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Dear colleagues,

Social Work Student Placements for Practice Learning

As you may be aware, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, all social work student placements were suspended in March 2020. Since then work has been underway through the Social Work Education Partnership, to support employers, Universities and students to safely resume and commence placements. This activity has included:

- The provision of online resources and guidance for practice educators and link workers
- The provision of a Resumption of Placement Fee of £300 per student to provide financial support to employers as a contribution towards any additional costs incurred in accommodating a placement
- The expansion of the NHS Scotland and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme 2020 to cover social work student placements.

Many third sector organisations are already providers of placements for social work students that offer rich learning opportunities to work across a diverse range of settings. We are reaching out to third sector organisations across Scotland, those who have previously offered placements and those who have not, to consider providing placements at this crucial juncture.

The Scottish Government is working closely with Higher Education Institutions, the Scottish Social Services Council, Employers and placement providers to ensure that there are enough high quality placements available for students, particularly students looking to undertake their final placement. This is vital to ensure that those students due to complete their courses in Summer 2021 are able to qualify and enter the workforce.

Placements are a vital part of the Social Work qualifying degree, where students have the opportunity to apply their academic learning in a practice setting. They also provide mutually beneficial learning environments for both the student and the placement agency. Students are required by the SSSC to complete a minimum number of days in practice prior to qualification, and do so in two or three placements across their degree programme, depending on the University. These placements run for 70-120 days (14-24 weeks) during which the student is part of the placement agency, undertakes allocated work and supports service users. Many agencies have qualified practice educators who support and assess the student 'in house' and others provide an agency based link worker who works with an independent practice educator, who is based off-site.

Placement providers are paid for hosting student placements on a fixed fee scale. For placement agencies in the voluntary sector and private sector, this fee is £28 per student, per placement day. Agencies that have qualified 'in house' practice educators are paid the full daily fee of £28 per day per student, and for placements that are supported by an independent practice educator, £10 per student per day is paid to the placement agency and £18 per day per student is paid to the independent practice educator.

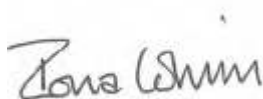
	Agency with in-house Practice Educator	Agency without in-house Practice Educator
70 day placement	£1960	£700
120 day placement	£3360	£1200

As outlined above, additional support including £300 placement grants, student insurance underwritten by the Scottish Government and a catalogue of resources have been put in place to aid students and placement providers in these unprecedented circumstances. We are also working to provide agencies or practitioners that have not previously hosted placements with access to Link Worker training. Placement providers who do not have in-house practice educators are supported by independent practice educators who hold a wealth of experience in placement provision, student support, learning and assessment.

As partners on the Social Work Education Partnerships we are all committed to ensuring that students have the practice learning experiences required to meet the rigours of qualification and prepare them for practice as Newly Qualified Social Workers. We hope that these challenging times may bear opportunities for new placement opportunities in exciting and diverse settings across the third sector.

If you would like to discuss potentially becoming a placement provider, or would like any further details, please contact shona.macpherson@gov.scot or linda.clark@swepscotland.org.

Yours Sincerely,



Iona Colvin
Chief Social Work Adviser