

Social Pedagogy: A scoping project for Derbyshire County Council.

Executive summary

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	What is social pedagogy?	1
1.2	What is the level of engagement in social pedagogy in the UK?	2
1.3	Project aims	3
1.4	Project approach	3
2	The current approach to the use of social pedagogy	4
2.1	The national picture	4
2.2	The picture in Derbyshire	6
3	Developing and embedding social pedagogy	8
3.1	Presenting social pedagogy	8
3.2	The potential impact of developing social pedagogical approaches in Derbyshire	9
4	The teaching and learning required to embed social pedagogy	12
4.1	Current employee competence	12
4.2	Personal philosophies for learning	13
4.3	Learning preferences	14
4.4	Approach to accreditation	15
4.5	Assessment preferences	15
4.6	Resourcing the new approach	17
4.7	Resources available to sponsor learners	18
4.8	Leverage for embedding social pedagogy	18
5	Conclusions and recommendations	20
5.1	Conclusions	20
5.2	Recommendations	20
6	References	22

1.1 Introduction

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) is committed to promoting positive outcomes for children and young people who are 'Looked After'. The Authority has found that promoting a social pedagogical approach appears to have a positive impact for stakeholders. In autumn 2012 representatives from DCC's Children and Younger Adults department met with a team of University of Derby staff from the faculty of Education Health and Sciences (EHS) to discuss the potential to further promote and embed social pedagogy into the daily working practice of DCC staff and carers. It was agreed that an initial research project to ascertain the potential for training in social pedagogy for DCC employees was a necessary component for achieving this aim.

The project involved a range of research approaches including a desk based review of literature, a number of face to face, telephone and group interviews, and an online survey. In total 209 Individuals participated in the research including managers, practitioners and foster carers.

This report presents a summary of the findings of the research including a number of options and recommendations for developing an approach to teaching and training the County's children and young people's workforce in this aspect of their professional practice.

1.2 What is social pedagogy?

According to Cameron *et al.* (2011) and Coussée *et al.* (2010) social pedagogy is not a new idea however it has recently gained interest with researchers and practitioners' in social care and early childhood education in the UK. It has its origins in the nineteenth century and is based on ideas developed from continental Europe.

Lyons & Hueglar (2011) note that the development of social pedagogy across Europe has followed different traditions making it a difficult concept to define for a UK audience, so they define it broadly as an element of education that includes informal learning processes that contribute to human development. Petrie *et al.* (2006) describe it as 'education in its broadest sense' and "bringing up" children in a way that addresses the whole child. Kyriacou *et al.* (2009) describe social pedagogy as referring 'to actions on the part of adults which promote the personal development, social education and general well-being of the child alongside or in place of parents in a range of educational and social care settings (e.g. pre-school play groups, residential care homes, youth clubs)'.

Others have attempted to define it according to the areas of practice that it represents; from a more continental perspective Eichsteller & Holtoff (2011) argue it contains four areas of practice:

- A multi-dimensional and holistic understanding of well-being;
- Learning from a standpoint of the 'competent' or 'rich' child, where education does not impose but facilitates children's capacity to think for themselves;
- Authentic and trusting relationships between professionals and young people that acknowledge and work with both the authoritative and affectionate, as well as retaining a sense of the private; and
- Empowerment or promoting active engagement in one's own life and within society, and as such is fundamentally concerned with children's rights and developing the skills for living in a democracy.

Berridge *et al.* (2011) note that researchers from a European tradition indicate that social pedagogy is not an approach or profession or a set of techniques that can be easily learnt but a perspective that pervades all areas of practice involving the welfare of children.

Boddy & Statham (2009) concluded that social pedagogy contains four elements:

- an academic discipline, studied to higher degree level and beyond within universities;
- a professional qualification, usually to Bachelors-degree level, and based on at least three years of full-time study (incorporating practice placements);
- a field for professional practice in the children's workforce, both in mainstream services and in child and family welfare; and
- a conceptual basis for policy for children and families.

1.3 What is the level of engagement in social pedagogy in the UK?

Jackson (2006) traces UK national interest in social pedagogy to a succession of crises in social care over the preceding decade which encouraged policy makers to look to improve the training of staff. Crimmens (1998) also noted the various child care scandals and the lack of training for people working in social care, for example he pointed to the work of Utting (1991) which found at the time that 20% care home managers had no relevant qualification and 70% of staff had no formal qualification. Jackson (2006) points to the Warner report (1992) which called for a close examination of the practice from Europe relating to training social pedagogues and social educators.

At the beginning of the twenty first century the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, London began to develop an understanding of social pedagogy by conducting a number of studies to explore how the concept of social pedagogy in different European countries could be translated to a UK context. In addition, the Social Education Trust (2001) recognised that social pedagogy could make social care more responsive to the needs of the individual child by being more holistic in viewing all aspects of their development. They also identified benefits for the profession of social care creating a more professional identity for practitioners and greater pride, self-worth and confidence, which could also impact positively on other professions working with young people.

The White paper Care Matters (DfES, 2007) included a commitment by the then Labour government to trial a pilot programme for social pedagogy training in English residential care homes. The resulting scoping study Cameron *et al.* (2007) found that it was supported by young people who were interviewed in focus groups and that there was already existing practice within the UK. They recommended that in order to continue the momentum for development that funding would be required to develop:

- A qualifications framework based on Foundation Degrees in working with children, with a top-up third year, leading to a bachelor's degree in social pedagogy. Higher level qualifications could then build on this.
- Programmes of training designed to familiarise participants with the concepts of social pedagogy. These would be for social care staff who work directly with children and young people and for others such as educators in further and higher education, and local authority children's service staff.

Berridge *et al.* (2011) reflected the growing interest in using social pedagogy in the UK, by the number of settings that it has been developed in recently such as foster care (Petrie, 2007), youth work (Paget *et al.*, 2007), children with special needs (Jackson, 2006) and in the children's workforce in general, including training (Petrie, 2001; Cameron and Petrie, 2007). Cameron *et al.* (2010) alluded to the development of a Social Pedagogy Development Network in the UK as evidence of the growing interest and sharing of practice in the UK.

Research indicates that the concept of social pedagogy is not an easy one to define for the UK context, however in its broadest sense, it can be seen as a way of conceptualising

informal learning which addresses the needs of the whole child in terms of their personal development. Evidence suggests that this is not a new concept but one which has been particularly practiced in mainland Europe for a considerable time. It has only more recently gained interest in the UK particularly in residential care home settings and eventually more widely with all professionals and para-professionals working with children and young people in a range of settings.

