



Title Should Universities and Social Work
Employers Use Mentors in the Revised
Post Qualifying Social Work Education
Structure?

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**SHOULD UNIVERSITIES AND SOCIAL WORK EMPLOYERS USE MENTORS IN THE
REVISED POST QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION STRUCTURE?**

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SHOULD UNIVERSITIES AND SOCIAL WORK EMPLOYERS USE MENTORS IN THE REVISED POST QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION STRUCTURE?

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ABSTRACT

Within social work Post Qualifying (PQ) education awards, the mentor advises and sometimes assesses qualified social workers' performance and written work against set national criteria. Is this a valued and unambiguous role that should be carried forward when the new PQ framework starts in 2006 or is it one that should be questioned and analysed? This study explores whether mentoring could be used within the new PQ framework, by considering the results of ten semi-structured in-depth interviews with managers and academics involved in the strategic and operational provision of PQSW in the Advance PQ Consortium. A review of the literature showed the value of mentoring and details of the outgoing PQ mentor role. It is concluded that the expectations of the new workplace assessor role are apt, including the skills of mentoring and coaching, which are taught on new PQ courses. It is recommended that generic mentoring schemes, whereby one person assists a less experienced individual to focus on his or her personal and professional development should be available within social care agencies for all social workers as part of a human resource strategy. It is suggested that mentoring and assessment roles should be included and remunerated within social workers' job descriptions. Moreover, this would formalise social workers' contribution to their and others continuous professional and personal development, support the new PQ framework, the GSCC Codes of Practice (2002) and contribute to staff retention.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	Adult Care Services
Advance	Regional Post Qualifying Consortium covering Luton, Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire & Northamptonshire
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)
CCETSW	Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSF	Children' Schools and Families
DH	Department of Health
EMCC	European Mentoring and Coaching Council
GLPQ	Greater London Post Qualifying Consortium
GSCC	General Social Care Council
NMC	Nursing & Midwifery Council
LRN	Learning Resource
PQ	Post Qualifying
PQ1	Post Qualifying Award Part 1
PTA	Practice Teaching Award
PQCCA	Post Qualifying Child Care Award
PQSW	Post Qualifying Award in Social Work

SCIE

Social Care Institute for Excellence

TSP

Training Support Programme

Chapter 1 Introduction

The aim of this research study is to identify whether mentors will still be required when Post Qualifying Social Work (PQSW) education changes its structure from 2006 'to improve the standard of social work practice... and ensure that the needs and perspectives of services users and carers are at the heart of Post-Qualifying education and training' (GSCC 2005:4). The awards are 'crucial to sustain continuing reforms of social work' according to Higham (2006). It has been noted that there is a 'paucity of research in Post Qualifying (PQ) education' (Brown et al: April 2005). It is intended that this research will also demonstrate the current contribution and future role of mentors as well as outlining existing sources of support for social workers completing PQ awards. Strategic and operational managers, decision-makers and academics, who are involved in the planning, delivery and support within social work education, were consulted during the research using semi-structured interviews.

The main objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To identify the current role and use of mentors within the local PQSW education Consortium (Advance) and by local employers.
2. To investigate the contribution of mentors currently in social work.
3. To consider how mentoring could facilitate university students on professional programmes within the new PQ framework.
4. To explore the availability of other educational /professional support for working students who are returning to Higher Education to study post-qualifying professional awards

The Post Qualifying Social Work (PQSW) awards provide an opportunity for qualified social workers to gain further professional qualifications, within social work as part of their personal and professional development. Established in 1991 the awards were

'built around six Requirements for PQSW level, and the Advanced Award in Social Work (AASW), built around six Requirements for Advanced level. Four specific awards are linked to the PQSW framework - Mental Health Social Work, Child Care, Practice Teaching, and Regulation of Care Services (GSCC Website 2006 in Higham 2006)'.

They are promoted by employers, and employees complete the qualifications in work as well as their own time.

'From an employer's perspective, PQ 'is viewed as training standards in social work practice and is becoming important for practitioners' career development. The awards are also considered to be or will soon become an aid to staff recruitment and retention. They are viewed as being relevant to daily practice and will help to raise the status of social work in the eyes of other professionals (Maitland 2002).'

This perspective demonstrates the contribution PQSW made towards the development of the

social workforce. The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) outlined support requirements for PQSW candidates. PQ mentors were expected to be committed to the values of social work and had 'up to date knowledge or experience of social work practice' would help social workers complete the awards by providing 'advice and guidance.... 'They would also be required to assist the candidates to be ready for the assessment process, advise on portfolio preparation and consider future development needs' (CCETSW 1997:17). It advised that the mentoring role should be separate from that of assessment. Mentors were expected to be experienced social work professionals, with an understanding of adult learning, and an ability to enable others in their professional development.

Although 'different models have been adopted by other PQ consortia and accredited programmes' (Walton 2005), independent mentors were employed by the local Advance Consortium with funds from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to support and advise PQ students, provide first-line assessment of PQ portfolios prior to submission, and contribute to the award's final assessment process. 'There are now 90 mentors on our register, some working on a freelance basis, others working with staff in their own agencies. 666 candidates are registered for the PQ awards' (Advance May 2006). CCETSW provide bursaries for registered PQ candidates, part of which is used to fund mentors (Turner 2000). They would be defined as 'professional mentors' given that they are paid (Anderson & Shannon 1995). In other parts of the country, social work practitioners mentor each other for the PQ awards (Lambeth Social Services 2005; Bristol Social Services 2006) and in Scotland mentors are paid (Coles 2005).

Within this research the interviewees referred to PQ mentors as well as the PQCCA Award (specifically for Child Care social workers) Practice Assessor role (specifications are outlined in appendix 2). Unlike the PQSW, the PQCCA is a taught course at local universities. The role of the PQCCA Practice Assessor within the Advance Consortium is different to that of the mentor in that it is defined as someone who observes and gives feedback on two observations, related casework and reflective logs, supporting candidates to create their portfolio of evidence and writing a summary report (Advance 2002). Indeed the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Practice Teaching Consortium (University of Luton 2005) recommend a separate mentor role to the Practice Assessor for candidates of the Practice Teaching Award, which provides PQ5 & 6 requirements of the PQSW (see appendix 3). The Advanced Award (equivalent to a Masters level professional qualification) mentor is not referred to in this study due to time limitations. The focus, in this study, is on the first PQ level award, which most social workers will complete.

Within the Western sub region of the Eastern Regional Planning Network (see appendix one), of the Eastern Region of Skills for Care, the PQ mentoring structure is managed by the Advance PQ

Consortium. This 'is a Consortium of agencies and institutions, which have a history of collaborative working in the social work education field. The area served by Advance includes Bedfordshire, Luton, Hertfordshire, and Northamptonshire, with a membership of local universities statutory social service agencies and voluntary organisations' (Advance 2003).

Northamptonshire, although a member of Advance, is not part of the Eastern Regional Planning Network.

'Within the BHL sub region the Universities, together with the major employers have been working together for the last two years to decide how to adapt to the changes and manage PQ education and training in a collaborative way which is best suited to the local workforce' (Advance January 2007).

The latter provides a forum for local social care employers with 'a voice in what they would like to see for their staff in the future' in terms of PQ, (Skills for Care Eastern August 2007), as well as an opportunity to work alongside universities to support the education and training of qualified and unqualified workers in the region.

The GSCC (2005:31, 90) guidance on the new PQ framework omits reference to mentors in preference to 'a commitment to ensure that qualified, registered social workers are always involved in workplace teaching and assessment' and that all specialist level courses must 'show how they will develop the knowledge and skills in mentoring, practice teaching and assessment' (GSCC & Topss England 2002). If universities with 'resource-tight, highly regulated and vulnerable departments' (Preston-Shoot 2004:364) agree the need for mentors and/or workplace assessors, it would be pertinent to consider whether remuneration is appropriate for these tasks, due to the existing arrangements of paying independent mentors of PQ candidates.

Is the role of the workplace assessor more appropriate than that of a mentor for social workers completing Post Qualifying Awards? How will the universities view the future role of the mentors and workplace assessors? What other support is available for candidates who are working full time? This study aims to extend the literature, by firstly setting the context of the traditional mentor role, examining the role of the social work mentor within the outgoing PQ structure and making recommendations for the future PQ framework. The intention is that the research outcomes will provide relevant recommendations to social work educators and employers, further to the changes in PQ education from 2006.

Chapter 2 Review of the literature

'Mentors are guides. They lead us along the journey of our lives. We trust them because they have been there before. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, and warn us of lurking dangers and point out the unexpected delights along the way. As teachers of adults, we have much to learn from the mythology of the mentor (Daloz 1986:17).'

Before Odysseus departed for the Trojan War, as depicted in Homer's poem the 'Odyssey' (1992), he chose a male friend, 'Mentor', as the guardian and advisor for his son, Telemachus. Mentor also appeared to Telemachus as a woman, Athena the goddess of war (Daloz 1986; Anderson & Shannon 1995; Aldred & Garvey 2000; Wallace & Gravells 2002). Today this is the origin of the word 'mentor', as 'a wise and trusted advisor or guide' (Collins 2005). According to Gibb (1997) the master-apprentice system of the craft guilds in the Middle Ages was a form of mentoring; in Gibb's opinion this approach developed later in engineering, legal, nursing (Benner 1982; Bourn & Bootle 2005) and teaching professions (Hobson Spring 2003). However, Klasen & Clutterbuck (2002: xi) suggest that mentoring is a 'relatively new phenomenon.' According to Pettit (2004) mentoring became fashionable in America during the 1970s, and then popular in the United Kingdom later in the 1980s, promoted by those who later started the Mentoring and Coaching Research Group at Sheffield Hallam University. In America, the mentor role is associated with a superior sponsoring another to foster promotion and networking with others. Hay (1998) comments that a mentor is usually associated with an older more senior colleague, whereas in Europe, according to Klasen & Clutterbuck (2002), 'the emphasis of mentoring in many countries has shifted away from sponsorship and career management to self-development and helping the individual to become self-reliant. The outcomes have become much more clearly linked to organisational goals.'

The mentor role is a wide one, which encompasses listening to the mentee (the person being helped) and enabling them to identify challenges, goals, choices and consequences (Pegg 1999). Mentors are those who 'help, support, guide' others to reach their goals (Parsloe 1995:26). Scandura (1998) cites benefits for women and those in a minority at work from accessing an experienced person. Mentors offer independent support for continuous personal and professional development (Harrison & Chia 2004), listen and advise about a range of issues, which concern the mentee. It can often be a mutually beneficial relationship (Mentfor 2005) and someone with whom to discuss issues beyond work (Carruthers 1993). Mentors help 'one person to help another achieve their potential by sharing experiences, listening and guiding. It's a one-to-one relationship between mentor and mentee based on trust, confidentiality and equality' (Pettit

2004). Mentfor, the Eastern Mentoring Forum within which region Advance sits, describes mentoring as 'a learning and developmental relationship between two people. It depends on essential human qualities such as commitment, authenticity, trust, integrity, and honesty. It involved the skills of listening, questioning, challenge and support (Mentfor 2005).' Mentoring incorporates a range of skills and knowledge bases and can be described unquestioningly as fulfilling a myriad of roles. It can occur often when someone is at a crossroads in his or her life or career (Zunker 2002, in McDowall Long 2004)

'In accordance with mentor functions established in the literature, mentors in the developmental context serve the following functions: sponsorship, coaching, challenging, exposure, confirmation and acceptance, counselling, friendship, and role modelling. Mentors listen, provide advice and counsel protégés; they encourage protégés to stretch, test and grow their skills, and provide a sounding board for protégés to posit strategies for success' (McDowall Long 2004: 525).

McDowall-Long (2004) situates mentoring within social learning theory, whereby individuals learn their psychosocial, emotional and personal skills from others modelling desired behaviour. She suggests that this is important, especially for women and those who are in the minority at work. Mentoring can also be situated within a cognitive learning framework, according to Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) in that discussions between mentors and mentees (those who are being assisted) enable the mentees to assimilate new information, reflecting and reconsidering their own 'constructs' or beliefs about the world. 'The objective is not for mentors to impress their knowledge on mentees and expect them to store it unquestioningly; the objective is to provide opportunities and mentees to reflect on their mentor's input, assembling and assimilating it as it is personally relevant' (Klasen & Clutterbuck 2002: 12).

Alred & Garvey (2000) promote the theory of 'situated learning' whereby employees learn in the workplace, from their relationships and discussions with others, who are more experienced. The Practice Learning Taskforce (2004) has encouraged the development of 'learning organisations', meaning a culture of encouraging development in others and sharing of skills throughout social care agencies. This approach is underpinned by the GSCC Code of Conduct for qualified social workers, which states: 'As a social care worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills. This includes: undertaking relevant training to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and contributing to the learning and development of others (GSCC 2002).'

In a Community Care social work magazine article, Jane Reece suggests that mentoring 'involves helping people become more confident and professional so that they can move up the ladder' (cited in Towner 2005). Reece advises that there should be regular meetings, which are reviewed

after a year, usually ending within 18 months. She contrasts her approach, to that of her role as a manager 'I will spend more time with them reflecting on what they are doing and how they might have done things differently. The aim is to help them develop and step back from the day-to-day work.'

The role of the PQ mentor is described by Advance as 'responsible for assisting the candidates in preparing for a portfolio submission: in many ways their role is that of Portfolio Advisor. The mentor oversees the candidate's progress in building a portfolio and will be required to countersign any submissions made by the candidate as First Assessor' (Advance 1998: 3). Mentors are provided for all candidates who complete the PQ1 (the first part of all the PQ awards) for which qualified social workers have to demonstrate 'that they have improved and extended the level of competence acquired by the point of qualification', as well as included theory, research and social work values (Advance 2003: 2).

Turner (2000: 232) identifies that 'the mentor's focus is the development and learning of the practitioner as they work towards their PQ award, whereas the existing supervisor's focus is much broader, incorporating agency and service user needs as well as those of the supervisee', although she advocates for managers to be involved in their staff's continuous professional development. Cooper and Rixon (2001: 712) acknowledge that the role of mentor can 'overlap' with that of a manager and that the role of mentors has not been clear. The Advance Consortium guidance to mentors adds:

'For many candidates their workplace supervision will also be the place where they are mentored for their PQSW (or AASW) evidence gathering and development activities. Although Advance views this arrangement for mentoring as valid, it is also recognised that PQSW/AASW mentoring could be compromised by the reactive and urgent nature of line management supervision and provisions needs to be made to guard against this.' (Advance 1998:3)

Although Kadushin (1992:140) has described the main supervisory tasks as 'administrative, educational, and supportive', Cooper & Rixon (2001) argue that managers' focus are operational priorities. Klasen & Clutterbuck (2002) emphasised the need for mentoring to be 'off-line' in that it does not involve the direct line manager. Managers focus on work quality rather than personal development (Harrison & Chia 2004:502). Rumsey (1995:9) comments that 'research in both health and social work has indicated that there are very real difficulties in combining the tasks of professional and educational development and line management supervision.' Hay (1998) identifies that there are not necessarily enough managers to be mentors and that mentoring can become 'developmental and transformational' once it is unconstrained from focussing on organisational requirements. These ideas would, support the notion of a PQ mentor being someone other than the candidate's line manager.

Candidates, who are qualified social workers in the Advance Consortium, are required to complete portfolios of evidence, using case studies and supporting evidence to demonstrate their competence in practice for six requirements within either the full PQSW award (appendix 3) for those social workers who work in adult services or the Post Qualifying Child Care Award (Advance 2003b). Mentors not only enable social workers to complete PQ awards, but also explain the complex requirements (Cooper & Rixon 2001; Walton 2005), focus on enhancing practice, discuss continuous professional development, provide a bridge between the academic teaching and the work place, and also act as assessors of practice (Rumsey 1995). According to Higham (2006) 'many practitioners and managers arguably did not understand the framework'. Cooper & Rixon (2001: 715) comment that 'the case for a system, of mentor support within professional development is compelling. Nonetheless, it seems to have acquired an acceptance amongst those involved in PQ/CPD as providing a necessary service to candidates. Mentors had sometimes been seen as a way of enabling candidates to navigate their way through complex, confusing and somewhat esoteric sets of assessment requirements.'

