

Coaching and consolidating the practice of Newly Qualified Social workers: A Brief Literature Review

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A Report prepared for Social Work Resources, South Lanarkshire Council

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1. Introduction

The overall aim of the brief literature review was to

- Review literature that could inform whether and in what ways a formal coaching approach could add value in consolidating Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) learning and readiness to practice during their first year of registration.

The main purpose of the brief literature review was to

- detail the evidence that could support the South Lanarkshire Social Work Resources Learning and Development Team develop a programme of induction that will facilitate the professional development and consolidation of good practice in newly qualified workers.

The scope of the literature review was to

- search the UK literature on coaching, coaching in social work, coaching in organisations, the benefits of coaching and the learning and development needs of Newly Qualified Social Workers.

2. Background

A review of the Post-qualifying Framework in Scotland led the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to develop a wider continuing professional development (CPD) strategy for the whole social services workforce (SSSC, 2004). The concept of continuing professional development (CPD) is viewed as on-going learning and development to improve and extend professional practice throughout an individual's career. It is aligned to the vision for Scotland's social services of developing and sustaining a competent and confident workforce capable of delivering services in a changing environment and committed to developing a culture of learning (SSSC, 2004). The SSSC aims to embed CPD through Post-Registration Training & Learning (PRTL). The broader context for CPD for the social services workforce is that of a new minimum level of qualification for social workers at honours degree level (Scottish Qualifications and Curriculum Framework, level 10), registration of social services staff and post- and re-registration requirements, the coming to an end of the Post-Qualifying Framework originally developed by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW, 1990) and the development and publication of a Continuous Learning Framework (CLF) (Scottish Government, 2008). These concepts are also linked to Scottish Government's policy developments in relation to changes in the statutory framework, the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and their Employers (SSSC, 2009) that lays

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down requirements for individuals within the qualifications-based regulatory framework for the social services workforce in Scotland and Changing Lives (Scottish Executive, 2006).

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) (Registration) Rules (2009) set down Post Registration Training and Learning requirements that all registered newly qualified social workers, must meet in order to ensure their continued suitability for registration.

The Registration Rules require that:

'Every newly qualified social worker working full time (35 hours a week or more) registered with the SSSC shall, within the first 12 months of registration, complete 24 days (144 hours) of study, training, courses, seminars, reading, teaching or other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance the social worker's professional development, or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole. At least five days (30 hours) of which shall focus on working effectively with colleagues and other professionals to identify, assess and manage risk to vulnerable groups'. (SSSC, 2009:2)

The Guidance notes for Registrants specific to newly-qualified social workers state that the purpose of the PRTL requirements is to ensure

'that all newly-qualified social workers undertake training and learning to assist them to consolidate their social work knowledge, skills and values at the start of their career as registered social workers and to assist them to contribute to the protection of children and adults from harm' (SSSC, 2009:3).

The Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC), in collaboration with employers and other stakeholders, has developed Preparing for Practice – a national induction framework for the Scottish social service sector. This is in response to the National Strategy for the Development of the Social Services Workforce in Scotland – A Plan for Action 2005-2010. The induction framework has six key components: introduction to practice; the organisation; service specific issues; the workplace; roles and responsibilities and values. The framework is designed in such as way that it can be used for all social services staff and be adapted to local context. There are links between this framework, PRTL and the use of Personal Development Plans.

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Although the four countries in the UK have different systems for recognition of CPD for social services staff, the literature that discusses the barriers and facilitators that promote workplace learning and assist the transitional process from being a student to a professional practitioner transfers across the boundaries of nation states and their consequent systems.

This review found very little literature that discusses the use of coaching in UK social work or the use of coaching in UK social service organisations. There is an abundant literature on mentoring within social work but this was not part of the brief and excluded from the main search terms¹. Whilst this review focuses on coaching it also includes literature that discusses the terms coaching and mentoring synonymously. Due to the lack of specific literature on the use of coaching in UK social service organisations the review brings together the generic literature on coaching and the social work education that has relevance to the learning and development needs of NQSWs. It was beyond the brief to cover the literature on 'how to' coach, resources that discuss how to set up coaching programmes in organisations are listed at the end of the references.

The review begins by setting out the definition of coaching and the various purposes of coaching in organisations. It then looks what the evidence suggests in terms of how to achieve quality coaching in organisations, the efficacy and benefits that coaching has the potential to offer individuals and organisations before situating coaching within the context of learning and development. The review then sets out the literature that discusses the research on learning and development that is relevant to preparing NQSWs for practice before considering how the literature informs whether and in ways formal coaching approaches could add value in consolidating NQSWs readiness to practice during their first year of registration.

3. Findings

3.1 Coaching: Definitions, purposes and models

For the purposes of this review the definition of coaching that is being used comes from Huczynski (2001) who states

'Coaching has been defined as a process through which an individual supports the learning performance improvement of another via interactive questioning and providing active support. The coaching instructor observes the learner and provides hints, help and feedback in a positive way as required. Coaching is sometimes incorporated in on-the-job training and can be carried out by an employees' immediate superior, another manager, company trainer or an outside

¹ See appendix A for the methodology of the search and terms used

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consultant who works with individuals to help them define their learning goals, see themselves as others see them and encourages them to explore new ways of behaving in order to achieve their goals' (Huczyski, 2001: 100).