Recent governments have expressed an interest in developing social pedagogy as a response to an identified need for training amongst those working with children and young people. Two broad areas of teaching and training have been identified for development:

- A qualification framework leading to Foundation degree level
- Ongoing continuing professional development

The following sections of this report present the findings of the research and address options for the delivery of both approaches.

1.4 Project aims

The project aims were to;

- develop an understanding of the current and existing competences (with regards to social pedagogy) of staff working with looked after children in the county of Derbyshire;
- to understand their training needs in the context of social pedagogy; and
- to make recommendations for development work to implement a new and sustained training and CPD approach across the county.

1.5 Project approach

The project approach was negotiated with the DCC managers and the project advisory board comprising individuals representing a range of interests including functional and operational staff from DCC, project managers and external consultants. The methodological approach adopted included;

- **an inception phase;**
- **a desk based review;**
- **fieldwork** including research activities with practitioners, managers and foster carers 46 individuals through focus groups, face to face and telephone interviews;
- **an online survey** which resulted in 69 responses from practitioners, 31 responses from managers and 63 responses from foster carers (163 in total).

1 The current approach to the use of social pedagogy

This section explores the extent to which practitioners and managers have engaged in the use of social pedagogy in the UK and elsewhere including both in Europe and beyond.

1.1 The national picture

With growing interest in the opportunities for social care there has been a small but gradual increase in research relating to social pedagogy in the UK. In the second report of the DCSF social pedagogy pilot which was undertaken in 18 care homes in the UK, Cameron *et al.* (2010) outlined the cultural and social challenges faced by recruiting social pedagogy practitioners from abroad to work in UK care homes. They found a great deal of interest from children's homes in the UK to participate in the pilot and a total of 39 pedagogues from Germany participated. The initial findings from a study of the impact of their work was that they had been broadly welcomed into the care homes and staff were enthusiastic about their ideas, however the German pedagogues did raise concerns relating to the potential impact of their work due to the being so many other people in the UK having responsibility for the children in their care. This was perceived as having the potential to dilute their impact as it was not part of a coherent approach by all practitioners.

Cameron *et al.* (2011) in the final report of the implementation of social pedagogy pilot in care homes in the UK identified some of the features that made working with social pedagogy more successful:

- Experience, confidence and skills of social pedagogues, ideally working with social pedagogic colleagues (i.e. not being the sole social pedagogue in a workplace);
- Knowledge of social pedagogy among management at all levels and willingness to learn and be challenged;
- Wider support from employer organisation and willingness to invest own resources into training, networking, thinking and reflection;
- Not being wedded to own philosophy to the point of exclusion of other ways of thinking;
- Taking a critical view of regulations and procedures, asking how they address the best interests of young people; and
- Stability of managerial and the staff team, with commitment to debate and reflect and to work with uncertainty as a positive.

They also articulated the key features of social pedagogy for social care practice based on nine interrelated but distinctive ideas that they identified in the research which included:

- The whole child: Social pedagogues work with the whole child, aware that children think, feel, have a physical, spiritual, social and creative existence, and that all of these characteristics are in interaction in the person. This approach is in contrast to the more procedural methods used in working with children, sometimes found among some English care workers (Petrie, *et al.* 2006). And while pedagogues seek to work with the whole child they also bring themselves as a whole person, to their practice. It is quite common for them to refer to bringing 'head, hands and heart' to the work.
- The heart: Social pedagogues should bring their hearts to their work as ethical and emotional beings. They are aware of their own emotional reactions to the work and how these can affect their relationships and communications with children and others. They treat others with respect and aim to build security, trust and self-esteem through their relationships with other people. They empathise with others and try to see their point of view knowing that this will often be different from their own – they sometimes speak of this as different people having different 'life worlds'.
- The hands: Pedagogues see their work as practical; relationships are formed in the course of everyday practical, ordinary activities such as preparing food, taking children to school. These are not treated as merely mundane activities, but as the medium for the relationship.

- The head: Social pedagogy practice develops through reflection. Practitioners assess their work in the light of theory and self-knowledge and on this basis, make decisions about taking the work forward, according to the best interests of children and young people.
- The 3 Ps: Social pedagogues sometimes speak of the '3 Ps', the Professional, the Personal and the Private. As professionals they are aware of their responsibilities towards others and they bring professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to their work. At the same time, they see themselves as people: fellow human beings with colleagues and children, not afraid to express feelings, or talk about their lives or share humour and fun. But they also judge which matters are private and should remain so, deciding what is for sharing and what would be inappropriate to share.
- Sharing the Living Space: Social pedagogues see themselves as sharing the same 'living space' as the people they work with. They try to get away from feelings of 'us and them' between different professionals and between adults and children ensuring that, whatever the setting, a group values all its members. In the 'living space' all group members are equally persons, with a right to participate and be heard. Pedagogues work 'in dialogue' with children and colleagues, believing that different perspectives make for richness and creativity.
- The common third: An important concept of social pedagogy is that of the common third - a mutual focus and the medium in which relationships are formed. Sometimes these are creative activities, sometimes more everyday tasks and sometimes just playing and having fun together.
- Teamwork: Social pedagogues value teamwork and the contribution of other people in bringing up children. They try to form good working relationships with other professionals and members of the local community, and especially with parents and carers.
- Role models: In all aspects of their profession, social pedagogues are aware of being role models for the adults and children they work with, especially in the respect they show to others, their attentive listening and supportive responses to other group members.

They concluded that 10 of 18 piloted care homes had made changes towards a social pedagogic approach, and had momentum to make further changes. They also found that where social pedagogues attempted to raise awareness and promote social pedagogy outside the care home they found that they both raised the profile of residential care and social pedagogy within the local area.

Eichsteller & Holthoff (2012) looked at pioneering work to develop social pedagogy in children's homes in Essex. They found that training and thinking in social pedagogical terms had broadened practitioners' perspectives so that they began to see their role as supporting health and education. Social pedagogy was also seen to shift practitioners mind sets to a more 'can do' attitude. However, they did not demonstrate any strong empirical evidence of improvements to the young people they were caring for, although this was explained by the fact that it was difficult to measure improvements except from the narratives of individuals receiving the support.

