

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

A STRATEGY FOR PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL WORK

Report on a review of the framework for post-
qualifying social work education
in Northern Ireland

J M Consulting Ltd
Glenthorne House
20 Henbury Road
BRISTOL
BS9 3HJ
0117 959 3687
director@jmc1.org

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the social work profession in Northern Ireland, I warmly welcome this report, *A Strategy for Professional Development in Social Work*. The report, produced by J M Consulting Ltd, reflects the results of wide consultation with key interests throughout Northern Ireland and offers recommendations for progressing the development of a revised structure for post qualifying social work education to meet the professional development needs of social workers in a changing service environment. I am grateful to JM Consulting Ltd for this contribution to the reform of professional social work education and training in Northern Ireland.

A striking feature of the report is its recognition of the enormous achievements to date of the Northern Ireland Post Qualifying Partnership. In emphasising these achievements, the report, of course, is also highlighting the achievements of all those social workers who, since the current PQ Framework was introduced in the early 1990's, have registered with the Partnership and successfully completed their award. I am proud of Northern Ireland's record of success in post qualifying social work education and believe it reflects the commitment to high standards within the profession here.

Following on from this success, J M Consulting makes the case for further development and changes to post qualifying education for social work based on the wider context of change. As well as the imminent advent of the degree in social work, the drivers for change also include:

- the proposals for improvements in how the workforce is structured and remunerated;
- better informed and more demanding service users; and
- policy initiatives such as the new Primary Health and Social Care Strategy, the Children in Need Strategy and the Regional Strategy currently being developed which will set a twenty-year vision for the Health and Social Services.

All of these present challenges and new opportunities for the social work profession.

Central to all the reforms in social work education is the imperative to ensure that high standards of social work practice are available to all who need our service. It follows that a comprehensive, easily accessible framework of post qualifying opportunities for development of expertise across all social work areas is essential. This framework must also support the individual social worker in meeting the continuing registration requirements of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

J M Consulting makes clear recommendations for key players and in particular, the Department, the Council and the PQ Partnership. Having considered the recommendations, both I, on behalf of the Department, and my colleagues from the Council and the Partnership are willing to play our part in taking forward work to develop new arrangements based on the principles and recommendations from *A Strategy for Professional Development in Social Work*.

I am particularly delighted that the PQ Partnership has agreed to take the lead in the next phase of the PQ Review which will see the development of the actual revised Framework over the next year to eighteen months. Not only does the Partnership contain expertise in delivery of post qualifying education but, importantly, it also represents two of the key components of successful professional development, namely employer and education institution commitment. I am confident that, under the continuing leadership provided by its chair, Miss Stephanie Irwin OBE, the Partnership will ensure we have the post qualifying arrangements the profession needs for the future.

I look forward immensely to receiving their proposals which will lay the foundations for an improved system of professional development; one which provides opportunities for every social worker in Northern Ireland to be actively engaged, one which has the support of employers and one which promotes continuous improvement in professional practice and service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Martin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Martin
CHIEF INSPECTOR
Social Services Inspectorate
February 2004

1. INTRODUCTION

This review

- 1.1. This report recommends changes to the framework for post-qualifying professional development (PQ) for social workers in Northern Ireland. These arise from the changing context and education requirements in social work.
- 1.2. We were commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). We have worked closely with the joint Project Team (DHSSPS, with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council – NISSC) charged with progressing the reforms in social work education.
- 1.3. As part of this work, we spent some time at the PQ Partnership Headquarters in Belfast, where we had meetings with a range of different stakeholders, including members of the partnership, education providers, employers, and award holders and those currently working towards awards.
- 1.4. We have also consulted widely with interested parties in Northern Ireland. We issued a consultation paper at the beginning of October 2003, and we held two consultation meetings at the Stormont Hotel on 8th October and at the Glenavna House Hotel on 22nd October. These meetings were attended by people representing a wide range of different interests, and there was a lively debate about the issues raised in the consultation paper. We also received a number of written responses. A brief report on the consultation responses has been provided to the Project Team.
- 1.5. We are grateful to all those who responded in writing and/or attended the meetings for their contribution to the review. The recommendations are our own responsibility, drawing on the evidence and information we have acquired through this consultation process.

