.

Supports

All Link Workers and Practice Educators will be invited to the Link Worker & Practice Educator's Forums which are held quarterly. You will be sent a calendar invite to these.

A Students Hub is held every 6 weeks on a Friday in Camelon Social Work Office and we encourage members of the Learning Team to arrange to come along to these where possible.

For those completing their Practice Educator Award, their Practice Assessor will be Dean, Viv or another experienced colleague.

Dean and Viv will meet with you throughout your studies to check in regarding academic processes and provide appropriate guidance.

2 study days per module are allocated for Students and you should discuss with your line manager if you need additional study time.

Any other supports to help you share in learning for Students will be considered.

Links

Practitioner's Pages: [Practice Learning](#)

Practitioner's Pages: [Continuous Professional Development](#)

If there are any other questions about your development as part of the Learning Team for Social Work Students please get in touch via socialservices.training@falkirk.gov.uk.