There have also been a number of small scale evaluations of the use of social pedagogy in the UK, however as these studies are mainly about scoping the development of social pedagogy in the UK they have not as yet produced strong empirical evidence that has indicated significant changes in outcomes for young people receiving care. Milligan (2009) in a review of the use of social pedagogy with Sycamore Services staff found that the training was considered relevant and useful and highly regarded by staff. Bengtsson *et al.* (2008) evaluated a programme to introduce social pedagogy in nine residential children's homes found that, by the end of the project two-thirds of participants' had increased their knowledge and many participants felt confident in using aspects of social pedagogy in their everyday practice. However, they also identified barriers to implementing social pedagogy in the UK,

relating to how residential care is perceived and restrictions to practice due to risk assessments and regulations. Berridge (2011) also alludes to a small scale study of Danish social pedagogy students who completed a six-month placements in England (Cameron, 2006) the study found that although the introduction of social pedagogy ideas to UK had made the students reflect on their practice it was considered insufficient to impact on their longer term practice and required more time and development to have an impact.

A key theme of present research in social pedagogy has been the number of barriers to establishing status and practice in the UK and particularly England. Firstly as *Bengtsson et al.* (2008) has already alluded to, the regulatory framework in the UK creates barriers. Smith and Whyte (2008) identified language barriers, the lack of a long tradition of theory and practice that has been developed in Europe making it difficult for the UK to replicate. They also identify ideologically barriers because the Anglo American tradition views pedagogy as essentially the science of teaching and therefore located in the classroom whereas care is situated in the family rather than with a more collective 'social' or community. Cameron *et al.* (2006) identified two cultural barriers to the introduction of social pedagogy in England firstly the low value attached to children, child rearing and child welfare in England and secondly the narrow focus of education and training on accrediting performance.

Coussée (2010) identified three problems with social care in the UK, which were the fragmented nature of social care in the UK, the poorly qualified and motivated workforce and the complex relationships with children and young people i.e. young people having a variety of adults involved in the care. Coussée went on to describe how UK Labour Government policy over the last ten years was improving the situation because it was focussed more on the child. However, Coussée argued that in adopting a social pedagogy approach in the UK it would encourage further reforming of care in order to obtain better outcomes, support creating better conditions for professionals and build a holistic, child-centred care approach. However, this can only be achieved if a social pedagogical perspective can be introduced into all aspects of the care of children and not in a fragmented way which mirrors the system that currently exists in the UK. This idea was explained in detail by Padget *et al.* (2007) who argued that in order for social pedagogy to be developed in the UK it needed to be defined for the UK audience and include training and qualification for the whole children's workforce. This requirement would need to be defined for all elements of the system including: practitioners, commissioners, leaders and managers, employers, regulators and inspectors, educators, trainers, researchers and policy makers.

1.2 The picture in Derbyshire

In spring 2010, Derbyshire County Council (DCC) commissioned an external organisation to facilitate the development of a social pedagogic approach in residential child care and contract care services. In commissioning the service, the overall aims were to:

- raise awareness of social pedagogy in the identified service areas amongst a wide group of staff, to include associated professionals e.g. social workers, nurses, education psychologists, CAMHS staff, education welfare staff, designated teachers.
- train a group of approximately 40 staff, the majority in residential child care and a much smaller group in contract care. 6 days of training for 2 staff per children's home and contract care teams, one of whom a manager or deputy manager, and the other a RCW. Also to include the educational psychologists linked to development of reflective practice within the children's homes and contract care. It was envisaged that these staff would become 'change agents' and have the interest, enthusiasm and commitment to promote the development of social pedagogy within their setting.
- offer the opportunity for a smaller group to undertake accredited training.

To support the commissioning process and in line with change management theory (Kotter 2002 & Burns 2007) a consultation took place during which a number of themes emerged which underpinned the need to develop social pedagogy training. These included:

- enthusiasm for social pedagogy and a thirst for learning;
- a desire for staff teams to be empowered;
- a desire to network and share good practice internally;
- awareness of pockets of resistance to change;
- a desire to bring together in a coherent way, strands of good, but disparate practice;
- a desire for an approach to social pedagogy to be one with a long term strategic application rather than a short term activity;
- a desire for young people to reach their potential;
- myths surrounding regulation and health and safety to be dispelled.

Three training activities emerged as a result of the commissioning process. In total, 280 members of staff were engaged at some level in training

Assessment was by portfolio which comprised of:

1. A group presentation to peer trainees
2. The completion of a reflective diary
3. A reflective summary of the reflective diary
4. A case study

In addition to the externally delivered training a programme of training six events have been offered to children's' centres across Derbyshire. This training has been delivered as part of the Unifi, creative Councils initiative and is being delivered as part of the Directorates in house training provision along with a one day introduction to Social Pedagogy which is offered by trained specialist staff.

2 Developing and embedding social pedagogy

Social pedagogy, whilst being more widely understood in Europe is a relatively new concept to those working with children and young people within the UK. This section presents the research findings concerning how people understand the term social pedagogy. It considers how the concept might be presented to make it engaging and considers the wider impacts of embedding the approach in DCC's work with children and young people.

2.1 Presenting social pedagogy

There was broad agreement about the understanding of the term social pedagogy amongst research participants. The majority of respondents used words like holistic or nurture to describe the concept. Most were agreed that the term referred to a broader or wider approach to care for children and saw this as integral to developing the role of those who worked to support children and young people. The Tag Cloud below presents the twenty most commonly used words to define the term by all survey respondents.

Figure 1: Tag cloud* representing the most commonly used words to define the term social pedagogy



*Tag clouds represent the frequency of words used in a specific piece of narrative and represents the frequency by assigning a relative size to each word

There was a slight difference in the responses between groups. Managers and practitioners were able to provide a definition of the term, although the definitions did vary however there was less ability to define the term amongst foster carers. Out of the 37 responses to the question which asked for a definition of the term social pedagogy six were unable to provide an interpretation of the term. This finding was backed up by focus group responses where one manager suggested that

'Foster parents and workers may not understand the name, and it could be a turn-off, contact with foster parents and foster workers should be through local support groups'

Focus group respondent

There were a range of views about how to present the concept of social pedagogy, with the majority agreeing that practical activities which involved training sessions, refreshers, videos, discussions, news articles, and opportunities for people to seek clarification were all important. The views of whether or not the term social pedagogy was the correct one to use were mixed. Whilst many respondents chose to focus on approaches to delivering the messages which lay behind the term social pedagogy the few respondents who did discuss the use of the actual term were divided. The survey question 'have you any ideas of how we could present this concept to help people understand it?' prompted 3 out of 39 practitioner respondents, 3 out of 12 manager respondents and 6 out of 29 foster carer respondents to suggest that alternative terminology or simplified language should be used. This idea was largely supported by participants in the foster carers focus group one of whom explained

'It's a very deep and technical word. It would be useful to have something that is understood across the range'

Foster carer focus group participant

Different views however were held by the practitioners and managers who attended the focus group some of whom held strong views to the contrary. The participants accepted that social pedagogy can create problems in translation at certain levels, but felt that it is important to retain the title.

