

Registration, PRTL and the new PQ awards

Heather Wing, Director of Regulation

Cyndy Whiffin, Strategic Regional Inspector, PQ
General Social Care Council

WHAT IS PRTL?

- Every Registered Social Worker needs to carry on training and learning.
- This is an important component of registration.
- Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) is a specific professional development activity.
- It is a requirement of registration and has a close link with your registration status.
- PRTL does not need to be time consuming and difficult.
- The GSCC is committed to helping you understand what it means to you.

HOW DOES IT LINK WITH REGISTRATION?

- Registration is valid for three years.
- When you register, your training and learning is not finished.
- It is necessary to complete your PRTL in order to renew your registration.
- Like other professions you must continue your training and learning to ensure your knowledge and skills remain fit for purpose.
- PRTL ensures that your skills and knowledge of the sector are kept up to date.

WHY IS PRTL IMPORTANT?

- Training is essential in keeping standards high in the delivery of care for service users – positive outcomes for people.
- Registration provides an additional layer of assurance to service users and carers that individuals have satisfied the GSCC to their suitability to be on the social care register.
- PRTL helps ensure that social workers keep their skills up-to-date, that they contribute to the wider social work knowledge base and can develop their own careers and expertise.
- Linking registration with ongoing training helps ensure that your registration status is really meaningful in terms of your skills and commitment.
- PRTL acknowledges individuals achievements and helps to raise standards.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

- 90 hours or 15 days of training and learning over the three year registration period.
 - It can be made up of short periods of training, as well as formal qualifications. It can also involve learning acquired on the job.
 - It does not need to be spread evenly over three years, for example you may complete it in one or two years.
- To keep a record of PRTL undertaken and its outcomes.
 - 90 hours is the minimum. If more PRTL is done over three years make sure you record it.
- GSCC may ask to see evidence of your PRTL at the time of your renewal of registration.
- It is a key part of registration and is not optional.

PRTL is about you and your training needs.

PRTL ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON GOOD PRACTICE

- It is your responsibility to make sure you do the appropriate amount of training.
- To assist you in identifying your learning needs and activities, the GSCC released new PRTL guidance earlier this year.
- It is now available on our website.
- It is a guide to help you achieve PRTL, and not statutory guidance.
- It includes:
 - » case studies;
 - » examples of training; and
 - » learning outcomes.

THE NEW GUIDANCE

- The new guidance explains:
 - how PRTL can be flexible and incorporated into your daily or regular work routine;
 - Employers' roles and responsibilities in providing access to PRTL for their employees; and
 - the requirement of recording PRTL and supervision by employers.
- It also:
 - highlights some best practice models; and
 - acknowledges that personal learning needs, employment based focus or policy based focus can be incorporated into PRTL.

FOR EXAMPLE...

- Case studies highlight ways PRTL can be achieved.
- Lets look at one:

Taken from the
PRTL guidance.

EXAMPLE 3 **How to identify and select PRTL evidence**

Kate has begun a two-year postgraduate diploma course in management at the local university and has passed several assignments to date. Although Kate has only just started her course, even at this very early stage, she is able to record key elements of learning relevant to her major work areas. She has included the transcript of the course content and the assignments she has completed along with the university pass list in her portfolio as evidence of achievement. The course is run on a day release basis and expects candidates to undertake private study in their own time.

Kate also included reference to in-house training she received. She recorded one day for attending a supervision course and the other for a one-day legal training course on powers of attorney for people with mental health needs. These workshops covered two days and Kate felt she had learned a lot from attending these and spent some time reflecting on the learning outcomes. She recorded both days as PRTL evidence and also made specific notes of the learning outcomes she had identified.

Finally, Kate took part in a four hour group seminar within her office exploring the implications of the new White Paper 'Our Health, Our Care and Our Say'. From this she learned about Government policy intentions for the future of health and social care. She is better informed when working with health care colleagues in her mental health post. Kate recorded four hours of PRTL.

Key issue:

A wide range of activities can be sources of PRTL.

HOW TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS

- There are many ways to continue to learn and develop such as:
 - training – formal study and post-qualifying training for example;
 - courses;
 - seminars;
 - reading;
 - studying;
 - teaching; or
 - other activities – records of attendance, presentation workshops, supervision notes, appraisal notes, research projects

BENEFITS OF PRTL

- PRTL activities can be varied but:
 - will add value to social worker's involvement with service users and their carers;
 - will benefit current employment;
 - will benefit career progression;
 - reflect preferred learning style;
 - make the most of the learning opportunities available; and
 - form part of wider professional development.

- The GSCC has tried not to be too specific so as not to constrain your training and learning.
- For example, you could:
 - arrange to shadow the work of a colleague in a related team or profession;
 - participate in in-house training;
 - negotiate protected time to research latest policy and good practice developments in their field of practice; or
 - undertake a piece of research related to your practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE KEY

- All Activities should:
 - advance your professional development; or
 - contribute to the development of the profession as a whole; or
 - enable you to contribute more effectively in your professional role.
- You should:
 - ensure the training is relevant to you, your needs and your role;
 - plan what learning outcomes you hope to achieve; and
 - discuss your training needs and learning outcomes with your employer, to build it into your professional development.

POST-QUALIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

- A post-qualifying award in social work is an excellent way of doing PRTL, and is encouraged.
- In February 2005, the GSCC launched the revised post-qualifying framework for social work education and training.
- The new framework is flexible and modular and is intended to be fully integrated with workforce planning and development arrangements, including relevance to the Skills for Care CPD strategy to be launched later this month.
- Builds on what has worked well with current GSCC awards.

Post Qualifying – award levels

- There are three levels in the new framework, each corresponding to a stage of professional and career development.
- They are linked to academic awards at graduate and post-graduate levels.
- The three levels are:
 - Specialist Social Work;
 - Higher Specialist Social Work; and
 - Advanced Social Work.

PQ Specialisms

- Five specialisms have been developed and four are published.
- They are:
 - practice education;
 - leadership and management;
 - children and young people, their families and carers;
 - adults;
 - mental health (now being prepared for publication).
- We are currently approving new programmes.
 - Six new programmes to enrol their first students from Sept 06 onwards; and
 - Five more from Jan 07 and more from Sept 07.
- DH funding will support employer and service user and carer involvement in the new awards.

CURRENT AWARDS

- Registration for current awards will end 31 March 2007.
- Choice for candidates currently registered for awards:
 - Complete full PQSW by Sept 2008; or
 - Complete specific award (eg Practice Teaching award) and consider options in new award framework; or
 - Complete part of award (eg PQ1) AND AP(E)L in to new award framework.
- Contact your local post-qualifying consortium for more help.

Any questions, comments or thoughts?

For further information:

Visit www.gsccl.org.uk

Call 0845 070 0630

Email registration@gsccl.org.uk