

**The Care Council for Wales and Cardiff University focusing on developing and implementing the Standards for Involving Service Users and Carers in the degree in Social Work in Wales**

Judith Jones, Care Council Member

- Service User and Carer Reference Group to steer participation work
- Service users and carers have worked together positively to progress the participation agenda
- Setting the standards for involving carers and service users in the social work degree programme
- Developing the standards - the journey!
  - ❖ A challenge
  - ❖ Lively and passionate discussion and debate
  - ❖ Shaping the content, style and presentation
- Service users and carers setting the standards
- Consultation process
- Crucial work to ensure service user and carer involvement develops in a consistent and measurable way
- A key aspect of Care Council's work on ensuring service users and carers influence its work.

- Developing a service user and carer participation strategy to ensure they are at the heart of the agenda

Dr. Colin Young and Evan Davies, Cardiff University

- The experience and impact of service user/carer involvement in teaching
- The challenges of implementing the standards for service user and carer involvement on the MA in social work
  - Effective participation in technical and administrative aspects of the care is proving to be more challenging
  - Highlighted issues of data protection and confidentiality
  - How to reach and engage service users and carers from the widest possible backgrounds
  - Significant issues around payment and the impact on benefit entitlement
  - Developing formal agreements with service users and carers that meet their requirement
  - Service user and carer input is invaluable but careful thought and planning is required to consider their welfare and support needs
  - Recognition that making service user and carer involvement central in the planning and delivery of social work training will be a gradual process
  - Effective service user and carer involvement will radically change the way in which social work students are taught

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW MA COURSE IN SOCIAL WORK AT CARDIFF UNIVERSITY**

Cardiff University is launching a new course in Social Work from September 2005. It is for students who already have a degree, or who are over 25, with extensive experience in the social care field. The course will last for 2 years, and students will undertake both practice and academic study. Students will have 3 periods on “placement” (practical work), in a variety of places such as a Local Authority Social Services dept., or in a Voluntary Agency such as MIND, or Age Concern. They also have to write a number of essays, and complete a research project, and pass all the practical work, to obtain the qualification of MA in Social Work, at the end of the 2 years.

Social Workers, and students, are required to register with the Care Council for Wales, (CCW), - this is a new organisation set up to set the standards of social work practice, and to spell out the code by which social workers (and everyone involved in social care including employers) must abide by. Social workers and students have been registered this year for the first time. The CCW have instructed those running social work courses, that they must involve service users and carers in every aspect of social work training, and organisation of the course. In response to this, we are keen to involve service users and carers – you do not have to have any qualifications, only an interest in social work training, and have had experience of requesting, or receiving services from health, or social services. We are just beginning to involve services users, and carers, and this will be a learning process for us all, how we do this – it will take some years to be fully realised, and we are all going to have to learn as we go!

There are a number of Committees who look after the various tasks involved in running a social work course. These all have what are termed “Terms of Reference”, which describe what the Committees do. The terms of reference of all the Committees listed below include the need to involve service users and carers. The Committees are:

- Programme Management Committee (PMC) – this is the most important one – all the other committees “report” to this one,
- Access, Selection and Allocation Committee – this committee manages the process of selecting students for social work training, and links with employers
- Placement Assessment and Planning Committee (PAP) – these meetings are held very regularly throughout the year. The purpose is to read all the reports that are produced on placement, about the student’s practical work. These reports comprise an assessment from the student’s practice assessor on how well the student has done, and other material produced by the student reflecting on the work he/she has done. Other matters concerning training in general are discussed, and practice assessors, and representatives from training departments attend.
- Equal Opportunities (EOPS) – this looks at matters concerned with “anti-discriminatory practice” – to ensure that no student is disadvantaged in any way, regardless of factors such as age, or race, culture, or disability.
- Exam Board – this meets once a year to confirm that the students have passed everything on the course in that year, so that they can either progress to the second year, or be awarded the qualification at the end of the second year. The members of the exam board discuss anybody who has failed anything, any special circumstances, and arrangements made to enable the student to have another go at passing the piece of academic work, or placement.

The Care Council for Wales has just finalised a set of standards specifically related to how we should involve service users and carers, and how we should measure our progress. As a first step, the Care Council for Wales has also instructed the Universities to ensure that service

users and carers are members of all the main committees that look after the running, and organisation of the social work course. However, this is only one way in which you can get involved. There are many other things you can do. These include:

- Giving us advice over a specific question – this may entail reading a report, or a policy document, you can then respond, in your own time, and tell us what you think, by e-mail, or telephone, or by letter.
- Helping to interview prospective social work students – e.g. thinking of questions to ask candidates, looking at our procedures for selection, and recruitment, as well as taking part in face to face interviews in the future.
- Being involved directly in teaching

We would be pleased to hear from you about any other ideas or suggestions you may have about getting involved.

If you have any questions about anything you have read, you are welcome to ring me on 02920 875004, or to speak to any of the academic staff, on 02920 874967/ 02920 875566. Alternatively, my e-mail is [YoungC1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:YoungC1@cardiff.ac.uk). Dr Colin Young, Professional Tutor.

**Dr Colin Young**



The Care Council for Wales (Care Council) is the regulatory body for social care workers and social work training. It also has the role of workforce planning and development for the social care sector. It was established under the Care Standards Act 2000 and became operational on 1st October 2001. It is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Care Council aims is to make sure that children and adults who receive social care services can rely on a workforce that is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated. Its main responsibilities are to improve public protection through promoting high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers and high standards in their training.

The Care Council's role is to:

- maintain a Register of social workers and social care workers;
- prepare and review Codes of Practice for social care workers and employers of social care workers;
- approve social work and post-qualifying social work courses;
- ascertain the training needs of people wishing to become social care workers and promote such training; and
- draw up occupational standards for social care workers.

As part of its regulation of training role the Care Council has set a specific requirement to ensure that service users and carers are involved in all stages of the social work degree programme. The Care Council has established a set of standards for involving service users and carers in shaping and delivering the degree programme, which are available in an easy to read version. The Care Council is also providing financial assistance to enable the programmes to progress this work.

The Care Council has pledged to ensure service users and carers are at the heart of its work. Already involved in the governance of the Care Council, service users and carers have also played an active role in developing the standards for the practice and training of social care workers in Wales. To build on current practice, the Care Council is developing a service user and carer participation strategy.