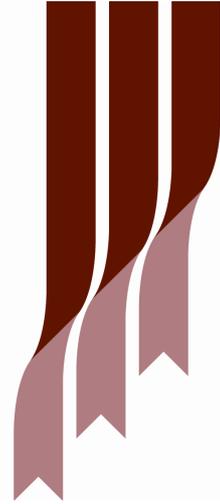


SCOTTISH INSTITUTE
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT

Involvement of Service Users and Carers

Practice audit
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) is currently undertaking a programme of project developments with three major objectives:

- 1.) Learning for effective and ethical practice: to improve radically the quality, quantity, range, relevance, inter-professionality and management of practice learning opportunities for the social work honours degree
- 2.) Knowledge transfer: to promote knowledge transfer between HEIs through the collaborative development of a repository of digital learning resources for social workers
- 3.) Integrated assessment: to develop innovative flexible and aligned assessment methods to develop deep learning for ethical and effective practice

There are five projects related to the objective of integrated assessment, one of which (3.3) is entitled 'Involvement of Service Users and Carers'. The following is an audit of current, recent and planned arrangements for enhancing the contribution of service users, carers and employers, one of the outputs of this project. A focus is centred on the contribution of service users and carers, in agreement with those involved in the other projects on integrated assessment, because this project alone has consulted directly with these stakeholders.

1.2 The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland (2003) sets the Scottish context for the integration of service user and carer involvement in social work education. The framework defines both the requirements for social work training and standards in social work education for Scotland and indicates that: 'policies and procedures for assessment (must) include effective and appropriate ways of meeting the requirements of key stakeholders in social services.' (p15). Key stakeholders include: 'people who use services, carers and employers' (p15).

1.3 The developing service user movement 'emphasises the importance of models of participation that are based on human rights, equalities, inclusion and the social model of disability' (Levin 2004, p 9). The related social work literature reflects a complex debate about the 'language of participation' (Braye p 9 in Kemshall and Littlechild, 2000) and draws on distinctions between a consumerist model of participation on the one hand and a democratic model on the other (Beresford and Croft, 1993). What emerges across the literature is a broad framework of principles which form the basis of good practice. These will be highlighted later. In terms of the impact users and carers may have in effecting change, Beresford and Croft report:

'the constant message from service user organisations is that there is no more effective way of changing practice and service culture than through involving service users in training (and) ...extend(ing) systematically through all aspects of

training from providing direct input in professional and in-service training to being involved in developing course curricula, providing course materials and evaluating and assessing courses.’ (in Reynolds et al 2003, p 24)

1.4 The following summary of good participatory practice is noted:

- Clarity about what level of involvement is being offered
- Involvement from the start of new initiatives in decision-making arenas
- Tangible goals for involvement
- Involvement by choice not compulsion
- Inclusion of diverse and marginalised perspectives, such as those of black and minority ethnic groups
- Provision of time, information, resources and training
- Openness to advocacy
- Clear channels of representation and complaint
- Open agendas
- Accessible structures for dialogue

(Braye in Kemshall and Littechild 2000 p24)

1.5 In the Scottish context, Elaine Noad has proposed a ‘five fold model’ of ways of enhancing service user and carer involvement (SSSC conference, ‘The Vision of the framework for Social Work Education in Scotland’, 8 October 2003). She looks at *power, language, information, methods, and procedures and the legal context* as areas which can significantly impact on service user and carer participation.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data was gathered through postal semi-structured questionnaires (Appendix 1) to the nine higher education institutes (8 returned), electronically sent semi-structured questionnaires (Appendix 2) to practice teachers (120 returned from a potential of approximately 400), approximately 80 questionnaires (Appendix 3) to directly given to students in three institutions (46 returned) and through six focus group meetings of service users with experience of social work students.

2.2 The methodology combined a broad range and fairly high number of questionnaires from institutions, practice teachers and students to gain an overview of current practice with a much more individualised technique with service users and carers. The Advisory Group to the project that combines six service users and carers with three agency representatives and one academic representative, recommended that we take on board the messages from research and base methodology with service users and carers on the principles of good practice it defined. The Advisory Group recommended the following principles:

- **There should be no tokenism – a purposeful seeking of views where power can be shared.** We therefore used a process that engaged with service users and carers within their environment and time using methods that did not create extra demands.
- **Views should be sought at grass roots levels** where there is contact with social work students and not through management.
- **Funding of expenses** should be possible.
- **The processes used should allow those consulted see change as a result.** We therefore worked within the pilot network system for the University of Dundee that ensures feedback is disseminated to those directly teaching students and feedback on changes is communicated to those consulted.

2.3 For the purpose of this audit, eight organisations in Tayforth (Appendix 4) were identified using purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

- Organisations being part of the user group network in Tayforth;
- Organisations having been involved in providing practice learning opportunities to student social workers;
- Organisations drawn across a range of service groups.

Visits to each organisation were arranged to be held at a time and venue of their choice. For some organisations this meant that groups of service users or carers were specially convened for this purpose, in others, visits were made to pre-existing groups. A total of 28 people took part in discussions. Unfortunately, two visits could not be made to meet the deadline of this audit report, and so this section is based on six visits rather than eight. The two remaining visits will be completed at the convenience of the organisations involved.

