

# Supporting your career

## Introducing the Academy

Camden's Children and Learning Academy is a joint enterprise between the Children and Learning Directorate and Camden's Learning and Development Service working in partnership to deliver Camden's vision of a learning environment and culture where workers are valued and their professional development is prioritised to ensure our practice is of the highest standard.

## Vision

We want to ensure that children and young people are at the heart of everything we do; to achieve this we aim to foster a passionate, creative workforce that is committed to learning and development as a driver for excellent practice.



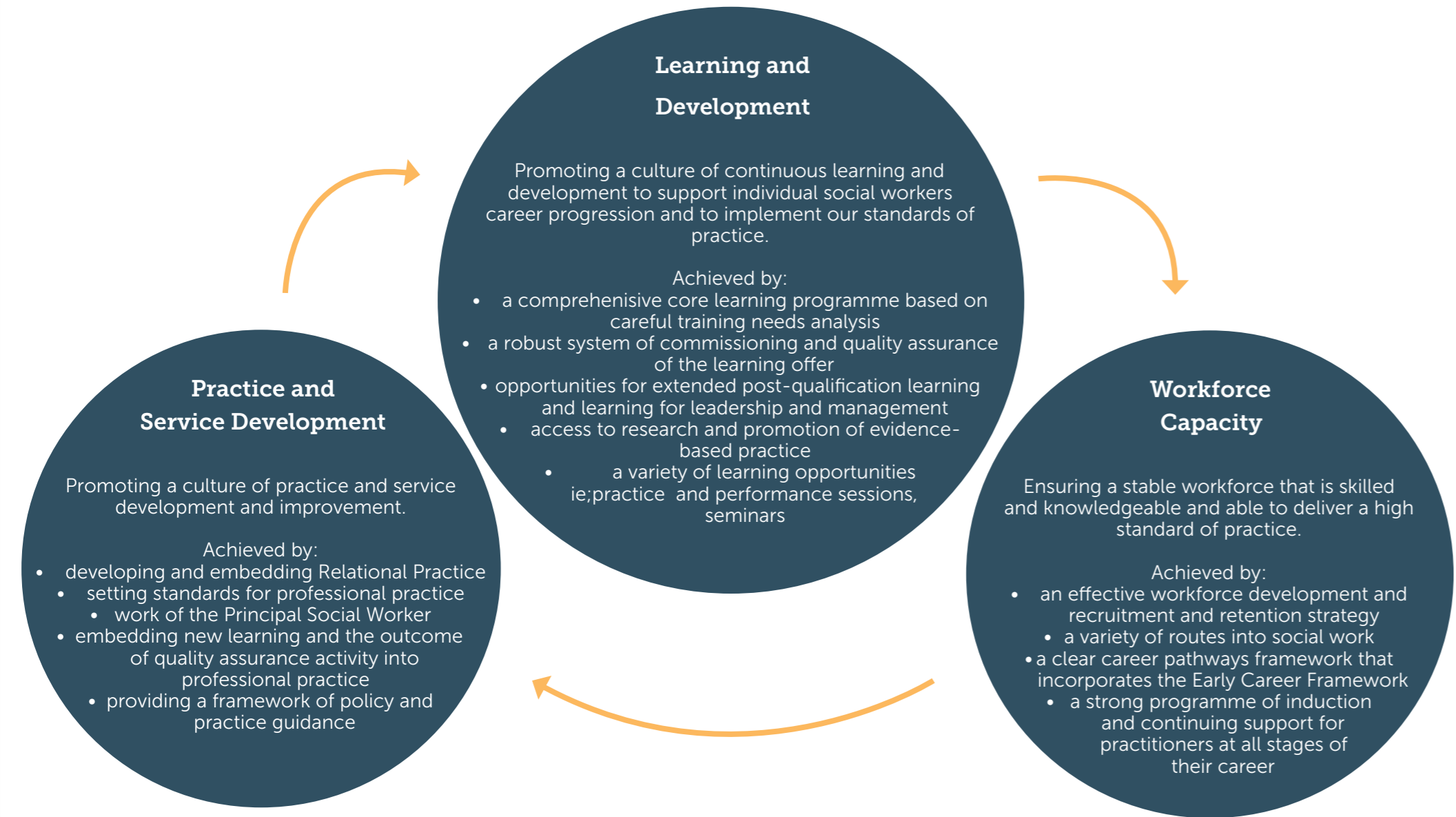
## Our aims

- Cultivating a stable, flexible and sustainable workforce that is skilled and knowledgeable and responsive to the needs of children and families in Camden.
- Embedding Relational Practice into our work with children and families across all children's services.
- Creating an environment that promotes a culture of continuous learning and developing innovative practice through reflective peer to peer support and knowledge exchange.
- Supporting the career development of workers at all levels via a variety of pathways so that individual workers can pursue their chosen path.
- Facilitating a culture of support for the workforce that enables workers to grow and develop throughout their time in Camden.