'You can't take 'social pedagogy' out of what we are doing without appearing to water-down the whole thing, ThemPra and Jacaranda are pioneering social pedagogy and it would be counterproductive to re-invent the title'.

Focus group participant

The literature regularly refers to social pedagogy as taking a 'head, hearts and hands' approach to bringing up children. Petrie (2011) acknowledges the fact that the term can be a very off putting academic term and some research respondents support this view, however, there were only two views expressed about alternative names or descriptions for social pedagogy. These were:

- Making a house a home
- Nurturing awareness

2.2 The potential impact of developing social pedagogical approaches in Derbyshire

The results of the survey demonstrated a strong belief by all respondents that the development of a social pedagogical approach would have wide ranging benefits. This was backed up by the results of the fieldwork.

For children and young people

The overwhelming view from the responses of practitioners, managers and foster carers from both the survey and from focus groups was that the benefits for young people would be wide ranging and included enabling young people to take more control of their lives, to raise their aspirations and to make successful transitions. Derbyshire County Council has been developing its approach to social pedagogy and where training for this has occurred the impact is already evident.

'Since the adoption of a social pedagogy approach, incidence of physical interventions have all but disappeared'

Focus group participant (Care manager)

One practitioner survey respondent whose sentiments mirrored the majority noted that the outcome of developing social pedagogy would be

'to improve the child or young person's ability to understand themselves, their feelings, history, possibilities for the future and their current environment. It would help them understand the world around them, their place in it and how better to engage with, relate to their carers and trust them to provide positive and safe care which would enable them to thrive'

Practitioner survey respondent

For practitioners

The impacts on practitioners of introducing a wide spread culture of social pedagogy was more contested. The majority of research participants viewed this approach as having benefits for practitioners such as new skills and knowledge and a more satisfying outcome to their roles. One practitioner told us that social pedagogy would

'allow workers to become more directly involved in children's lives and help them make changes'

Practitioner survey respondent

There was however some concerns that developing a new approach might serve to reduce the resources available to provide services. One focus group respondent told us that they believed social pedagogy

'could have a massive impact if nurturing was at the centre of the provision.. but would require resourcing. Staff are already facing training towards 'Systemic Working' this is already creating pressures on time and resources''.

Focus group participant

Whilst the majority felt that introducing and embedding this approach was a good idea there were some frustrations expressed in terms of people's opportunity to engage with this:

'I would like to spend more time with our pupils discussing values, aspirations, self-confidence, identifying their skills/qualities, planning a route through education and into work. Many of our pupils have chaotic home lives where there is little or no input on the areas I have mentioned. I know my colleagues would like to do this as well, but we have so few hours to deliver GCSEs that exams become the sole focus of education.'

Practitioner survey respondent

There was also a heartfelt plea from one survey respondent who told us

'It would be very helpful. However there have been several training courses in the past few years involving carers and social workers and they have all been ignored when it comes to putting them into practice. Please don't start another training scheme until you have worked out how and if you can implement it in practice'

Foster carer survey respondent

For foster carers

There were a number of benefits for foster carers highlighted throughout the research. Firstly, it was felt that social pedagogy would encourage foster carers to work more holistically with children by providing them with enhanced skills and knowledge. The development of this approach was seen as one which would gain favour with foster carers because it would

'empower foster carers, making them more confident of their knowledge and skills so improve the lives of the children they look after. This in turn would reduce pressure on staff and create a virtuous circle'.

Foster carer survey respondent

For organisational culture

There was unanimous agreement that introducing social pedagogy would have a positive impact on organisational culture. One practitioner survey respondent expressed the views of many saying that social pedagogy would produce

'better results, value for money, less stress, more proactive and useful partnership work and therefore better reputation!'

Practitioner survey respondent

Another practitioner told us that it would produce a *'more joined up approach with other agencies.'*

A number of comments illustrated the difficult job of embedding this culture.

'It needs a fundamental change to actual practice for this to be able to happen- what we plan as workers with our clients often isn't able to be achieved as funding issues/no voluntary sector organisation available to take things forward. Often then a culture of dependency emerges'

Practitioner survey respondent

Summary

The idea of introducing and embedding a culture of social pedagogy across DCC received widespread support from across all research respondents. The approach was seen to have far reaching benefits for young people, practitioners, managers and foster carers alike. Where concerns were expressed, these related to the resources required to embed this approach more widely and concerns that this might be seen rather more as an initiative than a widespread cultural change.

The majority of respondents were able to offer some definition or view of the meaning of the term social pedagogy. Although the definitions were not identical words such as caring, nurturing and holistic were used to define the concept. There were a significant number of individuals who were unable to define the term although these were largely restricted to the foster carer respondents. This is not unsurprising as trained professionals are encouraged to embed theory within their practice and this is not necessarily a culture which is embraced by foster carers as a group of front line practitioners (Evetts, 2003)

In moving forward, DCC may wish to give some consideration to the use of the term social pedagogy in order to engage the maximum number of individuals in the concept and embed a culture of social pedagogy across all areas of their work with children and young people

3 The teaching and learning required to embed social pedagogy

This section explores the practical issues associated with developing the teaching and learning required to embed the concept of social pedagogy. The section explores the philosophies which exist within the practitioner, manager and foster carer workforce. The section explores the preferences for teaching and assessment in social pedagogy.

3.1 Current employee competence

In order to gauge the most appropriate level of any future qualification survey participants were asked to provide details of their highest level of qualification. The table below provides an analysis of the responses.