Discussions were based on questions (Appendix 5) generated by the University of Dundee User and Carer Group. This topic guide identifies a number of set questions, with space to add further specific questions. For the purposes of this practice audit exercise, questions about the topic of the assessment of students were added.

2.4 The three questionnaires gathered views on current and proposed involvement of service users and carers in the assessment of students and in social work programmes more broadly (Appendices 1, 2 and 3). These gave an institutional perspective from the HEIs, a wide geographic sample of practice learning feedback from practice teachers and a sample of students, limited because of time. The students represented three different institutions and served to give the consumer perspective as a comparison to the data gained from those providing learning.

- 2.5 Literature with a focus on user and carer involvement in social work education and training is used to inform this audit and is included throughout findings.
- 2.6 Service user and carer perspectives are reported in section 3. Findings from HEIs, practice teachers and students have been integrated and are reported in section 4. Section 5 considers issues and challenges raised from all groups and section 6 some views on enabling service users and carers to play a greater role within social work training. Linkage to the literature regarding service user and carer involvement in social work education is made through the course of the whole report to highlight or illustrate practice. The final sections in this audit draw out themes and summarise the main findings.

3. Findings: Service user and carer perspectives

- 3.1 Service user and carer perspectives about the skills, knowledge and personal qualities that social workers need are a valuable basis for understanding the expectations that service users and carers have of social workers. ‘One key quality distinguishes such knowledge from all others...They alone are based on direct experience of policy and provision from the receiving end’ (Beresford 2000 p493). Crawford (2003) refers to a summary of key messages from focus groups, published by the Department of Health which ‘greatly influenced the social work training requirements issued in May 2002’ (p36). Many of these messages are reflected in the findings of the current audit. This section considers the account service users and carers give about social work and the role of the social worker, and reports on their involvement in the assessment of student social workers.

3.2 Service user and carer perspectives on social workers, their training and assessment: social workers and the social work role

Group members consistently and overwhelmingly reported wanting social workers to listen. ‘They need to know everything that’s happened to you so that they can understand, and so that they can know what they can help you with’ (young person).

- Listening skills were vital, as were communication skills, especially ‘talking in a way you can understand,’ both with service users and carers as well as with other agencies. Examples given concerning listening were most often negative and group members described their feelings associated with this e.g. ‘making me feel in the wrong’, ‘I felt like a piece of dirt’, ‘it left me feeling like a child, very insecure –it was an upsetting experience.’
- Social workers need to be honest and not patronising, acknowledging what the service user or carer is saying. This was highlighted by a person with a physical disability who wanted ‘social workers to tell you when they don’t understand what you’re saying instead of pretending they know.’ Groups want social workers to

show respect, treating people as individuals. One person with a learning difficulty has noticed positively that social workers now speak to him first rather than his carer which they used to do a few years ago.

- The value of building and maintaining relationships with social workers is important, but is often difficult. For some individuals, social workers are nameless officials with little time or resources to do their job adequately. For others they are key people, available to offer emotional and practical support and giving consistency over many years. For some groups, social workers are the people who provide information about services and welfare benefits. Having adequate time for appointments and being punctual (or apologising when they're going to be late or not come at all) are all vital, and social workers are heavily criticised for being inconsiderate in this way. 'They can't expect to build up trust if they do this' (a parent).
- In terms of extending their knowledge base, it was felt social workers would benefit from work on medical issues, including disability and implications for day-to-day living, and also mental health issues and the experience of being in hospital. Understanding different ways of working with families was important – especially in acknowledging all members of the family, not just focusing on 'the child with the problem'.
- A number of groups felt that social workers are too young and do not have sufficient life experience to do the job well. One group particularly mentioned the lack of male social workers, which they felt perpetuated the idea that women are the carers in our society.
- A number of groups recognised that resources are lacking in social work and that this made the social worker's job difficult, but knowing that doesn't help in times of distress. 'You feel like a tadpole in the ocean when facing problems with resources' (parent).

3.3 Service user and carer views on their current involvement in the assessment of student social workers

- Of the 28 people who took part in discussions, only seven people could specifically say that they had been linked with a student. Of these seven people, only two had been asked for their views of students' practice. These two people were associated with the same organisation.
- The two people who had given their views were given a feedback sheet for the midpoint review, but they were also given the opportunity to give feedback verbally. One of them estimated she had been linked with about five students. She felt her views made a difference to the student's practice. It also benefited her 'as it helps you as a person to give your opinions.'

- In one organisation, one person had been linked with about ten students. Another had been linked with two students. Neither person had been asked for their views. One of these two had been involved in a direct observation of a student in a group setting. After the observation was over, the person was told the student had passed but was not asked for their views. In another organisation, group members were aware that student placements regularly take place, but none of the group could recall being asked to give feedback about a student's work. Two service users had been asked if they could be the subject of students' essays. They had agreed, but didn't see the essays subsequently and said they would have been interested in doing so. No-one had knowledge of or a view about the student's final report.

3.4 Service users and carers views on the potential for involvement in assessment

When asked for suggestions on ways that service users and carers can have a say in how students are assessed, one group felt they could give guidance and encouragement to students, but would not wish to be formally involved in their assessment, 'as service users would need confidence to put people right.' Another group suggested meeting face to face with students to talk about their experiences. Students could then ask questions and discuss issues. One group indicated they knew very little about the content of training courses for social workers and therefore could not say how they could be involved in students' assessment.