Reforms in social work education

- 1.6. This project is of course part of a broader set of changes in social work education which are currently being steered by the Project Team. Most readers will be familiar with the details of this wider context.
- 1.7. In many ways PQ has been a success in Northern Ireland and it is right to acknowledge the very good work that has been done by the Partnership. However, the reforms in social work training provide an opportunity to develop a new strategy for professional development in social work, building on the foundations that have already been established.
- 1.8. This report sets out this new direction, but it will require some years to complete all the details and this will need further discussions and work by those involved. We believe that there is a broad consensus about the directions for this new strategy, and this encourages us to expect that this work can be taken forward effectively under the leadership of the Partnership.

2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL WORK

Background

- 2.1. The current system in Northern Ireland follows the basis laid down by CCETSW with two main awards, the Post-Qualifying Award (PQSW) and the Advanced Award (AASW).
- 2.2. The Post Qualifying Award (PQSW) was designed to be achieved by most social workers and encompasses the Practice Teacher, Approved Social Worker and the Child Care Awards. The PQSW has six requirements (or modules) and can be achieved by a flexible mixture of formal courses and portfolio evidence. It is assessed at honours degree level in academic terms.
- 2.3. The Advanced Award (AASW) at a (Masters) post-graduate academic level was seen as an award that only some social workers would attain. They could do so through one of, or any combination of, four pathways: research, practice, training, management.
- 2.4. The system in Northern Ireland is managed by the Northern Ireland Post Qualifying Education and Training Partnership ("the PQ Partnership" NIPQP), a consortium which brings together voluntary and statutory social work agencies and educational institutions.
- 2.5. In general, PQ in Northern Ireland has been more successful than in other parts of the UK in terms of the numbers of social workers participating and gaining awards. As at early 2003, the Partnership had 2000 registrations and had made a total of over 700 awards. This is more than 10% of the UK total, and, relative to the population of social workers is a higher engagement rate than in the rest of the UK.
- 2.6. Of course, the number of social work professionals engaging in PQ is greater than the number of award holders. Nevertheless, there remain a significant proportion of social workers who have not engaged with PQ.

Context for change

- 2.7. The reforms in qualifying education (particularly the new degree starting in September 2004) and other recent developments will lead to a new context for professional development. The chief elements we would highlight in the context for this review are:
 - **The need to raise the status and achievement of the profession**, and to be outward looking and collaborative with other professions. Multi-disciplinary training and practice is an important element in this. Social work needs to recognise, value and reward high levels of achievement as other professions do.
 - **The importance of career structures in social work:** a robust and comprehensive framework of relevant and assessed professional development is an essential underpinning to the development of career structures and progression in the profession which will enable it to achieve higher levels of performance and accountability;

- **The need to improve service delivery and develop social work practice:** service users and service delivery will benefit from competent, independent, reflective, and accountable practitioners. Employers want a trained workforce, but they do not always make the connections between valuing and supporting post-qualifying training and these outcomes. Agencies need to develop as learning organisations and to value the contribution that a more qualified, and analytical profession can make to their operational needs and to future strategies. PQ needs to involve employers (service managers, not just training departments) to ensure that it fully reflects their needs and has a strong user perspective.
 - **The strong workload pressures** on many staff, coupled with difficulties of recruitment, make it difficult for staff and their employers to find space for training and development. Many of those consulted noted this as a key constraint on the development of PQ. But they also hope that initiatives including Agenda for Change and Duty of Quality will help to give greater priority to professional development.
 - **The new degree will change the qualifying level** and, over time, the status of social work. The Framework needs to adapt in some obvious structural ways (e.g. change in PQ1 and in academic levels) to the new degree, but also to build on the broader intentions behind the degree of creating a more confident, competent, analytical and reflective profession. (It of course also needs to continue to remain relevant to social workers who qualified before the new degree.)
 - **The registration requirements of the NISCC will include compulsory Post-registration Training and Learning (what other professions know as CPD)** for all registered social workers. Not all this activity will be recognisable under PQ, but we would expect that any recognised PQ activity is likely to be acceptable to meet the NISCC's requirements. Given the other pressures on staff, it is very desirable that these two streams of development are seen to have been planned together, albeit remaining distinct.
- 2.8. Overall, this context for change presents a challenging agenda for social work, but it also offers an opportunity for PQ to play a larger and more influential part in the development of the profession.