Table 1: Current highest qualification of survey respondents

Level of highest award	Percentage of practitioners (n=62)	Percentage of managers (n=21)	Percentage of foster carers (n=51)
2	0%	0%	17.6%
3	14.5%	0%	25.5%
4	9.7%	4.8%	17.6%
Degree or above	75.8%	95.2%	35.3%

The research also sought to explore the extent to which those working within the children and young people’s workforce had qualifications related directly to their work. The survey responses revealed that the workforce was generally well qualified with a range of qualifications at a number of levels. The level of qualification was higher for the professional employees however the foster carer respondents who chose to answer this question (25 out of a possible 63) were largely qualified to level 3 or above with at least one qualification. One foster carer was at pains to describe their entire accreditation by listing the following

‘Foster Carer Induction, Birth to 3 Matters, Contact, Recording, Difference and Diversity, Makaton, Safeguarding - Advanced, Safeguarding - Shaken Babies, Safeguarding - Domestic Abuse, Working with CAMHS, Making a Difference I & II, Working with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder, Working with children who may have ADD/ ADHD, CWDC Folder, Children’s Rights, Attachment, First Aid, Preparing Children for Moving On’

Foster carer survey respondent

The table below lists the highest level of qualifications relating to working with children and young people attained by each group

Table 2: Survey respondent’s highest level of qualification appropriate to working with children and young people.

Level of highest award	Percentage of practitioners (n=61)	Percentage of managers (n=21)	Percentage of foster carers (n=25)
3	13.1%	4.8%	60%
4	16.4%	19.0%	8%
Degree or above	55.7%	66.7%	20%
Unclassified	13.1%	9.5%	12%

The survey results indicated that 26.2% of practitioners (n= 61), 23.8% of managers (n=21) and 13% of foster carers (n=54) have undertaken training in social pedagogy.

3.2 Personal philosophies for learning

Survey responses indicated that there was a great deal of interest from all participants in developing their knowledge and skills regarding social pedagogy. Of the respondents choosing to answer this question, 86.9% (n= 53) of practitioners, 80.9% of managers (where n=21) and 79% of foster carers (n=43) were either excited or interested in developing their skills and knowledge. The figures below show the full results for each group.

Figure 2: Practitioners willingness to develop their skills and knowledge about nurturing children and young people (n =53)

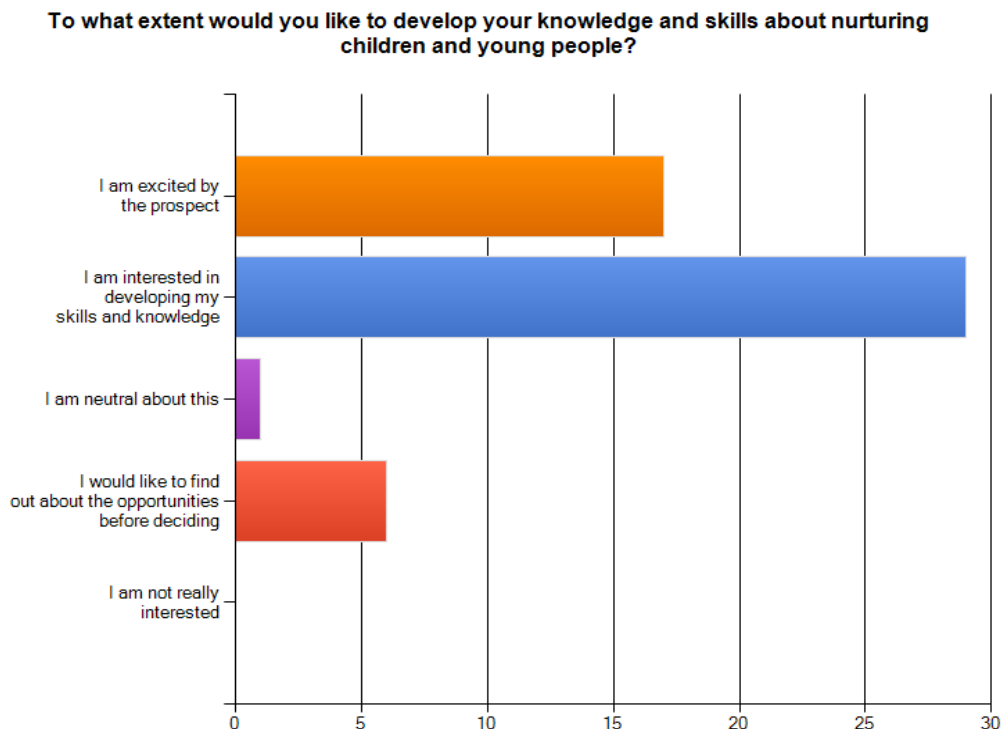


Figure 3: Managers willingness to develop their skills and knowledge about nurturing children and young people (n =21)

To what extent would you like to develop your knowledge and skills about nurturing children and young people?

