

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> Bournemouth University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA 3
<b>Title of case study:</b> Improving health and social care practice
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)

Social work is about making a positive difference to the most vulnerable in society. Since 2008 Bournemouth University's (BU) research-based continuing professional development (CPD) programmes have improved practice for 6,170 health and social care professionals. During this period CPD has taken place in 28 NHS Trusts, 96 Local Authorities and 39 independent, voluntary and private sector organisations. Nurses, social workers, managers and educators have all developed professionally from the self-reflective approach, demonstrating increased confidence and improved management abilities. Evaluations of the effectiveness of post-qualifying social work education are scarce. BU's evaluative method has confirmed the value of this CPD and its impact on the practice of individual health and social care professionals and their organisations.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
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BU's combination of theoretical and practice-based research gives the balance needed to deliver effective CPD programmes with wide-reaching impacts. The programmes are based in research and feed further research themselves through evaluation; creating the cyclical and evolving approach that has been successful in the ever-changing and always scrutinised health and social care sector. This work is in accordance with the Social Work Reform Board's aim to improve social work practice by developing the skills practitioners need to meet new challenges, linking to very recent developments in health and social care practice (e.g. Francis Report 2009, 2013).

Under the direction of Brown (1995 to present), accompanied by Keen (2004 to present) and Rutter (2002 to present), BU established research themes to develop and simultaneously evaluate professional practice. This has been delivered through key awards (G1–3) and a range of publications (P1–5, R9–10), including 20 monographs (e.g. R1) written on behalf of Learn to Care; the professional association for workforce development managers in local government. The primary research themes are the:

- Development of reflective practice (P1&2).
- Development of evaluative research tools (G1–3, P1–2&4–5, R9&10).
- Assessment of the impact of CPD on the practice of social workers and their organisations (P1,3&4 & R10).
- Identification of learning needs and development of future provision (G1–3, P3,5, & R1,9).

Research has been completed across the spectrum, with nurses (R10), newly qualified social workers (G1&R9), more experienced social workers working with children or adults (P1,2&4), practice educators (G3&P5) and managers (G2&R10). Each of these studies has involved participant (self-report) and reporter (e.g. line manager) views and has led to the publication of a series of textbooks and related resources. Parker (BU 2006 to present) highlights the main educational strategies practitioners need to employ in developing the workforce of the future and identifies a lack of models to evaluate effectiveness of training programmes (P3); something that lends further weight to the evaluative work undertaken (P1,2,4&5&R9–10).

One of the most significant areas of research is in leadership and management in the sector. Brown received a 'Skills for Care' research grant in 2007 to scope a pathway for leadership and management development (G2). Researchers sought the views of Local Authorities and other independent, private and voluntary sector organisations to evaluate leadership and management needs (R10). They examined factors that required the pathway to:

- Have a specific sector (not generic MBA) focus i.e. leading and developing care services.
- Be in accord with the National Leadership and Management Strategy.

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- Be delivered at a time and location to suit the employer.

In 2010, BU received follow-on funding of £51,000 from Devon, Hampshire, Somerset and Worcestershire Local Authorities to translate these findings into a development programme. Through this process, Brown enabled the development of the concept of 'self-leadership' for use on the programme. Self-leadership is a new approach (R1) that focuses on changing the behaviour of managers by changing their thinking and communication processes (R10).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

#### Key research awards

##### G1. Funder: **Skills for Care.**

Title: **Tracking the Learning and Development Needs of Newly Qualified Social Workers.**

Reference number: SW-LRN0607-BOU11. Amount: £34,950.

Dates: Awarded 22 September 2006; completed 1 May 2007.

Report: Brown, K., Immins, T., Bates, N., Gray, I., Rutter, L., Keen, S. & Parker, J. (2007). *Tracking the learning and development needs of newly qualified social workers project.* Bournemouth: BU.

##### G2. Funder: **Skills for Care.**

Title: **Scoping and Development of a Regional Post-Qualifying Leadership and Management Pathway.** Reference number: SW-LRN0607-BOU26. Amount: £24,950.

Dates: Awarded 19 April 2007; completed 15 August 2007.

Report: Brown, K. & Gray, I. (2007). *Scoping and development of a regional post-qualifying leadership and management pathway. Final report for Skills for Care.* Bournemouth: BU.

##### G3. Funder: **Skills for Care, on behalf of the Social Work Development Partnership.**

Title: **Assessment of the Practice Educator Framework Demonstration Projects.**

Reference number: NAT-BOU-90145. Amount: £52,839.75.