Coaching draws on a range of disparate traditions, the most prominent of which have included sports coaching (Parsloe and Wray, 2000); life and career counselling; personal effectiveness and fulfilment interventions and participative management styles. The rapid expansion of the use of coaching means that the practice has outpaced the theory so that definitions vary, understandings about the purpose vary and little agreement has yet been achieved about the most appropriate way to manage and deliver coaching in a organisational setting (Jackson, 2005; Griffiths and Campbell; 2008, Ives, 2008). Coaching has become a widely used tool that can enable individuals to enhance their performance as organisations seek to realise the benefits, such as: improved communication processes; higher productivity, greater clarity about goals and objectives; effective knowledge-sharing processes; increased creativity; enhanced staff engagement and the development of an effective leadership style (Thomas, 1995; Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005). The CIPD Learning and development survey (CIPD, 2009) found that the purpose of coaching varied depending on whom coaching was offered to. Thus, within organisations that offer coaching to all of their employees, the purpose of this coaching is for general personal development (79%) and to remedy poor performance (74%), whereas within organisations that offer coaching only to managers, the emphasis shifts towards its positioning as part of a wider management and leadership development programme.

Coaching can be distinguished from mentoring because it emphasises training. The learner needs to learn something specific such as job knowledge or a new skill. The coach indicates what they want the learner to do, suggest how it may be done, follows up and corrects errors. The objective is to teach and guide the learner in the performance of their immediate task or assignment. Mentoring is less specific. (Huczynski, 2001:100).

Knights and Poppleton (2008) outline three broad models of coaching in organisations

- Organic and emergent models
- Centralised and structured
- Tailored middle ground

Each of these models flourishes in different organisational conditions. Centralised and structured models seem to work well in organisations where learning and development has a high level of senior support, where formal structures are the norm and where consistency is important. Emergent and organic models seem to work well in organisations where there is variation in processes and different ways of working is accepted and valued. Tailored middle ground seems to work well in organisations where some consistency is required while responding to specific organisational context or need (Knights and Poppleton, 2008).

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Coaching is delivered by various people including trained external coaches, specialist internal coaches, line managers, peers and HR staff. The majority of coaching provided to junior and middle managers is delivered by internal sources whereas external coaches are often used for executive coaching and to help organisation build their coaching capabilities often via the design and delivery of internal coaching skills programme (Jarvis et al., 2006).

3.2 Quality coaching in organisations

In this section we look at what the literature can tell us about what supports quality coaching in organisations. It outlines how what is known about creating a coaching culture, what are the determinants of successful coaching practices in organisations, how we can learn from the experiences of others who have delivered coach training programmes, issues to pay attention to if developing internal coaching services, or line managers as coaches as well as the use of coach supervisors .

3.2.1 Coaching culture

Six characteristics of a coaching culture have been identified by Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005)

- Coaching is linked to business drivers
- Being a coachee is encouraged and supported
- Coach training is provided
- Coaching is rewarded and recognised
- A systemic perspective is adopted
- The move to coaching is managed

Anderson et al., (2009) state that developing a coaching culture is not for the faint hearted and three important obstacles have been identified

- Organisational culture
- Lack of clarity about coaching styles and expectations
- Time and resource constraints

3.2.2 Determinants of successful coaching practices in organisations

Knights and Poppleton (2008) found that the quality of the coaching relationship was the single most important determinant for success in coaching. This raises a challenge for organisations about how they determine the appropriate level of structure and support to enable coaching relationships to be as effective as possible in the organisational context. Knights and Poppleton (2008) found that coaching flourished when

- There was a clear sense of the purpose and role of coaching in the organisation was maintained and linked to business priorities
- Coaching was weaved into relevant organisational activities such as wider development programmes and performance management

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- The organisational understanding of coaching was developed and 'buy-in' was achieved
- There were enabling frameworks and structures that were congruent with the chosen approach to coaching and the organisations culture
- The scope and effectiveness of an appropriate learning and development climate to develop and sustain coaching behaviours and skills
- When attention was paid to the quality of the external coaches practice
- When there was a 'coaching expert' or champions within the organisation to support provision
- When there was objective setting and the coaching relationship was evaluated
- When relationships were managed within the four cornered contract
- When there was development of coaching measures and there was reward and recognition processes for coaching behaviours
- When the impact of coaching was communicated and understood in the organisation

3.2.3 Coach training programmes

Jarvis et al., (2006) found that common features of coaching programmes consisted of

- Introductory workshops – set out the case for coaching
- Assessment exercises – assess development needs
- Intensive training – between two and five days with opportunities for practice during and between days
- Action learning sets or assignments
- Support for learners during training – peer learning, receiving coaching
- Follow through and reflection – follow up sessions
- On-going support –peer support networks, coaching support/supervision for trainee coaches

Not all organisations had all of these features and when asked about what they had learnt from designing and delivering coach-training programmes for managers and internal coaches organisations reported that coaching did not come naturally to everyone and certain people needed extra support and time to adapt, managers who use the command and control form of management will often find it difficult to leave this style (Jarvis et al., 2006). Short training courses were found to be insufficient to develop effective manager coaches, who often needed considerable training and support over several months allowing participants to have plenty of opportunities for practice and reflection between inputs as well as ongoing support. The most effective programmes for managers involve training them to use simple coaching models applied to specific issues over short time frames (Jarvis et al., 2006).

