

## Case study

Reference number

### Subject details (fields in red to be completed by DfE staff)

<b>Teaching Partnership name</b>	Kent, Medway and the South East Social Work Teaching Partnership (KMTP)
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Medway Council
<b>Sector</b>	Social Work
<b>Subject</b>	Progression
<b>Potential related work area</b>	Workforce and labour market planning

## Case study details

### Main title

KMTP and Social Care Academies Student Faculties.

### Subtitle

Promoting Social Work Student Employability.

### Introduction (max 100 words)

Progression is focused on promoting the employment and employability of University of Kent (UOK) and Canterbury Christchurch University (CCCU) Social Work students upon completion of their studies and Social Work England registration within the Partnership Local Authorities. This case study aims to illustrate the employment rates in social work after graduation and how the Kent, Medway and the South East Social Work Teaching Partnership (KMTP) has worked to develop the support given to final year students in their transition to qualified practitioner. This case study shows how this work has been developed with Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Council (MC) Social Care Academies' Student Faculties and HEIs, which will promote the sustainability of the support programme and the Local Authorities' recruitment plans for NQSWs.

### Fact box

- In place is a programme of employability skills, which is now time tabled to the yearly NQSW recruitment cycle of the Las.
- The measurements of graduate employment rates are changing.
- Employment Data has been gained to influence the decisions in this case study.

### Quotes

Testimonials from students on Student Learning Workshops:

*"The facilitated workshop was beneficial to me because it gave me the opportunity to interact with other students on placement from children services and learn from their various experiences."* Student on placement in Medway

*"It enabled me to reflect on my experience and also their experience and helped my learning and development. It was a reflective space for us students."* **Student on placement in Medway**

*"I liked that we looked at theory/concepts that are relevant to children and adults."* **Student on placement in KCC**

*"It was a really important topic to discuss and use to inform practice."* **Student on placement in KCC**

Student comments related to employment applications and offers

*"Employment process was a really positive experience – I was encouraged to apply quite early in the placement"* **CCCU MA Student**

*"I was lucky – every interview I went to I was offered a post"* **CCCU MA Student**

## Body of case study text

The Kent, Medway and the South East Social Work Teaching Partnership (KMTP) is committed to achieving the objectives it has been commissioned to deliver within the Implementation plan. These objectives have been translated into a vision and ethos in relation to attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing the brightest and best social workers in the country.

It aims to do this by:

- Developing and implanting a credible plan to deliver employment rates in social work of at least 70% and 80% 6 months and 12 months respectively after graduation.
- Developing and implementing a system to support final year students in their transition to qualified practitioner, above and beyond final placement arrangements.
- Proposed joint recruitment by Local Authorities of NQSWs.

### 1. Employability Data

#### *University of Kent Graduates (BA/MA)*

Activity type*	Employer**	Job role***	Leaving academic year			
			2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	All years
In work	Kent or Medway Councils	Social worker	19	16	-	35
		Other role	2	0	-	2
	Other Local Authority Councils	Social worker	7	10	-	17
		Other role	0	0	-	0
	Other employers	Social worker	3	0	-	3
		Other role	4	5	-	9
Other activity	-	-	6	3	-	9
Did not respond	-	-	15	8	-	23
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>	56	<b>98</b>

*\*Data not provided citing changes to data collection processes*

Of the 98 students, 76% responded to the employment survey. Of these 73% were successful in obtaining social work roles, with 46% of these roles being within KMTP local authorities and 26% within other authorities and PVIs. A further 14% found employment in the PVI sector in non-registered roles.

*Canterbury Christchurch University Graduates (BA/MA)*

Activity type	Job Role	Leaving academic year			
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	All years
In work	Graduate Level Employment	26*	29	37	92
	Other Employment	-	0	1	1
Other activity		-	2	1	3
Further study	-	-	0	1	1
Did not respond	-	32	16	58	106
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>203</b>

*\*BA data not provided*

There have been limitations with the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data as a more detailed breakdown of employment destination was not able to be obtained. Of the 97 respondents 94% went on to secure employment at a graduate level with a further 5% obtaining other employment/activity or going into further study.

Making use of secondary data held by the programme team was that 26 out of 28 MA students (93%) in 2015/16 went straight into employment, the majority with KCC where they had been on placements. In 2016/17 secondary data from employment references that of the 27 MA students who qualified that academic year a high proportion went to work for KCC.