However, this in itself is not a case for mentoring, since the assessment requirements should be understandable and transparent. In research undertaken on behalf of the GSCC, mentoring included identifying, advising and giving feedback on work related evidence, advising on portfolio construction, completing and writing reports on observations of practice. The frequency of meetings with mentors was also noted:

'6 candidates had received mentoring monthly. 1 candidate met with their mentor twice a month. 1 candidate had only met their mentor once and 1 candidate had not met their mentor at all. 2 candidates met their mentor 3 times in total, and 1 met fortnightly but PQ mentoring way incorporated into regular supervision' (Stanford-Beale & Macauley 2001: 11-12).

Not all candidates felt that they were well supported and this mainly related to mentors not being available and having insufficient information to advise candidates. The mentors themselves identified difficulties, one commenting:

'There are too many tensions between the joint role of mentors and that of assessor. If the mentor has mentored in a certain and given structure and direction to the work, the candidate can reasonably expect that same person to assess them successfully! This rather takes all objectivity out of the process with the only 'check and balance' being the academic panel. There is less difficulty with the line manager being the assessor, but mentor and assessor are an inappropriate combination and should be separated out' (Stanford-Beale & Macauley 2001:17).

PQSW mentors need to demonstrate that they are working at a higher professional level, with experience of supervision, an understanding of adult learning and anti-discriminatory practice.

Jones and Straker (2006) describe mentors for newly qualified teachers as 'gatekeepers to the teaching profession' and it could be argued that the PQ mentors also fulfilled this role for the ongoing quality assurance for PQ awards. PQ mentors also assist candidates with portfolios, the latter 'transcending the sphere of education and training as such, the reflective self- assessment characteristic of effective portfolio construction is identified as a major contribution to the 'professionalisation' of social work practice as a whole' (Slater 2007).

Bourn and Bootle (2005: 351) in a study of Post Qualifying Advanced Award candidates, noted in their study that 'More than half rated as good or very good the support given by their mentors compared to a quarter who rated the support from their line manager as good or very good'. Cooper & Rixon (2001) also point to the importance of team support for PQ study and Rowland (2003) notes that the lack of workload relief can also affect social workers studies, whilst Mitchell et al (2001) emphasised the need for PQ students to be allowed time for studying. Doel et al (2007) commented 'The support of a mentor who has direct experience of the candidate's programme is highly prized, as are clear and consistent guidance from the programme, and meaningful study time and workload relief from employers'. In a study by Bourn and Bootle (2005) 'more than half felt that they had received limited help or support from their staff development section: in one case this amounted to 'little more than the loan of a video camera for the completion of a portfolio objective'. Despite the availability of mentoring to PQ1 candidates at Kingston University (Keville 2002), 'a significant minority' did not complete their studies. Two main issues arose from their research: lack of self-assurance in their ability to support the student and that some students had specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia or where English was not their first language).

The need to ensure quality in mentoring and provide guidance to organisations has led to the Department for Education and Skills supporting the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation in administering the Approved Provider Standard for any organisations with volunteer mentors (Mentoring and Befriending Association 2006). The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) was founded in 2002 'to promote good practice and the expectation of good practice in mentoring and coaching across Europe' (EMCC 2006a) with the development of an 'Ethical code' for mentors and coaches (EMCC 2006b). Advance also maintained a Quality Assurance scheme (2003) in terms of its assessment of portfolios, rights of appeal for candidates and mentor development days (appendix 6). There was not a system for accrediting mentors, although a register was held, detailing their experience (Advance May 2006).

The concept of a 'learning organisation' according to Baldwin (2004:162) is one in which education is an inherent part of the culture and development is available for all. However, he then

questions whether this is possible for social workers, who work in a 'managerialist organisation which fundamentally undermines the concept of participation for learning and change.'

Nevertheless the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE 2004) has developed an information pack for social care agencies to identify whether they are learning organisations and 'how you might move towards creating a culture of learning in the workplace' for staff, managers, policy makers, people who use services and their carers.' Forming a learning organisation requires a 'committed leadership' (Senge et al. 1994:503), which could be underpinned by the GSCC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care workers, whereby they must be providing :

'Induction, training and development opportunities to help social care workers do their jobs effectively and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities; Contributing to the provision of social care and social work education and training, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning Supporting staff in posts subject to registration to meet the GSCC's eligibility criteria for registration and its requirements for continuing professional development; and Responding appropriately to social care workers who seek assistance because they do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspects of their work.' (GSCC 2002: 3.1-4)

Consequently, linking the expectations of the Codes of practice for social workers and their employers' obligations to the new PQ framework could provide a structure to promote social workers' continuous professional development. Indeed the new awards are based on the Codes of practice, as well as being 'underpinned' by the National Occupational Standards for social work (GSCC Feb 2007).

There are potential benefits of mentors being available to social workers, who work in bureaucratic organisations focusing on managerial priorities (Banks 2001) and performance indicators (Jones et al 2006). Mentoring could promote 'critical self-reflection'; essential for professionals (Schon 1991: 291) with social workers acting as enablers of others so that a community of support could be developed. However, Jones et al. (2006) identify a 'crisis in social work.'

'The main concern of many social work managers today is the control of budgets rather than the welfare of service users, while worker-client relationships are increasingly characterised by control and supervision rather than care. The best way to strengthen respect is through activity: projects and tasks that give people reason to recognise each other as human beings, rather than as categories' Buonfino & Mulgan (2006).

Could a system of social workers mentoring each other, placing themselves in the wider context be a way of providing additional support in a demanding environment and become a form of 'personal and community empowerment' (Cropper 2000: 602) ?

The many benefits of mentoring for individuals and their organisations are widely cited. Pettit (2004) reports that in 2003 the

'Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) conducted a survey on the way its members were managing their employee careers. Half the respondents said their organisation offered a mentoring scheme, while 72% said they offered mentors to graduate trainees, executives or minority groups, the majority of respondents said their scheme was available to all staff.'

McDowall-Long (2004: 523) states 'it is clear that contemporary research demonstrates the beneficial functions of the mentoring relationships upon career development' such as promotions, fulfilment, as well as improved work performance and success (Siegal et al 2001). She also identifies how individuals' psychosocial outlook is improved, for example with 'higher academic achievement' and better relationships with others (Grossman & Rhodes 2002 in McDowall-Long 2004).

Indeed mentoring benefits all parties (Pettit 2004) including the organisation (Alred & Garvey 2000). It is used in workforce development (Employers Organisation 2004) and supports a trained workforce (Parnell 1998 in McDowall-Long 2004), whilst being a 'relatively cost-efficient form of professional support /development' (Bush and Coleman 1995 in Hobson 2003). Mentoring can be more effective than training courses in improving skills (Hale 1999) and effectively 'develop leadership for the future' and facilitate relationships across organisations (Balance date not known). The employers' workforce-planning organisation for social care focuses on workplace learning (Topss England 2005:3) and recommends that employees should have 'career pathways promoting lifelong learning, through individual development plans, and flexible training opportunities.' Harrison & Chia (2004:502) claim that 'lifelong learning, can facilitate personal development, so that people feel more motivated and fulfilled', but warn that there should be adequate time set aside for mentoring.

Jones and Straker (2006; 183) suggest that mentors for newly qualified teachers should have a 'knowledge and critical understanding of theoretical models and frameworks of mentoring as well as the generic principles underpinning effective practice...and be provided with the conditions and resources within their schools/colleges that allow them to be actively involved on the construction and extension of their knowledge base as mentors.' Brief training was provided to the PQ mentors in their role, to guard against difficulties arising, but the suggestion by Jones and Straker (2006), is that mentors should have a greater involvement in reflecting and reconstructing their role. Clutterbuck (2004) identifies difficulties such as poor relationships, insufficient time, lack of goal setting, unrealistic expectations, encouraging reliance, influence of other parties, relationship breakdown and gender differences affecting mentoring relationships. These difficulties would need to be taken into account for future mentoring schemes.

'As mentoring is non-reporting and confidential, it provides a means to take action on self-

development needs. It should also be supportive with the overall aim of encouraging mentees to become more self-reliant and to take increasing responsibility for their own development in a questioning and proactive way' (Beds County Council 2005:1).

For Brockbank and McGill (2006a) 'the learner's agenda is primary' within mentoring. Hay (1998) likens mentoring to the apprenticeship model, of an inexperienced worker, learning from an expert. Benner's analysis of the development of a proficient practitioner builds on Dreyfus' model of Skill Acquisition (1980 in Benner 1982), shows how nurses can develop their skills from 'novice' to 'advanced beginner' to competent to 'proficient' and then 'expert.' Dracut and Bryan-Brown (2004) further suggest that nurses should transform themselves from 'expert to preceptor' to pass on their knowledge to working with recently qualified nurses. Using Benner's model, ADVANCE mentors could be deemed to be 'proficient', able and experienced practitioners. The NMC (Burke & Saldanha 2005) have reviewed the system of mentoring support to enable nurses, midwives and health visitors to complete their professional development. They suggested four roles on a continuum (fig.1) as a 'standard to support learning' and assessment in practice 'those who are training to become nurses and those who support nurses once qualified as associate mentor, mentor and practice teacher and qualified teacher (ibid.: section 32). The code of conduct emphasises the role of nurse as a teacher and mentor.' As a registered nurse or midwife you have a duty to facilitate students of nursing and midwifery and others to develop their competence' (cited in Bunce 2002:26). This is in line with the code of professional conduct expecting all those newly qualified nurses to 'meet the requirements for an associate mentor' (Burke & Saldanha 2005: sec 34). Nursing mentors are more experienced and supervise 'pre-registration-nursing students. Practice teachers assess newly qualified nurses in their post-registration training. Parsloe (1993) comments that nurses following registration (qualification) have preceptors, whereby the roles of mentoring, teaching, coaching and assessment are combined. Qualified teachers (nursing lecturers) are at the other end of the continuum and split their time between Higher Education and practice. At all levels the criteria for these roles are that they' are registered in the same part of the register as the students they will support' (Burke & Saldanha 2005it: Annexe 2, 53).

Stages to 'support learning and practice' in nursing and midwifery

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Associate Mentor	Mentor	Practice Teacher	Qualified Teacher

Fig. 1. Cited in (Burke and Saldanha 2005: Annexe 2, 53)

Issues regarding continuous professional development, time to undertake the mentoring tasks and funding were raised in the NMC final report, similar issues to this research. Again dilemmas as to whether nursing mentors, for example, should be paid for the additional work that they undertake or whether it is an integral part of their role and duty is rehearsed in the Nursing Times (Ferns and Stiles 2004), whilst Peach (1999) recommends that 'funding to support learning in practice should be reviewed to take account of the costs of mentoring and assessment by practice staff.' It has been recommended that 'mentors need to learn to fail nurses', since they have responsibility to assess fitness to practice before nurses are qualified. '

Registration of social workers is the remit of the GSCC, which was established by the Care Standards Act (DH 2000). It superseded CCETSW as the social work regulating body and then launching a review of PQ education in 2002 (GSCC 2004). The PQ developments correspond to the introduction of the new degree in social work in England during 2003-4 (DH 2000). 'The PQ framework builds on the qualifying degree and aims to integrate professional development with the development of the workforce, support workforce planning and support the development of career pathways in social work' (Kingston University 2008). The extensive review of PQ provision resulted in the introduction of the new awards as the PQ award in specialist social work (set at 'all or part of the final year of an honours degree or as a freestanding graduate diploma' GSCC 2005:10, 31), the PQ award in higher specialist social work (at Postgraduate Diploma level) and the PQ award in the Advanced social work (at Masters Level). (Further details on the requirements for the Higher Awards can be found in the GSCC 'Specialist standards and requirements for post-qualifying social work education and training-Practice education GSCC 2006).

These GSCC validated awards will be delivered by universities from 2007. However some PQ programmes were approved to start earlier from 2006 with the changeover from one PQ system to another completed by the end of September 2008 (GSCC 2005b), presenting the possibility that there could be two sets of assessment schemes for PQ candidates existing conterminously. Given that universities are now responsible for the delivery of the awards (GSCC Feb 2007) they will also provide tutorial support to the students in terms of being 'looked after, guided and taken care of' (Lominé 2006), in terms of written work, personal and work issues the students face, arguably the role of the outgoing PQ mentor. Given that the new PQ awards will be provided by universities, one could argue that the new PQ students' tutors could fulfil aspects of the mentoring role although taking on the full role of a mentor as MacLennan (1995:51) advises, for 'an academic or theorist is the last thing a coach or mentor in the business world should be!' Cropper (2000: 602) also identifies the power imbalance between tutor and student, which is not

conducive to mentoring.

The new PQ programmes will however be underpinned by 'regional planning' between employers and universities to plan and commission local programmes according to local need' (GSCC 2005: 56-58). These new qualifications will correspond to the new National Occupational Standards in Social Work (Topss England 2002), which are performance criteria determined by employers, for social work students and qualified staff to demonstrate competence (DH 2002). Indeed

'most providers recognise that workplace assessment should be a core function of social care workers and other professionals and an essential component of CPD. The new role of the workplace assessor in the new PQ framework is crucial in that 'the assessment of practice competence will lie at the heart of any revised PQ framework' (GSCC 2004: pt 16).'

Mentors are not mentioned in the new PQ structure. Instead GSCC guidance (Feb 2007) identifies that work-based assessors' practice is underpinned by the GSCC & Topss England (2002) 'Guidance on the assessment of practice in the workplace'. The expectations are not prescriptive but

'There is an explicit recognition that coaching, mentoring, supervision, teaching and also role model are activities linked to work-based assessment. It is for providers to clarify their expectations of participants as appropriate to the learning process or programme and in accordance with the work context' (GSCC & Topss England (2002).

Indeed the GSCC (2005) expects that the revised PQ framework will equip more qualified social workers with teaching and assessment skills, by ensuring that these are taught within all levels of the new awards as shown below.

At Specialist PQ level (3 undergraduate) to 'Teach and assess the practice of student social workers and mentor and support students or colleague GSCC (2005: 17, 49.viii).'
At Higher Specialist (Postgraduate Diploma) level to 'Support, mentor, supervise or manage others enabling them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice'.
At Advanced Specialist (Masters) level to 'Support, mentor, supervise or manage others, exercising practice, research, management or educational leadership to enable them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice (GSCC 2005 :20,5, ix).'

Fig. 2. Enabling others requirements within the new PQ framework.

'Assessment must always be based on actual practice. Registered social workers must be part of the overall assessment. GSCC Code of Practice, relevant specialist standards and 'Guidance on the assessment of practice in the workplace' are vital to practice assessment.'(GSCC Feb 2007)

The GSCC has linked the newly introduced registration of the Social Care workforce to the adherence to the Code of Practice (GSCC 2002). Social workers, once registered, need to 'take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills', which encompasses 'undertaking relevant training to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and contributing to the learning and development of others'(GSCC 2002: 6). In order to support this, employers could create learning organisations (Practice Learning Taskforce 2004). The GSCC specifies that 'there must also be a specific commitment to ensure that qualified registered social workers are always involved in the support, teaching and assessment of practice competence' in the revised framework (GSCC 2004: point 78). In addition, it is stated that there is an expectation throughout the new PQ framework awards for social workers to demonstrate their competence to 'support, mentor, supervise or manage others'. (GSCC 2004: point 40 ix.). These guidelines could provide an impetus to a fresh approach by social workers and their employers to further social workers' continuous professional development. However it is noted that whether social workers will have the resources to perform these tasks 'will be a key strategic issue for universities and employers to consider when planning new programmes' (GSCC 2005). There is a tension here between what is expected by regulators and universities versus social workers' workload.

