



NATIONAL PRACTICE TEACHING IN SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVE



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

CONTENTS

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

GREETINGS

Welcome to the Summer and final edition of the National Practice Teaching in Social Work Initiative (NPTSWI) e-newsletter. It has been a busy few months here for the NPTSWI as you will see throughout. This edition will highlight the collaborative work of the past two years. In line with the completion of this project the IASW are giving one lucky reader the opportunity to win a years free membership. Be sure to enter!

On 2nd March 2023 we hosted the first-ever Practice Teaching Conference in Ireland, this was an in person event in UCC. In the previous edition we introduced some of the speakers including keynote speakers Professor Mark Doel, Marguerita McGovern and Siobhan Maclean. You can view this event on our website here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/nptswi/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/>

In this edition we will hear from MSW graduates Darragh and Cora who presented at the conference following their placements on “innovation in social work”. Dr Niamh Flanagan and Dr Elaine Wilson created a bespoke video “One piece of advice” for the NPTSWI website from the conference and tell us how this was achieved. New bespoke resources will continue to be added to the NPTSWI website until the end of the month. Keep an eye out here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/nptswi/resources/#video-series>

We all know students can't graduate without completing two practice placements so the involvement of practice teachers supervising students on placement is vital for the profession of social work. From September 2022- May 2023 510 practice teachers supervised social work students nationally! Andrea Ward, practice teacher and tutor reminds us “Practice teaching is very enjoyable, it gives a sense of fulfilment and opportunities to review our own practice and to refresh on social work theories”.



On behalf of myself and the NPTSWI I would like to take this opportunity to thank the DCEDIY for funding this project, the IASW for collaborating and to all HEI'S nationally for investing in collaborating for the benefit of HEI'S, practice teachers, students and service users. Well done to all involved.

Lyn on behalf of the NPTSWI



WE ARE ENCOURAGING CORU REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKERS NATIONALLY TO CONTACT THE HEI'S IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PRACTICE TEACHING IN 2023/2024

Placement dates for the next
placement cycle are as follows:

UCC	UCD	TCD	MAYNOOTH	ATU	UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY
11 th Sep -15 th Dec 2023	22 nd Jan - 23 rd April 2024	4 th Sept - 8 th Dec 2023	29 th Jan - 3 rd May 2024	22 nd Jan - 3 rd May 2024	11 th Sept to 14 th Dec 2023
8 th Jan-12 th April 2024		8 th Jan - 12 th April 2024			

Maynooth University
✉ Brian.Melaugh@mu.ie
and
✉ jean.byrnecummins@mu.ie

Atlantic Technological University
✉ brenda.feeney@ATU.IE

University of Galway
✉ eleanor.kelly@universityofgalway.ie

Trinity College Dublin
✉ erna.oconnor@tcd.ie
and
✉ sinead.whiting@tcd.ie

University College Cork
✉ Joanne.rose@ucc.ie

University College Dublin
✉ paula.slavin@ucd.ie

OBITUARY

DR HELEN CLEAK

Dr Helen Cleak who sadly died on May 18th, was a leading academic in social work practice teaching and learning who had strong associations with Ireland. Helen was Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Allied Health, Human Service and Sport, La Trobe University, Melbourne and was formerly Associate Professor, School of Public Health & Social Work, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. In recent years she has been a Visiting Fellow at Trinity College, Dublin and Queens University Belfast and collaborated on international research projects and publications with colleagues from Trinity College, Queens University Belfast, University College Cork and the University of Galway.

Helen had a strong practice and research background in practice education and was the Director of Field Education and International placements at La Trobe University, Melbourne for over 20 years. She was on the Editorial Board of Australian Social Work and was a member of the accreditation Panel of the AASW and a member of the Expert panel to review the ASWEAS guidelines on field education. She also collaborated with health practitioners to research aspects of health-related social work and domestic and family violence.

Her bestselling book, co-authored with Jill Wilson, 'Making the Most of Field Placement' offers a practice-based approach to teaching and learning during placement experiences for both students and supervisors.

Helen recently contributed a pre-recorded presentation based on research undertaken with colleagues in Ireland and Northern Ireland at the NPTSWI conference "Educating together for practice teaching in social work in the 21st Century."



Dr Helen Cleak

COMPETITION TIME

Would you like to win one year free membership?!!