Using this approach provided a higher level of responses than was available through the use of National data alone. This enabled the partnership to form a more detailed localised picture and has led to agreement within the HEIs to develop their own internal processes with SW Graduates so that, not only are the rates of employment being tracked but also understood and responded to effectively.

There has now been changes in the way that employment data is collected. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) have conducted a review of the data collected about graduate outcomes ([the 'NewDLHE' review](#)). This review designed a new model to capture data about graduates. They are now implementing the Graduate Outcomes record – with the first survey of graduates completed in December 2018, and the first data to be published in Spring 2020.

In order to overcome the barriers in relation to obtaining destinations data for the 2018/19 graduates, CCCU asked the cohort of MA students and BA students who completed a placement at KCC and Medway, to complete a survey during a recall day near the end of their course.

*Canterbury Christchurch University Graduates (BA/MA) 2018-19*

Activity type	Employer	BA	MA	Total
In work	Kent or Medway Councils	14	13	27
	Other LA Councils	1	-	1
	Other employers	1	1	2
Other activity		5	6	11
Did not respond or unknown		12	6	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>59</b>

Of those 13 CCCU MA students who took up employment within KCC or MC and the 1 who accepted a job at an Independent Fostering Agency, 8 of them did their placement within the KMTP, whilst the other 6 did not. In total 10 applied to their placement areas, 4 didn't - those that didn't cited lack of placements in the area they wanted to work in or lack of jobs in that area. Of the 26 CCCU BA students that were on placement within KCC and MC, 14 (53%) of them went on to work for the same Local Authority. Reasons cited for not progressing into employment within the KMTP LAs, were because students were taking a break or sought out of county employment.

## **2. Social Care Student Faculty and HEIs**

Both Kent County Council and Medway Council have developed Social Care Academies, which have played a key role in the development and implementation of KMTP's plan and goals. The Medway Social Work Academy was launched in April 2014. The Academy was set up with a strong focus on training linked to continuous professional development for all existing social workers and managers. KCC are in the process of developing a virtual Social Care Academy, which is due to be fully launched by the 1st of April 2020. Both Academies are key to any sustainability agenda for the KMTP.

Within these Academies are the Student Faculties. One of the functions of the Student Faculties is to facilitate the action learning sets for students on placement within the partnership local authorities to expand their knowledge and share solutions. The student faculties also works with the KMTP to ensure that all social work vacancies across the partnership are systematically advertised to students as well as maintaining a database of Qualified Social Work Practitioners who are made available to support employability skills development to social work students at the partner HEIs.

### **2.1 Student Placement to NQSW Conversion**

Student employment as it relates specifically to those graduates who were on placement within KCC and MC Adults and Children's Services is supported by the LAs through their placement programmes.

*Medway Placement to NQSW Conversion Rate*

Year	Service	Placement Total	No. Placement to NQSW	NQSW Total	Placement conversion as % of total NQSW	Placement conversion (%)
2017/18 *	Children's	19	5	12	41%	26%
	Adult SC	7	3	8	37%	42%
2018/19 **	Children's	25	5	12	41%	20%
	Adult SC	7	3	6	50%	42%
	Total	58	16	38	42%	27%

\*Students on Placement 2016/17

\*\*Students on Placement 2017/18

Of the 26 students on placement within Medway, 12 went through the interview process with 66% of them being successful. The total number of NQSWs recruited also included 4 graduates from KMTP HEIs, who did not complete their placement in the LA where they obtained employment.

*KCC Placement to NQSW Conversion Rate*

Year	Service	Placement Total	No. Placement to NQSW	NQSW Total	Placement conversion as % of total NQSW	Placement conversion (%)
2017/18 *	Children's	55	30	68	44%	54%
	Adult SC	15	7	34	20%	46%
2018/19 **	Children's	64	33	64	51%	51%
	Adult SC	16	7	38	18%	43%
	Total	150	77	204	37%	51%

\*Students on Placement 2016/17

\*\*Students on Placement 2017/18

The total number of NQSWs recruited over the two years also include 46 graduates from KMTP HEIs, who did not complete their placement in the LA where they obtained employment. Overall, 60% of all NQSWs recruited in this period studied at either UOK or CCCU.