3.2.4 Developing internal coaching services

Internal coaching is 'a one to one developmental intervention supported by the organisation and provided by a colleague of those coached who is trusted to shape and deliver an

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programme yielding individual professional growth' (Frisch, 2001). So it is different from manager as coach as it is outside of the line management relationship and has a wider remit, focussing holistically on individual professional growth rather than solely of performance improvement (Jarvis et al., 2006:126). Internal coaches are often HR professionals such as learning and development staff, or managers who wish to develop their skills in this area. Internal coaches have knowledge of the organisational environment and they are also likely to understand the role and responsibility of the coachee.

Internal coaches when effectively selected, trained and developed can offer effective coaching in the areas of performance development and behaviour change; they can be particularly effective when an understanding and knowledge of the organisations culture, systems and expectations is helpful. Jarvis et al., (2006) state that a key challenge is how to generate confidence in and take up of internal coaching services, drawing on various CIPD surveys a number of common factors have been identified in organisations with a high take up of internal coaching services.

- The internal coaching programme is actively promoted to both potential coaches and coachees
- Coaching is perceived as a developmental opportunity not a remedial intervention
- Application to become a coach isn't restricted but must be supported by the line manager
- There is a selection process
- Programmes are run by a dedicated HR/L&D resource
- There is a good quality training programme run or accredited by an outside organisation
- There is a clear set of common competencies or standards for internal coaches
- There is ongoing support for internal coaches including peer networks, regular networking, CPD events, and supervision and discussion forums.

Jarvis et al., (2006) state that the training needs of internal coaches are likely to have the same elements as with training managers as coaches but with additional elements requiring attention:

- An organisational framework – a shared understanding by the internal coaches of their terms of reference, ethical framework and code of practice
- Accreditation, evaluation and supervision of practice
- Internal coach service must be embedded in the organisations strategy for development, thereby ensuring credibility and sustainability

3.2.5 Coaching and line managers

Coaching is increasingly being advocated as an important part of line managers' responsibilities. Line managers are crucial if a coaching culture is to be achieved and coaching is to become the predominant style of managing and working together (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005).

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Manager coaching is generally viewed as a fairly narrow form of coaching –primarily because of the influence of the managerial relationship, it is not an equal relationship in terms of power and responsibility but it may be a mutually beneficial one albeit that it has a very different dynamic from other coaching relationships. Managers as coaches are usually solely concerned with improving and developing employee performance in line with organisational requirement. Jarvis et al., (2006) outline the characteristics that differentiate manager coaching from external or internal coaching:

- The coaching is solely focused on the fulfilment of business objectives
- The coach as manager will be aware of the performance and perception of coaches within the organisation
- The relationship is on-going, allowing time intervention (just in time....)
- Coaching is available to all staff

However, opinion is divided about the extent to which line managers can fulfil all the requirements of formal coaching. Indeed a number of authors have pointed out specific difficulties associated with line managers being coaches: demands on their time, difficulties in negotiating the switch between managerial and coaching roles and the power dynamics inherent within the manager coach relationship (Clutterbuck, 1998; Geber, 1992; Huczynski, 2001; Anderson et al., 2009). Anderson et al., have suggested that the line manager as coach is better understood as a coaching style of management, integrated with a move from 'command and control' approach to a more participative style of management (2009:ix). Clutterbuck has made a similar suggestion, rather than all managers becoming coaches, he argues that sheer practicality demands that they become facilitators of learning – creating an environment where 'helping to learn' is a task shared within and outside the team (1998). Line managers themselves have identified time constraints as the most significant barrier to achieving a coaching style of management; in addition they have identified a perceived lack of skills, organisational culture and a lack of confidence as barriers to them achieving a coaching style of management (Anderson et al., 2009). Moreover, the research suggests that operational managers are less likely to exhibit coaching characteristics which may indicate the inhibiting effect of the operational challenges faced by them may limit the extent to which they can fulfil the expectations of being a coach and adopting a coaching style of management.

This suggests that while coaching skills may be part of the development 'toolkit' of managers, it may be inappropriate to expect the deep rapport, confidentiality and boundary maintenance expected from formal coaching relationships. Jarvis et al., argue that training and supervision for managers as coaches is particularly important, their limited knowledge and experience are powerful reasons for organisations to develop clear ethical frameworks of practice, supervision and training opportunities to develop effective coaches as managers and for them to develop a coaching style of management (2006).

A two-stage model of coaching characteristics which together make up a coaching style of management have been identified (Anderson et al., 2009). Primary coaching characteristics comprise: a development orientation; a performance orientation; effective feedback

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processes; and successful planning a goal settings activities. Mature coaching characteristics, which are also associated with a participative style management include: using ideas from team members, powerful questioning; team based problem solving and shared decision making (Anderson et al., 2009:ix).

Successful implementation of coaching at the sharp end requires HR professionals to work with line managers to diagnose the most effective way forward to coaching becomes 'business as normal'. The manager as coach role cannot be a full substitute for specialised coaching activities and relationships. Instead it is important to give clarity to managers about behaviours that incorporate a coaching style of management; the two-stage model of coaching characteristics is useful starting point in this regard (Anderson et al., 2009:ix). Coaching needs to be seen as a business issue rather than a learning and development initiative and requires:

- Clarity about coaching roles and expectations
- Consistent attention given to the time and resource restraints facing managers, particularly line managers
- Appropriate and relevant training and support to enable managers to develop and maintain coaching characteristics
- Effective team working and relationships between and within teams if fostered and encouraged
- Manager encouraged to develop confidence in the coaching capability

3.2.6 Coaching supervision

The CIPD suggests that coaching supervision should be integrated from the outset of any coaching initiative. A framework for supervision should be designed, it should operate ethically within explicit boundaries of confidentiality, a supervisor from outside the organisation should be recruited or a senior coach trained to be a coach supervisor, a system to document learning and harvest organisational themes needs to be created and coaching supervisors need to have adequate supervision of their coaching supervision.

