

Trainee Social Worker Model Webinar – Gateshead Council and University of Sunderland

Presenters: Steph Downey, Sarah Beck, Julie Smiles, Melony Bramwell,
John Foreman, Michelle Morgan, James Davenport, Olivia Walters



**University of
Sunderland**



Why Social Work Trainees?

Building on existing success

- Social Work degree apprenticeships for existing workforce
- Graduate Management Trainee roles

Challenges

- Response to recruitment
- Loss of 20% capacity – challenging if numbers of apprentices increase
- Lower numbers of existing workers eligible for/wanting to undertake degree apprenticeship

Opportunities

- Bring in good quality capacity (now), at lower cost
- Widening participation in social work
- Development of our future workforce/career pathways





**University of
Sunderland**

Model Overview



- Procurement of the apprenticeship already in place with University of Sunderland (only campus based apprenticeship provider in NE)
- This made it easier to co develop the model between the LA and HEI
- Funded through re purposing of other posts
 - E.g. 2 progressed social work posts = 3 trainees and the uplift in salary for the Lead Practitioner





Why a Pod Model?



- Opportunity for development for existing SW's
- Learning from other models (e.g. Think Ahead/Step Up)
- Recognition of lack of assessment experience for this cohort of apprentices
- Supportive development environment
- Resource can be directed more strategically
- Risk of JE if role wasn't substantially different to an Assessing Officer



About the Course

Background

- Work with NE Local Authorities to develop the programme began in 2018
- Our first cohort has just graduated and we now have over 100 apprentices on programme
- Close partnership working throughout
- 3-year programme leading to BA (Hons) degree and professional social work qualification, enabling successful apprentices to apply for registration as a Social Worker with Social Work England
- Similar entry requirements to traditional BA programme



**University of
Sunderland**



About the Course

Course structure

- Each year starts with a block induction period
- Then traditional 'day release' model – one day per week for university attendance or directed study
- Apprentices are learning on and off the job throughout but have designated placement periods of 70/100 days in Years 2 and 3
- Employers are responsible for allocating placements, which must provide contrasting experiences of practice.



**University of
Sunderland**



About the Course

Progress on the programme

- Support from University tutor and workplace mentor (PE during placements)
- Regular tripartite reviews (every 8-10 weeks)
- Recognising diverse backgrounds of apprentices and providing additional support
- Maintaining academic standards on programme
- Apprentices learn from each other in the classroom and apply theory in practice immediately



**University of
Sunderland**





**University of
Sunderland**

Application Process

- Recruiting lead practitioners
- Importance of the job advert
- Preparedness for questions
- Working with University Colleagues throughout
- Practicalities on time
- Number of applicants
- Qualification checks
- Personal statements
- Clear matrix
- Stages and sifting





