

# Through The Students Eyes

A students perspective of placement



# Methodology



- ▶ A group of 12 students who were on their 100 day final placement were given the opportunity to give their feedback on their statutory placement
- ▶ The students were reassured that their feedback would remain confidential and that I was presenting their views to a practice educators training
- ▶ The students were allowed to have an open opportunity to discuss their placement but were guided by 3 headings and scaling question.
- ▶ The headings were **What Could We Do Better, What Was Positive About the Placement, General Comments and a scaling question** on how confident did you feel before placement and how confident do you feel after placement.

# The results from Confidence Scaling Question





# The results from Confidence Scaling Question

- The students found this difficult to answer, there were 2 majority groups
- First majority of students had been higher in their confidence than when they had finished their placement.
- When asked about this they stated that they had over confident in their competence and discussed this confidence coming from unconscious competence.
- Second majority of students confidence had remained the same at the beginning as the end of placement.

# The results from Confidence Scaling Question





# The results from Confidence Scaling Question.

- Both groups of students that had increased or remained the same in confidence talked about a 'journey' of confidence:
- reducing then increasing
- or reducing then remaining the same.
- A very small minority of students had stated that their confidence had decreased and this was due to feelings of being overwhelmed and struggled within their placement. They stated that there was so much to learn and to 'take in' that they felt overwhelmed.

# Areas of Development



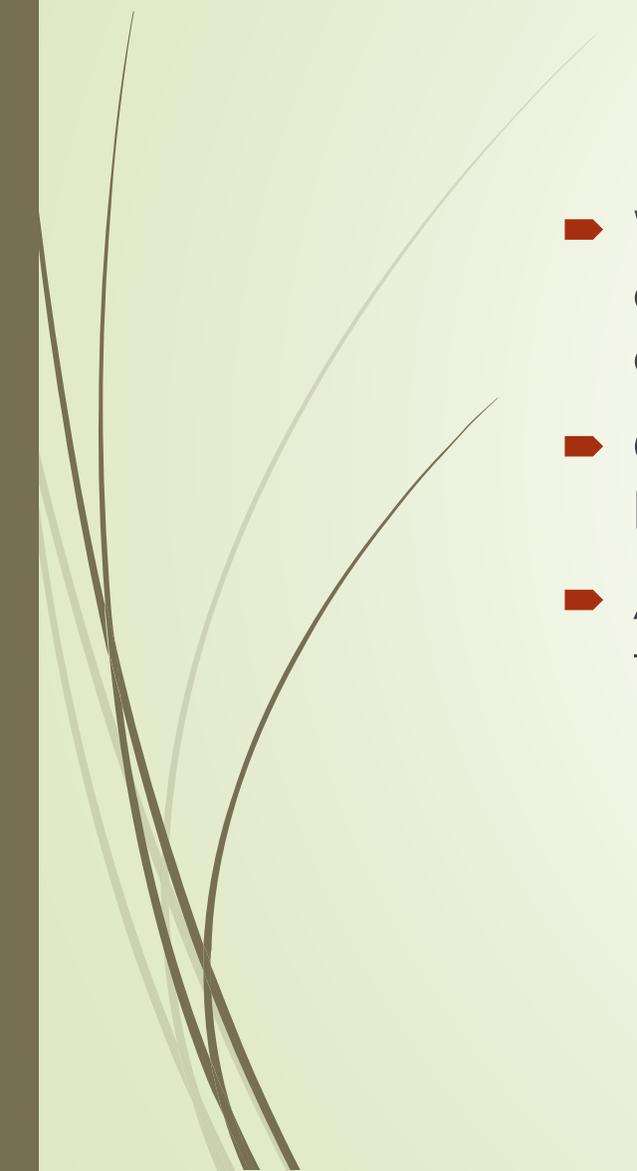


# Areas of Development

- Students stated that the Practice Educator being on Annual Leave created difficulties within placement if substitute support was not discussed or arranged.
- Students said that there were high demands on them and that work was 'bottlenecked' essays.  
i.e. Practice Analysis two and risk assessment essay were both due in together, in addition to the demands of their placement.
- Students felt under pressure when the placement 'window' to complete was tight and little room for sickness, childcare demands or external commitments.