4. Findings from practice teachers, students and HEIs

4.1 Introduction

This section reports on the findings arising from analysis of response to three discrete questionnaires that were developed for the consultation (see Appendix 3). Self-administered postal questionnaires were sent out to HEIs in late December 2003 for return mid-January 2004. A mixture of electronically dispersed and postal self-administered questionnaires were sent to all local authority training sections, voluntary sector practice teaching units, SCOPT and other voluntary sector networks at the same time. These reached approximately 400 practice teachers. The timing of this audit influences the findings in respect of HEI planning for the new Honours degree. All HEIs reported that their plans had not been finalised and therefore this audit cannot fully represent how HEIs intend to incorporate user and carer involvement in the new degree. Further work to follow up this initial information is therefore needed, once degree courses have been approved. Student questionnaires were circulated in February 2004, distributed to 2nd year student groups at the University of Dundee, University of Stirling and the Open University.

Eight out of nine HEIs returned questionnaires. 120 practice teachers returned questionnaires. The response rate for this group is very difficult to determine, as a number of different networks was used to circulate the questionnaires.

Approximately 20% of practice teachers in the sample are working in the voluntary sector. This is an approximate figure, as there was no requirement for practice teachers to provide their name or contact details. 46 students completed their questionnaires. Of these, 12 were from the University of Dundee, 12 from the University of Stirling and 21 from the Open University.

Findings from practice teachers, students and HEIs have been integrated in reviewing the way that service users and carers are currently involved in social work programmes, specifically in the assessment of student social workers and how they may be involved in the future. Findings are reported under the following headings: governance, practice learning opportunities in general, practice teaching, teaching, assessment and other university-based activities

4.2 The Involvement of service users and carers currently in governance

There is currently no participation of service users and carers reported on boards, committees, or advisory groups within any HEIs in Scotland. The OU School of Health and Social Welfare however has a Service User Panel with a UK-wide remit which has a sub-group currently working on the development of the new degree. Services users are also on the management group and on policy development groups. The Open University is also aiming to involve service users in course production teams. RGU has plans to involve service users and carers in an advisory group. The University of Dundee has an advisory group and network.

4.3 The potential for involvement of service users and carers in governance

- Practice teachers generally recognise the future potential for service users and carers to be involved in the whole university process, from student selection and admissions, course planning and management and teaching, providing input to induction for student practice learning, and quality assurance. Students also point to the potential for the involvement of service users and carers in university fora or management groups, offering places to service users and carers through existing structures or by setting up specific service user/carer fora which then nominate representatives to university management groups.
- HEIs, in planning for the new Honours degree, noted that a range of opportunities for involvement are indicated, including involvement in programme development, particularly in subgroups of the programme development board; involvement in programme assessment boards and practice panels.

4.4 Practice learning: current practice

- Currently none of the HEIs appears to specifically *require* the views of service users and carers to be sought to aid the assessment of students in practice learning on current DipSW courses. It is, however, reported as an 'expectation' of all the courses.

- Practice teachers and students report that around 75% of practice teachers ‘always’ seek the views of users and carers of students on placements. They achieve this most commonly by getting feedback from one or two service users or carers. Around half (56%) of the practice teachers canvassed describe the extent of their contact to be at this level. A further smaller proportion, 11% of practice teachers, report contacting all the service users and carers a student has worked with to seek their views. Only five practice teachers (4%) of the total sample reported not seeking service users and carers feedback at all. The factors around this are explored later in paragraph 3.26.
- Currently practice teachers and students report a range of methods to gather feedback from service users and carers. Just under half (45%) of practice teachers ‘always’ use the opportunity to ask service users and carers for their views when observing the student on placement. A further third (39%) ‘sometimes’ use direct observation to get feedback. Other than through direct observation, reported methods to gather information are listed below in order of preference (both practice teachers and students reporting the same preferences).
 - Direct questions to service users and carers
 - Feedback accessed via another worker or carer
 - Telephone contact with service users and carers
 - Using a questionnaire
- The precise format and scope of feedback sought by such means was rarely indicated. One practice teacher referred to guidance notes for observed practice and feedback from service users, sourced from guidance for the assessment of MHO candidates (CCETSW 2000). This guidance is adapted from the ‘Involving Users Project: Criteria for Assessing Social Work Students,’ School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. It is these criteria which also have been amended for use by the Open University.
- Different communication strategies are reported, which take account of language and cultural issues, developmental stages and levels of literacy. Examples given included artwork with younger children, ‘gossip groups’ with young people moderated by a practice teacher, getting verbal feedback from people with visual impairments, using interpreters when required.
- It is not possible to accurately report at what stage feedback is currently sought from service users and carers. Some responses suggested that feedback is most usually gathered in advance of placement report preparation. For example, one student noted that, ‘feedback at the end of the placement came too late to help improve practice’.