Quote Practice teaching along with your full name and CORU registration number to be in with a chance to win!!!



Join more than 1600 Social workers and become part of our essential community. We offer services that develop, protect, represent and support your social work career. We provide a range of relevant needs-based member benefits and services. Come and join us!

Become a member today!
www.iasw.ie

WIN

We are giving you an opportunity to win one-year free IASW membership - Email: iaswcompetition@iasw.ie with the subject line: Practice Teaching along with your full name and CORU number to be in with a chance to win. Comp closes June 30th 2023. Open to current IASW members and non-members. T&Cs Apply



View IASW Memberships here

Member Testimonials



As a new starter into the profession of just one year, the IASW has been pivotal for me in terms of networking, keeping motivated in the profession with ongoing CPD training and being kept informed on such trainings. The role I am currently in was brought to my attention through the IASW. As a whole being a member of the IASW has been paramount in shaping my outlook and networking with other members.
- Amy O'Hara



Being an IASW member means a lot to me. It helps me stay abreast with current updates around social work practice in Ireland. I feel like I am part of something and part of an amazing community. The training opportunities are enormous and cuts across various areas of social work. Thus, there is a training opportunity for everyone.
- Love Anie



Being a member of IASW means feeling a member and being a part of a wider community of social workers that are here to protect and represent social workers and the work of social work. Being a member of the IASW, as a social worker in the early years of my career can be given opportunities around training and professional development in order to enhance my development as a social worker, while being kept informed around a wide array of topics relating to professional practice. Overall, I am glad to be a member of the IASW as it's an organisation for social workers and where social workers can be heard.
- Keith Hanafin

PRACTICE EDUCATION CORNER

Darragh O’Grady and Cora Keady, MSW graduates of the University of Galway presented at the “Educating together for practice teaching in social work in the 21st century” conference in UCC on 02/03/23. Here they tell us what innovation in social work means for them and offer advice to practice teachers and students.

“When we were asked to speak about innovation in social work, we were initially slightly daunted by the topic. As a student, it can be difficult to introduce new approaches to social work as there can be times when it is tough to trust your level of experience.

When we first began speaking about new approaches, we reflected on our two placements on the MSW. Both of us identified that case management was the area where we had tried various new approaches throughout both of our placements. When we spoke with other people in the MSW, we found the same was true for them.

“Case management makes a unique contribution towards the integration of health care, social services and other sector services and supports for people” (Lukersmith, Millington, Salvador-Carulla, 2016)

Case management is possibly the most crucial learning method in any placement (Wilson and Flanagan, 2019) as it allows students to practice an array of skills and methods. These are skills that will be utilised in any future employment in the field of social work. While case management can be intimidating, particularly for those on their first placement, it is vital that students determine the approach that works best for them as well as the approach most beneficial for their client group. In order to determine this, there may be times when students need to utilise methods, theories or skills that are new to them, or new to practice.



Our experience of being innovative in our case management on placements would not have been possible without using a range of supports. These included:

- Speaking with other students,
- Other social workers in our placement organisations,
- Other professionals on the team,
- Our visiting tutors and
- Most importantly our practice teachers.

Having practice teachers who were encouraging of using innovation in our practice allowed us to develop our own individual styles of practice. Although using new approaches enriched our learning experiences, it was important that we stuck to some of the basics along the way. This included:

- Managing our diaries well,
- Planning ahead,
- Reminding ourselves that it was okay to not know everything and
- Ask questions about why the organisation works in the manner that it does.

Most importantly, we had to remind ourselves to not have fear about using particular elements of a theory when initially trying it out in practice.”
View conference [here](#)

Andrea Ward - Principal Social Worker in National Orthopaedic Hospital since 2019, 10 years of Medical Social Work experience. Practice Teaching since 2015 and Practice Tutor with Maynooth since 2019.

I am passionate about facilitating social work placements, I believe positive placements for students provide the foundations for competent and confident social workers, who will hopefully become my colleagues in the future.

From my experience, it's important for practice teachers to have the necessary training with the relevant university as there can be variants to how the placement is managed across universities. I also encourage experienced Practice Teachers to refresh your training if it's been some time.

I truly believe that preparation is key to facilitating a successful placement. I recommend mapping out the placement as much as possible, identifying key learning opportunities from the outset and potential cases for the student. I strongly recommend that you contact and meet the student before they start. Students appreciate this opportunity to meet practice teachers and if they can attend the organisation, this helps preparations, manage expectations and provide information.