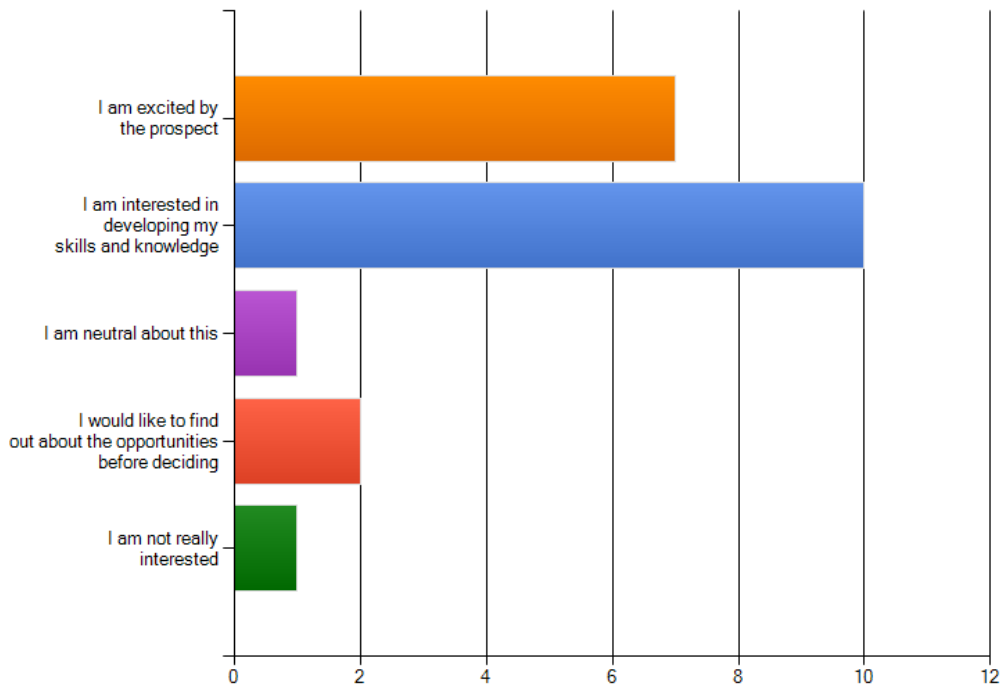
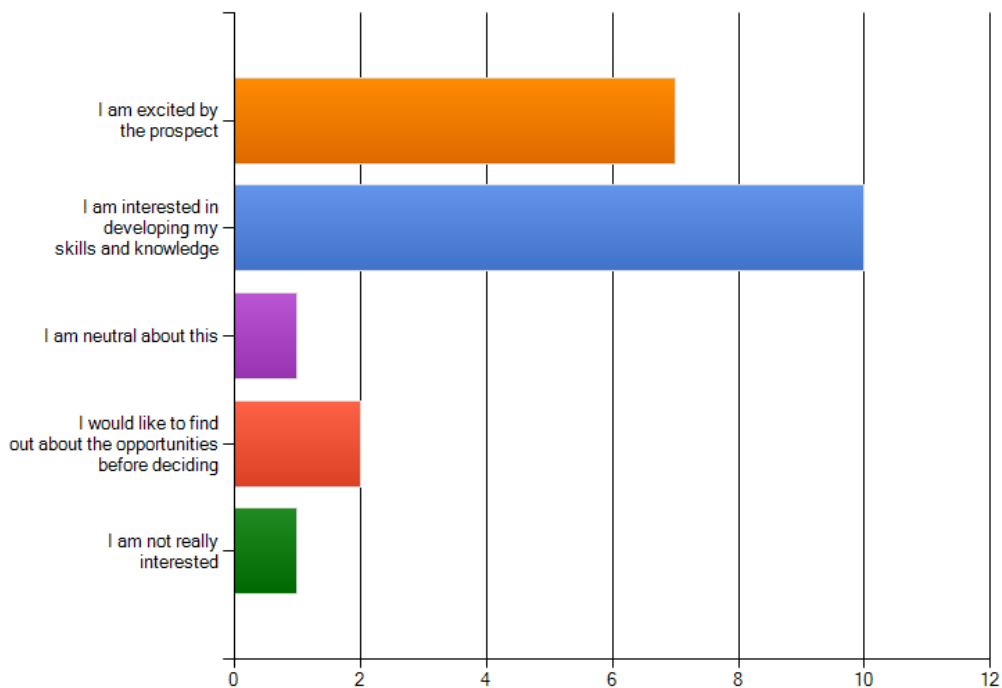


Figure 4: Foster carers willingness to develop their skills and knowledge about nurturing children and young people (n =43)

To what extent would you like to develop your knowledge and skills about nurturing children and young people?



3.3 Learning preferences

The survey responses indicate that of the three approaches presented (face to face, distance learning or a blended learning approach) distance learning was the least preferred

with only 11.1% of practitioners (n=54), 20% of managers (n=20) and 9.1% of the foster carers (n=44) preferring this option. Foster carers had a slight preference for a blended learning approach but the other two groups were evenly divided between face to face and a mixed approach.

3.4 Approach to accreditation

All survey respondents placed value on learning about social pedagogy however there were slight differences in the extent to which accreditation in social pedagogy would be valued. Foster carers were the most enthusiastic about receive a qualification in social pedagogy (51.2% where n=43) with practitioners being the least enthusiastic (44.4% where n=54). Ten managers (47.6% where n=21) showed a desire to gain accreditation in social pedagogy. Taken as a whole group, 47.7% of the respondent's favoured the idea of receiving accreditation for social pedagogy.

The focus groups provided a different response. Managers and practitioner focus group participants were keen to advocate for a qualification in social pedagogy. It is important however that any qualification should integrate into existing structures.

'Qualification are vital and important, but it must be suitable for all takers delivery would be complex and should not duplicate the NVQ system already in place'

Focus group participant.

Training managers interviewed as part of the fieldwork gave very clear messages about the role and value of accreditation. Non-accredited training in social pedagogy is a valuable asset within the existing training programme. Whilst they acknowledge that accreditation has a role to play in developing professional practice and a culture of nurturing, not everyone either wants or needs a qualification. Any qualifications developed should be strategically integrated into a framework for staff development which includes both accredited and non-accredited training. This should include a framework which is developmental and spans qualifications from level 2 through to level 4. There is also an argument for integrating social pedagogy awareness in the induction programmes of all staff working within the Children and Young Peoples Directorate.

The opportunity for integrating modules of study into existing professional and para-professional programmes exist such as to support the level 3 and 5 diploma (National Occupational Standards for those working in children's residential homes) may exist and this would be worth pursuing. Equally with the advent of higher level apprenticeships it may be possible to develop modules in social pedagogy to support individuals working through these programmes in the future.

3.5 Assessment preferences

There were marked differences in assessment preferences amongst the three respondent groups. For practitioners (n=51) there was no clear preference with 74.5% indicating preferences for projects and professional discussion. For this group, videos or podcasts were the least preferred scoring only 9.8%. Managers responses indicted a clearer preference with 78.9 % (n=19) preferring project work. For this group exams were the least favourite option with a score of only 5.3%. Foster carers' responses indicated a slight preference for project work based assessment approaches (50%) however responses were spread similarly across five of the eight options. Only 4.8% (n =42) of the responses were given to vide or podcast assessments. The figures below show the preferences for each group

Figure 5: Practitioners preferences for assessment approaches (n =51)