In terms of the future of mentoring the Advance Consortium as at May 2007 was unable to provide clarity as to the role of mentors in the new PQ framework. A newsletter to Mentors and Practice Assessors in May 2007 stated

'Despite many efforts by Advance to ascertain the position of Mentors in the new framework, this is still not clear. All the relevant Universities have been contacted, but none can give a definitive answer at present. University of Hertfordshire indicates that the role of the mentor will not be built into the University of Hertfordshire Graduate Diploma..... How much support is given to candidates outside the formal teaching, tutorials and seminars within the university will be up to the agencies themselves to decide. University of Bedfordshire, indicates that they are unable to make any firm offers until 2008 when the programmes start running. They suggest that they might have a pool of mentors/Pas to commissioning as required. But until funding is agreed no firm decisions can be made. I am sorry that the news is not more positive for mentors. There is such a wealth of expertise and knowledge that has been built up over the years that Advance has been coordinating' (Advance May 2007).

One article in the Greater London PQ Consortium (GLPQ) Contact magazine did ask of PQ

mentors 'where do they fit in the revised Post Qualifying Framework?' The author affirmed the supportive role of mentors to PQ candidates and concluded that

'the aim is to increase the number of social workers who are able to support workplace learning, but the conflict between these roles and other workload priorities will continue to be an issue. I therefore have no doubt that the role of 'specialist' workers, including independent workers, in supporting workplace learning will continue to be vital to the progression of social workers through the PQ framework' (Walton 2005:2).

This article did not question the rationale of mentors undertaking assessment since this was not their role in the GLPQ, nor did it explore their role as opposed to that of 'workplace assessors, as outlined by the GSCC (2005) given that it was a short article. But Walton does warn that in future 'as a minimum, roles and boundaries will need to be absolutely clear to all involved.' This indeed is a pertinent comment, to be considered for future PQ developments.

My conclusion from reading the literature is that mentoring per se and that undertaken within Post Qualifying education as an activity is largely beneficial, best separated from managerial and assessment tasks. Consequently it could be contended that the outgoing role of the PQ mentor is not required in the new framework but that the workplace assessment role for the PQ awards has been aptly devised by the GSCC to encompass the inclusion of mentoring skills. Mentoring, as a distinct activity from assessment, has been acknowledged as useful within organisations and could be considered for social workers, to also support their registration, professional and personal development within separate schemes (Bedfordshire County Council 2005). This can be 'developmental' and 'transformational' activity (Hay 1998) if sufficient time and training can be applied. This would make use of the mentoring requirement within the Codes of practice and that taught within the PQ awards, whilst those who are trained as workplace assessors will also use elements of mentoring skills. Linking activities of social workers on generic mentoring schemes and the new PQ awards should be encouraged; otherwise the benefits will be lost.

There was a lack of information, 'the ideas or perspectives which are relevant to a topic, but which are neither stated nor implied' (Jamal & Hollinshead: 2001), within the GSCC documentation about the omission of mentors in the new PQ framework. Indeed there were also delays in terms of the issuing of the new GSCC PQ standards (Higham 2006). The literature search provided some information about the role of PQ mentors but little on the implications of the proposed changes in PQ education on their role, thus confirming the need for research in this area. The following chapter will outline how the research was undertaken as well as the methods by which the data was collected and analysed.

Chapter 3 Methodology and data collection techniques

Following discussion with my research supervisor, I identified ten people whom I could interview. I focused on a small number of interviewees due to the more personal nature of qualitative research, which is recognised as time consuming in terms of conducting interviews and analysing data (McNeill 1990: 124). Those interviewed included managers of training departments from three local authorities, three academics from two local universities involved in PQSW education, one manager of a voluntary organisation, one manager of a learning centre or another of a Post Qualifying Consortium. All worked within the Advance region and had links with the Consortium. Two other training managers and one academic did not respond to my requests for interview. However I was able to ensure that I had sufficient interviews with a range of leaders in the field. I interviewed five men and five women, all White British. It was not a random sample (Gomm 2004:24) of unknown participants but a chosen one, 'an opportunity sample' (Bell 1984) whereby I identified those who were available and willing to take part. I knew the interviewees from my previous role as an Employee Development Advisor, and my post as the Programme Director of the Practice Teaching Award at the University of Luton (now University of Bedfordshire).

I contacted the subjects by telephone, email or at a meeting to outline my research objectives and invite them to be interviewed. In terms of bias these were all people with whom I had worked. As a result the interviewees knew me well, which could have affected the research in terms of influencing the content of data produced but alternatively enabled me to have access to my interviewees and, improved my ability 'to elicit data' pertinent to the research (Gomm 2004:176). Nevertheless, being in an interview will affect the respondents' behaviours, in terms of providing information 'that she or he thinks will be of interest to the researcher. This is known as the interview effect' (Harvey and MacDonald 1993: 123) so that being in an interview could have affected their responses to my questions regardless of their knowledge of me.

This research was undertaken over a five month period from May 2005 to October 2005 and consisted of one interview with each of the interviewees of up to one and three quarter hours. Those interviewed were assured of confidentiality and encouraged to express their opinions (Reinharz 1992). The interviews took place in different settings since the interviewees worked in a range of agencies. One took place in a university staff coffee lounge, three in a cafe, another in a meeting room, two in learning resource centres, three in the interviewees' offices. The first trial interview was in May 2005 (see appendix 4) to clarify the questions, the structure of the interview and the time taken. After which I modified the questions (appendix 5) to avoid possible ambiguity, noted by the interviewee.

I had initially agreed to conduct a focus group interview by raising issues and questions in a

group of independent mentors to find out their opinions on their possible future role and status, in an 'open ended group discussion' (Robson 2002: 285) at an Advance mentor training event. However, having led a mentor workshop (within my independent role of consultant mentor with Advance) before the start of my research (see appendix 6), I had discovered their concern and anxiety regarding the implications of the changes in PQ education for their livelihood. This could have led to them asking questions, to which I could not give full answers and thus possibly encourage or heighten any anxiety about the PQ changes.

I was aware of the need to protect research subjects and to consider effects of the investigation (Research Mindedness 2004). Many of the mentors used within Advance are freelance and self-employed, whose income could depend on the continuation of their role. Having discussed these sentiments with my research supervisor and the manager of the Advance Consortium, I decided that the focus group would be an unethical course of action due to the lack of information available to the mentors and myself on their future role at that time. Accordingly, the research plan was changed to focus on semi-structured interviews and textual data regarding mentoring. 'Qualitative design is adapted, changed and redesigned as the study progresses due to the social realities of doing research among and with the living' (Janesick 2000: 395).

I used a qualitative approach 'focusing on the meaning of a particular phenomena to the participants' (Robson 2002:271), also identifying 'how people experience the world and how they make sense of it' (Gomm 2004:7) in this instance since I needed to discover individuals' ideas, opinions, understanding and feelings regarding the PQ framework. I used a semi structured in-depth interview with open-ended questions, on which I could elaborate (Robson 2002) and develop the interview depending on the issues raised.

'Where researchers engage in semi-structured or qualitative interviews most of the important analytic decisions are made while the data are being collected, and after the data have been collected. The kinds of analytic decisions made while the data are being collected are those which lead to the interviewer deciding what questions to ask next, when to speak, when to remain silent and so on. Respondents to an interview will be making the same kinds of decision' (Gomm 2004:184-5).

I used the interpretative approach to discover the respondents' opinions 'examining the meanings and interpretations of texts and events/occurrences' (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001: 67). This approach led to interviews with different focus depending on the interviewees' interests, or preferred style of management, teaching, or mentoring. This was evident from the coding where a particular code would predominate in an interview.

Nine of the interviews were recorded by hand, four were then typed, whilst one interview was taped and then typed (appendix 8). I found this improved accuracy of recording from that

completed whilst interviewing, although it was time consuming. Copies of the interview questionnaire and transcripts are provided in the appendices (5, 7 & 8) to support the accountability of the research (Gomm 2004:177). Following the interviews I made summary notes of my feelings about the interview, later identified quotes and themed the responses (Lofland 1984: 88) using codes I had generated. This was done by identifying key areas or themes/codes from the research objectives and interview questions (see appendix 10). These interview responses relating to themes/codes were then clustered and in a separate document, collated and analysed to form the results.

I have had a longstanding interest in mentoring, since I have informally mentored (Shea 2002) friends and colleagues at work, supporting them to develop their knowledge and skills, without realising that I was actually performing the role of a mentor. I have since been an independent mentor for social workers completing the PQSW as well as a 'consultant mentor', assisting those who have had difficulty in their PQ studies. The PQ mentoring had provided me with a positive experience in being involved in the continuous professional development of qualified social workers, revisiting theory and practice, encouraging the application of research, legislation and reflection in their roles. In my post at the University of Luton, I have also formally mentored a new colleague. I had also enjoyed undertaking the first-line assessment requirements within the PQ mentoring role, when reading portfolios prior to assessment, and then later, within the assessment panel for Advance. As a researcher I was reflexive, identifying my own standpoint (Haney 2002: 297), my vested interests, influence on the research, whilst acknowledging the sensitivities of the independent mentors to the changes in the PQ structures.

I became aware that I was denying any personal bias and then wondered why I was approaching the research in this way. It was possible that I wanted a rationale to keep the role of the independent mentors, due to my personal interest. Another was my concern for those mentors, whom I met on mentor training and PQ portfolio assessment days. Having discussed the rationale for continuing with a mentor system in the future PQ education, I realised that I was unquestioningly holding on to a system for others and my own benefits. However at the same time I did not want the contribution of mentors to be lost and forgotten, in the new framework should they not be required any more. I was also interested in how mentoring could enable social workers in their substantive work role independent of the PQ context. I decided to stop mentoring for a while to create some distance between the research and myself.

'Reflexivity is important, not to ensure some 'objective distance' between self and topic, but to demonstrate to the reader how the text is influenced by the researcher's own traditions and historicity, as well as how the researcher's own understandings on the research topic evolve over time - the situatedness of the researcher in the text being presented to the reader' (Jamal & Hollinshead 2001: 77).

During the research process I became aware of the range of mentoring schemes available in the public, private, business, and voluntary sector from my attendance at Mentfor annual conferences. I have appreciated the value of mentoring in itself, independent of its role within the PQ framework.

I kept a research diary or journal during the research period to record my feelings and act as an aide memoire reminding me of the next stages to complete. 'The act of journal writing is a rigorous documentary tool ... for focussing individuals on the project at hand' (Janesick 2000:392). This helped since I was also completing the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education at the same time, continued to draft an article on Curriculum Action Research and the use of social work research to Practice Teacher Award students simultaneously (Holmes 2007). Opposite pages of my 'field notes' (Harvey and MacDonald 1993: 153) of my interviews recordings, I wrote my ideas, questions, reminders and comments. I made my own observations of what I had experienced and heard which became useful at a later date when reviewing the data. Holliday (2002) comments that 'showing the workings of the research is necessary for the accountability of qualitative research,' and as such also formed 'summary sheets' (Robson 2002 477) concluding my thoughts of the results of the interviews (appendix 9).

Data collected in the interviews was analysed using the previously identified codes (Miles & Huberman 1984: 66), through the grouping of statements, within separate categories or common themes within the research analysis. My intention was to make general recommendations, not just to reproduce the interviewees' opinions. Before I undertook the research interviews, I pre-identified codes or themes using a scheme suggested by Lofland (1971, in Miles and Huberman 1994 61). It was suggested that any research undertaken could be divided into 'Acts', 'Activities', 'Meanings', 'Participation', 'Relationships' and 'Settings' for example. I started to adapt this approach to my own study, resulting in cryptic codes such as SETT/ROLE (their current role), ACT/ TIME (length of time as a mentor), ACT /PLACE (where they had mentored) and ACT/MEN (information about their mentoring). I then began to code the initial interview questions using this system but found that these abbreviated codes were not meaningful representations of the data since I had not generated these categories for myself. I discussed this with my supervisor, who suggested having fewer codes to create 'clumps of data.' Consequently I reconsidered the data and created codes, (as identified in appendix 10) for example interviewee context and student support that were then 'focused' on the subject matter (Lofland 1984:192). As Janesick (2000: 389) comments 'early on the researcher must develop a system for coding and categorising the data. There is no best system for analysis.'

Being new to research, I assumed there would be a best way to analyse the data, and it took a

while to develop an understanding of the process. Managing the data can be seen as a 'messy task' (Holliday 2002). I found it a challenging one without the use of a computer programme. I was aware of the need to include interview data in the analysis, even if it was negative or contradictory (Glaser and Strauss 1967:230). I attended a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) training course on electronic research data collection techniques by University of Surrey Institute of Social Research (2006). Here I learned the importance of first managing the data myself as a new researcher, rather than relying on the software so that I became closer to the data, by manually identifying, and collating the codes. This could be considered as 'a rite of passage' (Janesick 2000). The CAQDAS PowerPoint presentation showed how codes (words, rather than initials) could be added to the margin of a text and speech and then retrieved using a computer programme such as MAXqda & Nvivo (University of Surrey Institute of Social Research 2006). Although I was not intending to use this software, I found the visual representation of the programme coding illuminating as to how to code sections of text. Janesick (2000:389) discusses how 'research must find the most effective way to tell the story and communicate.' This was then possible since I had an understanding of creating codes or themes from the data I had collected.

Following this, I analysed each interview and placed the code name using colour pens towards the end of completing all the interviews (Gomm 2004). I added my reflections in my notebook at the end of the interviews and summarised the interview, as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984) so that my analysis and thoughts were captured. I had written comments and quotations opposite the interviews, which could be described as 'memos', helping to create concepts from the interview data (Lofland 1984:193). Following this I identified one theme at a time for example 'benefit to mentors' and then recorded all the responses. I used 'mind maps' (Buzan & Buzan 2003) in order to manage and further code into subsections to illuminate the trends in the data so to identify it for later analysis (see appendices 4-6). I identified the codes from the results of the interviews so they were not superimposed onto the data before the interviews took place. Consequently the data is 'inductively derived from the study' from which a theory is then devised (Janesick 2000: 397).

This approach is associated with Grounded theory techniques, as espoused by Glaser & Strauss (1967). The use of themes 'is sometimes described as grounding theory/ concepts categories, and so on from the data, meaning the opposite of imposing theory, concepts, categories on the data' (Gomm 2004:194). In terms of generating a theory Glaser and Strauss (1970: 32) advise that 'substantive' theory may be generated from comparison within the data.' This was a challenge since I needed to consider whether the evidence collected could generate 'one or two core' themes (Glaser 1978:94) from which to create my conclusion and recommendations. The

following chapter will outline the ten interviews research results and the main themes, which emerged from the data.

Chapter 4 Results

Codes used to analyse the ten interviews (see appendix 10). Each interviewee was denoted with a number from the order in which the interview took place, to maintain confidentiality. Of the ten interviewees three (1, 6, 9) were PQCCA (Post Qualifying Award in Child Care Award) and PQ1 mentors. One had not been a mentor (10), three had been mentors for people studying qualifications other than the PQSW (2, 3, and 7), three were Practice Teachers (4, 8, and 10), two were also assessors/mentors for Practice Teachers (4, 8), and one (5) had been a generic mentor (i.e. not for PQ) for social workers. One interviewee (7) was a manager of a mentoring scheme who also held a Post Graduate Certificate in Mentoring (Theory and Practice).

Eight of the mentors (2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10) were managers, whilst 3 were academics (1,4,10). Three (3, 5, 7) were managers of social services training departments, one (8) managed a voluntary organisation, and another (7) managed a social services mentoring scheme. The academics worked in universities within Eastern region. The voluntary organisation manager was also an associate member of Advance, whereby smaller voluntary organisations attend the assessment & management events in return for funding from local authorities, to support PQ activity in their agency.