Scope and Purpose

2.9. Professional development for social workers includes:

- the minimum or compulsory requirements to maintain registration status (i.e. the Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements of the NISCC);
 - a wide variety of induction and on-the-job training provided by employers;
 - various professional development activities and experiences (including on the job learning) undertaken by individuals .
- 2.10. These are all-important, and can sometimes form part of a broader programme which could lead to recognition by the PQ Partnership. The main focus of this report, however, is on the other activity which is about developing professionals' abilities within a more structured or systematic

framework which has some external recognition through some form of accreditation or assessment. As it is so well accepted, we use the convenient shorthand of PQ to cover all this other activity which could be described as professional development for social work. If our recommendations are accepted, this will encompass a broader range of activity in future, not all of which will have to be formally accredited by the Partnership (see next section).

- 2.11. PQ starts after successful completion of the assessed year in employment.
- 2.12. Many of those we consulted have expressed views about the purpose of PQ. This is multi-faceted, and employers, education providers, candidates, and the department all naturally emphasise different aspects of the role of PQ which are important to their roles.
- 2.13. Drawing on these views, we believe it is worth restating the purpose of PQ, which we suggest could be expressed along the following lines.

The purpose of PQ is to develop the professionalism and effectiveness of the social work workforce and to provide benefits to the full range of the service's users including related agencies and the wider community. PQ will do this through:

- Encouraging independent and accountable practitioners to work at the cutting edge of social work practice and to contribute to the development of the profession;
 - Promoting the value and contribution of relevant, organised and assessed professional development for all professionals and providing a framework for this in a structured and supported environment;
 - Providing recognition, for professionals and their employers, of the value of development activities;
 - Quality assuring professional development activities;
 - Providing a focus for line managers and employers to contribute to and engage in the development of their staff and of their agencies;
 - Promoting leadership in social work;
 - Building public confidence in the professionalism of social work and social workers;
 - Ensuring links between practice, teaching, research, management; and service development.
- 2.14. If this general statement of purpose is accepted, PQ can be seen to be a broadly based activity which is about a wide range of life-long learning for social workers. It should be able to encompass both the outstanding achievements of the leaders of the profession, and also the more routine development which is important for every social worker. It includes activity with professional benefits but no academic outcomes, and also a range of formal accredited "education" leading to academic qualifications.

Principles

- 2.15. A number of respondents have suggested that we define some principles, related to this purpose, which should guide the development of the framework and programmes. These principles could include the following.
- 2.16. PQ should:
 - be flexible, accessible, streamlined and seamless;

- be responsive to occupational needs across settings and sectors as well as individual professional development;
 - align with career structures and career opportunities;
 - recognise and reward achievement;
 - not impose unnecessary barriers to attainment.
- 2.17. These principles are not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive. They reflect views put to us by those consulted which we believe can helpfully guide the development of PQ.
- 2.18. A fundamental principle is that professionals should take a large degree of responsibility for their own development. They can expect support and guidance from their employers and others, in this, but should expect to be proactively involved in seeking and creating their own development opportunities. The NISCC codes are helpful in clarifying the responsibilities of individuals and their employers.
- 2.19. We would note that there is a natural tension in the way these principles are applied (as in much other professional development) between “maintaining standards” and “facilitating entry and achievement”. It is normal that those who have already advanced in the profession (and who largely manage PQ) tend to focus on maintaining standards, while those who have yet to engage with, or qualify under PQ see barriers to entry and progression. These two legitimate interests need to be kept in balance. Standards should not be compromised in areas which will affect public or user interests, but neither should those who have already qualified be seen to be “making it harder” for those who follow them. The NIPQP has a key responsibility for ensuring these issues are addressed in its policies and operational systems.

3. A NEW STRATEGY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objectives for development of PQ

3.1. In the light of the work and discussions we had at the start of the project, and drawing on the purpose and principles above, we propose five objectives for the development of PQ. These have been very largely endorsed by most of those who attended meetings or responded in writing. They are as follows.

Objective 1. The PQ framework should be comprehensive.

3.2. We believe that the PQ framework should in principle be able to recognise and accommodate all significant and relevant development activities done post-qualification, provided there is some method to verify their quality and/or their outcomes.

3.3. It should be comprehensive both in the sense of encompassing a wide range of types of development, and also a wide range of types of staff. These should include all those holding a recognised social work qualification, irrespective of their current employment status.