**University of
Sunderland**

Recruitment Day

Pre-planning

- Who, what, where
- Numbers + roles
- Interview questions
- Clear time slots

The day

- Reflective discussion
- Co-educators
- Scoring
- Final checks
- Offers





University of
Sunderland

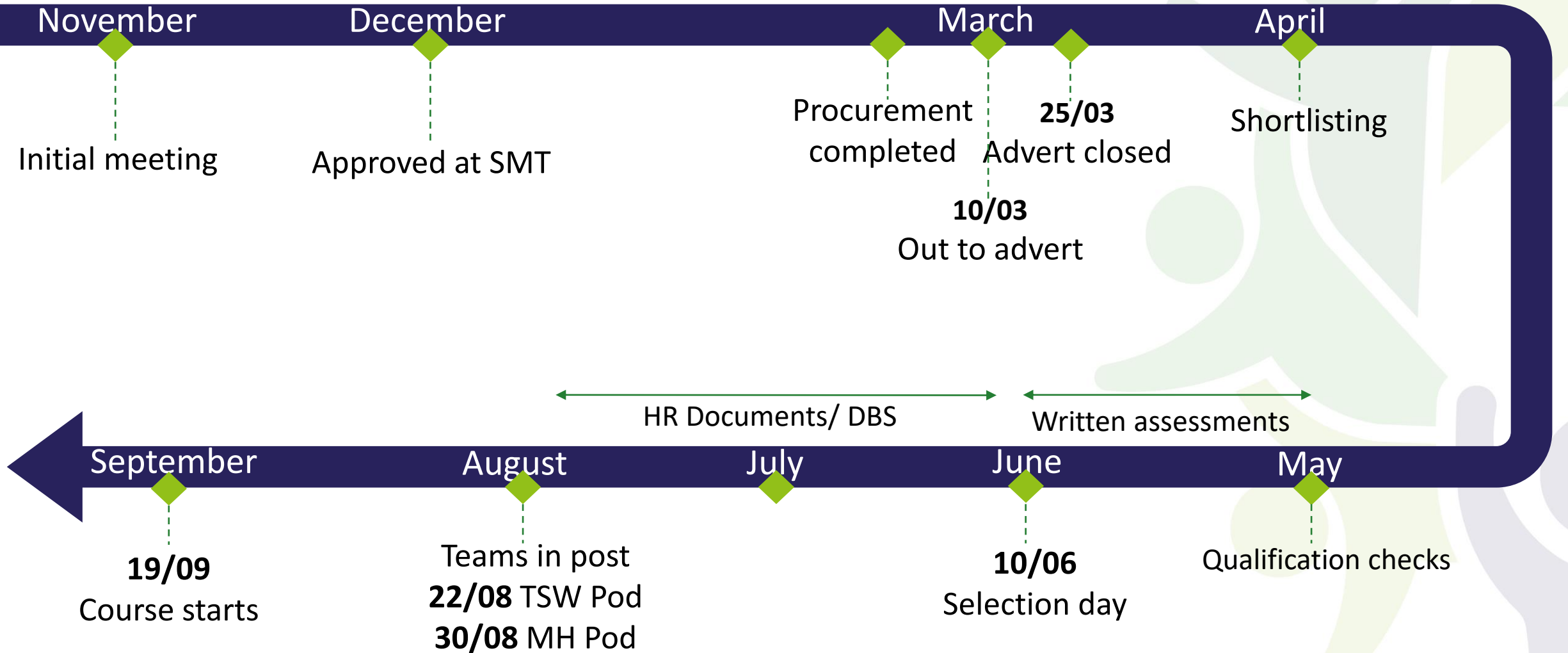
Project Management



- Managing collaboration across partners
- Holding the pen
- Admin/ support
- Point of contact for candidates



Timeline





**University of
Sunderland**

How it's going

- In place for 13 weeks - mental health trainees for 11 weeks
- All trainees have own caseload to manage
- Weekly → fortnightly → monthly supervision
- Shadowing experience in several different teams gaining valuable experience of a varied service user group
- All trainees found in depth induction to be extremely beneficial, building the vital foundations of the Trainees learning base





Testimonials

I became frustrated with my role (in a care home) mainly due to the lack of opportunities for progression. I stumbled upon the social work apprenticeship and jumped at it, knowing this would allow me to continue to help others but in a more lasting and powerful way. I'm fully aware of how great of an opportunity the apprenticeship is and am determined to succeed in passing it.

**Trainee Social Worker,
Mental Health Pod**

I especially like the idea of the social work degree being achieved through apprenticeship as I am able to gain real life experience on the job and it helps me to understand how to put policies into practice.

**Trainee Social Worker,
TSW Pod**



**Trainee Social Worker,
TSW Pod**





**University of
Sunderland**

Apprenticeship Support Group



- Broader group set up with first cohort of apprentices
- Led by current apprentices
- Peer platform for all learners across children's and adults
- Used for topical discussion





What would we do differently?



- Lead in time
- Recruitment advert
- Personal Statement
- Internal recruitment processes
- Qualification check and applicability (to be led by the University)
- Appreciate the time factor
- University open day





Questions

