

Exploring new training opportunities for Communication Support Workers

Edexcel have confirmed that the current CSW course is only accredited until August 2010, which means that the September 2009 intake will be the last one. This is worrying for the profession and for future CSWs who want appropriate, quality training.

What will take its place?

Currently there are two developments:

- Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) has developed a Level 3 Certificate for Learning Support Practitioners (LSPs) - a generic qualification with 4 core units and additional specialist units. New National Occupational Standards (NOS) and role descriptions are about to be launched for LSPs.

This will be a welcome training route for all learning support practitioners, which has been missing in the FE sector, but NATED and ACSW are worried that it will not be specific and detailed enough to match the current CSW course curriculum. We are currently meeting with LLUK for an exchange of information. How flexible is the LSP course curriculum and how much of it can be focused on our specific area? How will it be managed if course members take different specialist units? Will a new specialist LSP qualification match the currently enhanced status of CSWs? There is much to be explored here.

- Signature (formerly CACDP) are planning to develop a new qualification for Educational Communication Support workers (ECSWs) and are at present concentrating on information and opinion gathering from all involved.

All involved are keen to liaise and get the opinions of existing practitioners.....

UPDATE!

- NATED and ACSW are planning a series of network consultations nationwide, due to be undertaken in September. At these meetings NATED and ACSW representatives will jointly present the issues of future training for CSWs, refer to the Standards, discuss options and collect views and suggestions.

- Paul Hambley, Senior advisor at LLUK is giving a presentation at the NATED Conference 2009, entitled...'**Accredited professional development opportunities for specialist learning support practitioners**'