3.4. The benefits of a more comprehensive framework include:

- a. Staff who make significant sacrifices of time and effort to undertake development activity wish to have this given some more explicit recognition by their employers and others. A more comprehensive framework would enable such activities to be “recognised” by the Partnership (which does not necessarily entail costly accreditation or a formal academic award).
- b. A broader range of opportunities will enable a larger proportion of social work professionals to see PQ as relevant to their needs.
- c. A broader interpretation will add opportunity, status and influence to the Partnership and PQ, and therefore also to social work as a profession, and will facilitate shared learning and exchanges with other professions.

Objective 2. PQ should offer a more continuous range of opportunities for progression, and for developing breadth of competences.

3.5. In order to achieve Objective 1, PQ will need to be developed both by extending the ladder of academic and professional levels (“progression”), and by extending the range of development opportunities at each academic or professional level (“broadening”), so that a network of types of opportunity is provided.

3.6. **Progression:** While PQ should not be just about gaining qualifications, it should enable those who wish to do so to progress academically and in professional recognition. At present, there is perceived to be a “huge gap” between the PQ and Advanced level requirements. We suggest that the framework needs to offer a more accessible and flexible range of

progression opportunities.

- 3.7. **Broadening:** Equally, it is very important that PQ offers opportunities for professionals to broaden and extend their range of experience and expertise without having to take on additional academic qualifications or professional responsibilities. This means that there should be more breadth as well as more progression levels. Staff may develop by widening their portfolio, not just by advancing through levels.
- 3.8. Many types of formal and informal development activities could be included within this objective. As examples of this, respondents have suggested that staff who are involved in complex cases; counselling training; Joint Protocol or Vulnerable Adults training; or court work should (in appropriate circumstances) be recognised as broadening their professional practice. If they are able to reflect on, and learn from these experiences, this might contribute to a recognition by their employers and the Partnership without requiring them to take an academic qualification, or to change their employment status. Similarly those who gain experience of training, mentoring, or managing others (without necessarily changing their posts) are all developing and deepening their own professional experience.

Objective 3. Assessment needs to be more flexible

- 3.9. There is a fairly widespread view that assessment processes can sometimes become unduly burdensome for candidates. These concerns seem to relate primarily to the use of portfolios in assessment processes. Examples are quoted where assessors appear to be erecting unnecessary barriers for candidates, but we do not know how common these are.
- 3.10. The principle should be that portfolios are assessed on the quality and relevance of the candidate's performance, and on ability to reflect on this and to relate it to professional development. Candidates should demonstrate both what they have achieved, and the way they have learned from it. They should not need to produce voluminous documentation to demonstrate this. And those who are already making significant sacrifices to combine work and development should not normally be required to spend time re-presenting existing documentary evidence in a different format (one expressed this by saying the requirement should be for "mapping" not "rewriting").
- 3.11. The complaints we have heard may be isolated examples, but they appear to indicate problems of inconsistency of interpretation by at least some assessors. The Partnership has already made some progress in providing improved guidance for some requirements and training for assessors, but more may need to be done to improve consistency of assessment and to give candidates more confidence about what is required. It has also been suggested (and we agree) that it would be good if more assessors were drawn from line managers, in addition to professional trainers, to provide a leavening of operational as well as educational perspectives.
- 3.12. While portfolios are important (not least because this route enables staff to continue to work), respondents stressed the need to maintain a variety of different assessment approaches within PQ. They also asked for assessment panels to operate more continuously so that candidates can be assessed at more assessment points and at more times in the year, which is easier for those in full-time work to manage.
- 3.13. One respondent proposed that there should be a fast-track route for

candidates who can demonstrate that they already meet a significant part of the requirements of PQSW. In principle, this seems a good idea, but we have not had a chance to investigate its implications in detail.

- 3.14. The assessment arrangements should be reviewed to address these concerns.