One manager (2) explained that the requests for new mentors had been initially advertised in Community Care magazine but then all PQ award holders were asked to be mentors or new candidates sometimes chose their own. She (2) commented 'this Consortium is different from others nationally; this was from the beginning of Consortium' but 'others like our method', 'in other areas candidates do courses, but here they wanted the portfolio route. Three quarters of candidates wouldn't get through without mentors... [although] the GSCC don't insist on mentor for PQ.' She continued to explain that mentors are 'mostly self-employed, part time, mostly independent mentors; with smaller agencies using their own staff or managers as mentors.' Some PQ6 candidates become mentors to obtain the PQ6 (see appendix 2) of the PQSW, whilst another agency has its own list of mentors (6), and email staff if they wish to be PQCCA assessors. Others (3) used the Advance PQ mentors' profiles list 'because we had problems internally to find people and paid them via a contract. One manager of a training department (5) explained in addition to using in-house staff that he was 'working with external mentors and assessors in a strategic way to support increased demands and this had been effective in increasing completions.' One (10) was unclear' would have to hazard a guess; I would guess that what is happening that agencies who are a part of the PQ framework are putting forward people who in their judgment can facilitate the learning of others.' The interviewees identified a range of roles, qualities and tasks for the mentors, which can be found in figure 3. They identified a range

of information, which broadly reflects the current mentoring and practice assessor roles within the Advance Consortium.

One manager (2) explained that Advance keep 'a list of all mentors and events attended' and provided 'development/induction events for new mentors and keep them up to date with opportunities and invite them to be portfolio assessors up to date with letters/ correspondence.' There were twice yearly mentor workshops that were 'not well subscribed.' Issues of payment for mentors were cited as reasons for not putting on more workshops, which they were paid to attend (2) and it was suggested that 'they need to form their own groups' for support. There were now 'joint briefing' sessions between Bedfordshire and Luton, about the mentoring role (3) description. The organisational mentoring scheme (7) in Bedfordshire provided briefings on expectations, mentoring contracts, evaluation of the process. The figure below includes the respondents' answers regarding what they thought mentoring entailed in terms of the role qualities, and activities.

Mentor role	Qualities	Mentor activities
Liaising with others (e.g. Advance & tutors)	Objective/independent	Provide advice (on assessment process)
Independent view of professional development (i.e. from university)	Good interpersonal skills,	Assess against agreed criteria & sign off portfolio
Focus on candidates learning objectives	Good analytical skills	Validating candidates competence, on behalf of service users
Observations	Good understanding of the PQ framework and to help student translate that	Facilitate (group/individual) reflection on practice
Encourage and support candidates	Well organised	Ensure learning agreement with candidate and line manager
Help prepare portfolio	Time management skills	Link practice to legislation and theories
Motivate & keep on track	Committed to CPD self and others	Identify poor practice
Use the learning agreement taking into account differences	Experienced in teaching, subject area and adult learning	Clarify requirements
	Ability to apply research findings to practice	Coach

	Ability to challenge working practices	Critical friend/ questioning to promote practice development
	Recently experienced in voluntary or statutory sector	Counsellor /Supporter
	Different perspective	Provide feedback/ Reflector
	Enthusiastic	Read and verify candidates' written work

Figure 3. Suggested mentor roles, qualities and tasks.

It was explained (2) that each candidate is awarded a bursary from the GSCC with a set amount for registering on the PQ programmes, assessment & mentoring. Advance is also supported in its work (2, 6) by the local authorities providing financial support through the DH Training Support Programme (TSP). She (2) confirmed that mentors are paid as follows:

1. PQ1 = £140 payment for mentoring not including travelling costs
2. PQCCA = £20 per hour (= £700 for 35 hours) not including travelling costs
3. There is also a consultant mentor a 'person they could contact when they have mentoring problems I can't help them with. Independent mentors need someone.'
4. Hertfordshire Social Services Children's Schools and Families (CSF) have a new scheme of 'lead mentors', who 'facilitate group reflection sessions and ...study days' and are paid £320. PQ candidates are also expected to sign a learning agreement with mentors and line managers and tutors (PQCCA only). This extra scheme was devised 'because people weren't submitting' (6).

One academic (1) who was also PQCCA assessor confirmed that Advance & other training managers, 'ensure all get their money.' Three (3, 7, 10) were unsure of the mentoring payments. However (10) added 'I think people should be remunerated for the work that they do, so if they are taking on functions that are genuinely outside of their job description, then they should be rewarded for that.' In terms of remuneration, it was commented (2) that 'it hasn't changed for a long time 'but there was always a view that they are not paid enough' and that she was 'pushing for it to go up.' Nevertheless there was recognition that local authorities had to balance this with other budget pressures. One manager (5) 'needed to fit into their available budget' and 'used £20 an hour as a benchmark.' One manager (3) did not have 'budget allocation' for mentoring. There was acknowledgement of the need for 'parity between assessors' in terms of payments, and that the local training managers were 'reviewing the Practice Teacher payment system.' Only one (9) was concerned about universities not wanting to pay independent mentors, from monies received for the new PQ modules.

The responses could be divided into three areas: benefits to candidates, benefits to people who use services and benefits to the employing organisation. 'One interviewee commented that 'good Practice Assessors do much more' (4) for example offer telephone support (2, 4, 8), especially if the candidates are struggling (5). Mentors offer advice and guidance (5), new skills (3), an opportunity to develop reflective practice (4, 8, and 9) 'after years of not doing it' (8), and that they were invaluable for providing individual feedback'(1). It was commented that they were 'hugely important and underestimated. Mentors are not just supporting through PQ. Often during the first twenty minutes of a meeting...there's quite a lot of 'downloading time' about problems at work'

and that without a mentor 'three quarters would not get through'(2). One interviewee (10) emphasised the mentor's role of enabling reflection:

'I would also see a mentor as enabling the candidate to reflect on their lived experience of work, from which to generate areas of curiosity, which they would hope Post-Qualifying education would illuminate. And I would also see a mentor as having a role in enabling candidates to reflect on and find ways of negotiating, 'what if' kind of situations, by which I mean, situations where what they are being asked to do by their employer is not necessarily what they or the evidence base, would consider as lawful, ethical or knowledge informed.'

It was suggested (10) that mentors provide 'added value' and a different perspective, they combine theory and practice and help keep candidates up to date (5,9), and they should have a 'contemporary link' to practice.

'A mentor ought to have a 'contemporary link' to the delivery of social work or social care services, um, that I would see as being the main difference. The challenge for the mentor is to be sufficiently, is to be able to step back sufficiently from their own lived experience of work, in order to have a kind of meta position in relation to, and encourage the candidate to have a meta position. Their tutor by force of circumstance is removed from it, but the tutor may not have reflected on what their lived experience of work was and how that lived experience impacts on what the tutor currently does by way of teaching and research and so on.'

Mentors may advise on referencing and the latest research (6). One interviewee (9) thought that mentoring could help with 'academic rigour and provides the ability for people to develop outside of the work environment with someone who does not have an assessment/ management role over them.

'The nature of practice is changing daily and the nature of the organisational context is changing markedly and a candidate will benefit immeasurably, from someone who has the same experience as the candidate of the rapidity of change in the nature of practice and the organisational context in which it takes place.'

Two believed that the mentor role enhanced professionalism (1, 2), whereas another (7) thought that 'everyone has to play a particular role to support others.' Only one interviewee (3) was particularly concerned that 'it is important to recognise that not everyone makes a good mentor', that 'not everyone needs a mentor', and there should be an element of choice because of potential differences. In contrast another (7) claimed that mentoring could benefit everyone and suggested that 'when looking at holistic issues, there is nothing to beat mentoring.' Other benefits, he outlined, were that 'mentoring is more cost effective than a training course, since you can 'grow your own' and it 'increases the confidence of staff.' He also identified that some managers received 'executive coaching', which he described as 'another form of mentoring.'

Practical benefits were described (6) for self-employed Advance mentors as including access to

the University Hertfordshire Library Facilities & a car park permit! Personal benefits were illustrated by one interviewee (5) as 'finding out what was happening in their areas. It was asserted (10) that mentoring 'enriches' other areas of the mentors' work life. Another (1) agreed and identified many benefits including 'you learn as much as you impart.' He confirmed it had influenced 'his teaching and service delivery since 'one thing informs another. If you do not realise that you are not a very good mentor!' It was confirmed (3) that mentors 'gain something both ways' and that it was an 'opportunity to work with colleagues in different capacity 'and strengthened peer relationships.' This again was echoed by the last interviewee (10) who declared that 'mentors are a resource, they are a resource for themselves, in the sense that the experience, and any education and support they have for the experience becomes a source of knowledge, which they can use.'

These were wide ranging. Mentoring was described as cheaper than training courses, that it helped to retain staff (3, 7) and improved confidence (7). One manager (3) commented that 'If they are effective in their role they are improving the service delivery fundamentally and ensuring PQ students are maintaining standards of professional practice.' Another (6) agreed that mentors supported 'agencies in reaching PQ targets set by Department of Health/ Skills for Care.'

Only one (10) extrapolated the benefits of mentoring to influencing social work practice.

'They are a resource for people they are mentoring, they are a resource for the organisation, if the organisation can access their learning & they are a resource for experts by experience with which they work. Well in an ideal world if you have experience of mentoring, if you have experience of facilitating people to learn, if you have experience of education & training at a variety of levels, that at least in theory should enrich the work you do and how you do it.'

Everitt (2002: 119) also reminds us that research undertaken by social workers should also be of use to people who use services and be applied to improve the services they receive.

Several concerns were raised by the interviewees that currently independent mentors were not supervised, did not have an annual appraisal, that there was not an evaluation of the service provided (6), nor was their role linked to a qualification or a 'continuous professional development pathway' (3). It was suggested (6), that independent mentors would not have much time available for meetings at universities (due to their self-employed work commitments). Other responses also identified the need to manage quality in mentoring (1,3) to ensure that (freelance) mentors' knowledge and social work practice should be current. It was highlighted that currently a register of mentors exists, held by Advance, in order to provide support to them (2) and that this would need to be updated in the new PQ arrangements. One (1) said that there were issues of quality of some Practice Assessors for the PQCCA if their candidate's portfolio is not 'up to the mark.' and

there was a need to ensure that they maintained their CPD. Concerns were raised by some that there may not be enough mentors for the future PQ framework, further to the interviewees' knowledge of the current demand for practice assessors for social work degree students (2,5). Indeed the manager (7) of the agency mentoring scheme found that often employees were too busy to volunteer and that social workers had asked for payment for the mentoring role.

However, one (8) believed that managers could be mentors. She had taken on the role in the voluntary organisation, 'because there was no one else to do it.' Yet, it was identified by others that there could be 'tensions when the line manager is a mentor/practice assessor' (2) even though in other PQ programmes managers were used as mentors. It was suggested that this could affect working relationships (3), whereas another had found 'resistance from line managers' or that they didn't meet the criteria 'for being a mentor (some may not be social work qualified) (6). One manager (2) commented that few managers attended a conference, on 'creative ways of supporting your staff' (in the PQSW framework) compounding the difficulty of lack of managerial understanding and involvement so that 'PQ is not integrated in the work place.' Instead, leaflets were provided to inform candidates and managers on the PQ awards.

One person (1) stated that 'the role of workplace assessor and mentor went together.' However, another (7) commented that mentors' consideration should be the 'best interest of mentee, whereas assessors' focus is on 'knowledge & evidence' without 'time to consider additional needs', since, mentoring is time consuming, needing 'skills and knowledge base.' Indeed one manager (8) queried whether there was sufficient time to focus on mentoring, whilst undertaking the assessing role. Another (10) identified the potential difficulties of conflating assessment and mentoring, and that it could influence relationship boundaries and trust. It was asserted (3) that 'the best assessments are those that form naturally and are by definition informal because mentors should not need to be paid.' Interviewee (3) suggested that the mentoring role in PQ was 'very distinct from the assessment role' due to 'guidance & support / advice to the PQ student helping them to interpret requirements of the PQ award.'

One manager (2) distinguished between the PQ1 mentor and the PQCCA assessor roles stating that they were 'different' since the PQCCA assessors 'sign off the Practice requirements of the Childcare programmes have been met whereas the PQ1 mentor is a 'supporter' and completes a form so that the portfolio can be assessed. The PQCCA assessor completes a report which 'is a formal first line assessment (check list, knowledge & practice requirements)' and only needs moderating, no one questions that decision.' In contrast, PQSW portfolios (PQ1-6) are read through at an assessment panel. She stated that 'the pass rate in PQ1 is 80% whereas in PQCCA with 50 portfolios, only 2 or 3 are returned.'

The interviewees outline a range of extra help available to PQ candidates (see figure 4). Workload relief (3,5,8), set criteria for study leave (5,6,8) or staff replacement (6) were cited as being available, although the workload relief was problematic for one agency. Another (6) was considering providing Practice Learning and PQ monies to teams so that they could access someone else to undertake the work of the PQ candidate, while they were studying. The voluntary organisation manager (8) commented that there was not any finance for workload relief. She (8) highlighted the need to consider how voluntary organisations' needs in terms of supporting their staff could be different to versus local authorities, partly due to the fewer numbers of voluntary organisations' staff that could be released to study for PQ awards as well as issues such as access to funding. She (8) felt that funding issues could delay new developments and suggested more 'creative ways' of approaching social work education. Another (9) was concerned about voluntary agencies not having enough money for future changes. Only one (10) commented on the role of the university in supporting candidates to complete their studies.

'An effective tutoring system makes a huge contribution to retention. I think the role of the Staff Development/Training officer in the organisation releasing the individual and supporting the individual is crucial, in moderating the demands of the workplace to enable someone to complete. The role of the person's line manager is similarly crucial in protecting the space to enable somebody to complete and I think the role of one's colleagues too, the willingness of colleagues to cover for the absence of a person on training.'

This quote demonstrates how all those in contact with candidates have a role to play in helping them to complete the awards.

The responses were divided into the future organisational implications, the future role of mentors, and the effect on the students with the emphasis of the responses on the former. One interviewee (10) did not offer suggestions for future developments for mentoring since he was waiting for a 'steer' from employers as to what was required and that there was a perceived 'lack of strategy' within organisations for learning & development, in relation to facilitating the learning of others. Another (3) said it would depend if mentoring were still needed. One (2) stated that 'they won't be called mentors anymore' rather they would be assessors, but that the GSCC 'did not communicate their vision well.' Another (5) suggested that there was a need for 'clearer guidance to take place, to allow mentoring and assessment to take place.' The need for a coordinator of a database of mentors & assessors was mentioned (5). One interviewee (3) suggested that employers could identify mentors, whereas another (2) was concerned whether there would be enough mentors.

Alternative forms of student support identified
University Disability Support Unit
Study skill advice
Colleague & peer support
Line Manager support
Other mentoring schemes
Luton Centre for Professional Development
Student Counsellors
Newsletters
Employer run workshops
Agency libraries
Training departments & officers to advise teams and individuals
Consultant mentors
Study time & workload relief
Attendance time at PQ workshops
Making Research Count seminars
Conferences
Online practice & legislation update
University tutor

Fig. 4 Additional forms of support identified

Three (3,5,7) advocated a mentoring strategy since 'there is an acknowledgement actually it is a good thing to do' but with 'built-in' rather than 'ad hoc' funding (3) and that 'mentoring strategy needs to be linked to organisational priorities and strategic plans' (7). Four of the interviewees (2,3,5,7) identified that mentoring would need to be included in agencies' human resources strategies in order for mentoring to be effective within the organisation and linked to the review of practice assessor (of social work students) payments 'so anyone gets recognition' (3). There was recognition of mentoring as a form of learning and development since 'time spent with a mentor is relevant' (2). One (7) also suggested that mentoring could be considered as a resource when completing appraisals. Nevertheless, it was also recognised that workload relief issues needed to be addressed (2) social workers' job descriptions did not include mentoring others (5). The mentoring scheme would be linked to the county council objectives and their management & leadership scheme (7), whilst the provision of information booklets, clarify the role of mentor (Bedfordshire County Council 2005). The manager of the agency mentoring scheme (7) was given a target of forty mentoring relationships (of which 50% 'had to be leaders') but did not have any link to Advance.