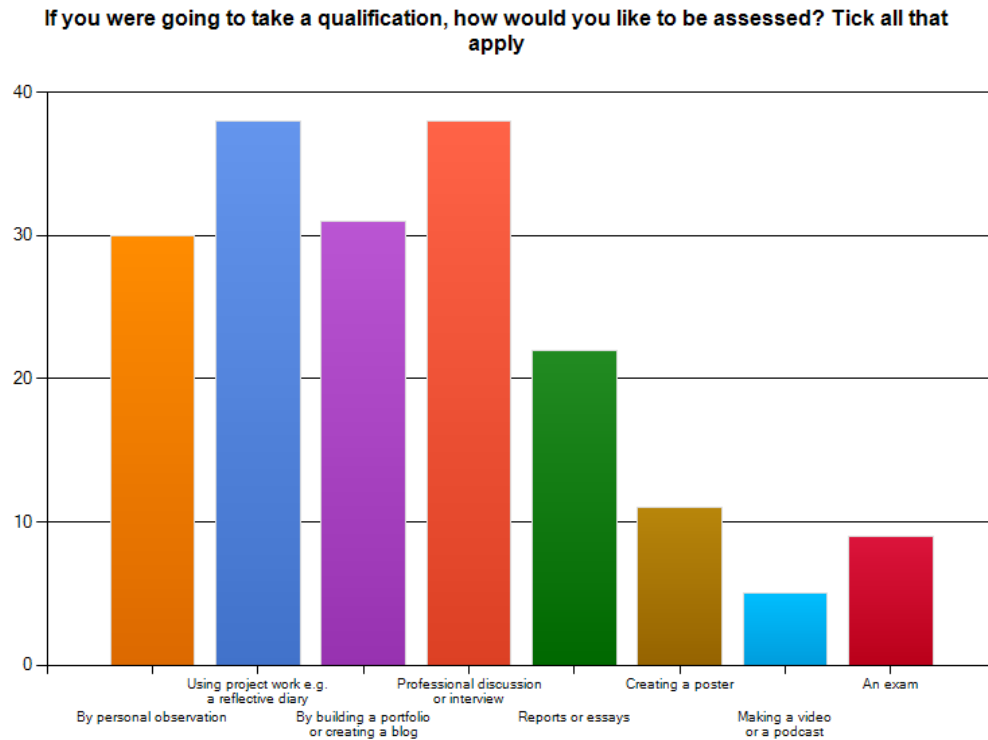


Figure 6: Managers preferences for assessment approaches (n =19)

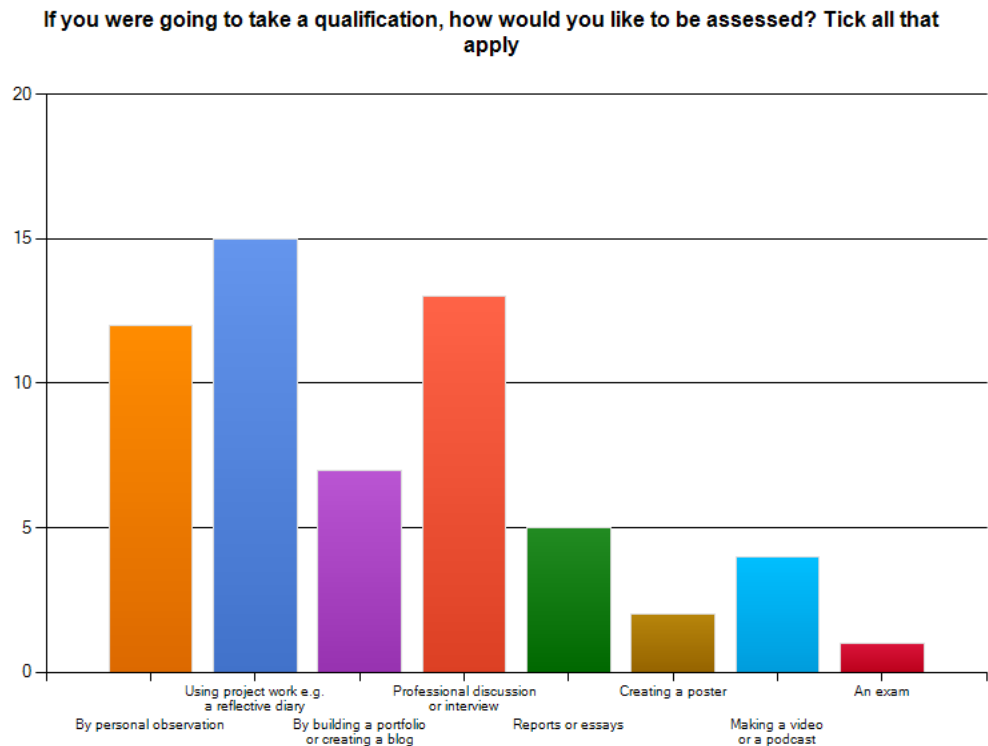
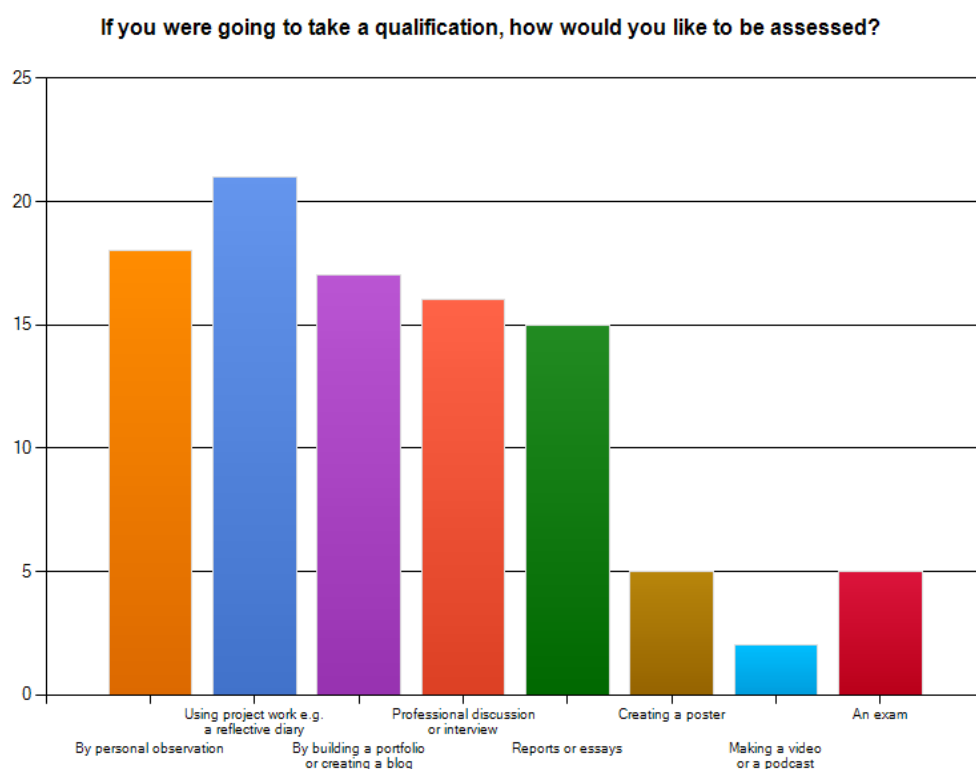


Figure 7: Foster carers preferences for assessment approaches (n =42)



3.6 Resourcing the new approach

Throughout the research, respondents were very positive about the idea of undertaking training for social pedagogy and there was a high level of enthusiasm for obtaining qualifications in the subject. The development of awards is not without cost and this section explores considers the availability of resources to develop a new programme

The identification of training resources for new initiatives is determined by the Directors priorities. Without a strong message from senior leaders neither financial or staff resources are likely to be made available for this initiative. It is important therefore that this initiative is lead from above and communicates clear priorities for all members of staff involved.

