

# **Terms of Reference of Professional Development (England) Reference Group**

**Including roles and functions**

Nov 2010



**British Association of Social Workers  
Professional Development (England) policy reference group  
Terms of reference and roles and functions**

**1. Introduction**

The Learning and Development Group was set up in November 2010 by the BASW England Committee in order to assist in the carrying forward of the England Development Plan, specifically by providing a focus for learning and development. This paper describes the functions of the Learning and Development Group, its remit and the processes of its functioning. The group was re-named as the Professional Development (England) group in 2013.

**2. Membership**

The Reference Group will consist of approximately 10 members, who will communicate regularly in a variety of ways, mainly by email and by phone. Members of the group will be BASW members, although non BASW members can be co-opted as temporary members for specific matters. The reference group will develop working groups as necessary and will engage as many BASW members as possible in these working groups.

2.2 The membership will be endorsed by the England Committee and effort will be made to ensure that membership reflects the range of Social Workers in this field.

2.3 Members will serve for an initial period of two years, which can then be renewed for a further two year period. There may be exception to this when it would mean a high number of people leaving the reference group at once. Co-options onto working groups for specific pieces of work are expected.

2.4 The reference group will have a Chair, or convenor and a BASW Professional Officer will offer support. The Chair (or another representative) will represent the reference group on the England Committee. If the chair / convenor is not able to participate at the England Committee a deputy will be appointed.

2.5 The reference group will encourage a wide participation of BASW members in the work of the reference group. This will be facilitated by posting work plans, minutes of meetings and other relevant documents on the BASW web site. In addition, where appropriate, e bulletins and e surveys will be conducted.

BASW members can apply to belong to the group, by stating their areas of interest and knowledge. Applications for membership of the reference group will be decided by the group itself. In the event of there being a greater demand for places on the group than vacancies people will be encouraged to participate in working groups.

**2.6 Frequency of meetings**

The group will meet normally meet annually on a face to face basis and up to 6 times a year by teleconference. The teleconferences are to be held approximately two

weeks before England Committees to enable the reference group to respond to appropriate agenda items and to propose appropriate agenda items.

### **3. Activities**

The reference group will:

3.1 Prioritise learning and development issues from the BASW England Development Plan and actions to be taken<sup>1</sup>

3.2 Respond to local and national issues and developments by contributing to consultations, working parties and groups outside BASW, using alliances with other groups and links with the media.

3.3 Contribute to BASW policy development and to raising standards in Social Work practice.

3.4 Uphold BASW principles on equal opportunities and anti-oppressive practice.

3.5 Provide regular feedback to England Committee of work undertaken, decisions taken and actions planned and link with other parts of BASW to work together and ensure there is no duplication of work.

3.6 Provide an annual summary of its work for inclusion in BASW Annual Report.

### **4. Administration**

A Professional Officer will take responsibility, in consultation with the chair, for agendas of meetings, recording of meetings, distribution of relevant documents.

### **5. Oversight**

The England Committee may review the work of the Professional Development (England) Reference group and direct its work in line with the England Development Plan and Association's Strategic Priorities.

### **6. Roles and Functions**

6.1 The Professional Development (England) reference group derives its mandate from the agreement of the BASW England Committee to establish reference groups to support the work of the England Committee.<sup>2</sup>

6.2 Defining Learning and Development for the purposes of the reference group. Learning and Development is defined as:

*"All learning and development including: the social work degree and all post qualification learning and development, including accredited learning".*

Included in the above definition is learning that takes place through supervision, non accredited courses, reflection, reading, peer networking.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> The England Committee of November 2010 established reference groups to: "...play a key role in deciding on areas for BASW to comment, produce guidance and information and develop policy". In addition "Reference Group members would take part in temporary, task-focussed Working Groups. The working groups will draw in the expertise of BASW members, who may or may not be members of a reference group. Reference groups and working groups will meet face to face annually and to meet by teleconference in between". As part of the 2010 to 2011 England Development Plan an exploration will be made as to whether the reference group should be England wide or UK

### 6.3 Continuing professional development (CPD)

The CPD aspect of learning and development generally is accepted as applying to post qualifying learning. The CPD aspect of the reference group will occupy a major part of its role.

The reference group have adopted the Skills for Care and CWDC definition of CPD (below):

“CPD is an on-going, planned learning and development process, which:

- enables workers to expand and fulfil their potential
- contributes to work-based and personal development
- can be applied or assessed against competences and organisational performance
- includes any activity that increases knowledge, experience and understanding, improves performance and contributes to lifelong learning”.