Another (3) noted the local agreement on payment of Practice Assessors (who supervise social work degree students) and suggested that this could be pertinent to future mentor payments. One manager (8) advised that mentors needed 'time in their workload' for their role. It was suggested (3) that internal mentors could get a payment or a 'small incentive payment to teams for team development' since 'ideally, PQ mentors are from the workforce and there should be a withdrawal from using freelance mentors all the time.' She suggested that currently the 'payment arrangements should reflect, level of support, length, and complexity' of the task. Another interviewee (4) agreed that there should be a 'fair reward' taking into account their experience and expertise whereas one training manager (6) commented that it would be cheaper if staff had mentoring included in their job descriptions (than paying independent mentors) and there would be more 'control' over the mentor development or another idea would be to pay social workers within the local authorities to undertake the specific role of mentoring and that this would then link to the Code of Practice (2002). A social services-training manager (6) planning for the new PQ consolidation module stated that 'everyone has a supporter through induction and module assessment to help reflect, the direct observations and know what to do next.' One (10) felt that all social workers would need to take into account the need to support others in assessment and mentoring.'

One (8) suggested that if mentoring were included in the job description then it could contribute to 'job satisfaction' leading to staff wishing to stay with their employer. One (7) agreed that 'if mentoring was added to the job description' it would be more important. This role would be linked

to a payment and job role structure, initially designed for practice assessors of social work degree students on placement. The voluntary organisation manager (8) suggested that it would be valuable if experienced staff could support new staff and volunteers as part of their substantive role. One training manager (6) suggested the plan in figure 5 to integrate PQ mentoring and Practice assessor roles into the Human Resources strategy of the organisation, whereby she matched the level of social work experience to the mentoring or assessment role.

Social worker level	PQ level	Social work degree placement
Level 2 social worker	-	Practice assessor for stage 1 30-day understanding placement (University of Luton) or co works with level 3 social worker
Level 3 social worker	Assess/mentor PQ1	Practice assessor for stage 2 University of Hertfordshire social work degree students
Level 4 social worker (senior practitioner)	PQCCA Assessor	Practice assessor for stage 3 (final year) or Masters in Social work student & support level 2 social worker
Team Manager	Support all 3 levels of social workers	Support all 3 levels of social workers

Fig. 5 Plan suggested by agency training manager

This was suggested as the following 'to support the tutor'(4) as a 'facilitator', to support those in the consolidation module (6) to reflect.' Another said that he 'would be disappointed if the role of mentor is downgraded or if it is not a fundamental part of the assessment processes' (7) and that 'it would be a loss to students & deflects from the overall support given to student at that level.' One (1) commented that 'to get rid of the independents would be sad because they bring a lot to the task.' Whereas one organisation representative (5) hoped that his organisation would be able to 'support the process from within', by setting targets to achieve this for internal staff including managers and by integrating mentoring and assessing within social workers' job descriptions in future, using the Code of Practice (GSCC 2002) as a 'lever' to do so. He wished that 'all qualified social workers could see the benefits of having individuals who can assess and mentor.' With which another manager (8) concurred by suggesting that mentors could help 'less experienced colleagues at work.' Another (9) was unsure of the models that will be used in the future in PQ. The need to support mentors in their task was emphasised. 'It is absolutely crucial in my judgement that they have access to education and training that will help them to perform the role, and also supervisory support that will enable them to reflect on the role' (10). Another manager (6) agreed that mentors should have updates and pursue their own professional development. This (5) could be provided from their employers and also (1) from universities, which could 'work closely with employers 'to focus on quality standards' (3).

One (2) believed that in the future there would be Practice Assessors, which universities would

organise (as in the PQCCA) and not mentors, due to the focus on assessment of practice in the workplace. One training manager (5) commented that in order 'to allow mentoring and assessment to take place, all work areas need to have students, and qualified assessors and mentors.' He added, 'all qualified Practice Assessors, Practice Teachers and mentors need to be seen to be using their skills.'

A considerable amount of data was collected from the ten interviews resulting in several themes, regarding the role, benefits of mentoring, issues needing to be addressed such as quality assurance and remuneration, how mentoring could be integrated into agencies' strategies. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Discussion

It was not intended or expected that most of those who were interviewed would also have experience of being mentors. This happened by chance and enhanced the research, in that the interviewees had an understanding of the role. The responses provided a wealth of material, which has contributed to the development of key themes.

One of the main themes to emerge was the interviewees' identification of the advantages of mentoring for the mentees' and their employing agencies. This supports the literature (Rumsey 1995; Alred & Garvey 2000; Cooper & Rixon 2001; McDowall 2004). The responses showed that they valued the role of the PQ mentor, appreciated their qualities and the tasks that were undertaken. It was also identified how being a mentor in an enabling role could enhance social work practice with people who used services. It was also noted how providing mentoring could retain staff and contribute to their continuous personal development, also noted by Harrison & Chia (2004). The interviewees acknowledged that mentors support candidates to complete the PQ awards by clarifying the requirements (Walton 2005) by providing personal support (Carruthers 1993), and linking research to practice. Saltiel (2003:107) comments that, 'practitioners tend to see theories and research findings as technical, abstract phenomena of little use in the fluid fast-changing world of practice'. This supports Bourn and Bootle's (2005) view that 'mentors can make a huge difference to learning on a course such as this and can also support the student in negotiating student time'.

The interviewees' positive view of the mentoring role, mostly distinguishing it from that of an (workplace) assessor, who assesses practice, suggests a model whereby social workers could in future have access to mentors to focus on their personal issues, whilst having work-based assessors for their PQ awards. The distinction between assessment and mentoring has been highlighted by Stanford-Beale and Macaulay (2001). The benefit of mentor assistance for candidates, within the current system has been recognised by previous research by Maitland (2002), 'the need to support candidates is recognised and that its absence creates difficulties, which can increase the failure rate.' Social work staff have also highlighted the importance of quality learning opportunities, as reasons to remain with their employers (Winchester 2003). The interviewee, who was positive as regards the use of managers as mentors, worked within a small voluntary organisation, which had few people to carry out the mentoring task. The manager in question was a trained Practice Teacher (qualified to teach and assess social work students) and so would have had additional training and skills, which may not have been available to other managers, who could be asked to take on the mentoring role. However there was some agreement that managers should not take on this role. Nevertheless what is important is, as Walton (2005) warns, that in future 'as a minimum roles and boundaries will need to be absolutely

clear to all involved.' This indeed is a pertinent comment, to be considered for future PQ developments.

The findings of this study confirm previous research into PQ mentoring, considering the disadvantages, benefits, the use of managers, and the need for a range of resources.

'If the quality and relevance of the learning experiment are accepted as being important outcomes, all three reports indicate the significance of good mentoring. Candidates quoted in the reports speak eloquently of the impact, both good and bad, on them of mentors. It is clear that mentors like candidates need good information, resources and above all time to do the work effectively. The reports also indicate the problematic nature of using line managers as mentors; their need for access to information, resources and time is no less than for other mentors, and they also have to contend with potential role conflicts, particularly, again, in managing the time of a team worker, who is also a student (Shaw in GSCC 2001).

This study raised the important issue of the difficulties of including assessment tasks within a mentor's role.

The responses included reference to the roles of PQSW mentors as well as the PQCCA and PTA practice assessors (all roles which are undertaken within the Advance Consortium, see appendix 2) rather than purely the former role, which may have affected the outcome of the interviews. However, all roles have elements of mentoring, but the latter two have a greater assessment focus, in particular the PQCCA role. One manager identified this role as being one that enabled more candidates to pass the award, and a model for the future workplace assessor role but without considering whether the PQCCA Practice Assessor role was 'fit for purpose' within the new PQ framework. In contrast, one interviewee would not be drawn into the debate of the role of mentors, in that he was waiting for direction from the social work agencies as to their preferences, in accordance with the need to consult employers within the Regional Planning network (Skills for Care Eastern, August 2007).

Although there was only one mention of ineffective mentoring (Keville 2002) the interviewees' main concern was the issue of quality assurance such as the importance of regular training for mentors, monitoring their professional development and ensuring that they were supervised. It was suggested by one that there may be difficulties monitoring and supervising independent mentors. It was agreed that mentors need to be updated and that there needed to be a check on the quality of their work. This supports the views of the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (2006) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Councils (2006a). The interviewees however did not criticise the current monitoring arrangements of the Advance Consortium, but suggested

additional safeguards. Quality assurance of mentors and practice assessors was a major concern for the interviewees, and would be relevant to the planning and implementation of the new PQ framework.

There were several suggestions of a variety of additional forms of support available to candidates (fig.4) and an acknowledgement that PQ candidates do not complete awards with the sole support of mentors or assessors i.e. study time (Mitchell et al. 2001), workload relief (Doel et al. 2007) and peer support (Cooper & Rixon 2001). There was an acceptance that help is required for candidates in order to complete their studies. Nevertheless, it was not possible within the remit of this study to assess the impact and effectiveness of the additional areas of support mentioned by the interviewees or how consistent the provision was across the Advance region. However the list (in fig.4) did indicate that a range of support services were available across the region.

A study by the Merseyside Post Qualifying Consortium (GSCC 2001: 47) found that 'in general terms their attempts to work towards and attain PQ1 were exacerbated by a lack of workload relief and an overall sense that their employers did not value or facilitate the process.' However, in this study a training managers and a voluntary organisation manager mentioned budgetary pressures as having an effect on payment of mentors and assisting teams with workload relief, (so that additional monies were available to pay others to undertake some of the duties of those who were studying). This is an important area to consider for agencies competing for social work staff to fill vacancies since an excessive amount of work has been cited as 'nine out of ten respondents saying that their workload would be a major factor in deciding to quit their job', whilst 'good pay and conditions' would encourage them to remain (Winchester 2003). Clearly there is a complex interaction between a range of factors, which employers and universities should consider when planning the viability for new PQ courses, depending on local need and priorities.

The emphasis of the responses tended to focus on the organisational implications of the new PQ framework, whether there should be a mentoring strategy and if mentors should be paid for their role. Yet several interviewees recognised that agencies needed a mentoring strategy, which would be integral to the agency's human resources and organisational strategies and plans, which would then lead to financial resources to support it. At the time of the interviews, the managers were discussing a strategy for payment for practice assessors of social work degree students and these issues may have influenced their answers regarding remuneration of mentors. Although some interviewees wished to retain the system of using independent mentors, others were keen to have the mentoring and assessment role integrated within the social work job description, so that these functions were part of the regular tasks of social workers and their teams. The responses referring to the new payment system for Practice Assessors for social

work students implied that a strategy for remuneration of those who support others in their learning at PQ level, could not necessarily be divorced from existing agreements. One training manager had considered this and provided her own plan, but it is not within the remit of this study to pursue this, since it would need to be agreed at a local level. This view also was underpinned by the existence of the social work Code of Practice (GSCC 2002) and the expectation that they will support others in their learning, as part of their substantive role. These debates are similar to those already rehearsed in the nursing profession as to whether mentors should be paid extra for mentoring, due to it being a 'demanding role' or whether according to the NMC Code of Professional Conduct for nurses and midwives, 'the role should be seen as integral to everyone's job and should feature in all job descriptions and appraisals' (Ferns and Stiles 2004). Higham (2006) notes that without a 'skills escalator' i.e. a pay scale 'linked to roles and responsibilities, social workers will recognise few incentives for engaging continuing professional development' and contends that the GSDCC could have influenced this policy decision.

The responses indicated that there was a mixed approach to the mentoring arrangements between the three local authorities in the Eastern region, with different approaches to accessing and paying mentors. The research highlighted the need to consider the position of voluntary agencies to facilitate mentoring in terms of their ability to provide the necessary resources (finance, people, and time). There was some support for the continuation of using independent mentors, but one training manager's aim was to increase the number of 'in-house' mentors and assessors. The voluntary sector position was only considered by two of the interviewees, but this will need to be considered in the new PQ framework and acknowledgement of the difficulties that voluntary organisations face.

'Research published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations reveals that 55% of voluntary organisations had not had funding negotiated or agreed for this financial year. Even though the government stipulates the necessity of paying for services delivered, 41% of respondents had not been paid on time and had to use their own reserves to meet the running costs of providing services (Kelly2006).'

This issue could be overlooked in the future of PQ education if voluntary, as well as private and not for profit organisations, which employ social workers, do not represent their views on the regional planning committees, which are required to consider the needs of local employers (GSCC 2005).

Interestingly, none of the interviewees mentioned changes in the organisation of health, education and social care teams due to the Health & Social Care Act 2001 (DH 2001) and 'Every Child Matters' (DH 2003) with the resulting increase in multidisciplinary teams and interagency working, and how this would affect future mentoring availability and requirements. This is relevant

since the new PQ awards are intended to be qualifications, which are relevant and available to other professions as well as social workers (GSCC 2005).

Although there was only one generic County Council mentoring scheme (Bedfordshire County Council 2005), this was not linked to the Advance mentoring process and the neither manager was aware of the other's mentoring scheme. This appeared to be a lost opportunity for them to support each other's work. Overall, there was not a clear understanding of what would happen to mentors in the new PQ framework, although one interviewee stated categorically that there would not be mentors anymore. There were comments regarding the lack of information from the GSCC. Another assumed that the PQCCA role would continue. Nevertheless, the contribution of the mentors to the current system was recognised by the interviewees and a range of skills and attributes identified, which would not necessarily be expected or possible for manager to provide. These ranged from what would be expected in a mentoring role to that of an assessor. Clearly the role of the new work-based assessors would need to be clearly defined and their activities clarified as advised in the GSCC & Topss England (2002) Guidance on the assessment of practice in the workplace.

Although based on only ten interviews, limited to within the particular geographical region and some of managers had been mentors; it might have enhanced the research if I had interviewed more people, who had been mentors and not necessarily managers or academics. Most had experience of being mentors, although I did not ask whether they in fact had experience of having had a mentor. It would have been interesting to see whether they had benefited from this experience in their current role. If there had been a greater number of interviewees, I would have had a wider mix of Black & Ethnic Minority research subjects (Research Mindedness 2004) but all those interviewed were white British managers & academics. In future I would pay more attention to this dynamic but as Robson (2002: 266) explains 'the exigencies of carrying out real world studies can mean that the requirements for representative sampling are very difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil.' In addition, the focus group, as initially planned, would have offered an additional perspective to the research but as mentioned earlier was not appropriate at this stage.

I could have ensured that the research interviews were all in quiet offices or meeting rooms to avoid interruptions but we met in areas, with which the interviewees were familiar. Taping all the interviews would have enhanced accuracy of written recording (Harvey & MacDonald 1993) but this would have had implications for the resourcing of the research since I was completing it alone. Harvey & MacDonald (1993: 208) state 'unless you are an expert at shorthand you should not attempt to write everything down. It is far better to make a condensed account of the interview, writing down key words, phrases or sentences that will enable you to recall the item of

information later.' However, I knew that I would not be able to remember the key points and important quotes so I took notes during the interviews. I was aware that the interview took between 1 ¼ and 1½ hours and could have been shortened. I needed also to be aware that there were different roles within PQ education whereby mentoring or similar roles are provided (e.g. the PQ1 mentor, the PQCCA assessor and the Practice Assessor for Practice Teachers) and that this could have been made clearer in the interview questions. However, the responses indicated the range of mentoring provided within PQ education and enhanced my understanding of the roles.

A more detailed examination of the mentoring relationship providing case studies would have provided the reader with an example of the process of mentoring a PQ candidate and the issues involved for mentors. Some information on this aspect in terms of the issues mentors faced regarding work processes and time taken in the role is provided from a mentor development day I facilitated as a consultant mentor (see appendix 6). However using research funded by CCETSW (Stanford-Beale & Macauley 2001) I was able to give an outline of some mentoring process issues. I also used relevant textual data (Smith 2002) such as national and local guidance to provide data triangulation and considered how mentoring differs in America (Klasen & Clutterbuck 2002), indicating how mentoring has taken place historically (Gibb 1997) as well as in different settings (Janesick 2000). Validation is a matter of triangulating evidence from different sources about the same events' (Gomm 2004:188). I used central documentary texts for CCETSW (1997), the GSCC (2001;2004;2007) PQ research (Rumsey 1995; Turner 2000; Maitland 2002) as well as Advance handbooks (1998; 2003) and newsletters(January 2007) to provide factual information to support my literature review.

