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Birmingham Social Work Academy

Posted on Friday 14th October 2011

A trail-blazing partnership between Birmingham City Council and the University has seen the launch of the Birmingham Social Work Academy on Monday 10 October.

The Academy is for all social workers; students wanting to enter the profession, those who are newly qualified, experienced practitioners and those aiming to become managers.

The development of the Academy reflects the work developed nationally by the Social Work Reform Board and the recent Munro review into child protection.

The aim is to increase the level of professional expertise within the city by raising standards and improving recruitment and retention of experienced staff.

Councillor Matt Bennett, executive member for children's social care at Birmingham City Council, said: "I am really excited by this initiative, which doesn't merely seek to solve some of the problems we have experienced in terms of recruitment, retention and standards but actually creates something innovative which will encourage excellence at every level."

He added: "Unlike other academies, this is not just aimed at newly qualified social workers. We want all social care staff in the city to be members of the academy and to keep learning and developing professionally. This recognises that children's social work is one of the most important and difficult jobs within the public sector; ensuring we support and enable our staff to be amongst the best in the country is key to our aspirations for the service."

Professor David Stephenson, Head of the School of Social Policy said: "Birmingham City Council has always had a significant influence on our programmes and we have had long-standing partnership arrangements with Birmingham Social Services over many years. Having entered into a Strategic Partnership with the Adults and Communities Directorate last year it is a very appropriate next step that the founding partnership of the BSWA is between the Children, Young People and Families Directorate and the School of Social Policy at the University of Birmingham."

"The Birmingham Social Work Academy will provide the platform for the School of Social Policy to implement the Social Work Reform Boards' recommendations for effective partnership working between HEI's and employers throughout the midlands region. We will be inviting all social work agencies to join us in this exciting new initiative.''

The University has been providing social work education since 1908 and the School of Policy has developed a reputation for delivering high quality teaching and learning. The BSWA is the first of a range of initiatives to strengthen the relationship between the University and employers in the region to embed a learning culture in social work agencies.

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