Supervision is a structured formal process for coaches; the help of a coaching supervisor can improve the quality of coaching, grow coaching capacity and support coaches in their practice. Coaching supervision can be face to face or telephone based for one to one, peer groups with or without a facilitator, often offered at key points in the coaching cycle: a briefing before the first session, after the first session, after the midpoint and at the end of the coaching contract. The structure of coaching supervision varies depending on whether it is a group or one to one experience but often includes check in, establishing the focus, identifying current issues, CPD needs or action learning and in a group situation feedback on organisational and cultural themes – this can be a source of organisational learning.

The benefits of coaching supervision included developing coaching capability, assuring the quality of coaching; ensuring coaching is focused on work objectives, sharing good practice and ethically identifying organisational themes and issues. Using both individual and group supervision optimises the benefits (CIPD, 2007).

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3.3 Coaching: efficacy and benefits

The 2008 CIPD Learning and Development Survey surveyed 518 organisations and found that around three quarters (72%) of the organisations that used coaching felt that coaching was very or fairly effective. Effectiveness was gauged largely through reviewing objectives set between line manager, coach and coaches. More than two in five organisations that used coaching linked it to their organisations overall learning and development strategy most commonly through management development initiatives, leadership development programmes and through performance management processes and personal development plans.

Jarvis et al., (2006) have identified four overlapping factors that combine to result in a positive climate for coaching

- Coach attributes
- Coachee attributes
- The organisational context for coaching
- The coaching process

The areas identified in relation to coach attributes were self-awareness, core coaching competencies and an understanding of the ethics and management of coaching relationships (Jarvis et al., 2006).

The areas identified in relation to coachee attributes were their receptiveness to coaching and desire for behaviour change.

The area identified in relation to the organisational context for coaching was whether there was a culture of learning that recognised and promoted the value of learning and translated this into a positive attitude about and support for activities such as coaching.

The three main elements identified in relation to the coaching process was the coach-coachee relationship; the duration and structure of coaching relationships; an appropriate coaching definition, goals and model of practice for the organisation

HR practitioners believe coaching is an effective way of promoting learning and it can deliver tangible benefits to individual and organisations. They perceive that coaching by external practitioners to be more effective as a means of learning than coaching by line managers. They also feel that the impact of coaching on an organisation is beneficial to its learning culture and its success (Jarvis et al., 2006).

Those organisations who were evaluating report a wide range of improvements at both individual and organisational levels: performance, confidence and motivation, behaviour change, culture and leadership. However, evaluating the impact of coaching was most often carried out at the level of the individual often in the form of feedback with only around half of the organisations assessing whether goals set at the beginning of the coaching had been

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achieved. Those organisations that were attempting to measure impact at both individual and organisational level were using three types of data: targets, performance ratings and success stories. Targets used included achievement of key performance indicators/goals; measures of increased skills; reduction in absence; set objectives and targets. Performance ratings used included performance rating from coach, 360 degree feedback, rating of competence, employee satisfaction surveys, liP status and skills matrix. Success stories used included stories about changes in customer perspectives, accounts of improvement or results. Glasgow Housing Association for example evaluate coaching through reviewing agreed actions after each coaching session, on the job coaching for technical type activities that are measured through the use of competency based checklists and the individuals managers and other colleagues are asked to rate progress in specific areas through the use of the personal development plan process.

3.4 Situating coaching within learning and development

Jarvis et al., (2006) state that coaching needs to be firmly positioned within the wider field of learning and development and that employee and organisational learning are now considered key issues in the ability of an organisation to respond quickly and flexibly to change. Research has shown that there is a relationship between learning and development activities vital for maximising employee skills and contribution and how these impact on organisational performance (Purcell et al., 2003). The crucial link between HR practices and organisational performance was the way HR practices built employee commitment and encouraged employees to undertake 'discretionary' behaviour. This is where committed employees seek to excel in their work and effort into helping achieve the goals of the organisation (Purcell et al., 2003). Learning and development practices can create the conditions in which employees are more likely to engage in discretionary behaviours and coaching can be one activity that contributes to building the commitment to and promotion of discretionary behaviours through:

- Developing employee skills in line with organisational objectives
- Engaging employees in the work, make them feel valued and foster commitment to the organisation
- Promoting self-responsibility and initiative
- Facilitating adaption to new challenges and change
- Accommodating and supporting employee obligations to their home lives so they are productive and effective whilst at work

Discretionary learning is when an individual proactively seeks to learn and develop their skills and abilities to enhance their capacity to do the job is seen as one of the most important discretionary behaviours, coaching can contribute to creating a suitable climate for this type of behaviour to thrive (Purcell et al., 2003).