4.5 Practice learning: future intentions

- In terms of planning for the new Honours degree in respect of practice learning opportunities, HEIs indicate that they are 'likely to require' feedback from service users and carers. However, this had not been finalised in most institutions at the time of writing.
- Practice teachers and students report a range of ideas for involving service users and carers in the assessment of students' practice in future practice learning opportunities. Systematic verbal or written feedback from all service users and carers with whom a student works, gathered both by the practice teacher and the student, is generally the preferred option. Written questionnaires are not seen as appropriate for use with all service users and carers. Nearly half (42%) of practice teachers indicated that their use should be limited. Across both practice teachers and students there was considerable variability in views regarding the use of questionnaires. Some argue that standardised questionnaires would be extremely valuable; others see them as impersonal and prescriptive; 'service users are more likely to contribute given face to face to contact with a practice teacher' (PT response).
- Several practice teachers and students identified the potential for wider perspectives for student assessment. At an organisational level, for example, student assessment could be included in regular project/agency/departmental evaluation processes. This places the student's work in the context of the whole 'organisation', whatever shape this takes. At the individual service user level too, student assessment in service provision (e.g. a student's input to a package of care) could be included in planning and review meetings and again, therefore, placed in the context of the 'whole' service.
- Four practice teachers and one student pointed to a method of gathering feedback where the role and task of the student is specified and agreed at the start of contact with an individual. Feedback is then gathered on completion of the work according to how the role and task were carried out. In this way, the service user or carer is involved from the start in the process of assessment and may thus have clearer expectations about what is being asked of them.
- Potential for assessment could also come from feedback about students' performance at meetings, such as case conferences, reviews and hearings was considered to valuably assist in assessment. Feedback from training courses and workshops and informal feedback from social events can also be gathered.

4.6 Current service user and carer involvement in teaching

- All HEIs report that service users and carers are involved in teaching. One programme specifically referred to involvement in the preparation of materials, 'The Open University has a long history of involvement of service users and carers in aspects of course production including social work courses.'

- Five HEIs specified that service users and carers are involved in teaching in ‘some modules’ and one HEI specified their involvement in ‘occasional modules’. No institution suggested that service users and carers were involved in teaching in ‘most modules’. No further information was requested concerning the scope of involvement.
- Practice teachers did not comment to any great extent on the involvement of service users and carers in teaching. Several reported that they were aware that service users have been involved in teaching at RGU for several years.

4.7 Future teaching potential from service users and carers

- HEIs and practice teachers were not specifically asked to comment on this area but students emphasised the importance of service users and carers being directly involved in role-play, video work, lectures and presentations.
- One student underlined the value of ensuring that when teaching is arranged service users rather than service providers do the teaching.
- Practice teachers saw potential for service user and carer involvement in delivering teaching both to students and to lecturers, preparing teaching materials.

4.8 The involvement of service users and carers in other aspects of university-based assessment

- Within current DipSW programmes, HEIs reported that service users and carers are not involved in the assessment of students in terms of institutionally-led learning.

4.9 Future service user and carer involvement in other aspects of the university-based assessment

- HEIs noted, as indicated earlier, potential for involvement in programme assessment boards and practice panels; assisting in the assessment of project work, groupwork, presentations and EALs and assessing students; and practice in skills learning.
- Practice teachers listed a number of ways that service users and carers can contribute to the assessment of social work students within a programme. Carers groups and service user fora could review learning objectives to see if they are congruent with service users’ and carers’ needs. Such groups may also highlight training needs for student and qualified social workers in the light of what their expectations are of the social work role. This latter aspect has been a starting point for work on the new Honours degree in involving service users and carers in a number of institutions (GSCC/SCIE conference notes: ‘Living and Learning Together’, 24 November 2003).

Service users and carers could contribute to course assessment (including student presentations, assignments and practice learning).

- Several practice teachers and students identified the potential for wider perspectives for student assessment, placing the student's work during practice learning in the context of the whole 'organisation', whatever shape this takes. This emphasis on the organisational process highlights the mutual benefits of good practice learning, bringing student assessment into the life of the organisation alongside satisfying the requirements for the HEI. This is an aspect which requires further exploration.

5. Issues and challenges in involving service users and carers in the assessment of social work students

5.1 The nature and value of feedback

- Overwhelmingly, practice teachers and students reported valuing feedback from service users and carers. Practice teachers see the involvement of service users and carers as essential for quality assessments, recognising the importance of client group perspectives. Around three-quarters (71%) of students reported that they felt feedback improves their practice.
- There is a note of caution however. Feedback needs to be carefully and sensitively managed to maximise positive criticism so as to avoid, on the one hand, a destructive approach or on the other – and one which is most often mentioned, a difficulty in saying anything negative at all.
- Feedback which is overwhelmingly positive is not particularly helpful, particularly if it is not specific or comprehensive in scope. Practice teachers speculate that service users and carers may respond very positively for a number of reasons. Service users and carers may feel their views will be linked with future service provision. They may like the student and wish to help the student despite 'local difficulties'. In addition, giving and receiving constructive feedback is a skill which needs to be developed.
- Both practice teachers and students are concerned that feedback may be 'skewed' dependant on whether social work intervention has been requested or imposed. One practice teacher expresses this forcibly in terms that service users' views may be 'tainted' particularly in a children and families' setting, where service users have to be challenged on a regular basis. Fisher (in Barnes and Wistow 1992) counters this view, distinguishing between what he terms 'voluntary and captive users', and suggests that in fact 'too little recognition is given to users who are captive (p55).'
- With regard to the issues addressed by the questionnaire, only four practice teachers out of 121 distinguished between service users and carers in any way. In each of the

four cases the distinction centred on the differing perspectives service users or carers may bring to the assessment of students. One suggested that carers could be involved in contrast to service users where 'an element of self interest comes into play'. A second, however, suggested that carers tend to judge the person rather than the work, in contrast to service users whose feedback indicates levels of involvement and understanding of needs. A third reported 'always' seeking feedback from service users, but only 'sometimes' from carers, as feedback from the latter can be bland.