The first two weeks can be quite time-consuming so preparation and organisation during this. I recommend having an induction plan. Planned time for reading for the student can help with the pressure in the first two weeks, work life still goes on and departments are busy so this can give you time to breathe and catch up.

Setting dates for supervision and get the learning agreement and contract completed in the first week. If you work within a Social Work team, its useful to liaise with your colleagues and line Manager to see how they can support you over the placement especially the first few weeks.

Within the first week, the practice tutor will get in touch, its useful to set the dates for the three placement review meetings, this will assist with the planning of the placement.

Get to know your student, relationship building is key and this will help when you need to give constructive feedback and identify and resolve issues. Completing a learning style questionnaire can help you both understand each other and how you learn and work.

Have a plan for emergencies such as unexpected leave, this can be HSE land training or completing reflective practice tools for students and some time for them to complete the project or prepare for the mid-placement and final placement meetings with the Tutor. Give some time for the tutor meetings as they come around very quickly and there is a report to be completed, get the student to help with these documents.



Andrea Ward

“Practice teaching is very enjoyable, it gives a sense of fulfilment and opportunities to review our own practice and to refresh on social work theories”

I suggest completing the direct observations in advance of the mid-placement meeting. This will allow you as a practice teacher to assess the student and map out future learning needs and inform the recommendations for pass/fail. Discuss the direct observation with the student, and use this as an opportunity to engage in a reflective process. The student will benefit from an open discussion about progress and learning. Identify issues early, include the practice tutor for support. Providing feedback can be challenging, focus on the strengths and give students time, each student is different and will progress at different stages. Remember students are on placement to learn and will always need guidance. A reflective and supportive learning structure will support successful placements.



UPDATES

Have you seen our VIDEO SERIES on the NPTSWI website?!

Over the past two years, 6 HEI's came together with a common interest to profile practice teaching in the profession and support those committed to taking students.

A bespoke website of resources was created and has been populated with videos to support social workers in their role

as practice teachers. View our video series here:
<https://www.ucc.ie/en/nptswi/resources/#video-series>

All resources were created as an easy access byte size resource to reflect the busy workload of practitioners.



**One piece of advice as you go on placement:
Creating an advisory resource for students**

Dr Niamh Flanagan (Maynooth University) & Dr Elaine Wilson (UCD)

A few years ago, as part of an experiential-learning research module, we worked with social work students to research student-to-student advice on what makes a good placement. The resulting conference poster and publications provided insight into what students believe contributes to a good placement experience. These articles, which capture the student voice, have been used by a number of universities as part of their practice placement preparation, and are hosted in the resources section of the National Practice Teacher Social Work Initiative website (<https://www.ucc.ie/en/nptswi/resources/>).

In March we brought the same question of “what makes a good placement” to practice teachers at the National Practice Teacher Social Work Initiative Conference, asking them what advice they would offer to students. The act of seeking and giving advice to people moving outside the university setting was reminiscent of the Baz Lurhman spoken-word music video “Everyone’s free to wear Sunscreen” (1997) which mimics a conferring speech replete with general life advice to graduating students. For the conference we recorded the first minute of an imitation video, introducing such a speech for students who were going on social work placement.

*Ladies and Gentlemen.
Future social workers.
If I could offer you only one
piece of advice as you go on
placement, this would be it.
Breathe.*

*The long-term benefits of breathing
have been proved by scientists,
whereas the rest of my advice
has no basis more reliable
than the experiences of
your predecessors.
I will dispense this advice now.*

A special Ireland edition of The Journal of Practice Teaching & Learning to be published this summer features an article on the the National Practice Teaching in Social Work Initiative

The article entitled 'National Practice Teaching in Social Work Initiative; a rare opportunity to shape the development of social work student placements and practice teaching in Ireland' was co-authored by Sinead Whiting¹ Lyn Dorney² Joanne Rose³ Erna O'Connor⁴ Paula Slavin⁵ Eleanor Kelly⁶ Brian Melaugh⁷ and Brenda Feeney⁸.