The lack of information (Jamal & Hollinshead 2001) from the national regulatory body, the GSCC (Higham 2006), made the research speculative since it was unknown what would happen to mentors. As a result, one of the subjects did not wish to discuss the future for mentoring, whilst another stated clearly that there will not be mentors anymore. Others though did consider the issue from a strategic standpoint as to how mentoring could be used within their organisations. This study has provided an overview and analysis of the mentoring role within a social work context, taking into account the current literature, local academics and managers' opinions. Parallels with mentoring in other organisations have been considered. It has highlighted the important roles of mentors and assessors within the Advance Consortium, suggested issues which could be taken forward in the new PQ framework such as reinforcing the emphasis on quality assurance and inclusion of a mentoring strategy within social care agency strategies, as well as the need to involve all social workers in mentoring and assessing roles. The parallels within nursing and midwifery (Ferns & Stiles 2004; NMC 2006) have been considered, and the benefits of mentoring schemes within organisations (Mentfor2005). Future research could

include evaluating the availability and quality of additional support to the candidates since this was difficult to quantify. There was no sense that this was consistent throughout the region. In addition, the role of the new workplace assessors could be examined once the new PQ framework is established, particularly in multidisciplinary teams and voluntary organisations. Should generic mentoring schemes be introduced for social workers with social care agencies, these could also be evaluated as to their usefulness and effectiveness.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and recommendations

Although this study is only based on ten in depth interviews, my conclusion from completing this research is that mentoring is seen as a worthwhile activity by the interviewees. However there were few suggestions as to the future of mentors in the new PQ structure versus the workplace assessors. Indeed, the general opinion was that assessment and mentoring should be separate activities. The involvement of all qualified social workers employed within agencies in assessment and training was emphasised so that they could fulfil their Code of Practice (GSCC 2002) and support others in their learning. The use of independent social workers was expected to remain due to the potential demand for assessors and mentors, within post and pre-qualifying social work education. A range of additional support mechanisms, have been highlighted and this information should be circulated to PQ candidates. All aspects will need to be considered by the regional planning committees (GSCC 2005) when they decide on the demand, structure, assessment, support and financial requirements of future PQ courses. Issues of funding cannot be determined here. However, it could be resolved should agencies consider how the Code of Practice (GSCC 2002) could be promoted by referring to it within social worker job descriptions and allow for commensurate remuneration for any consequent additional tasks such as mentoring and coaching.

I posited whether mentoring would still be required in the new PQ framework. However, having considered the traditional mentor role (Parsloe 1995; McDowall-Long 2004; Pettit 2004), I would suggest that the model used within the Advance Consortium was one more akin to coaching (Wallace & Gravells (2005) whereby candidates were tutored and then assessed against workplace performance indicators, using skills of mentoring. Consequently, new term of PQ 'workplace assessor' will be more apt than 'mentor' whilst retaining mentoring, assessing and coaching skills within this role, as it will be taught within the enabling others modules within the new PQ framework (GSCC & Topss England 2002; GSCC 2005). Therefore assessors (with mentoring skills) rather than mentors will be needed by universities and employers to implement the new PQ framework, but generic mentoring schemes would be beneficial for all social workers. Social workers will need encouragement, opportunities and time to put these skills into practice. Much can be learned from the NMC model of learning and assessment. However, a clear continuum, structure and expectation of individuals to follow certain roles, as with the NMC guidelines (Burke & Saldanha 2005) depending on their social work experience may be too prescriptive, even though one training manager had devised her own version (fig. 5).

However, do social workers need mentoring for themselves apart from the assistance that is required for studying? The benefits of providing mentoring have been well documented in the

literature (Mentfor 2005) and its incidence within many different companies noted (Pettit 2004). My preferred model would be the provision of workplace assessors for social workers studying for the new PQ awards, as well as generic mentoring schemes in social care agencies. Therefore, a social worker could have a coach and a mentor at the same time, as well as mentoring or assessing others. These schemes could be interconnected, planned, managed, regulated and evaluated as part of an organisation's human resources strategy. Social workers could be encouraged to develop their mentoring skills, participate in schemes as well as be recipients within these schemes.

'Staff knowledge should be identified and utilised appropriately to facilitate Interprofessional learning. In this way students will have better opportunities to develop and different professions will be able to learn from each other. Supportive leadership, which encourages a team approach, allows mentorship to be viewed in a positive light (Stiles 2004 in Ferns and Stiles 2004).'

If social workers' final salary reflected all the roles, which they undertook (Higham 2006) then there would not be additional need for individual payments. These roles would therefore be included within job descriptions and working time. They would then be supporting each other and indeed other professions continuous personal development, and contribute to the retention of staff.

Recommendations

- Universities and Employers to use workplace assessors instead of mentors within the new PQ framework
- To encourage PQ candidates to use the skills learned on their PQ courses, by becoming workplace assessors
- To have generic regulated mentoring schemes available in social care agencies where social workers can give and receive mentoring
- That both workplace and assessment schemes should be part of social care agencies human resources strategy
- To consider the needs of voluntary organisations in their ability to provide workplaces assessors to support the PQ framework
- To work towards the inclusion of the GSCC Code of Practice (2002) and coaching, mentoring, and assessment roles within social workers' job descriptions
- To circulate information on all of support to PQ candidates, and for these options to be evaluated as to their usefulness and availability.

This model would support the Code of Practice (GSCC 2002) in that all social workers should support others learning and development as part of their substantive role. Agencies would also be

fulfilling their responsibilities to contribute to the development of their staff and to promote learning organisations (SCIE 2004). Mentors would focus on social workers long-term professional and personal development, whilst workplace assessors would concentrate on the assessment of workplace competence for the revised Post Qualifying awards, thus supporting the integration of the PQ framework, the Code of Practice (GSCC 2002), and continuous professional development in social care.

Appendix 1

Region Map

Source: Skills for Care [online]http://www.skillsforcare-eastern.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=12&Itemid=51 [Accessed 30/07/2006]

Appendix 2

Role Description of the PQSW Mentor

- '1 assist the new candidates to understand what is required and to develop a *Work Plan*
- 1.1 help the candidate to understand the PQSW framework
- 1.2 clarify the role of *Advance*
- 1.3 clarify the role of the mentor
- 1.4 review the *Initial Action Plan* with the candidate
- 1.5 assist the candidate in developing a *Work Plan* 12 H7 11/98
- 1.6 provide guidance on preparation for assessment including agreement as to the range, type and volume of evidence required
- 2 assist the candidate in identifying areas of learning need and development opportunities
- 2.1 assist the candidate in an assessment of current competence and learning needs
- 2.2 encourage candidate's progress towards self directed learning
- 2.3 guide candidate towards appropriate learning experiences
- 3 ensure that the candidate can learn and develop
- 3.1 provide professional advice / opinion from self or others
- 3.2 identify obstacles to progress and suggest strategies to overcome them
- 3.3 suggest ways for candidates to develop useful links with colleagues, agencies and other professionals
- 3.4 assist the candidate in understanding policies and procedures (at agency, local, national levels)
- 4 encourage reflective practice
- 4.1 support candidates reflecting on own practice through prompting, suggesting and questioning
- 4.2 develop relationship of trust where weaknesses and ideas can be explored openly
- 4.3 assist candidate to integrate and demonstrate ADP/ARP (anti-discriminatory/anti-racist practice) skills within their work
- 4.4 feed back observations
- 5 assist candidate in adhering to their Work Plan and evaluating their progress
- 5.1 set priorities together
- 5.2 set objectives/targets together
- 5.3 evaluate progress against objectives/targets
- 5.4 assist in workload management and problem solving
- 5.5 assist the candidate in setting up and maintaining accurate and efficient systems for recording
- 5.6 offer feedback to assist in the writing of Form CC
- 6 provide information required to *Advance*
- 6.1 authenticate all evidence submitted by candidate
- 6.2 endorse that any evidence submitted for assessment is of an appropriate quality, range and anonymity
- 6.3 keep ongoing records of mentoring which show process and progress
- 6.4 provide information for monitoring purposes
- 7 liaise with verifiers as and when appropriate
- 7.1 ensure that any evidence submitted is substantiated by a witness of practice'

Source *Advance (2003) PQ1 (Part 1) Candidate handbook*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire.

'PQSW Mentors should have:

- Social work qualification recognised by CCETSW or an appropriate equivalent
- A minimum of 4 years Post Qualifying experience
- Experience of supervising/mentoring others in their professional development
- Demonstrable commitment to Anti-Discriminatory Practice/Anti Racist Practice
- Evidence of own development since qualifying
- Familiarity with Post Qualifying Award in Social Work, its level and the role of mentor'

Source: Mentor handbook <http://www.Advancepq.org.uk/uhinfo/other/Advancepq/mentors.cfm>
30/07/2006

The Role of the Practice Assessor

'Practice Assessors (PAs) play a vital role in the PQCCA. Each candidate on the course is matched by their employer to a PA who has been approved and registered with Advance PQCCA. PAs work with candidates during the whole time they are undertaking the award. Their role is

- To agree an assessment plan with the candidate
- To observe the candidate's practice on a minimum of two occasions
- To examine the case files in respect of observed work
- To report on the candidate's practice in relation to each of the 5 practice requirements and the values requirements of the Child Care programme
- To verify the direct evidence contained in the candidate's portfolio
- To provide formative feedback on candidates' Reflective Journal
- To support the candidate through the Award.'

Source: PQ Child Care Award Portfolio Guidelines September 2005 [online]
http://www.Advancepq.org.uk/uhinfo/library/i19010_3.pdf [Accessed 30/07/2006]

Appendix 3

PQSW requirements

Part One has one requirement:

PQ1: Candidates must demonstrate that they have improved and extended the level of Competence acquired at the point of qualification.

Part Two has five requirements:

PQ2: Candidates must demonstrate competence in working effectively in complex situations.

PQ3: Candidates must demonstrate competence in exercising the powers and responsibilities of a professional social worker; including the appropriate use of discretion and the management of risk.

PQ4: Candidates must demonstrate ability to make informed decisions

PQ5: Candidates must demonstrate competence in identifying and maintaining purposeful networks and collaborative arrangements.

PQ6: Candidates must demonstrate competence in enabling others through management, supervision, consultation, practice teaching or direct contributions to education and training.

For PQCCA requirements see http://www.Advancepq.org.uk/uhinfo/library/i19010_3.pdf
PQ Child Care Award Portfolio Guidelines September 2005 30/07/2006

Appendix 4

Interview questions

Objectives

1. Identify the current role and use of mentors within the local post-qualifying social work education Consortium (Advance) and by local employers.
2. Investigate the contribution of mentors currently in social work.
3. Examine how mentoring could facilitate university students on professional programmes within the new PQ framework.
4. Explore the availability of other educational /professional support for working students who are returning to Higher Education to study post-qualifying professional awards.

Introduction.

Thank for agreeing to be interviewed, why they were selected & assure of confidentiality & state that recording will remain anonymous

Purpose - my MA & also contribution to future planning for new PQ qualifications

Objectives of the interview

Recording by hand (not tape recorder)

Semi-structured questions

1. What role(s) do you hold within Post- Qualifying social work education?

Please provide details....

2. Are you/have you been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else?

If so,

1. How long for? ACT/ TIME
2. With which Consortium? ACT /PLACE
3. How many mentees? ACT/MEN
4. what is their understanding of the mentoring role in PQ? in relation to social work tutor?
5. who are the mentors in PQ education?
6. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post Qualifying education?
7. how is this system funded
8. opinion of remuneration for mentors?
9. what, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the PQ candidates' employing organisation?
10. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
11. How could it be improved?

2. Contd. If not been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else?

a) please explain your role, within social work/ education

1. How long for? ACT/ TIME
2. for whom ACT /PLACE
3. How many mentees?
4. What is your understanding of the role of mentors within post-qualifying social work education? in relation to social work tutor?
5. who are the mentors in PQ education?
6. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post Qualifying education?
7. how is this system funded
8. opinion of remuneration for mentors?
9. what, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the candidates employing organisation?
10. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
11. How could it be improved?

3. What, in your opinion, is the overall contribution of mentors to post-qualifying social work education?

4) The PQ structure will change in 2007, so that universities deliver post -qualifying social work awards.

that social workers should be enabled to (49.viii)

Specialist PQ 'Teach and assess the practice of student social workers and mentor and support students or colleagues, N.B. student phrase not included for Higher Specialist & Advanced Specialist.

Phrase for Higher Specialist is Support, mentor supervise or ,manage others enabling them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice 51.viii, p19

phrase for Advanced specialist is Support, mentor, supervise, or manage others, exercising practice, research, management, or educational leadership to enable them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice. ix

Also statement that 'qualified registered social workers should be involved in work place teaching & assessment '

1. How could this learning and skills be utilised for the benefit of others within social care/ social work? How would envisage the future in terms of mentoring of PQ students? Is mentoring still required? (How can we build on the new expectations?)
2. How would they be funded/rewarded/paid of remuneration? Should they be?
3. If yes, explain howIf not, why not
4. How could they be organised ? Retain current system?

6. What is the availability of **other** types support in employing agencies & universities for employed students returning to complete professional qualifications?

1. Please give examples ?
2. How is this funded/organised/take up
3. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
4. How could it be improved?
5. Are their mentoring schemes set up within your agency?
6. How is this funded/organised/take up?
7. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
8. How could it be improved?
9. How do these arrangements 'fit' current & future PQ arrangements?
10. Is mentoring needed as well as these support structures?
11. Is any thing else needed

Any other comments?

Thanks for helping & giving up time.

To whom?

- Training managers,
- A voluntary/independent organisation training representative
- Up to 4 university academics involved in PQ consortia; (
· The manager of regional Advance PQ Consortium that is responsible currently for the regional mentoring programme.

Appendix 5

INTERVIEW 1 Thursday, 19 May 2005

Semi-structured questions

1. What role(s) do you hold within Post- qualifying social work education?

Please provide details....

- * An examiner for them, ? WHERE
- * Advance PQ Portfolios

2. Are you/have you been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else?

- * Assessor PC Child Care Award & mentor,
 - * He has little experience of mentoring PTs

If so,

1. How long for? ACT/ TIME *3-4 years*
2. With which Consortium? ACT /PLACE *Advance*
3. How many mentees? ACT/MEN *12 CCA, 12 PQ1*
4. what is their understanding of the mentoring role in PQ? in relation to social work tutor?
 - * Encouraging through writing... put it together and submits, did instructing on undergraduate course with RP?

encouraging role, facilitate, feedback

(PQ1) Simpler than CCA

- * CCA(mentoring) is encouraging and learning about questions that they need to think about

2 Observations (doing a piece of work)

feedback on values

- * direct feedback to indicators & raise questions

not an inspection role, but 'what are the problems with that piece of work?'

e.g. asking girl to see 5 people and ask why they expected her to do that'

Observation goes along with academic work

under? social work practice 2 managing professional tasks/observation

- * challenging
- * and help them prepare /create whole PF & they write
- * sign as being fit/won't sign off
- * read all assessment- check/verify that it is their work
- * mentor role + raising questions- making you ,more professional
- * 'How were you good?'
- *

- * New question are there tensions between the mentoring and assessing role?

- * No not really- doubtful come across

- * 'learn as much as you impart'
- * 'QUOTE not to be expert, tease out qualities and questions marks that practice leaves behind it'
 - * occasional conflict won't sign something off
 - * new workshops PQ & PQCCA
 - * 'part of (mentor)training- marking pfs with others...cross fertilisations
 - * likes reading others pfs
 - * says 'He does too much for mentees'
 - * Others who don't fulfil work properly, usually work place, mentors, less positive, don't address ADP, let things go through and not proper direction
 - * 'mentor job QUOTE for everything together, uni tutor marks essays'(PQCCA) but student will show essays to X
 - * PQ1 specific starter
 - * gets knowledge by doing marking with Advance and as external examiner
 - * at the end of the course and to service users..
 - * Feeds into teaching and probation services, one thing informs the other (CPD) 'If you don't realise that you are not a very good mentor

5. Who are the mentors in PQ education?

6. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post qualifying education?