Objective 4. Accreditation should be streamlined

- 3.15. Accreditation is widely perceived to be bureaucratic and slow, and HEIs are concerned that it duplicates several other internal and external review processes.
- 3.16. The principle should be to have a process which is proportionate to the need. Universities and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) have extensive QA processes of their own. Wherever possible, accreditation by the PQ Partnership should promote closer links with those processes and use the information they provide rather than impose unnecessary additional or parallel requirements. A 'light touch' could be applied to those programmes in universities which have been successfully audited by other bodies and where it is clear the PQ Partnership standards and requirements are being met. The same should apply to programmes already accredited by other regulatory or professional bodies.
- 3.17. Equally, many of the well-established regional professional development experiences which do not attract academic awards (i.e. the breadth part of the framework) could be subject to some much lighter "recognition process" by the Partnership. This could identify that these are relevant development activities which, if appropriately undertaken and consolidated into practice, could be recognised as professional development. It is not necessary for the Partnership to have to formally accredit such events in the sense of taking responsibility for the way they are actually managed or delivered, or for their outcomes. To seek to do this would inhibit any realistic prospect of achieving objectives 1 and 2 above unless the Partnership grew into a very much larger and more costly organisation, which is not necessary.
- 3.18. In summary, we urge the Partnership to develop a more flexible and proportionate range of processes for "recognising" a wider range of learning experiences without the full rigour of the current accreditation. One respondent proposed the creation of a sub-group to act as a "credit-rating panel" for such a wide range of learning outcomes.
- 3.19. Some of this work would be very closely related to the processes of APEL which will be increasingly relevant to both initial and post-qualifying education in social work. Appropriate links need to be ensured with any bodies developing APEL processes and capabilities.

Objective 5. PQ should align better with career opportunities and the needs of professionals and users

- 3.20. There was extensive discussion at the two workshops on how to increase the take up rates of PQ, and how to improve the integration of PQ with the needs and interests of employers and to increase their commitment to PQ. Everyone saw these as important and difficult objectives. We believe that actions to pursue them fall into two main categories:
- (a) making PQ more accessible, flexible and attractive to social workers;
 - (b) linking qualifications and achievement much more explicitly to

promotion, grades, appointments, and career progression (and many would say pay). This is really part of a much broader agenda of developing a learning culture throughout social work agencies so that the development of all staff, including middle and senior managers is seen as one of the highest priorities of the organisation, and one which supports, rather than interfering with, enhanced operational performance and service delivery to users.

- 3.21. Item (a) is essentially the intention of objectives 1 to 4 above. It is the main focus of this report and of our recommendations for PQ.
- 3.22. Item (b) is a wider objective which will need to be progressed as part of a broader human resources strategy for the health and social care sectors in Northern Ireland. Many respondents expressed the hope that initiatives such as Agenda for Change, Duty of Quality, risk assessment, could all help here.
- 3.23. It was also suggested that the Department could make a useful contribution by (for example) being much more explicit about its expectations of the qualifications and experience that it would expect social work agencies to require for appointments to practitioner, senior practitioner, team leader and management posts within social work. The Department can also influence these agendas through its links with Boards and Trusts and the priorities for action which it identifies and promotes through those links.
- 3.24. Of course, parts of the social work community are outside the direct influence of the Department and other departments and agencies also need to be enlisted in this campaign.

The qualifications framework

- 3.25. It is implicit in the objectives discussed above that the qualifications framework described in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3 above will need to change quite significantly. This will not happen all at once, and indeed the framework should be seen as an evolving and facilitating structure, rather than a rigid or prescribed set of arrangements. We believe that it will be for the Partnership to lead a debate on the ways on which it proposes to modify the qualifications framework, in the light of our recommendations and the Department's and the Council's response to them.

We therefore recommend that a new qualifications framework be developed, but we are not specifying what the new framework should be.

4. THE MANAGEMENT OF PQ

The current status and funding of the Partnership

- 4.1. The PQ Partnership has been approved by the Council to manage PQ in Northern Ireland. It has its own staff and offices. It is widely respected as making a valuable contribution to social work in Northern Ireland. It values its independence from the bodies with which it collaborates, but it has an important relationship with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council which both funds and quality assures the Partnership's activities. It has no separate legal status.
- 4.2. Currently the Partnership credit rates a range of programmes, manages assessment and of course registers and monitors candidates' performance. It also undertakes development work and currently also undertakes promotional activity. There is therefore some overlap of functions with the NISCC, which itself accredits three PQ programmes (those formerly accredited at a UK level by CCETSW, i.e. PT, ASW and Child Care) and has a statutory duty to promote social work education and training.
- 4.3. The consultation revealed an anxiety within the Partnership Management Board regarding the level and security of funding and their authority to make permanent arrangements for the management and delivery of the PQ Framework. For example, the feeling of uncertainty has inhibited the Partnership from making a permanent appointment to the important post of Project Officer (the title of this itself seems indicative of a lack of permanency). We understand that both the department and the Council would have a strong commitment to achieving a permanent, comprehensive and effective post-qualifying education and training system. It will be important to review the level and mechanisms for funding to ensure the Partnership can maintain current activity and undertake essential development with confidence.
- 4.4. The NISCC as the regulatory body for education and training has a key role in raising the standards of practice in the field of social care and for promoting social work education and training. Within the context of the PQ review, the Council needs to review the existing standards and requirements for the post-qualifying framework in co-operation with the Partnership. The standards and requirements for delivery would be the essential foundation for the development work of the Partnership in delivering the key objectives as outlined in this report.