There has been a shift from training to learning, learning being a self directed process by which and individual constructs new knowledge, skills and capabilities leading to increased

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capacity whereas training is a top down instructor led interventions taken by an organisation to promote changes in behaviour and knowledge. This shift has contributed to the growing attractiveness of coaching because it offers one to one personalised support for development that can be aligned to the organisations strategy and goals as well as enabling an organisation to plan for succession and bring about change. It also lends itself to the social nature of the workplace helping employees improve interpersonal skills so they can have more productive working relationships, help individuals quickly overcome gaps in knowledge, skills, behaviour and abilities. Coaching can be a key mechanism for transferring learning from training courses back into the workplace through helping create the conditions for learning and behaviour change – security, support, feedback and opportunities to practice over time. However coaching is not a solution for all learning needs, it must be carefully positioned as one element in a organisations total learning and development strategy. It is thought to be most helpful in certain organisational situations such as addressing specific skill shortages, to improve or develop skills, help individuals adapt and cope with periods of organisational or role change. The next section outlines some of the research on learning and development that is relevant to preparing NQSWs for practice. Although the research that directly concerns the post qualifying experiences of social workers in the UK is very limited (Mitchell, 2001; Brown and Keen, 2004) there is research that explores what supports workplace learning, research into the experiences of social workers in training, research on induction and probationary processes and studies that have specifically focused on the experiences of NQSWs.

3.5 Learning and Development Research relevant to preparing Newly Qualified Social Workers for practice

3.5.1 Preparing for practice

Social work education has always emphasised the importance of field experience within the curriculum for preparing students for practice, the purpose being to contextualise classroom learning (Parker, 2007). Practice learning is thought to be the place in which classroom learning confronts practice reality and is synthesised into professional social work (Fortune et al., 2001; Parker, 2004; Doel and Shardlow, 2005). Effective practice learning is associated with regular feedback about performance, feeling empowered as a learner with a degree of autonomy and opportunities to observe with constructive role models (Bogo et al., 2002). Practice learning is the forum in which the beginning professional develops core skills and competence and a critical and reflective approach. However Caspi and Reid (2002:36) point out 'field instruction largely goes on behind closed doors. Little research has been done to uncover what occurs behind those doors. Indeed, not much is known about what works and what does not in field instruction..., or about what behaviours are most successful in achieving objectives of professional competence and identity'. Maidment (2003) questioned the adequacy of social work programmes preparing students how to survive and negotiate in workplace cultures, her findings indicated that health and safety and stress preparation was essential. Doel and Shardlow (2005) consider learning to be something done best in a climate in which it is safe to take risks and learning is facilitated by doing, by live teaching

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and simulated practice. Current research identifies the centrality of a clear purpose and aims, relevant challenging opportunities, structured learning and negotiated approaches based on the development of mutually beneficial relationships. It has been suggested that training alone cannot prepare students for a career in the helping profession, with the first year in post qualification practice likely to be a particularly important one, in which further learning and development takes place (Marsh and Triseliotis; 1996; Gerrish, 2005).

Training will not be able to cover elements of professional development and learning such as the systems' rules, tools, norms, objectives, and division of labour and communities of practice inherent in workplace settings (Knight, 2006). This type of knowledge tends to be of a situated nature—a newly qualified worker's ignorance will become immediately apparent as they become immersed within communities of practice. The development of expertise is a gradual transition from a rigid adherence to taught rules and procedures through to a largely intuitive mode of operation in which learning from experience is the main force of transition (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Fook et al., 2000). Some of the instrumental aspects of the role perhaps cannot or should not constitute part of degree-level education; rather it should be a necessary component of learning in the first year of qualified practice (Bates et al., 2010). It would seem that the research in relation to social workers in training have salience for NQSWs who are also confronting the realities of practice, learning to negotiate workplace cultures and consolidating their learning by observing and doing.

3.5.2 Supporting workplace learning

Cooper and Rixon (2001) found that supporting and sustaining a positive workplace learning environment requires the active involvement of colleagues, managers and supervisors. Importantly, there is a need for underpinning practical arrangements that enable workplace study, learning and reflection. Menmuir & Thomson (2006) cite evidence that illustrates the gains from workplace learning for employers, staff and service users but time away from work creates difficulties for organisations, staff, and for people who use services. The integration of learning into the organisational context is crucial if there is fit between professional development and organisational objectives. The educational element of a line manager's role including awareness of training undertaken by their staff, and identifying opportunities to apply their learning in supervision have been areas identified for development (Brown and Keen, 2004; Ennis and Brodie, 1999). The practice development agenda tended to be squeezed out in supervision to make space for discussions about casework and managerial accountability (Brown and Keen, 2004). On one hand line managers have a professional instinct to encourage and promote practice development but on the other hand this may conflict with their managerial responsibilities in controlling scarce resources that are needed to respond to operational case work demands. This conflict has prompted some research to suggest that mentoring, professional and educational development should be a distinct function from line management supervision and accountability (Rumsey, 1995; Hendry and Crouch; 1998, Smith, 2000). Cooper and Rixon (2001) argue that the case for a system of mentor support within professional development is compelling and there is scope for creative use of both individual and peer relationships within operational and training collaborations.