7. How is this system funded?

- * Kathryn & other/ training managers/Sue H
- * no run it very well, ensures all get money

8. Opinion of remuneration for mentors?

- * I enjoy it , do it for money , ? No! (paid hourly rate)

9. What, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the PQ candidates' employing organisation?

- * very efficient role, when it is done properly

10. What are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples

- * Disadvantage another assessor and he marked a pf (not up to the mark on racism), met separately to marking process-, grave concerns BUT doesn't know what happened....

11. How could it be improved?

2. Contd. **If not been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else?**

a) Please explain your role, within social work/ education

1. How long for? ACT/ TIME
2. For whom ACT /PLACE
3. How many mentees?
4. What is your understanding of the role of mentors within post-qualifying social work

education? In relation to social work tutor?

5. Who are the mentors in PQ education?
6. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post qualifying education?
7. How is this system funded?
8. Opinion of remuneration for mentors?
9. What, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the candidates employing organisation?
10. What are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
11. How could it be improved?

3. What, in your opinion, is the overall contribution of mentors to post-qualifying social work education?

- * 'QUOTE , did I make her a better sw at the end of the day', ensure she could reflect on being a better social worker...sharing of skills

' those I have mentored ... all see real advantages

4) The PQ structure will change in 2007, so that universities deliver post -qualifying social work awards.

That social workers should be enabled to (49.viii)

Specialist PQ 'Teach and assess the practice of student social workers and mentor and support students or colleagues, N.B. student phrase not included for Higher Specialist & Advanced Specialist.

Phrase for Higher Specialist is Support, mentor supervise or, manage others enabling them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice 51.viii, p19

Phrase for Advanced specialist is Support, mentor, supervise or manage others, exercising practice, research, management or educational leadership to enable them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice. ix

Also statement that 'qualified registered social workers should be involved in work place teaching & assessment '

1. How could this learning and skills be utilised for the benefit of others within social care/ social work? How would envisage the future in terms of mentoring of PQ students? Is mentoring still required?
 - * depends on what you mean by a workplace assessor
 - * to get of the independent s would be sad, because the independent s bring a lot to the task
 - * said that those who are not independent, their pfs 'don't do very well'.
 - * PQCCA (assessors?) are encouraged to be workplace

- * but if they (are in agency (& have gone through award then most yes, but(will need) support from uni to go along- otherwise short falls but proud to work alongside them
 - * utilise workplace mentors - specialists
2. How would they be funded/rewarded/paid of remuneration ? Should they be?
 - * pro rata (should be) same funding as for PA student, daily rate £18, £1400(total?)
 - * otherwise say no
 3. If yes, explain howIf not, why not
 4. How could they be organised ? Retain current system?
 - * RECS beware of conflicts, (need to be) completely different team. (Issue of) OBJECTIVITY, and conflict of interests, saying not good enough
 - * Post grad level (yes (need mentors) academics judge assignments, they do not have day to day practice of dealing with public' QUOTE
 - * workplace ASSESSOR/MENTOR GO TOGETHER
6. What is the availability of **other** type support in employing agencies & universities for employed students returning to complete professional qualifications?
1. Please give examples ?
 - * disability unit, study skills
 - * colleague & peer support
 - * some managers are excellent at supporting (others misuse students)
 - * tutors watch their backs?
 2. How is this funded/organised/take up
 - * TIER students have managers, peers, PTs
 - * TIER students will then get workload relief, ability to demand it and their managers' ability to demand it
 - * Black Worker Support group, named black workers to access support
 3. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
 4. How could it be improved?
 5. Are their mentoring schemes set up within your agency?
 - * separate mentoring schemes, depends on agency
 6. How is this funded/organised/take up?
 7. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
 8. How could it be improved?
 9. How do these arrangements 'fit' current & future PQ arrangements?
 10. Is mentoring needed as well as these support structures?
 11. Is any thing else needed

Any other comments? No

but has found mentoring to be extremely rewarding

Thanks for helping & giving up time.

Appendix 6 -

Notes of previous Advance mentor development workshop (2004)

Comments by members of mentor group on issues affecting them	Extra mentors agreeing with comments
How to motivate candidates?	
(Lack of) Commitment of students to PQ1	+ 2
(Lack of) Commitment of organisation to PQ1	+1
Time issues affecting mentors (Issue of non-attendance)	+1
Candidates very busy (work), pressures affecting commitment	+ 4
Agency changes affecting candidates	
Personal issues affecting completion Unsure whether candidates will submit in September	+1
Unsure whether candidates will submit in September, (stop - start approach)	+1
Last minute handing in of PORTFOLIOS	
Need to put a tight lid on completions, need to chase candidates?	+1
Should there be taught input for PQ?	
Number of sessions unrealistic? Difficulty in getting observations completed	
How do candidates understand theory v policy & research? Via work? (Bournemouth course different to Advance)	+2
Different responses from candidates to PQ	
Group management issues	
Candidates understanding of PQ	
Suitability of work setting for PQ Resentment in teams	

Where are candidates? Mentor has 6 of them!	
PQ6 is large amount of work	
New mentor asked, 'what do students expect of mentors?'	
Good that assessment events are very 3 months	
Issue of payment for mentors of candidates who do not finish	
What can Herts. Do regarding mentor: candidate ratio?	

Summary of workflow analysis for 'Yellow Form L' created by mentors attending Advance mentor

development workshop (2004)

1. Average time for candidate to complete Yellow form = :

- * 3 meetings with candidate varying from 1-2 hours each time (total 5 hours)
- * 4 inspections of paperwork, including feedback varying from 1-2 hours each time (total 5 hours)
- * Delay of 30 days, for paperwork to be sent from candidate to mentor
- * Total time spent by mentor = 10 hours (travel time not included)

2. Analysis of delayed Yellow form L =

- * 5 meetings with candidate varying from 2-3 hours each time (total 11 hours)
- * 2 inspections of paperwork, including feedback, 2 hours each time (total 4 hours)
- * Delay of 9 months for paperwork to be sent from candidate to mentor and mentor on annual leave
- * Total time spent by mentor = 15 hours (travel time not included)

3. Analysis of e-mail route for Yellow Form L =

- * 3 meetings with candidate 2 hours each time (total 6 hours)
- * 3 inspections of paperwork, including feedback, 2-3 hours each time (total 7 hours).
- * Delay of 1 1/2 months
- * Total time spent by mentor = 13 hours (travel time not included)

Summary

Clearly these are suggested times for the process flow analysis of a Yellow Form L. It is interesting to note the time that is spent by mentors with candidates and on inspecting the work sent to them and for providing feedback. Further clarification could be provided by Advance on the average recommended meeting time. The delayed route demonstrates the potential additional time spent by mentors on encouraging candidates to complete. The use of email can speed up communication, where appropriate & maybe its use should be encouraged? Some mentors agree in their contract with the candidate that they will be in contact regularly to check on progress and this could also be encouraged as standard practice. I was wondering whether mentors should be encouraged to feedback to Advance when there are delays of over 2 months for example, in the return of work by a candidate, so that you are kept informed of potential difficulties. The initial comments provided by mentors outline their concerns, several of which related to the candidates paid work and approach to completing their PQ award.

Carolyn Holmes 12 November 2004

Appendix 7

Interview 10

Objectives

1. Identify the current role and use of mentors within the local post-qualifying social work education Consortium (Advance) and by local employers.
2. Investigate the contribution of mentors currently in social work.
3. Examine how mentoring could facilitate university students on professional programmes within the new PQ framework.
4. Explore the availability of other educational /professional support for working students who are returning to Higher Education to study post-qualifying professional awards.

Introduction.

Thank for agreeing to be interviewed, why they were selected & assure of confidentiality & state that recording will remain anonymous

Purpose - my Masters & also contribution to future planning for new PQ qualifications

Objectives of the interview

Recording by hand (not tape recorder)

Semi-structured questions

1. What role(s) do you hold within Post- Qualifying social work education?

Please provide details....

Reply: Locally do you mean or.

C any role.

Reply: Any role Locally I am a member of the Advance management board, & I obviously chair the Practice Teacher Consortium. Nationally I chair the Joint University Council Social work Education Committee, which amongst other things makes a contribution from a HE perspective into the General Social Care Council, and its planning for the future of PQ.

C: Thank you

2. Are you/or have you been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else? No

C: Or anyone else? Have you need a mentor for anyone else?

Reply: No, not a mentor, a tutor yes, Practice Teacher a long time ago, supervisor on various projects, but not a mentor.

C: not a mentor? Oh that is interesting...

If so,

1. How long for? ACT/ TIME (n/a)
2. With which Consortium? ACT /PLACE n/a
3. How many mentees? ACT/MEN n/a
4. C: So what is their understanding of the mentoring role in PQSW education? Reply: Um that's a very good questions...um.... I would see a mentor as being responsible for enabling a

candidate to link the education that they are a part of with their lived experience of work, if you like applying theory to practice. I would also see a mentor as enabling the candidate to reflect on their lived experience of work, from which to generate areas of curiosity, which they would hope Post-Qualifying education would illuminate, ...and I would also see a mentor as having a role in enabling candidates to reflect on and find ways of negotiating, 'what if' kind of situations, by which I mean, situations where what they are being asked to do by their employer is not necessarily what they or the evidence base, would consider as lawful, ethical or knowledge informed.

C :that's interesting. So how do you think that role would sit in relation to a social work tutor? , (Because you've said that you have been a tutor),

Reply: um..

C; theoretically,

Reply: theoretically?

C: Yes or could it sit...does it sit ?

Reply: A social work tutor doesn't have, doesn't usually have contemporary experience of delivering social work or social care work, a tutor is somewhat removed from, I am somewhat removed from practice over a number of years (laughter), whereas a mentor ought to have a 'contemporary link' to the delivery of social work or social care services, ..um...that I would see as being the main difference. The challenge for the mentor is to be sufficiently, ...is to be able to step back sufficiently from their own lived experience of work, in order to have a kind of meta position in relation to, and encourage the candidate to have a meta position, their tutor by force of circumstance removed from it, but the tutor may not have reflected on what their lived experience of work was and how that lived experience impacts on what the tutor currently does by way of teaching and research and so on

C: So when you say contemporary link, you're saying a current, sorry I'm putting words into your mouth! What do you mean by that then? Could you be a bit more specific?

Reply: Well... the nature of practice is changing daily and the nature of the organisational context is changing markedly and a candidate will benefit immeasurably, from someone who has the same experience of the candidate of the rapidity of change in the nature of practice and the organisational context in which it takes place, providing the mentor can distance themselves sufficiently from their contemporary experience of it, so that they can have a meta-position, they can look down on it and enable the candidate to do the same. ...That's what I mean

C: Thanks so you weren't, so you are assuming... that they... My understanding of that is that the mentor is 'in practice',

Reply: yes

C: yes, not that they have been,

R: no

C: No, but they are, thanks for clarifying that for me So what about, ...do you think there are any tensions between the mentoring role and assessing role, someone that is assessing the candidate's practice? Could they be the same or..?

Reply: Well they are 2 different functions. A mentor is principally about facilitating learning, an assessor is about assessing that learning. So they are two different functions. Whether those two functions can be combined in the one person as in qualifying training they have been combined in a person called a Practice Teacher, is a moot point. I think if a learning function is to be combined with an assessment function then the mentor needs to be very clear about whether those two things can be combined and if so how and that clarity arrived at personally, then needs to be discussed, rehearsed and thought through with the candidate, because what the mentor might think can be done in the theory of mentoring, may or not be possible in the reality of mentoring with an individual candidate.

It's rather the same as workplace appraisal. Workplace appraisal can have two functions, it can have a staff development function and it can have a line manager assessment function and the appraiser needs to be clear whether it is one or other or both of those functions. So the appraiser needs to be clear about the system and then the appraiser needs to discuss that with the individual who is being appraised, and I think the same applies in relation to mentoring.

C: Do you think it is possible to combine both roles?

Reply: Yes, but it's not easy...but then it is not easy for a Practice Teacher either to , (C: no) combine both roles in that you're asking somebody to learn, well you are hoping, not asking someone to learn , your hoping to facilitate somebody to learn and having an assessment function could detract from the openness with which the candidate is prepared to embrace learning.....But then as with Practice Teaching, having a discussion about power, having a discussion about whether assessment is about right and wrong answers or whether assessment is principally about a journey travelled and therefore can accommodate mistakes and learning from mistakes, those kind of things that one would hope a Practice Teacher consistently does with students, is what one would hope a mentor would do with candidates if mentoring is to have an assessment function.

1. C: Ok and who are do you think are the mentors in PQ education at the moment? What type of people?

Reply: They ought to be people who have experienced what the candidate is about to experience.

So they ought to be people who have gone through some kind or are going through some kind of continual professional development, not necessarily social work PQ, but some kind of continual professional development. They ought to be people who are experienced in facilitating learning. They ought to be people who have a proven ability to connect the academy with practice in other words, you know they have positive views and are relatively steeped in and actively apply the research, evidence .knowledge, bases, in essence the stuff of academe to practice. And I think they should be people who have a proven ability to challenge themselves and to challenge those who are a part of their working context and my concern would be that certainly for people who are working in councils with social services responsibility, we know the power of bureaucracy and we know what happens to people who work in large bureaucracies. Namely that people accommodate to the bureaucracy and that can sometimes mean that they lose sight of the values and the knowledge that should inform social work and social care work. So I have given you a long list (*of rules? inaudible*). I am under no illusions and that many mentors may not make (this *list? inaudible*).

C: thank you, but who is providing mentoring at the moment, is it people in agencies, other people who are independent?

Reply: I would have to hazard a guess; I would guess that what is happening that agencies who are a part of the PQ framework are putting forward people who in their judgement can facilitate the learning of others. I would be more sceptical about the degree of assessment that goes on, in terms of putting people forward as mentors or indeed the degree of support or education that is provided, to enable people to perform in a reflective manner

C: Right and what do you think about independent social workers, those who are self- employed.

Reply: Well if they are acting as mentors then it is absolute crucial in my judgement that they have access to education and training that will help them to perform the role, and also supervisory support that will enable them to reflect on the role.

C: Thank you

1. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post qualifying education? (Not asked here)

2. C: How is the PQ mentoring system funded at the moment, do you know? Reply: Pass, I suspect that I am (inaudible)...

C: But if it but if it is part of Advance,

Reply: Well if it is part of Advance, no I would not know how it is funded

3. C have you got any opinion of remuneration for mentors?

Reply: I think people should be remunerated for the work that they do, so of they are taking on functions that are genuinely outside of their job description, and then they should be rewarded for that. And I would say the same about Practice Teaching, that if the job description doesn't contain a requirement that as part of the job people will be Practice Teachers then they should be remunerated for that too.

C: Yes

Reply contd.; Then if it is in the job description, then I assume that the salary takes (it into account? - inaudible)

4. C: Yes. What, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the PQ candidates' employing organisations?

Reply: Benefits for the organization?

C: yes benefits for the organisation,

Reply: Well hopefully the organisation ends up with a member of staff with considerable experience in facilitating the learning of others, and that contributes to a learning organisation.

5. C: Do you think there are any disadvantages of the current system? (Why/Give examples-latter part of question not used)

Reply: I suspect that in some organisations, how employers prepare people for facilitating in different ways the learning of others (whether it is through mentoring, supervision, Practice Teaching, whatever) is not coordinated, is not part of a management & leadership kind of strategy. I suspect that in quite a few organisations, there isn't any strategy to bring together the learning within that organisation, to use the learning in that organisation in a 'learning-full' way, & I suspect in some organisations that mentoring, Practice Teaching, people development functions, if you like, are not part of a 'climbing frame', that enables the supervisors and mentors and the Practice Teachers to see how all of this actually contributes to their individual career development.

6. C: And how do you think the system could be improved?

Reply: By doing all of these, laughter

2. Contd. **If not been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else?**

a) Please explain your role, within social work/ education

1. How long for? ACT/ TIME

2. For whom ACT /PLACE

3. How many mentees?

4. What is your understanding of the role of mentors within post-qualifying social work education? In relation to social work tutor?