The way forward

- 4.5. The first priority is to recognise publicly the important role the Partnership plays and its contribution to the aims of the department and the Council. It should maintain its operational independence, and have its funding and resources clarified so that it can take forward the important strategic development we recommend.
- 4.6. If the objectives in chapter 3 are pursued, the work of the Partnership will become more significant in the future. It will need to cover a broader range of activities, and to have a higher profile and status. It will need to work closely with employers, education providers, service users and other

professions and with the new Regional Body which has been established for qualifying education. It may need to extend its current operations and it will need the confidence and freedom to manage its own staff, accommodation and operations, all of which will potentially need to expand as the enhanced role of PQ is developed.

- 4.7. We believe that there would be clear benefits to the status and influence of PQ in Northern Ireland (and to the clarity of focus of NISCC) from bringing all accreditation into one organisation, which should be the PQ Partnership, leaving NISCC to regulate, rather than accredit education programmes. There should be an appropriate transfer of resources to facilitate this. Consideration should also be given to the most appropriate site for promotional activity with resources being attached to delivery of the function.
- 4.8. The NISCC should also ensure that funds allocated to the Partnership provide an appropriate and visibly secure basis for the important work it has to do. While we understand the constraints of public funding, other bodies which have to plan and enter commitments can be given three-year indications of funding; some others work to quinquennial reviews. The Council should find an appropriate way to give a visible medium-term commitment to the Partnership which permits it to do its work effectively, while retaining the necessary accountability.
- 4.9. We understand the interest in the legal status of the Partnership, and its relationship to other bodies, but we suggest that these should be reviewed at a later stage following completion of the development of the revised framework and implementation of the Degree in Social Work.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. For convenience, we summarise below the recommendations which occur throughout this report. They are addressed to three bodies, the department, the NISCC, and the PQ Partnership.

The department should:

1. confirm the central role of an enhanced PQ Framework in its plans for developing the professionalism of social work and building public confidence in the service. An appropriate announcement of the outcomes of this review could be a helpful mechanism for this.
2. use its influence to encourage social services agencies to give greater priority to workforce career and professional development, including supporting and engaging with PQ. Mechanisms for this could include:
 - links with other relevant government departments to promote an inter-departmental approach for PQ education and training for all social workers irrespective of where they are employed.
 - incentives: appropriate recognition of agencies which demonstrate good practice (e.g. in allocating funding for professional development);
 - monitoring; taking more explicit and visible account of agencies' performance as learning organisations within social services inspections and other relevant processes;
 - linking conditions of appointment and career progression more closely to demonstrated professional competence and achievement.

The NISCC should:

3. in liaison with the Partnership, develop the framework of standards and requirements for future development and delivery of PQ;
4. publicise and promote the importance of relevant, structured and assessed professional development in ensuring safe and effective practice and eligibility for continuing registration;
5. support and promote the achievements of PQ and the Partnership by ensuring an adequate, and secure allocation of funding for this activity in line with its policy importance for the government, and the Council;
6. delegate its residual programme accreditation activities to the PQ partnership, along with the necessary resources to fulfil them.

The PQ Partnership should:

7. Develop the PQ arrangements in accordance with the strategy and principles laid out in this report. A project team could be established for this, led by the Partnership and with the Department and the Council represented. This could be charged with reporting back to the

Department after an appropriate interval (which we suggest should not be longer than 12-18 months). Development of the arrangements should continue during this period.

8. Map the range of existing needs and development opportunities and, in the light of this, propose a new PQ framework and associated process of accreditation and assessment to facilitate both qualification attainment and other recognised development activity as proposed in chapter 3. The aim should be to publicise a draft framework and processes at an early date so that all involved with PQ can see and contribute to the direction in which it is developing.