5.2 Where no feedback is sought

- Only a small proportion of practice teachers (4%) and students (15%) reported that no feedback is sought from service users and carers. Of the five practice teachers who reported that they did not seek feedback, four were qualified and one was working towards the Practice Teaching Award. Their comments indicated a number of concerns related to the validity and utility of such feedback. Again the issue of the views that are gained from 'captive' users was raised. As a result, one practice teacher suggests that observed practice is sufficient to give a good measure of practice. Another practice teacher suggests that carers could perhaps be involved in assessing students because they have a wide experience of social workers, in contrast to service users who are likely to link 'good practice' with their own satisfaction and 'bad practice' with their dissatisfaction.
- Students who commented on the situations where no feedback is sought referred to the demands placed on service users and carers who may not want to participate or find it difficult to understand the purpose of the exercise. One student reported being particularly aware of the burden this might create in a project where clients receive support exclusively from student social workers.

5.3 Difficulties experienced or anticipated in service users and carers involvement in giving feedback to students on placement

The nature of feedback from service users and carers is a major theme across responses to the questionnaires from both students and practice teachers. Where difficulties are reported, these concern:

- Methods of getting feedback – appropriate means of communication with people with particular needs e.g. people with dementia, people who have learning difficulties, older people who may be frail; difficulties in completing paperwork in time; finding a method that represents a shared agenda, not one imposed by the practice teacher
- Accessing feedback – it was perceived by students and practice teachers that there was a disproportionate representation of certain user groups or participation of certain individuals; the stresses of service users and carers are perceived as a barrier to accessing feedback in that practice teachers do not want to add to difficulties

- Time constraints – finding time within a heavy workload; short deadlines within practice placements; rural locations require more travel time
- Empowering service users and carers – many respondents perceived difficulties in gaining feedback when students are involved in statutory mandates with service users. ‘Some social work tasks are coercive/highly structured. In this context it is hard to align an approach which aims to empower the client’ (practice teacher response)
- Confidentiality – one practice teacher refers to their dilemma of using anonymous questionnaires which provide the potential for service users and carers to express their views without constraint, measured against the means to follow up concerns about practice which may be expressed
- Separating out service issues from feedback about students’ practice – limitations of the service (for example, in terms of lack of resources) may be attributed to the student’s practice

6. Enabling service users and carers to be involved

6.1 Practice teachers suggested that to enable service users and carers to be involved in the assessment of student social workers, significant work is required in the following areas:

- Work is needed to clarify expectations, roles and benefits for service users and carers in greater involvement with HEIs;
- Training of service users and carers e.g. interviewing skills, in relation to taking part in the selection of students. Such training could be accredited;
- Expenses must be paid;
- Certain groups are not frequently involved in social work education e.g. black and ethnic minority groups, people with mental health difficulties – these groups should be included;
- Use methods to promote the participation of people with literacy or communication difficulties;
- Need to avoid depending on one or two service users and carers who may suffer consultation overload. There may also be a risk of ‘professional’ service users or carers dominating feedback;

6.2 Guidance from SCIE on the Involvement of service users and carers considers some of these issues helpfully extracts are summarised in Appendix 5. The

Extracts consider *clarifying expectations, training and support, costs, promoting social inclusion and creative and inclusive methods in promoting participation.*

7. Conclusions

Themes identified in this audit are now highlighted alongside unexpected findings:

- There was overwhelming agreement from respondents that service user involvement in social work education generally and in assessment in particular is very important to good practice in the future. There was a wide range of ideas about how good involvement could be achieved.
- The distinction between service users and carers is not drawn to any extent by participants in this practice audit . However Evans and Fisher (in Shaw and Lishman 1999) emphasise - from the context of discrimination against disabled people - the importance of distinguishing carers as ‘another group of stakeholders in services with their own needs’ (p107). Manthorpe (2000) also suggests that ‘differences need to be acknowledged and valued’ in order that social work training adequately reflects ‘the complex status of carers’ (p 26). In terms of assessment processes, it would seem appropriate to bear these differences in mind in order that both service users and carers may participate positively, avoiding the stereotyping or pathologising of roles.
- This practice audit indicates that practice teachers most frequently are seeking feedback from one or two service users and carers in practice placements. The small sample of service users and carers found in the course of the audit appears to reflect this level of participation in the assessment of students. Whether this level of participation is sufficient to reflect the contribution service users and carers may make to the assessment process needs to be explored. Beresford and Croft (in Reynolds et al. 2003) underline the importance of choice for people regarding their involvement, but also remind us that there are ethical issues around not involving people. Who participates and with what supports are therefore crucial questions to consider, as well as issues about the management of the task, given the time constraints of work load and placement duration.
- Planning for collaboration with service users and carers regarding feedback and the timing of feedback in practice placements to maximise its impact on practice for students are important issues to be explored. Training for all those concerned in the process would be beneficial. Important areas to consider are:
 - giving time to planning areas for feedback at the start of practice placements with a number of service users and carers alongside the student and practice teacher;

- identifying stages at which to give feedback (in addition to the midpoint and final reports) to maximise opportunities to influence the student's practice;
- acknowledging the contribution of service users and carers at the end of placements;

All these may help to promote participation and complements the student's experience of empowering service users and carers.