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3.5.3 Induction

A number of studies and reports drawn attention to weaknesses in induction processes. Lord Laming (2003) called for induction to be seen as part of a structured continuum beyond the first year of employment and suggests adapting national situation to local situations. Bradley (2006) concludes that a good induction should aim to meet an individuals' personal and professional development needs and that person-centred supervision should be a central component. Jack and Donnellan (2010) call for induction processes to be clearer and better co-ordinated so that the experiences of individuals do not rely so heavily on the specific skill and knowledge of specific managers. Bates et al., (2010) suggest that induction and probation periods of newly qualified workers need much greater investment, perhaps in the form of specific training for line managers and in the design of a structured induction package that incorporates post qualifying consolidation and preparation for specialist practice. Formal and semi-formal on-the-job training, e.g. induction, supervision, in-house or local specialist courses, have been shown to meet immediate technical learning and development needs (Knight et al., 2006), and to complement rather than displace the informal and situated social learning associated with general professional. Within the first year of practice, specific role training and informal learning appear to be of critical importance, as does the inherent learning culture of the workplace. In this respect, newly qualified practitioners who are already lifelong learners will be best able to maximise the learning potential in their work situations (Bates et al., 2010).

3.5.4 Research into the experiences of Newly Qualified Social Workers

Bates et al., (2010) found that a quarter of the newly qualified social workers identified that their current development needs included assessment, report writing, record keeping, time management, case management, dealing with conflict and care management and contracting. Echoing previous research, they also found half of the line managers had not received support or training in managing the induction period and or had limited resources, managers seemed to be restricted by severe time constraints when it came to aiding personal development (Bates et al., 2010). Jack and Donnellan (2010) also found that line managers were not supported and enabled to meet the needs of NQSWs.

Jack and Donnellan (2010) found the rapid decline in the well-being of NQSWs was associated with three interrelated dimensions: the individual, the organisational and the professional, it was these dimensions that influenced the transition from newly qualified status to more fully established professionals.

At the level of the individual all the NQSWs reported stress in trying to resolve the conflicts between the ideals with which they left their training and the daily reality of work as a qualified professional. Those who engaged coping mechanisms such as problem solving, seeking support and expressing their emotions were more likely to main a sense of personal accomplishment and job satisfaction. Jack and Donnellan state that organisations can help NQSWs manage this by providing appropriate training and support for line managers, enabling them to meet the needs of their NQSW and help them to engage effective coping mechanisms (2010:312). NQSWs need different sources of support, formal and informal but

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those that provide a safe space for the expression of emotions and access to peer support have much to recommend them in this context.

At the level of the organisation NQSWs felt the demands and pressures of the organisation strongly. This was largely through the type and volume of casework and the few opportunities to engage in preventive and or therapeutic work, this many feeling exasperated and undervalued (Jack and Donnellan, 2010). A picture of organisations having no clear understanding about the roles and responsibilities between different levels of staff emerged. There was little evidence of training or development staff being direct contact with the NQSW or in giving guidance and support to line managers in managing induction and supervision processes. Time scales to complete work often conflicted with professional decision making, NQSWs felt a lack of trust in systems to measure and monitor their work and when managers urged them to steer a middle course between preparing the 'perfect' report and completing it on time, the NQSWs felt completely let down (Jack and Donnellan, 2010). Supervision was identified as a key learning and support mechanism but many of the NQSWs did not experience as a space for reflection or personal development which left them feeling dissatisfied and unsupported. There were pockets of good practice but they were dependent on personal characteristics, skills and abilities of individuals rather than a benchmark of time, resources and processes being applied to support NQSWs (Jack and Donnellan, 2010:315).

At the level of the professional Jack and Donnellan found that none of the NQSWs had been asked about their PDP (provided at end of completing new social work degree in England) by their employers. When NQSWs were asked how induction processes could be improved they suggested introducing a case free period in the initial 3 months, more opportunities for shadowing and co-working, more frequent supervision, time for reflection and personal development and clear a definition of what constitutes a protected caseload (2010).

Jack and Donnellan (2010) concur with Gregory (2007) who identified a number of specific elements that enhanced transitions to the workplace for newly qualified probation officers. These included a supportive senior officer who had knowledge of the training programme, who provided additional supervision with a focus on career development, who ensured a protected workload and support from colleagues who could mentor and provide opportunities for co-working. Like Stalker et al., (2007) they also state that different sources of support to assist social workers to deal with stress and exhaustion is important, particularly in the current context of criticism of social work children's services and the attendant recruitment and retention of social workers (Laming, 2009). They argue for clearer and better co-ordinated induction processes to improve the early employment experiences of NQSWs, induction processes that included increased opportunities for supervision, peer support and co-working, integrated performance development plans and protected caseload. They suggest that future developments in this regard need to acknowledge the anxieties of NQSWs had about embarking extended training courses, and their need to feel appreciated and be recognised as a person within the developing professional (Jack and Donnellan, 2010: 314).

3.6 Coaching in social work

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In 1999 Ennis and Brodie suggested that Social Work could promote CPD through re-emphasising the traditional strengths of social work education such as the 'coaching' models of supervision and recognising the importance of the team in enabling and supporting professional development. They put forward the 'athletic' model of coaching – coaching to improve performance in which the organisation provides the facilities to support this and builds on the strengths of line managers and teams to improve performance. Within this model the organisation has the responsibility to provide facilities and support individuals' efforts to improve performance. This model is consistent with models of competent supervision, coaching becomes an appropriate term for the process between the individual social worker and the line manager. In relation to assessment the active role of the individual is emphasised: self evaluation of practice performance in reflective accounts of pieces of work is as important as the feedback from the line manager (Ennis and Brodie, 1999). Although Ennis and Brodie (1999) put forward coaching as a model for supervision for CPD in social work the review found only one piece of work that specifically discussed the use of coaching in social work, it is this work that we turn to next.