(Skills for Care and CWDC 2010)

The Skills for Care and CWDC strategy states that CPD to be of benefit to individual social workers and employers needs to be looked at and implemented within organisations strategically.<sup>3</sup>

### 6.4 Identifying priorities for the Learning and Development Group

The Professional Development Group will identify each year, in consultation with the England Committee, the priorities for the year. (This process should commence in the summer and be confirmed by a autumn meeting of the England Committee).<sup>4</sup>

## 7. Relationship with other BASW groups

### 7.1 Relationship with the Policy, Ethics, Human Rights Committee

The Policy, Ethics and Human Rights Committee is a UK group, charged with leading on UK policy issues. It is the understanding of the L and D group that the work of the L and D group would only be referred to the UK group for advice as and when the L and D group deemed it would be helpful. Individual members of the UK Policy, Ethics and Human Rights group could of course be included in working groups of the L and D reference group. The UK Policy, Ethics and Human Rights committee can also request the L&D reference group to consider certain areas/issues.

### 7.2 Relationship with the Policy and Publications Board

If the reference group produce material for publication (and the concept of publication needs to be defined as to whether it includes publication by internet) then consideration needs to be made to what material is referred to the Policy and Publications Board. Advice will be sought on this issue. However the definition of ‘publication’ does not extend to discussions taking place on a BASW members-only forum

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<sup>3</sup> For details of the CPD strategy see Appendix 2

<sup>4</sup> Priorities for 2010-11 These are described in Appendix 3

## **Appendix 1**

### **Links to the England Development Plan**

The main driver for the reference group will be the England Development Plan. The proposed work of the L and D reference group will support major aspects of the Development Plan. For 2010 – 11 these aspects include:

**Objective 1.** Recruitment of more BASW members and retention of members. An active L and D group should have a positive impact on recruitment and retention of BASW members. The group will be able to:

- provide expert commentary on L and D issues
- develop policies and tools on L and D issues to support members
- provide advice to members
- raise the profile of BASW in the media therefore attracting people to join
- liaise with other organisations, including universities on L and D issues therefore raising BASW profile.

**Objective 2** – engage with members. The L and D group should have a positive impact on member engagement by providing an avenue for members to become involved in learning and development.

The work of the group will provide a service that members will benefit from.

**Objective 3** More influence. The L and D group will strive to influence other organisations, Government and other policy makers on L and D issues

**Objective 4** Policy documents. The Professional Development group will contribute to the plan to have at least 10 policy documents produced this year. The group will also contribute to hosting seminars / conferences as appropriate and contribute to the BASW engagement with the SWRB

## Appendix 2

A CPD strategy for employers has a number of outcomes:<sup>i</sup>

- support continuous improvement and delivery of integrated services to put individuals and their families at the centre of care
- improve recruitment and retention and provide career pathways
- provide employers with structures that support their responsibilities for developing a competent workforce and to achieve training and qualifications requirements
- support the development of learning organisations
- meet requirements for registration and re-registration with the General Social Care Council and other regulatory bodies
- improve the effectiveness, quality and relevance of learning
- encourage the use of a range of flexible learning and development approaches to strengthen work-based learning
- align CPD activities with the national qualifications framework and national occupational standards.

For workers the strategy should:

- maintain and develop skills and knowledge to do their particular job
- help to change practice for new roles or working in a different environment
- provide personal development plans which will promote lifelong learning
- help to meet requirements for registration and re-registration
- motivate them to learn, build confidence and self-esteem
- expand and develop new areas of competence, which might be for their existing job or to develop their careers
- develop the skills to reflect on and improve their practice
- enable workers to contribute and influence practice knowledge and development
- provide opportunities for career progression, whether this is sideways, to another level or a different sector. (Skills for Care and CWDC)

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Learning and Development Work Plan for 2010 to 2011**

1. Raise the profile of L and D in BASW
2. Establish mechanisms to establish working groups and consultation groups
3. To develop and progress a CPD strategy
4. To contribute to the work of the SWRB

For 2010 – 11 the main work streams of the SWRB are:

- **Practice Placements:** that new arrangements be put in place to provide sufficient high quality practice placements, which are properly supervised and assessed, for all social work students
- **Assessed Year in Employment:** the creation of an assessed and supported year in employment as the final stage in becoming a social worker.
- **Standard for Employers:** the development of a clear national standard for the support social workers should expect from their employers in order to do their jobs effectively
- **Supervision:** the new standard for employers should be supported by clear national requirements for the supervision of social workers.
- **Front Line Management:** the creation of dedicated programmes of training and support for front line social work managers
- **National Reform Programme:** the creation of a single national reform programme for social work.

(From Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the 15 recommendations of the Social Work Task Force).

Other issues that have a cross cutting remit would include:

- appraisal
- capability.

**JG/Terms of Ref 28.2.11**

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