- A wide spectrum of views was found in relation to the format for feedback regarding practice placements. Further work is needed to identify or design and evaluate a range of appropriate methods.
- Reference has been made to other ways that service users and carers may contribute to the assessment of students e.g. in the context of teaching, and in relation to written assignments. However responses emphasise that these ideas are aspirational rather than current. Further work is needed here to identify possible approaches. HEIs will need to monitor progress in these areas.

In conclusion, a reiteration of the impact that service users and carers may have in effecting change:

'The constant message from service user organisations is that there is no more effective way of changing practice and service culture than through involving services users (and) ..extend(ing) systematically through all aspects of training from providing direct input in professional and in-service training to being involved in developing course curricula, providing course materials and evaluating and assessing courses.' (Beresford and Croft in Reynolds et al 2003, p24).

The extent to which service users and carers participate will ultimately depend on the commitment of all involved 'to break from past paternalistic approaches to social work, prioritising *values* – honesty, openness, respect, equality commitment, *strategy* – a radical fundamental culture change at all stages and levels of programme provision, and *practice* – investing in induction, training and learning for programme providers and service users and carers and the involvement of service users and carers from a broad and diverse base, at local, regional and national level' (Peter Beresford: GSCC/SCIE Conference, 'Living and Learning Together', 24 November 2003).

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APPENDIX 1

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO HEADS OF DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTES ON SERVICE USER AND CARER INVOLVEMENT IN THE ASSESSMENT
OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT.**

This questionnaire seeks detail on two aspects of assessment.

- 1 The extent to which service users and carers are involved in the assessment of social work students and**
- 2 The methods used in assessment.**

Involvement of service users and carers within your programme: general.
Q1 Are service users and carers members of any of the Boards or Committees that govern the current DipSW programmes?
<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – <i>please specify title and functions</i>
.....
.....
Q2 Are service users and carers involved in any advisory group attached to the DipSW programme of your institution?
<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – <i>please specify title and functions</i>
.....
.....
.....

Q3 Are service users and carers involved in teaching within the DipSW programmes of your institution?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please specify below the type and frequency of involvement by ticking the statement that best describes the approach of your DipSW programmes.

- Most modules will have service user and carer input in teaching.
- Some modules will have service user and carer input in teaching.
- Occasionally service users will be involved in teaching sessions.
- Service users are seldom involved in teaching

Involvement of service users and carers in assessment.

Q4 Are service users and carers used to aid assessment of students practice?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please tick as appropriate from the following:

- This is a requirement of our programme
- This is expected by our programme.

Q5 Within the institutionally-led part of the current DipSW programme, are service users and carers involved in contributing to assessment?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please give details:

.....

.....

.....

<p>Q6 In the planning for the new Honour Degree which of the following ways of involving service users and carers in assessment in institutionally-led learning are you likely to use:</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Assessing students' practice in skills learning – e.g. live or through video work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assisting assessment of, e.g. project work, group work, presentations, EAL work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Taking part, as service user and carer representatives, in programme assessment boards, practice panels etc.</p> <p>Please specify any or all of above</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Q7 Within practice learning opportunities on the current DipSW programme, are service users and carers involved in contributing to assessment?</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>If yes, please give details:</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Q8 In the planning of the new Honours Degree, which of the following ways of involving service users and carers in assessment of students' practice during practice learning opportunities are you likely to use?</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> We are unlikely to require any feedback from service users and carers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We will be likely to require feedback from service users and carers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PTO</p>

If feedback is likely to be required, please indicate who may be required to gather this?

The practice teacher/link supervisor

The student

From direct observation of practice by the practice teacher

Other, please specify

Q9 Please add any further views on the involvement of service users and carers in the assessment of social work students.

.....

.....

.....

Contact Name	
Post Held	
Employing Agency	
Agency Address	
Telephone	
Email	

Are you willing to provide further details about the information you have provided above, possibly through face-to-face interview or telephone follow up?

Y No

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire.



APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRACTICE TEACHERS ON SERVICE USER AND CARER INVOLVEMENT IN THE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT.

PLEASE COULD YOU FORWARD THIS TO m.gee@dundee.ac.uk by 16.01.04 - Thank you

This questionnaire seeks detail on two aspects of assessment.