Perrault and Coleman (2004) discuss the use of coaching in social work field education in Canada, however it is suggested that the premise for and methods of using coaching in field education with student social workers will have salience for using coaching in relation to preparing NQSWs for practice in Scotland.

They state that based on the premise that behaviours can be changed and improved through objective observation, constructive feedback and analysis (Maeda, 2001), coaching incorporates feedback and training (Perrault and Coleman, 2004). Coaching is a strategy that supports and assists the attempts of learners to improve their practice (Veenman and Denessen, 2001). As a method, it involves teaching skills, techniques and strategies (Bergmann Drewe, 2000), and assists students in transferring their skills to new learning (Joyce and Showers, 1982). With the help of coaching, people maintain focus on their goals, actions and decisions, and use more of their natural strengths. Through the selection of a goal (defined as a standard which the student desires or is required to meet), the coach and student form a partnership. Together they select the focus, format, and desired outcomes (Perrault and Coleman, 2004). Coaching goes beyond "narrow skills acquisition" to look at "educating the whole person" and as a result fosters respect for the student as an autonomous individual (Bergmann Drewe, 2000:82) where questioning and critical thinking are essential elements in the development of autonomy. The coaching role goes beyond that of technical expert and is not something that is merely delivered. Rather, it is "a dynamic social activity" (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2002:35). One prerequisite of coaching is a trusting relationship where students can take action towards the realisation of their vision, goals and desires and improve their practice.

The method of coaching is aligned to supervision in that the both seek to promote effective social work practice and improve performance (Gardiner, 1989). Coaching is a form of "learning partnership" (Zachary, 2000), it capitalises upon a process of inquiry involving problem solving, strategic planning, action steps, and motivation. The coach provides structure, support, feedback, and challenge (Perrault and Coleman, 2004). The coach

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promotes a rational analysis of practice by asking the student to reflect on his or her practice at the level of technical competence (how the student has accomplished a given educational goal) and interpretative understanding (to make explicit the assumptions underlying their practice behaviours (Veenman & Denessen, 2001). During reflective support, the coach moves the process to discuss procedures to clarify issues, verbalise the learning objectives, and reflect on strengths and strategies (Swafford, 1998). These learning objectives must be specific, understandable, action-based and attainable. In this way coaching is aligned to the framework of the Integrating Theory and Practice (ITP) Loop as described by Bogo and Vayda (1998). Coaching can enhance the ITP Loop process, which includes four components: *Retrieval* of experiences, *Reflection*, *Linkage* with formal knowledge and *Evaluation* of responses to events or issues. Coaching requires that the coach set aside time to be available for providing suggestions and support. The coach demonstrates professional personal characteristics and must be aligned in thought, word, and action as a positive social work role model. As well as honest assessment, the coach gives the student acceptance and forgiveness, and allows a reasonable freedom to fail, creating a safe environment that supports learning, appropriate experimentation, and growth. Finally, the coach encourages the student to use and improve practice skills and problem-solving abilities. Perrault and Coleman suggest that by using such a framework students are more able to integrate experience, theory and practice and past and present with the future (2004).

4. Discussion

This review was asked to find evidence on whether coaching could add value in consolidating Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) learning and readiness to practice during their first year of registration. The review has attempted to shed light on this by bringing together the literature on coaching with that of social work education literature that has relevance to NQSWSs and readiness to practice.

Jarvis et al., 2006 have suggested that coaching can offer organisations and their staff

- Time out to reflect on performance at work
- Ongoing support to individuals as they learn
- Confidential and honest discussions about performance at work
- A tailored approach to addressing learning needs
- Employee development aligned to business needs

We know from studies in relation to social work that practitioner, supervisors and manager alike share frustrations about their ability to engage in meaningful learning in their professional practice such as being given or creating opportunities for reflective learning. Time away from the frontline was considered crucial, the time to capture stories of good practice and to use them in supervision and coaching, have a two way conversations about meeting individuals learning needs at a local level was considered important to consolidate learning, develop and sustain effective practice (Beddoe, 2009). We also know the NQSWS value ongoing support, opportunities that provide a safe space to reflect, discuss and get

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feedback about their practice, need to have structured approach to their professional development and have constructive positive role models (Jack and Donnellan, 2010). The literature suggests that coaching is one way to promote 'discretionary behaviour' behaviour where people seek to excel professionally and help achieve the goals of their organisation (Purcell et al., 2003). It suggests various contexts in which coaching are most useful, the two most relevant to the review are in the context of improving skills and helping people adapt to a change in role.

The coaching literature provides sound evidence regarding what methods, processes, systems and issues need to be addressed in order to support a quality coaching culture. Depending on the organisations rationale and purpose for using coaching the type of coaching and who becomes trained in coaching techniques or as coaches will vary. For example if the organisation is focusing solely on performance improvement managers trained to use a coaching style of management may be sufficient but if the organisation has a wider purpose in mind such as individual professional growth internal coaches may be the way forward. Whatever the chosen approach, it will need to be tied in with the organisations strategy for development, those taking on coaching responsibilities will need training and support and the factors that combine to produce a positive climate for coaching will need to be addressed. The literature suggested that coaching can be effective in promoting learning and brings tangible benefits to individuals and organisations. It also points to the crucial importance of the relationships between coach and coachee. Opinion is divided about the extent to which line managers can fulfil all the requirements of a formal coaching role. The literature suggests that it may be better to conceive of managers as having a coaching style of management rather than as coaches per se. It pointed to the benefits of selecting managers who were orientated towards development, performance, giving feedback, and who had with abilities in goal setting and planning rather than those with a command and control style. The literature that did discuss coaching in social work encased it in within a supervisory process that sought to promote effective social work practice and improve performance through field educators or managers having a coaching style to create learning opportunities and provide constructive feedback through a learning partnership.

The social work education literature can also help inform whether coaching would add value in assisting NQSWs readiness to practice. Numerous studies have detailed the various constraints to workplace learning but simultaneously point to the integration of learning in the organisation context being crucial if there is to be fit between an individual's professional development and the organisational objectives (Menmuir and Thomson, 2006). Coaching may offer a viable method of achieving 'fit' whilst offering 'time out' if not time away from the workplace. Group learning activities and forums for peer support have found to be particularly valued by NQSWs (Skinner et al., 2010; Jack and Donnellan, 2010). Although coaching is a one to one activity the use of both individual and group coaching supervision optimises the benefits of coaching (CIPD, 2007).

The social work education literature also raises the crucial importance of line managers recognising, assuming and being supported in their educational role (Brown and Keen, 2004). The ability of first line managers to respond in a flexible way to the development

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needs of their staff is highlighted as a key issue for organisations that wish to develop a coaching culture. Yet research on social work education points to social work line managers often having little awareness of the training being undertaken by their staff, the developmental agenda being squeezed out of supervision through operational demands conflicting with professional development needs. Some have suggested there is an incompatibility between the functions of a manager and them developing and sustaining their educational role. Yet the importance of line manager and staff team having shared understandings of the tasks, the capacity to work on them and being positive role models for new workers and learners is recognised. The literature consistently points to the support and training needs of managers in supporting staff. These issues are echoed in the more generic literature on coaching and line managers, with similar conflicts and issues coming to the fore: the relationship between coach and coachee, operational demands constraining the time for and style of interaction, power differentials and the training and support needs of managers in supporting learning and or adopting a coaching style of management. Line managers will be crucial to the development of any coaching initiative and the particular issues in relation to line managers raised in both the coaching and social work educational literature will need to be explored and addressed if line managers are going to take on coaching roles and or adopt a coaching style of management. Coaching may be one way to make room for line managers to increase their educational role if given adequate, training, support and resources.

Research into the experiences of NQSWs found that they not only needed support in the more technical, instrumental elements of their job that cannot be covered in training but also be provided with opportunities to reflect, get support and engage coping mechanisms to assist with the emotional labour associated with their role. Coaching may help prevent or dilute some of the difficulties faced by NQSWs if it assists with promoting a clearer understanding about roles and responsibilities, if it is incorporated into induction processes that include increased opportunities for supervision, peer support and co-working, when it is integrated into performance development plans and there are clear expectations about what constitutes a protected caseload. Coaching has the potential to take account of the anxieties of NQSWs had about embarking extended training courses, and their need to feel appreciated and be recognised as a person within the developing professional (Jack and Donnellan, 2010: 314). Perrault and Coleman (2004) offer an insight into why and how coaching can be used in social work field instruction, their findings illustrate the potential transferability of this approach in consolidating the learning of NQSWs and building their readiness to practice during their first year of registration. Coaching has the potential to be another way to maximise the transfer of learning through providing opportunities to practice and getting constructive feedback on performance.

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Other coaching resources

The 'how to' coach literature and resources other than those cited in the references include:

The Training Journal available at <http://www.trainingjournal.com/news/subject/coaching.html> Aimed at learning and development professional the website contains a coaching section featuring article related to current coaching practice.

Jones, D. And Murphy, P. (2007). *An Introduction to Coaching for the Health and Social Care Sectors*. Pavilion Publishing. The book looks at how to set up a coaching approach in an organisation and how to measure success.

Clutterbuck, D. (2007). *Coaching the Team at Work*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

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Foster-Turner, J (2005). Coaching and Mentoring in Health and Social Care: The Essential Manual for Professionals and Organisations. Radcliffe Publishing Ltd. The book covers the organisational preparation to support quality coaching processes in health and social care settings

Whitmore, J. (2002). Coaching for performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose. Nicholas Brealey Publishing

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6. Appendix A

Methodology

A search strategy was designed that incorporated a number of stages and elements.

The search terms used were

'coaching'

'coaching and social work'

'coaching and induction'

'newly qualified social workers'

'social workers and preparing to practice'

All these terms were used in the following databases, portals and websites:

University Library portal with access to international and UK Human Resource and Social Science publications

NHS Scotland e-library

Social Services Knowledge Scotland

Care Knowledge

Social Care Institute for Excellence

Social Care Online

Google Scholar

Two stages of screening were undertaken. The first involved scanning the abstracts returned in the searches, and the second involved scanning the full papers for content and references. The search includes examples from outwith social services.

The scope of the review is limited, it does not include the large body of international literature on social work education more generally although some of the papers included in the review touch on some of the more recent developments with regard to newly qualified social

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workers. Whilst this review focuses on coaching it also includes literature that discusses the terms coaching and mentoring synonymously.