It traces the development of the National Practice Teaching in Social Work Initiative (NPTSWI), formed in the context of increasing concern about the availability of sufficient numbers of social workers to meet workforce demands in Ireland and an insufficient supply of placements to enable an expansion in numbers of students on qualifying courses. The paper reflects on what has been achieved in the initial two years of the initiative. Barriers to building a culture and context for practice teaching and learning, in organisations already balancing multiple demands, are considered and strategies to address these challenges are explored.

1. Assistant Professor in Social Work and Practice Education Co-ordinator, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

2. Project Coordinator National Practice Teaching in Social Work Initiative

3. Professional Placement Coordinator at the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork

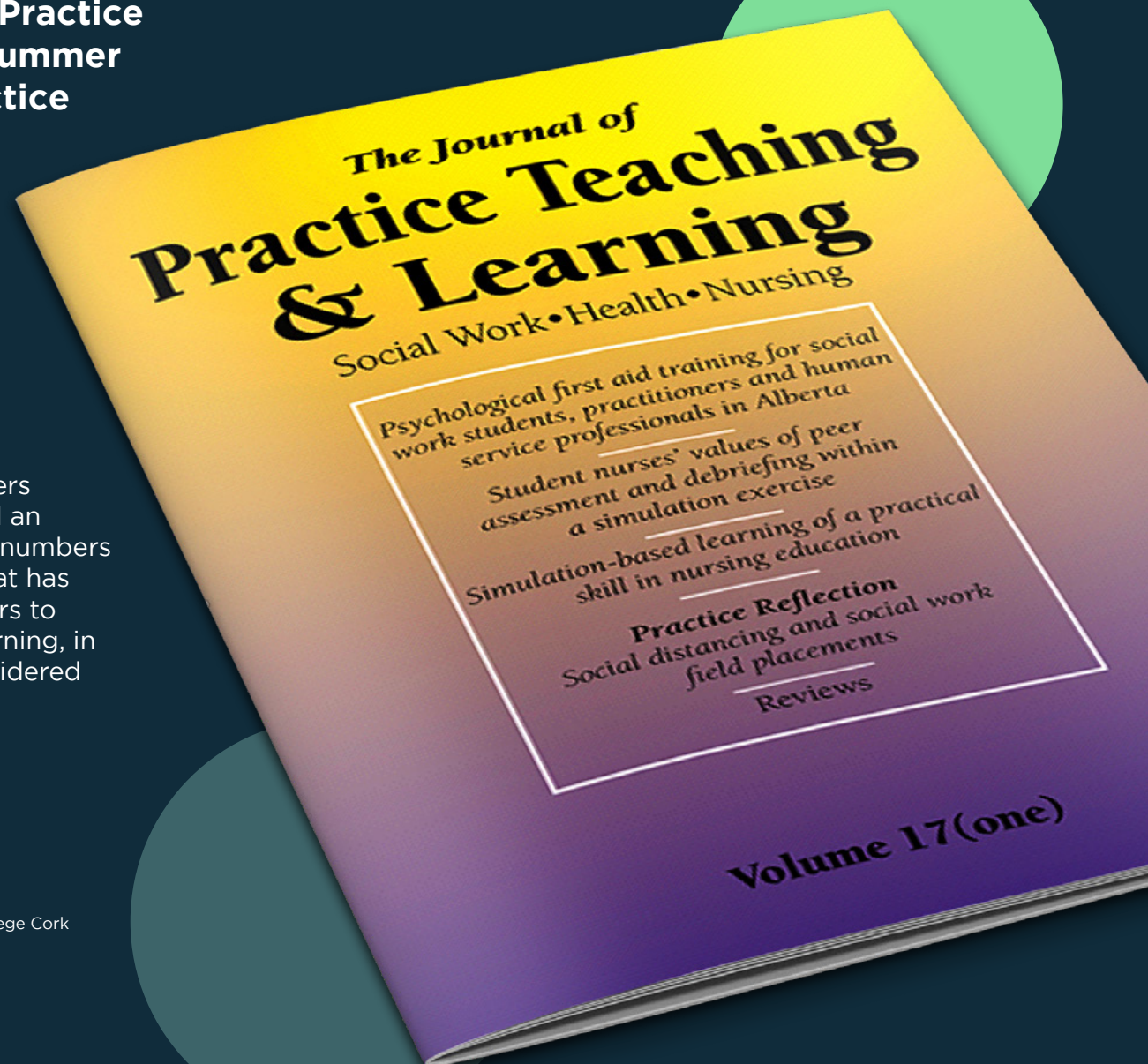
4. Assistant Professor in Social Work and Practice Education Co-ordinator, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin

5. Placements Allocations Manager with the Professional Masters in Social Work Programme, University College Dublin

6. Lecturer and Practice Learning Coordinator on Masters in Social Work Programme, University of Galway.

7. Director of Social Work, Maynooth University

8. Programme Director Programme Director MA in Social Work Atlantic Technologies University Sligo





CPD Events 2023

Educating together for Practice Teaching in Social Work in 21st Century - Part 1 March 2023

Introduction & Keynote Speakers: Professor Mark Doel & Marguerita McGovern

Educating together for Practice Teaching in Social Work in 21st Century - Part 2 March 2023

Irish practice teaching and learning research series

Educating together for Practice Teaching in Social Work in 21st Century - Part 3 March 2023

Educating together for social work series & Keynote speaker Siobhan Maclean

Responding to Racism in social work practice placements 20th April 2023

Continuing Professional Development Online

A series of online CPD events were hosted in partnership with the IASW. Details of which are here: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/nptswi/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/>



SUMMARY OF WORK

from Joanne Rose, Project Lead, UCC.

In 2020 funding was secured from the Irish Government to fund the National Practice Teaching in Social Work Initiative (NPTSWI). This arose from a series of meetings with key stakeholders concerned about the numbers of social workers needed to meet workforce demands and in turn the availability of social work student placements.

The aim was to support and resource social workers to take on the role of practice teaching with a view to increasing the number of available placements and in turn supporting an increase in the number of social work graduates. The Initiative is the collaboration of all six social work education providers in Ireland, led by university-based Practice Education Coordinators. The Initiative enabled the employment of Project Coordinator Lyn Dorney with support from the Irish Association of Social Workers. The Initiative and collaboration represent a significant innovation in the development of social work practice education in Ireland.

From Sept 2019 – April 2022 the number of social work placements in Ireland rose by 18.3% from 413 to 493 students due to the expansion of places on social work programmes, while a welcome development of this increase occurred throughout the pandemic. It is a credit to the profession and commitment of social work practice teachers with support from their agencies that all social work students in Ireland secured a placement. To support practice teachers the NPTSWI provided online CPD in collaboration with the IASW culminating in the first practice teaching conference in March 2023 and also launched a website of learning and teaching resources to support practice teaching.

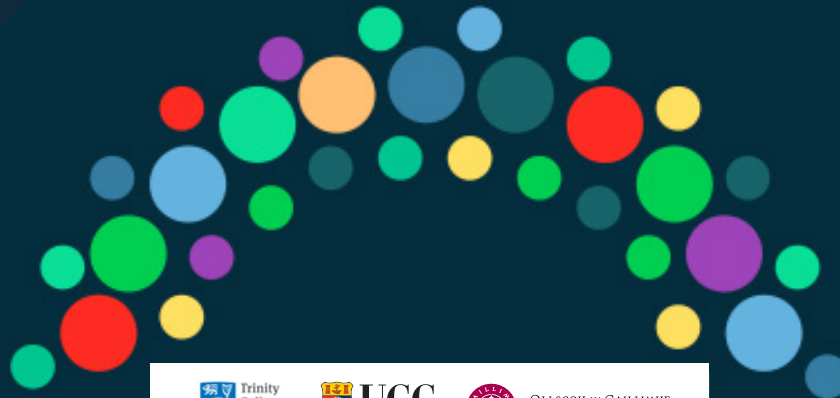
493 ↑ **18.3%**
Rise 2019 - 2022



The number of social work placements in Ireland

We would like to thank all social work practice teachers who engaged with us by attending our CPD, sharing their feedback, engaging with our research questionnaires, attending our conference, and contributing to these newsletters over the past two years. Thank you must also go to Lyn Dorney Project Coordinator and our colleagues in IASW, DCEDIY, and many others (there are too many to mention) who contributed their expertise, time, and support to the project. There is still important work to do to secure our profession into the future, and while the Initiative is coming to an end, work will continue with stakeholders through SWEPT, the Social Work and Practice Teaching group initially set up to respond to the impact of the pandemic on social work education and placements.

We look forward to work continuing and future developments in social work education and practice placements to strengthen the future of our profession and contribution to society.



NATIONAL PRACTICE TEACHING IN SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVE