Natasha Young and Steven Keen, explain. Lose valuable elements that could still be concerned over change for change’s sake, throw the baby out with the bath water.” Water was so dirty you could actually lose children; last of all the babies. By then, the men, then the women and finally the clean water, then all the sons and other conspired of a big tub of water. The man of training was published. (1) In it, the GSCC a new framework of PQSW education and Council (GSCC) in 2003. Submitted to the General Social Care launched in December 2002 and a report work is in murky waters. Commonly known as PQ1 – is in murky waters but that doesn’t mean ‘throwing the baby out with the bath water’, as Keith Brown, her book on the subject, the latter has many of pieces of work have been completed assessing the impact of Part One programmes. (2) In the past three years, the authors of these articles have been conducting an ongoing programme of research to ascertain what people’s experience of PQ1 has been. Aside from using feedback on university forms, we surveyed 71 candidates and 26 training managers. Findings from this research illustrate that candidates find PQ1 to be a positive experience. It enables them to take a step back and look in-depth at their practice. Through completion of the portfolio, candidates re-engage with core social work values and principles. Importantly, it also prepares them for Part Two courses by acquainting or re-acquainting them with study skills and an academic writing style. The most significant finding, however, has been that PQ1 helps to “start, develop or confirm the importance of critically reflecting on their career and practice”. For training managers and co-ordinators a positive impact of PQ1 is that it can be delivered flexibly and in a cost-effective manner; it also carries both professional and academic credits. Taken overall, this research shows that PQ1 has a number of significant benefits for social care workers in terms of personal and professional development and in preparing them for future programmes. Another major concern about the proposed PQ framework is the usage of the term ‘graduate’. Only 40% of candidates completing PQ1 hold degrees according to data from 2004, therefore, how will prospective candidates without degrees access the proposed framework? Most universities are not able to award Graduate Diplomas to non-graduates. The social work practitioner workforce would need to be qualified to degree level, in order to progress onto a graduate diploma. While entry to the social work profession is now pitched at degree level, there is still a significant section of the social care workforce with diploma level qualifications or less. It would seem wise to have four levels of award, and to retain PQ1 (with its 40 credits and possible graduate certificate) at the first point of entry in the award structure. From our experience, PQ1 needs to remain a generic award, with both academic and professional credits, and be integrated into the post-qualifying framework. Its 40 credits could then be used towards a degree, in the case of non-graduates, or as a graduate certificate in the case of graduates. Whatever happens, before PQ1 gets thrown out we need to assess its role and impact.

The proposed three-level PQ framework

- Graduate Diploma in Specialist Social Work consisting of a minimum 80 credits at Level H (or 3) in the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) framework;
- Post-graduate Diploma in Advanced Social Work consisting of a minimum of 80 credits at Masters level in the QAA framework;
- Master’s Degree in Advanced Social Work consisting of a minimum of 180 credits at Master’s level in the QAA framework.

Biography

KEITH BROWN is acting head of social work and head of the Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work at Bournemouth University. Natasha Young is a research fellow at the Institute of Health & Community Studies, Bournemouth University. Steven Keen is an independent research analyst, and specialises in the fields of health and social care.

References & Information