# Areas of Development



- ▶ When students compared their experiences they felt there was disparity in the assessment and it was not uniform or consistent and different Practice Educators had different expectations
- ▶ One student's experience was 'Lack of support' and her Practice Educator 'Expected more than they give'
- ▶ All Students said they benefit from or would benefit from feedback from Practice Educators, both **positive** and constructive criticism.
  - Students want transparency and suggested a student template for supervision.

# Areas of Development



# What Students said about positives elements of their placement

## ► Supportive Practice Educators

- Students who had a positive placement all commented that they benefitted from was supportive practice educators.

-Students said the most supportive practice educators were ones that they could feel had an investment in their learning.

-Supportive of linking Practice to theory and models.





# What Students said about positives elements of their placement

## ➤ **Supportive Teams**

-Students who had a positive placement all commented on having a Supportive Team around them makes a 'Great placement'

-The team can offer support through difficulties 'Everyone helps' and opportunities to shadow other social workers styles

## ➤ **Opportunities to shadow other teams and have opportunities to undertake relevant training**



# General Observations



- ▶ A well thought out induction 'made' a placement
- ▶ Students wanted to be 'nurtured' within placement.
- ▶ Students wanted on some level for Practice educators to recognise there is a power imbalance. Students stated that they had a lot to loose if they failed their placement.
- ▶ This power imbalance can effect challenging practitioners. Students valued when practitioners and Practice Educators were open to challenge.
- ▶ Students which were in specialist fields on their statutory placement, felt they would benefit from assessments and pieces of work from different teams, creating a varied experience. 'Placement within a placement'



# General Observations

- ▶ Students were neither negative or positive about separate roles of work based supervisor and practice educator.
  - However what was important was communication and clear division of roles
- ▶ Students had empathy for their Practice Educators having case load of 28. Students recognised and felt this was unmanageable whilst being a practice educator and supporting their learning.



# General Observations

- ▶ Students said it would be worth exploring mandatory work experience in their first year at university
- ▶ All students said that they 'loved' the opportunity to do group supervision/ reflection on their placements and this should be offered within every placement.
- ▶ Students said that the use of social media could benefit the Local Authority to gain feedback on the quality of their placements ie. group chat or Facebook page refreshed every year.
- ▶ Students commented that there is a huge amount of theory but a lack of application- the gap between Academia and Practice

**To bridge this, there is an invitation to fill out the expression of interest form.**



# General Observations

- **Think students want to gain employment after their placement**
- Employability was high on a students agenda nearing the end of their placement.
- Students discussed Signs Of Safety implementation
  - suggested potential role out at University
  - Students which didn't have as much experience in application of Signs of Safety felt it effected their chance of gaining employment



# General Observations

- ▶ Those students placed within BCP have stated that the merger has effected their placement.
  - Students did not comment in a positive or negative as they could not compare with anything but could feel that the change was effecting the teams around them.
- ▶ Interview process after placement had affected students
  - Students did not like applying for generic posts
  - Students felt they were chasing feedback on their interview
  - Students struggled with words such as appointable, but no firm employment offer led to confusion
  - Students said they benefitted from clear constructive feedback from interview to inform their next interview.



# Analysing the Student Evaluation

- ▶ Under the pressures of 3 authorities we are providing a positive experience for students.
- ▶ Recognise that Students are under pressure too they could be juggling childcare, external employment, assignments, and pressure within placement. Practise Learning Agreements are a good place to get to know your student and support them to inform you of their commitments.
- ▶ Continue to be transparent and remind ourselves that Students need positive strokes
- ▶ A student wants to be employable do we consider a wide range of opportunity to not just meet PCF but to offer employability to differing teams than our own?

## **'Placement within placement'**

- ▶ We need to ask the question are we as the educator in a positive place to offer a supportive and positive experience for a student (case load, annual leave etc.)...also....**Is our team in the positive place to support a student**

**'Team is important vs pressure to find placements'**

# Analysing Student Evaluation

- ▶ Finally and most importantly let me leave you with the students comment....
- ▶ **'The most supportive element was my Practice Educators investment in my learning, the effort put into supervision, the extra mile with linking theory and models'**
- ▶ We are there to inspire the next generation of social workers and students and they can feel when we are invested in them.