Dates: Awarded 1 January 2010; completed 29 October 2010.

Report: Brown, K., Keen, S., Parker, J., Rutter, L. & Williams, S. (2010). *Final assessment of the practice educator framework demonstration projects.* Bournemouth: BU.

#### Key publications

**P1.** Brown, K. and Keen, S. (2004). Post-Qualifying Awards in Social Work (Part 1): Necessary evil of panacea? *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 23(1), 77–92. DOI: 10.1080/0261547032000175719.

**P2.** Brown, K., Fenge, L-A. and Young, N. (2005). Researching reflective practice: an example from PQSW education. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 10(3), 389–402. DOI: 10.1080/13596740500200212.

**P3.** Parker, J. (2007). Developing effective practice learning for tomorrow's social workers. *Social Work Education*, 26(8), 763–779. DOI: 10.1080/02615470601140476.

**P4.** Brown, K., McCloskey, C., Galpin, D., Keen, S. and Immins, T. (2008). Evaluating the impact of Post Qualifying Social Work Education. *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 27(8), 853–867. DOI: 10.1080/02615470701844217.

**P5.** Keen, S., Parker, J., Rutter, L., Williams, S. and Brown, K. (2011). Practice education: where next? *Journal of Practice Teaching and Learning*, 10(2), 63–88. DOI: 10.1921/174661110X592746.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

From 2008 onwards, 6,170 health and social care practitioners have completed BU's research-grounded CPD, equating to 14% of the current registered workforce of social workers (R5). These programmes have won two prestigious National Training awards since 2008 (9 in total). The total now trained to date is 10,515, which is 25% of the social work workforce. During the impact period, these figures include over 500 practice educators; 500 social work managers; 500 adult/childcare social workers; 1,600 mental health practitioners; and 2,900 completing the first 'consolidation' stage of a social worker's CPD (G1,P1&R9). Since 2008, BU has worked in partnership with 28 NHS Trusts, 96 Local Authorities and 39 other major employers in England including British Forces Social Work Service (Fig. 1).

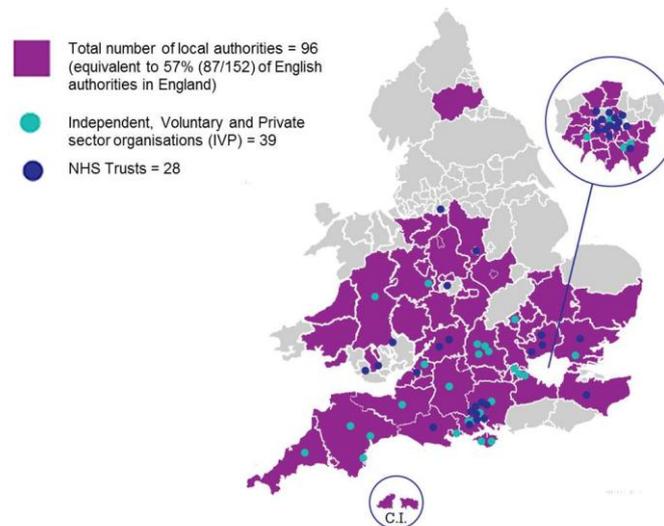


Fig 1: Local Authority, IVP and NHS Partners 1/1/2008 to 31/7/13  
Source: National Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work

BU's research corroborates the impact of our professional education on both practitioners and organisations. Brown and Keen (P1) demonstrate that the main impact of BU's CPD has been to help over three-quarters of the 44 trained professionals to develop or confirm the importance of reflecting critically on their career and practice. Researchers (P4) emphasise the clear impact of BU's CPD on professionals' confidence and practice regarding policy and legislation, and their ability to reassess roles and responsibilities and practice reflectively with vulnerable adults. P4 also provides examples of organisational impact such as the development of anti-discriminatory practice on both individuals who use services and colleagues.

The former Head of Social Work Education at the General Social Care Council (R2), states that those under-going BU's research-grounded CPD programmes are "more confident in decision making within their job roles, showing increased ability to apply critical reflection to the social work task and an increased ability to communicate more effectively to their peers, professional colleagues and service users." He continues: "The BU centre has not only developed the necessary provision, but driven it in areas of greatest need such as management and where now a growing evidence base is supporting the positive impact such training is having on the workforce." This testimony has been influential in the renaming of the BU centre as the National Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work.