3 The extent to which service users and carers are involved in the assessment of social work students *and*

4 The methods used in assessment.

Practice Teacher Data
Q1 Which of the following best describes you?
<input type="checkbox"/> A practice teacher with the Practice Teaching Award
<input type="checkbox"/> A practice teacher working towards Practice Teaching Award
<input type="checkbox"/> A practice teacher with no qualification
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above
Q2 How many social work students have you had on placement during the last 4 years?
<input type="checkbox"/> 0
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 -2
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 10
<input type="checkbox"/> over 10
Service User Involvement in Assessment of Social Work Students on Placement: general.
Q3 When gathering evidence for assessment of students on placement do you seek the views of service users and carers.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
<input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If no, please go to Q13</i>
Q4 In seeking the views of service users and carers on students on a placement, which of the following best describes the extent of your use of feedback?
<input type="checkbox"/> I get feedback from all the service users and carers my student has worked with.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I get feedback from all the service users and carers my student has had substantive contact with in the placement.
<input type="checkbox"/> I get feedback from one or two service users and carers my student has worked with on the

<p>placement.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I rarely get service user or carer feedback on students practice on placement.</p>			
<p>Q5 When service user and carer views are gathered are these incorporated clearly into the practice teacher's report?</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Always</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p> <p><i>Can you give further details on how this is done?</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>			
<p>Observing a student in practice on placement</p> <p>Q6 When observing a student's practice on placement which one of the following best describes your approach?</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> I <u>always</u> ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on the practice of the student.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I <u>sometimes</u> ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on the practice of the student.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I <u>occasionally</u> ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on the practice of the student.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I <u>never</u> ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on the practice of the student.</p>			
<p>Q7 When asking for views from a service user or carer following a direct observation of practice are their views shared with students?</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Always</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>			
<p>Q8 When service user and carer views are gathered in direct observation of practice are these incorporated clearly into the practice teacher's report?</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Always</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>			
<p>Other Methods of gathering evidence in assessing students from service users and carers.</p> <p>Q9 Please indicate the methods you have used and the frequency with which they are used.</p>			
	Frequently used	Sometimes used	Never used
Direct questions to the service user/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through other worker/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other methods (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 Do you find service user and carer feedback **helps your judgement**?

Yes No

Please briefly indicate why

.....

.....

Q11 What **difficulties** if any, do you find in gathering and using service user and carer feedback – please outline briefly

.....

.....

.....

Q12 Please indicate by what methods you think service users could be used to assess students practice in **future** practice learning opportunities.

(a) Systematic verbal or written feedback from all service users and carers with whom the student works in practice learning, gathered by:

The student

The practice teacher

Both

(b) Written questionnaires to some all service users or carers working with student – where this is appropriate to the service user/carer.

(c) Telephone questionnaires/questions where suitable.

(d) Other – please specify

.....

.....

.....

Q13 Please specify any ways **outside of placements** you know of that service users and carers contribute to the assessment of social work students?

<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Q14 Please specify any ways outside of practice learning opportunities that service users and carers could contribute in the future to the assessment of social work students?</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Q15 Please list any further points to be considered about the use of service user and carer involvement in assessment.</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Additional Information	
Contact Name (If wished)	
Post Held	
Agency Address	
Telephone	
Email	

Are you willing to provide further details about the information you have provided above, possibly through face-to-face interview or telephone follow up?

Y N

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire.



APPENDIX 3:

QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENTS ON SERVICE USER AND CARER INVOLVEMENT IN THE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT.

This questionnaire seeks detail on two aspects of assessment.

5 The extent to which service users and carers are involved in the assessment of social work students and

6 The methods used in assessment.

Student Data
Q1 Which of the following best describes you?
<input type="checkbox"/> A social work student with experience of one placement
<input type="checkbox"/> A social work student with experience of more than one placement
Service User Involvement in the Assessment of Social Work Students on Placement: general.
Q2 When on placement did you or your practice teacher/link supervisor seek the views of service users and carers on your practice?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes I did
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes My Practice teacher did
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes My link supervisor did <input type="checkbox"/> I had no link Supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/> No feedback sought <i>If no, please go to Q13</i>
Q3 In seeking the views of service users and carers on students on a placement, which of the following best describes the extent of use of feedback ?
Practice Teacher/Link Supervisor(Delete appropriately)
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe my practice teacher/link supervisor sought feedback on my practice from all service users and carers that I worked with.
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe my practice teacher/link supervisor sought feedback from all the service users and carers I had substantive contact with in the placement.
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe my practice teacher/link supervisor sought feedback from one or two service users and carers I worked with on the placement.
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe my practice teacher/link supervisor rarely sought service user or carer feedback on students practice on placement.
Student
<input type="checkbox"/> I sought feedback on my practice from all service users and carers that I worked with.
<input type="checkbox"/> I sought feedback from all the service users and carers I had substantive contact with in the placement.
<input type="checkbox"/> I sought feedback from one or two service users and carers my student has worked with on the placement.
<input type="checkbox"/> I rarely sought service user or carer feedback on my practice or on my placement.

Q4 When service user and carer views were gathered were these incorporated **clearly** into the **practice teacher's report**?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Can you give further details on how this is done?
.....
.....
.....
.....

Q5 When service user and carer views were gathered were these incorporated clearly into **your report**?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Can you give further details on how this is done?
.....
.....
.....

Observing you as a student in practice on placement

Q6 When your practice teacher/link supervisor observed your practice on placement which one of the following do you think best describes their approach?

- They **always** ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on the practice of the student.
- They **sometimes** ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on my practice. **(PTO)**
- They **occasionally** asked the service user or carer at some stage for their views on my practice.
- They **never** ask the service user or carer at some stage for their views on my practice.

