

## **Meeting the challenges of collaboration in post-qualifying social work education**

The Masters in Professional Practice (MAPP) course for child care practitioners was successfully developed as a post-qualifying award at the University of Sheffield as a response to identified needs within child and family social work for better professional development for frontline practitioners. It is one of only two such courses in the Yorkshire region which lead to the Advanced Award. Over the last year, in response to the needs of practice agencies in the region, there have been three linked developments of the course:

- The provision of a bespoke version of our mainstream post-qualifying education at PG Certificate level linked to the Specialist Award to all the frontline social workers in one local authority as part of that authority's responsive action to Ofsted issuing a 'Notice to improve' – action which significantly contributed to the removal of Government intervention in an unprecedented timeframe.
- Undertaking 'Action Learning Sets' with first line managers in the same authority.
- Initiating a post-qualifying leadership and management strand of the MAPP.

At a time when the Social Work Reform Board is working hard to determine how employers and HEIs can work more closely together, this presentation will build on the knowledge base of PQ social work education by providing a case study of the experience of collaboration around development in the children and families workforce. It will examine the delivery and evaluation of the three developments above and reflect on the experience of close partnership working between an HEI and local authority in defining skills for practice through which synergies between HEI-based learning and a defined workforce development strategy were identified. Some discussion about how conflicts in expectations were managed and the linked but separate activities of training and education will emerge.