Both LAs take a significant number of students to meet their recruitment needs and to assist the HEIs with their obligation to place students. However, on average 44% of students on placement go on to be recruited as NQSWs. There are a number of factors that need further

exploration to understand this pattern. What is evident is that there is considerable interest from applicants from other universities and graduates of UOK and CCCU who had not completed a placement in the LA in which they went on to be employed.

## 2.2 Student Learning Workshops

Student Learning Workshops have been agreed by the Social Care Academies, Strategic Boards within Kent County Council and Medway Council, falling under the Student Faculty. The student workshops are facilitated by the Advanced Practitioners within the Partnership. Going forward a sustainability strategy will be needed to support continued facilitation of these post March 2020.

The programme of action learning for students on placement within KCC Adults and Children's teams had been agreed by the KCC Social Care Academy Board and has been delivered to the 2018-2019 student cohort. The workshops are offered in both the East and West of Kent, to promote accessibility and attendance. The plan of workshops has included as examples:

- "Considering permanency for children through adoption"
- "Working with grief and loss throughout the life course"

These workshops have continued in October 2019 when the new cohort of students started their placements as well as being offered a fully actualised induction programme.

Within Medway students have benefitted from monthly sessions. These covered various practice topics, specialist speakers and included reflective case discussions. Some of these sessions were done jointly with the students on placement within Children and Adult services. A schedule of learning events has been offered to students in Medway since the launch of their Social Care Academy. The current schedule of learning events for the 2019/20 student cohort, is being developed within the Academies Student Faculty meeting.

Preliminary feedback from the students has been positive. Based on this feedback, the workshops have provided supplemental learning to the students, where they have particularly found the opportunity to link their learning with practice examples helpful. The opportunity to hear about the experiences on placement of their fellow students has enabled a broader learning experience, not limited to their own setting. The opportunity for reflection and to make links between their practice and academic learning is particularly valued. In this way, the student workshops are not replicating the academic learning but rather support students to make the links with practice.

## 2.3 Promoting Employment

### *2.3.1 Employability Skills Development*

Both partnership HEIs have provision in place to support the employability of Social Work students. This is through their Employability Services, which is accessible to all students within the universities. Also provided are career events and workshops specific to Social Work recruitment, which are now linked to the ASYE recruitment cycles of the partnership Local Authorities.

These programmes have been developed to cover the skills requirements to successfully progress through the recruitment process; the written test, the group task and the individual

interview. These include mock interviews, which includes a skills training element and a mock panel made up of qualified practitioners from within KCC and MC. These individuals will be sourced from a centralised database of experienced practitioners, accessed through the Social Care Academies.

These skills development days and “Career Days” will be scheduled to take place in early 2020, just prior to the NQSW recruitment within KCC and MC, taking place around March/April each year. Medway has recently added a further recruitment cycle to capture the MA graduates who complete their studies later in the year. The careers day gives opportunity for students to meet employers with KCC and MC being a big feature. Also, within the careers day, there are further workshops on compiling CV’s and application forms. CCCU has an online resource for students to access information, guides and tips to promote employability.

The first trial of this will take place in March/April 2020, past the point where the KMTP will be able to evaluate the impact of the programmes. However, this will be picked up within the respective Student Faculties of the Medway and Kent Social Care Academies.

### *2.3.2 Promoting Employment Opportunities*

Each student on placement is given an interview in the respective LA where they have been on placement. We have observed that there is often cross over with students on placement in one LA applying for NQSW post in the other KMTP LA. We are in the process of exploring the feasibility for joint recruitment opportunities, which would enable resources to be utilized in the recruitment process more efficiently. Both LAs have through the KMTP developed the same recruitment process, however these to date take place usually weeks apart. A joint recruitment process would need to not disadvantage either LA or students undertaking interviews. This piece of work continues.

Students on placement within KCC and MC, each receive a formal induction into their respective LAs and receive an induction pack which includes within it the recruitment dates and other valuable information.

The partner local authorities both participate in the careers days organised by the HEIs. This provides opportunity to promote employment opportunities, and benefits of employment within their respective organisations. Both local authority partners advertise employment opportunities on their own council websites and externally on government job websites.

KMTP has developed a communication and engagement strategy of which promoting student employment, is a feature. The KMPT will use its own website to consolidate the employment opportunities within the partner local authorities and promote the benefits of working in the TP in relation to the ASYE programme and post qualifying CPD.