Q7 When asking for views from a service user or carer following a **direct observation** of practice were their views shared with you?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Views not gathered

Q8 When service user and carer views were gathered in direct observation of practice were these incorporated clearly into the practice teacher's report ?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Always		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Views not gathered		
Q9 When service user and carer views were gathered in direct observation of practice were these incorporated clearly into your student report ?			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Always		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Views not gathered		
Other Methods of gathering evidence from service users and carers.			
Q10 Please indicate the methods you believe that your practice teacher/link supervisor used and the frequency with which they are used. Indicate with initials whether it was the Practice Teacher or /and Link Supervisor who did this			
	Frequently used	Sometimes used	Never used
Direct questions to the service user/carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> PTO
Through other worker/carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other methods (please specify)</i>			
.....			
.....			
.....			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q11 What other methods did you use to seek feedback from service users and carers?			
	Frequently used	sometimes used	Never used
Direct questions to the Service user/carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through another worker/carer <i>Other (please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....			
.....			
.....			

Q12 If used did you find service user and carer feedback **helped you improve your practice?**

Yes No Not used

Please briefly indicate how

.....

.....

Q13 What **difficulties** if any, did **a)** you or **b)** your practice teacher or **c)** your link supervisor find in gathering and using service user and carer feedback – please outline briefly

.....

.....

Q14 Please indicate by what methods you think service users could be used to assess students practice in **future** practice learning opportunities.

(a) Systematic verbal or written feedback from all service users and carers with whom the student works in practice learning, gathered throughout the placement by:

The student

The practice teacher

Both

(b) Written questionnaires to some all service users or carers working with student – where this is appropriate to the service user/carer.

(c) Telephone questionnaires/questions where suitable.

(d) Other – please specify or add comments about a) b) or c) above

.....

.....	
Q15 Please specify any ways (outside of placements) in University based teaching that service users and carers could contribute in the future to the assessment of social work students?	
.....	
Q16 Please list any further points not yet raised about the use of service user and carer involvement in assessment.	
.....	
Additional Information	
Contact Name (If wished)	
University Programme	

Are you willing to provide further details about the information you have provided above, possibly through face-to-face interview or telephone follow up?

Y N

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire.



Appendix 4: Format for service user and carer group interviews

University of Dundee
Department of Social Work

Agency and Group:

Group members present:

.....

Date:

General Questions

- Q1 In the group's experience, what sort of things does a social worker do?
- Q2 Are there other things they should do?
- Q3 What are good qualities in a social worker?
- Q4 What are bad qualities in a social worker?
- Q5 What does a social worker need to know to do their job well?

Specific questions

- Q6 Have you been asked to give your views about a student's work on placement?
When has this been done and how?
- Q7 Do you think your feedback about the student's work on placement has made a difference to the student and the teaching staff? How?
- Q8 Has your feedback about the student's work on placement been included in the student's assessment report? If it has, do you know how it has been reported?

General

- Q9 Can you give suggestions on ways that service users and carers can have a say in how students are assessed?
- Q10 What other comments would you like to make?

Appendix 5

Service user and carers groups consulted

Aberlour Child Care Trust, Sycamore Project, Kirkaldy	Young People
Capability Scotland, Perth	Adults with physical disabilities
Listen to Us Advocacy Group, Blairgowrie ARC	Adults with learning disabilities
NSF Carers Support Project, Dundee	Carers of people with mental ill-health
PAMH	Adults with mental ill-health
Perth and Kinross Carers Group	Carers of people with learning disabilities
Rowans Resource Centre, Dundee	Young people
SACRO Falkirk	People in the criminal justice system

Appendix 6

Extracts from ‘Involving service Users and Carers in Social Work Education’ (2004)

In working towards the active participation of service users and carers, practice teachers canvassed in this audit identified a number of areas needing attention. The recently published SCIE resource guide ‘Involving Service Users and Carers in Social Work Education’ (Levin 2004) provides helpful guidance in these areas which is summarised below:

- *Clarifying expectations, roles and benefits for service users and carers*
SCIE guidance (p21): HEIs need to be clear from the start about the principles, aims and intended outcomes of service user and carer involvement. The Open University Service User Panel has a person specification for panel members (personal communication: OU).
- *Training and support*
SCIE guidance (p23-24): Induction, training and support should include service user and carer organisations and individual trainers as well as academic and administrative staff, students and staff in agencies providing practice learning opportunities....to promote understanding of the principles and practicalities of working with service users and carers. Training for trainers should be available using a variety of approaches depending on the type and level of involvement in social work training. Such courses should include those developed by service user organisations and courses leading to a recognised qualification.
- *Costs associated with the involvement of service users and carers*
SCIE guidance (p25-28): Each HEI should develop and negotiate its own policy and procedures (there are no nationally agreed rates of payments for service user and carer groups and individuals in higher education). Payments for involvement should include fees, travel expenses, allowances for personal assistant and replacement carers, and other costs (for phone calls, photocopying etc). Costs for using accessible venues, equipment and refreshments also need to be anticipated.
- *Widening diversity*
SCIE guidance (p29): Each HEI should map which organisations are already involved and identify gaps. Support needs to be provided to include people from black and minority ethnic groups, mental health survivors, homeless people, older people, people with learning disabilities, children and young people etc. User and carer organisations need to be asked to consider their current involvement and future interest in participation and to identify resulting training needs.

- *Creative and inclusive methods promoting participation*
SCIE guidance (p28-29): Examples include the alliance between Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network and the University of Bath; joint work based on citizen empowerment through self-directed groupwork; drama, poetry and video work conveying young people's views. It is also important to enable people with different communication needs to participate on equal terms.