Specifically, the leadership and management development programme has been accessed by over 500 managers from 18 wide-ranging organisations. The impact has been evaluated by Keen and colleagues (R10). Managers indicate highly statistically significant increases in:

- Levels of general awareness and confidence in their work role.
- Perceived ability to communicate non-verbally, lead change through people and create a strong learning climate.
- Feeling less overwhelmed in dealing with conflict at work.

The results represent significant relative impact shifts of between 7%–12% over the programme. Line managers have also confirmed the development of self-awareness, confidence and communicative ability in their staff attending the programme (R10). Further research with 204 managers from 11 widespread Local Authorities continues to corroborate the above impact (R3).

All these CPD programmes are complemented by textbooks, which aid practice improvements through key professional development techniques and strategies. These are accessible, born out of research, yet grounded in the realities of practice. Brown has acted as series editor for 15 books since 2008 (31 in total). His series has sold 45,000 copies since 2008 (R4) (55,000 in total) with Rutter & Brown's reflective practice text alone having sold 13,000 copies (R5).

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One further example of impact stands out. The underpinning research with newly qualified social workers (G1&R9) subsequently influenced discussions on the CPD of social workers in the House of Lords (R6). On the basis of the findings and the needs of newly qualified social workers, R7 was published. This text has sold over 5,000 copies, has been adopted as a key text by 30 organisations who view it as an important tool in the professional development of those working in the sector (R4).

In addition, Brown and Keen have published over 12 monographs since 2008 (20 in total), on behalf of Learn to Care (e.g. R1). Each of these publications has been issued to every local authority in England as national guidance; thereby influencing the development of social work practice and simultaneously facilitating the reach of the National Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work (see Fig. 1). The Chair of Learn to Care, classes these publications as “excellent...because of the quality of the research...it makes it very credible when you are putting forward any points, arguments or discussions with your organisations as workforce leads” (R8). Brown has been supported by BU to maintain his membership of Learn to Care’s Executive Committee throughout the REF period and since 2008 has keynoted at 29 conferences, mainly hosted by Local Authorities.

Significantly, in addition to these vast impacts on improving health and social care practice, BU’s research has answered important questions on the effectiveness of professional development. As the former Head of Social Work Education at the General Social Care Council explains: “BU’s evaluation of post-qualifying training’s impact shows for the first time a growing evidence base in the difference it makes to social work practice and in particular, the increased confidence social workers have in their role, which is essential in today’s complex, demanding and challenging social work environment” (R2).

This unique provision of research-based CPD to 14% (since 2008) of the current registered workforce of social workers, coupled with evaluation and publications, demonstrates the research team are continuing to make a positive difference to the most vulnerable in society.

<b>5. Sources to corroborate the impact</b> (indicative maximum of 10 references)
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- R1.** Holroyd, J. and Brown, K. (2011). *Leadership and management development for social work and social care – creating leadership pathways of progression*. Birmingham: Learn to Care.
- R2.** Former Head of Social Work Education at the General Social Care Council 2007–2012. Letter available on request. Video testimonial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH-0FF3Bjhq>
- R3.** Impact evaluations in social work and social care workforce development. Bournemouth: Bournemouth University. Available from: <http://www.ncpqsw.com/publications-all/#impactevaluation>.
- R4.** Senior Commissioning Editor, Social Work, Social Care and Youth Work, Sage Publishing Ltd (contact details available).
- R5.** Rutter, L. and Brown, K. (2012). *Critical thinking and professional judgement for social work* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Sage. ISBN: 978-0-857-25753-6.
- R6.** Hansard (2007). *House of Lords Debates*. 695(129), 8 October, column 88–94. Available from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200607/ldhansrd/text/71008-0012.htm#07100826000689> [accessed 21 November 2013].
- R7.** Keen, S., Brown, K., Parker, J., Galpin, D. and Gray, I. (2013). *Newly qualified social workers: A practice guide to the ASYE* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage. ISBN: 978-0-857-25923-3.
- R8.** Chair, Learn to Care, and Social Care Workforce Learning and Development Manager, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, (contact details available). Video testimonial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH-0FF3Bjhq>
- R9.** Bates, N., Immins, T., Parker, J., Keen, S., Rutter, L., Brown, K. and Zsigo, S. (2010). ‘Baptism of fire’: The first year in the life of a newly qualified social worker. *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 29(2), 152–170. DOI: 10.1080/02615470902856697.
- R10.** Keen, S., Brown, K., Holroyd, J. and Lanng, E. (2013). Evaluating the impact of the IPOP (Improving Personal and Organisational Performance) programme. *Social Work & Social Sciences Review: An International Journal of Applied Research*, 16(1). DOI: 10.1921/1203160302.