The DCC Training Directory currently includes an introduction to social pedagogy which uses internal staff for delivery. Specialist staff are regularly involved in the delivery of a range of programmes across the Directorate. A review of the training opportunities presented in the training directory reveals that many programmes on offer could include an element of social pedagogy and that all trainers should be equipped not only to adopt effective teaching approaches but should also be aware of social pedagogy and the implications for their own areas of expertise. The idea of training trainers is not a new one however could result in a more effective approach to embedding social pedagogy and would be relatively easy to achieve with a relatively small amount of resource.

At this stage of the social pedagogy initiative the extent to which DCC has funding to develop a framework or any qualifications which might sit within this is unclear. There appears to be no obvious external sources of funding for the development of this programme.

3.7 Resources available to sponsor learners

It is acknowledged that resources for any new local authority initiative are limited and therefore a number of funding models for meeting the training needs of staff need to be considered. This section explores the possibilities for funding the training of individual staff through DCC resources, the resources available to individual staff and funding which might be available externally.

DCC resources

It is unclear at the point of writing this report how much resource the DCC are able to invest in staff training in social pedagogy however the research sought to establish the extent to which individual staff members might be prepared to invest in their own training and development. The survey responses reveal that all three groups would be willing to spend their own time on training in social pedagogy.

Learner's resources

The current budgetary challenges which face public services in the UK make it critical that all options for funding for learners pursuing programmes of study are explored. The research sought to gauge the extent to which potential learners on a programme might be prepared to invest their own time and money in such an option. The survey results suggest that there is little appetite amongst any of the three groups for wholly funding their own training however a small number (8% of managers where n=50, 12.5% of managers where n=16 and 2.6% where n=39) are prepared to consider part funding a programme. A greater proportion of respondents would consider investing their own time in a programme. The table below presents the survey responses concerning individual's feelings of personal responsibility towards directing their own resources to a programme of study

Table 3: Survey response indicating levels of personal responsibility for resourcing personal study

	Practitioners (n=50)	Managers (n=16)	Foster carers (n=39)
I am prepared to invest my own time on this	44.0%	56.3%	64.1
I am prepared to invest my own money in this	0%	0%	2.6%
I am not prepared to spend my own time on this	10%	18.8%	2.6%
I am not prepared to spend my own money on this.	38%	12.5%	28.2%
I am prepared to part-fund my own training in this area	8%	12.5%	2.6%

3.8 Leverage for embedding social pedagogy

Conversations with participants revealed a number of options for encouraging a cultural change around nurturing. For many professional groups for example, the need to undertake a number of hours of continuing professional development (CPD) is a requirement of professional registration. Where this is the case, a programme of study in social pedagogy would ensure that practitioners have the necessary hours of CPD to include in their registration requirements.

It might also be possible to incorporate social pedagogy learning into any activity or offer where funding is an outcome for example foster carers receive a bonus which is linked to prescribed training and social pedagogy could be included in this, or the process whereby community child minders seek funding could be linked to a requirement for CPD and social

pedagogy could form part of this requirement. It could also be incorporated into the requirements for the volunteer passport.

Other opportunities could be the basic induction for child minders and also opportunities which present themselves during conferences.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The research team embarked on a scoping exercise to determine the appetites for learning about social pedagogy amongst the DCC workforce including practitioners, managers and foster carers. The results demonstrate overwhelming that there is a genuine interest and commitment to developing knowledge and skills in this area across all groups. Although this has been a small scale project there is reason to believe that the results are representative of a wider commitment and the research team conclude that it is timely to convert this positive message into a strategy to embed the values and messages contained within a social pedagogical approach across the Directorate.

The research shows that employees would engage in a differentiated and developmental programme of learning. For some individuals this would involve accreditation. The preferred options for a model of learning are for a mixed programme which involves both face to face and distance learning options. The preferred assessment approach is for project work, portfolios and observations.

A number of options for developing a programme have emerged and the key features are that any programme should:

- Engage all staff
- Allow for progression
- Allow for accreditation where appropriate
- Should span foundation level learning through to undergraduate level.

It is the view of the research team that the priorities for development include an accredited level 4 programme as this would provide an option for the majority of employees however this will be less effective in embedding a cultural shift if it is not accompanied by a whole Directorate approach.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The use of the term 'social pedagogy' should be given some thought when developing any future strategy. Views are divided about the use of the term. Whilst it is incumbent on professionals to embed their practice in understood and accepted theory and concepts, this is not always helpful when developing and embedding a new approach across all groups. Some care should be taken therefore to maximise positive engagement by choosing to communicate the concept using clear and widely understood language. Without this DCC may not achieve their aims of engaging all participants in the fundamentals which underpin social pedagogical approaches.

Recommendation 2: Given the existing levels of education by employees DCC should prioritise a level 4 qualification as this is likely to be most effective in engaging the maximum number of individuals in the first instance. It is likely that progression will need to be considered as a natural consequence of developing a level 4 and DCC should also consider diverting some resources into considering a level 6 award.

Recommendation 3: Given the enthusiasm and commitment by all research participants for learning and development around social pedagogy, DCC should consider implementing a training strategy to develop and embed social pedagogy within the Directorate. The approach should allow all staff to undertake the training and accreditation which is suitable to their role. This should include a range of accredited training resulting in qualifications

including both level 3 and level 4 as well as non-accredited training for staff at all levels within the directorate.

Recommendation 4: When developing the teaching and learning strategy for social pedagogy DCC should adopt a blended learning approach offering both distance learning and online options. This would ensure that the majority of learner preferences are met.

Recommendation 5: The development of assessment approaches should consider a mixed methods approach but should avoid examinations and the use of videos or podcasts.

Recommendation 6: Employees have indicated that whilst they are not prepared to fund their own programmes of learning they may meet DCC part way and use some of their own time for study. Any programme should consider this as an approach, however the implications in terms of formalising agreements and remunerating success may need to be carefully considered.

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