5. Who are the mentors in PQ education?
6. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post qualifying education?
7. How is this system funded?
8. Opinion of remuneration for mentors?
9. What, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the candidates employing organisation?
10. What are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
11. How could it be improved?

3. C: What, in your opinion, is the overall contribution of mentors to post-qualifying social work education?

Reply: Well in a nutshell, they are a resource, they are a resource for themselves, in the sense that the experience, and any education and support they have for the experience becomes a source of knowledge, which they can use. They are a resource for people they are mentoring, they are a resource for the organisation, if the organisation can access their learning & they are a resource for experts by experience with whom they work,

C: Do you want to say a bit more about the last one? How they can be a resource for experts by experience?

Reply: Well in an ideal world if you have experience of mentoring, if you have experience of facilitating people to learn, if you have experience of education & training at a variety of levels that at least in theory should enrich the work you do, and how you do it with the experts by experience with whom you are asked to work. Just as in the same way that we would hope that academic members of staff can draw on all of their experiences to enrich the student experience. In an ideal world we would expect to see a difference in the student experience between when they are engaging with new academic members of staff & when they are engaging with very experienced members of staff and we might expect also particularly in our line of work , a difference between those people who come through a traditional academic route into teaching and those people whom have come through an academic & professional, we would expect to see differences in how they manager student groups & all of those kind of things that's something similar to what I would expect a mentor to be able to do with experts by experience .

4) The PQ structure will change in 2007, so that universities deliver post -qualifying social work awards & all the levels of the PQ structure

That social workers should be enabled to (49.viii)

Specialist PQ 'Teach and assess the practice of student social workers and mentor and

support students or colleagues, N.B. student phrase not included for Higher Specialist & Advanced Specialist.

Phrase for Higher Specialist is Support, mentor supervise or, manage others enabling them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice 51.viii, p19

Phrase for Advanced specialist is Support, mentor, supervise or manage others, exercising practice, research, management or educational leadership to enable them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice. ix

(this in socially summarised

Also statement that 'qualified registered social workers should be involved in work place teaching & assessment '

& GSCC is expecting sw to contributing to the development of others

How can all this learning be built on?

C: The above was paraphrased. I was wondering how we could build on this

1. How could this learning and skills be utilised for the benefit of others within social care/ social work? How would envisage the future in terms of mentoring of PQ students? Is mentoring still required? How can we build on them? (New expectations?)

R: I would encourage staff development officers in organisations delivering social work & social care services to have a workforce development strategy to enable practitioners to build on, with particular emphasis on leadership, on staff development, on supervision, appraisal, and mentoring in the way that I have defined it, someone engaging with others in learning. So preparing people to take on more responsibility in enabling the learning of others, which I think has to start in enabling people to reflect anew on their own learning and the universities can provide modules & that provide a climbing frameand enable authorities to

C: What implications do you think this will have for our existing mentoring system?

Reply: I would hope that we would become less compartmentalised, I think at the moment we training Practice Teachers, we train Practice assessors, supervisors in management, training box mentoring, boxes, and I think we need a linking frame which is about learning

C: I do not know whether you have answered this question! How would envisage the future in terms of mentoring PQ students?

Reply: Well I think the future at the moment is a bit uncertain because both in relation to the rest of the Eastern region and some other areas if England, it is unclear, how organisations are analysing their workforce needs and particularly staff development in their workforce, and

therefore what outsiders they will encourage universities to develop, and then unclear whether the universities are individually, and collectively going to develop and run that. So yes I think there is considerable uncertainty about actually what is going to happen in terms of,

C: So we won't know whether mentoring is required, because we are waiting for a steer really

R: I think it is uncertain, how many organisations are perceiving if they perceive it at all a strategy experience at all workforce to contribute to the learning of others, Workforce to contribute to the learning of others in the workforce, maybe it is there but I don't see it where I am sitting

C: So any issues about paying them or rewarding them in the future because we don't know what the future holds

R: You can only sort out the practice aliases, vision, and strategy; maybe some organisations have a strategy, and are then clear about what they want HEs to deliver that vision. No one has articulated such a vision or a strategy to me

C: Thank you. So you would take the steer obviously from the employers,

Reply: I think the universities have to. Unless employers are prepared to release staff to come to modules, however flexibly & innovatively they are delivered, unless employers are prepared to come. Universities are only going to have very small numbers, people who are committed by fitting in to everything else (work). That they have to do, employers have to have a very clear sense therefore, about the numbers, so that either universities can hand on heart say to the HEFCE how many numbers they are expecting or universities will be commissioned to provide certain courses for certain numbers, I think it has to start with employers saying what they need, I think the days of universities dreaming up Post Qualifying courses are not gone but they are limited.

How would they be funded/rewarded/paid of remuneration? Should they be?

1. If yes, explain how...If not, why not
2. How could they be organised? Retain current system?

6. The last question. C: So what do you understand as the availability of **other** type support in employing agencies & universities for employed students returning to complete professional qualifications? Can you think of any examples?

1. Please give examples? The universities have to provide tutors I think that the evidence is fairly

strong, an effective tutoring system, makes a huge contribution to retention. I think the role of the Staff development/ training officer in the organisation releasing them, is crucial, in moderating the demands of the workplace in enabling someone to complete, the role of the persons, line member is similarly crucial in protecting the space to enable somebody to complete, & I think the role of one's colleagues too, the willingness of someone to converse cover for one, to In some universities that colleagues cover for their colleagues on sabbatical

Any other types of support

2. Not really, No3.
4. How is this funded/organised/take up?
5. What are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
6. How could it be improved? The fact that the University of Luton, should suggest to some departments that they have and I suspect some organisations, some manager, some training managers, are more effective, in supporting, in protecting space and so on.
7. C: Are their mentoring schemes set up within your agency? That's for staff there are mentoring schemes set up for staff, I think there are mentoring schemes being piloted for students, students mentoring other students, NP (colleague) is a good point of reference ,
8. C: maybe I should talk to her about what she is doing; do you think that is a possibility?
R: Yes I think the uni generally that the uni can mentor students and how new members of staff, yes I think there is a role for both of these
C: Good I'll speak to N
9. C: So do you think mentoring is needed as well as these generally support structures you have spoken about tutors, the SDO, line manager, and colleagues?
R: Um, again they are different roles, same can you combine management & supervision. The answer is sometimes yes sometimes, yes depending on the clarity that people can negotiate roles, and whether the necessary process elements are the in terms of trust combine, roles, in terms of trust and so
10. How is this funded/organised/take up? Not asked
11. What are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
12. How could it be improved?
9. How do these arrangements 'fit' current & future PQ arrangements?
10. Is mentoring needed as well as these support structures?
11. Is any thing else needed?

Any other comments? Thanked for helping & giving up time.

Appendix 8 INTERVIEW 3, 18/8/05

1. What role(s) do you hold within Post- Qualifying social work education?

Please provide details....

Manager of team that is responsible and ensuring delivery of PQ awards

Housing and Community Living (inc Adults and childcare, inc Children & Learning

2. Are you/have you been a mentor for qualified social workers or any one else?

Not for qualified sw

1. How long for? But yes to NVQ assessors (for 5 years, average length up to and for CIPD undergrad (c 2 years between 6- 12 months), and (12 month per assessor)

2. With which Consortium? ACT /PLACE (not asked)

3. How many mentees? ACT/MEN

Less than 10 mentees between these)

(Contracted / lecturer and external examiner for another part of the award)

If so,

4. What is their understanding of the mentoring role in PQ? In relation to social work tutor?

Very distinct from the assessment role, guidance & support / advice to the PQ student helping them to interpret requirements of the PQ award

Liaising with other people (e.g. student & tutors)

There is always and interesting issue between the mentor/student and line manager

Clear understanding of the role versus support for student and means of communicating (?)

***C query re type** of mentors (based on her experience of mentoring, probably don't know enough about current role to comment)*

5. Who are the mentors in PQ education?

A lot are freelance, come to the role from background of social care, I think most will have been operating @ Senior Practitioner or above

Qualities

Strong interpersonal skills,

Good analytical skills

Able to be objective

Have a good understanding of the framework and to help student translate that

Well organised,

Time management skills committed to CPD self and others

6. How are mentors utilised/organised locally within social work Post qualifying education?

Many struggle (?)

My understanding was the Julie had profiles of PQ mentors and they were subject to a written contract

Similar to offsite PTs, that came about because we had problems internally to find people

List (guess) drawn up from Advance

7. How is this system funded?

Money from Advance no budget allocation

8. Opinion of remuneration for mentors?

Can't remember exactly, more than onsite PTs (c £800) (poss. CCA) more activity in that area, problem need to ask managers

Claire to identify; little response back from both. harder now, changes (in organisation,) sure to be one of the factors

in her opinion = context of work with Herts. and Beds, reviewing PT payment system some of the principles considering recognise

want to try & improve payment arrangements so anyone gets financial recognition -

PARITY between assessors etc

payment arrangements should reflect, level of support, length, and complexity

leads to differential payments

recommend not agree single payment e.g. £ 600

poss. (small) incentive payment to teams for team development (C mention experiences PTs for PAs)

Ideally get PQ mentors from workforce and move away from freelance all the time

this would be good for career development

On a freelance basis need to keep knowledge and practice up to date

more opportunity of employed to gain something both ways

9. What, in your opinion, are the benefits of mentoring for the PQ candidates' employing organisation?

benefits of mentoring organisation

help employees to develop new skills beneficial to organisation & career development

helps retention, increase job satisfaction

and linked to skills of mentoring develop future managers & team leaders, support internal progression

less expensive than freelance all the time but recognise addition to own development, downside not doing day 2 day work (backfill issues) way from work place needing staff ???

If organisation has general strategy for mentoring, not just for PQ, can apply model to all levels of organisation, leads to new people as managers

Benefits to individuals

- some of the above

transferable skills

provides opportunity to work with colleagues in a different capacity (as a mentor not a colleague)

can strengthen work relationships

10. What are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples

unsure if any system in place for developing mentors, invite anyone who is interested better if career development pathway (trained into that role)

no mentoring philosophy/strategy

funding is ad hoc, rather than being built in

11. How could it be improved?

12.

3) sharing /developing best practice

strengthening peer support and working relationships

if effective in role they are improving the service delivery fundamentally and ensuring PQ

students are maintaining standards of professional practice' if they (mentors?/PQ candidates..)

are doing their job effectively

PQ for registration purposes, they are contributing to social work registration

(we) don't encourage people often enough to recognise activities as L&D (because they don't associate it with L&D), if enhancing their skills or being introduces (?)

QUOTE 'Time spent with mentor is relevant'

4) The PQ structure will change in 2007, so that universities deliver post -qualifying social work awards.

That social workers should be enabled to (49.viii)

Specialist PQ 'Teach and assess the practice of student social workers and mentor and support students or colleagues, N.B. student phrase not included for Higher Specialist & Advanced Specialist.

Phrase for Higher Specialist is Support, mentor supervise or, manage others enabling them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice 51.viii, p19

Phrase for Advanced specialist is Support, mentor, supervise or manage others, exercising practice, research, management or educational leadership to enable them to identify and explore issues and improve their own practice. ix

Also statement that 'qualified registered social workers should be involved in work place teaching & assessment'

1. How could this learning and skills be utilised for the benefit of others within social care/ social

work? How would envisage the future in terms of mentoring of PQ students? Is mentoring still required?

if employers will be responsible for finding mentors then it will be like for Practice Learning placements (comparing)

university ensures quality of placements even though we are the providers, need strong partnership arrangements between university & employers

& Quality standards

(What if not meeting standards? responsibility here for addressing that)

employers own assessment, NVQ assessors = QCA standards (LBC license people / standardisation meeting (if fall behind, then withdraw license)

Is mentoring still needed? Depends. Buddying system (supported by experienced P.Q. award holders

idea for group mentors arrangement for social work trainees,

Jane 4/5 trainees & individual meetings

One of the things I didn't comment on earlier from my experience, that students concerned can choose their own mentor (otherwise) it can be harder to establish role (if imposed). I have seen 1 or 2 examples, & they have not got on even with the best will in the world (ISSUE OF CHOICE) can be stronger if they feel that they can learn from

difficult if different type of working relationship (mindset of what it was before) doesn't always work, mentoring & assessor or line manager, take on mentor hat affects dynamic

(refers to difference between mentoring of PQ1 (informal assessment) and PQCCA mentoring (more of a formal assessment) up to here

Input joint briefing /mentoring sessions (???) in Beds, gives clear description of what it is & what they are not (clear boundaries)

5.1 Question if social workers are expected to learn about mentoring-

if we can link people in mentoring into action learning sets

She is a member of corporate action learning set (member of action learning set)

no work done previously to see if AL set composition

BUT if some one give opportunity to develop their mentoring skills-> sharing their mentoring skills within action learning set, and use as mentors (???)

How can we build on them? (new expectations?) new Q,

Q: added 'Is mentoring a good idea'?

Yes the principles are sound

There should be an element of choice - not everyone needs or wants a mentor

If people have a clear understanding of roles (skills associated with mentoring are very similar to those an assessor needs to have,

One of the distinctions as an assessor you make a judgement against a standard, versus mentors, who offer and want to encourage others to develop skills and way of working

2. How would they be funded/rewarded/paid of remuneration? Should they be?

if formal because decision re payment, are they mentoring (???)

Often the best assessment is those that form naturally, and are by definition are informal because mentors shouldn't need to be paid

assessment and teaching are different. own much of this has been developed in job roles in the past

(Team leader job role -as NVQ assessor = time and effete, and not team leaders, = colleagues @ some level because additional responsibility (????))

BUT encouraging and enabling role is difficult (??)

UNCLEAR recording here

3. If yes, explain how ...If not, why not

4. How could they be organised? Retain current system?

6. What is the availability of **other** type support in employing agencies & universities for employed students returning to complete professional qualifications?

1. Please give examples?

time to attend & study time, mentor assessor# access to reach through MRC (LBC subscription to this), inc seminars, and conferences

used to be professional development group (support network), & speakers supervision

2. How is this funded/organised/take up?

3. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples

4. How could it be improved?

Probably if there was more time, workload relief is a big problem

In T&D programmes they only make a contribution to someone being away from team (not for PQ last year was a one off) not everyone agrees backfill money argument that managers should manage teams- but reality...

5. Are their mentoring schemes set up within your agency?

Are mentoring schemes (voluntary) for managers and the mentors of NVQ assessors

It is important to recognise that not everyone makes a good mentor, because they don't make it compulsory

6. How is this funded/organised/take up?

7. what are the disadvantages of the current system? Why/Give examples
can't really comment
8. How could it be improved?

Because it is voluntary it is not addressed on any way, if it doesn't happen. There is an acknowledgement actually it is a good thing to do but there is no strategy for mentoring

9. How do these arrangements 'fit' current & future PQ arrangements?
10. Is mentoring needed as well as these support structures?
11. Is any thing else needed?

Any other comments?

Interested to see results

Appendix 9

Summary sheet examples

Interview 5: X thinking globally strategically - seems very positive about mentors, and sees it as part of a strategy, of practice assessors and practice teachers. HR involved here too, in terms of now it can help integrating Codes of Practice into job descriptions. He talks a lot about the future and benefits of mentoring.

Interview 7: I haven't really got the substance of this interview but X gave me 2 booklets and emphasised the positive nature of mentoring and the possible negative impact of its withdrawal. Notable that there wasn't any linkage with Advance although some social workers do use the mentoring scheme for other reasons. X emphasised the need for structure in a scheme, the need for an evaluation of mentoring relationships and the need too be firmly linked with the organisational strategy. Good that it is the only agency represented that which had a mentoring scheme implemented and he has a qualification in mentoring.

Interview 3: Good interview, useful ideas, still no answers. Addresses mentor/assessor dichotomy.

Appendix 10

Final Codes

INTERVIEWEE CONTEXT
OWN EXPERIENCE OF BEING A MENTOR
MENTOR ROLE
MENTOR ACTIVITY
ORGANISATION
MENTOR PROBLEMS
MENTOR BENEFITS
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
STUDENT SUPPORT

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