## Our practice framework

Camden's Children and Learning Directorate uses Relational Practice as the underpinning philosophy for all work undertaken with children and their families. Under this approach, workers focus on developing open and trusting relationships with children and families in order to empower them to develop resilience and find solutions to their problems. The approach emphasises the importance of giving families control so that they can be active agents of change rather than recipients of social care practice.

**What we do: the Academy's three pillars**



**Supporting your career**

The Academy aims to support individual practitioners on their career journey, wherever it leads. We can support you as you start out on your career and develop your practice and will continue to support you with on-going professional learning and development opportunities as you progress along your chosen career path.

For social workers, we work in partnership with the North Central London Social Work Education Partnership, Frontline, Step up to Social Work and Kingston University amongst others who provide a vital link between teaching establishments and Camden's social care service. Through this partnership Camden is able to offer a comprehensive Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme as well as a variety of routes into social work.

**Joining the social work profession**

If you want to train as a social worker, Camden recruits social work graduates from a variety of routes including Frontline and Step Up and offers council employees places on social work degree apprenticeships involving attendance at university and social work placements.

**The ASYE programme**

Newly-qualified social workers will join our ASYE programme, with a structured learning programme overseen by the ASYE co-ordinator, reduced caseloads and support from an allocated assessor who is an experienced social worker. Social workers who are returning to the profession after a career break will be offered a bespoke programme to follow for 6 months during their probationary period.





### Student placements

Camden provides 12 student placements every year and all students joining us will be allocated a Practice Educator (an experienced social worker who has undergone specialist training) who will oversee their placement and provide supervision and support in order to help students develop their practice.

### Social work progression

Experienced social workers in Camden can develop their career within the Launchpad social work career development pathway which is built around the Professional Capabilities Framework and helps social workers develop the level of skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next stage.

#### Newly qualified social workers

Following the ASYE programme to develop practice in a safe and supported environment

#### Experienced Social worker

Consolidating practice through experience and knowledge

#### Advanced Social worker

Developing own practice and specialisms and supporting the practice of others through consultation and support

#### Team manager

Developing and consolidating management and supervisory skills at team level

#### Service manager

Developing and consolidating strategic management skills and service development

## Our learning offer

The Academy works in partnership with Camden's Learning and Development Service to provide comprehensive learning opportunities for all practitioners, including social workers, Family Support Workers and Personal Advisors, at every stage of their development and career journey. Our training is designed to help you enhance your practice, support your professional development and, if you are a social worker, ensure you can maintain your social worker registration.

The Camden Centre of Relational Practice works closely with the Academy to support continued professional development for all staff who have an opportunity to be an associate.

Commissioning is based on a careful analysis of:

- what individual workers need to develop their practice; this is based on discussions with managers during supervision
- any specific training needed to support the development and improvement of a service
- any gaps in learning identified through audit and quality assurance activities.

All the training we provide is monitored by the Academy and the Learning and Development Service to ensure it is meeting the learning needs of staff and is being embedded into our practice.



## Our programme

Our core training programme is available to all practitioners and is aligned with the Professional Capabilities Framework and Knowledge and Skills statements to help you build your expertise, develop your practice and support your continued professional development.

Other training available includes:

- Induction training; every practitioner joining Camden will follow a 6 week period of induction training in order to help them settle into their role.
- Post-qualifying training; experienced social workers looking to pursue post-qualifying training and qualifications can apply to the Academy for a discretionary contribution to fees and costs. Courses are available on specialist modules or for Masters courses at Royal Holloway, Southbank University, Middlesex University and the Tavistock Clinic and Institute of Family Therapy.
- Multi-agency training; the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership offers multi-agency safeguarding training with our safeguarding partners to enhance joint working.
- Practice educator training for social workers who would like to train to supervise and assess student placements with bespoke support from our Practice Development Officers.
- All Camden social workers can access Research in Practice and Making Research Count resources to enhance their learning and keep up to date with new developments.

## Mentors

Social workers can take up an offer of mentoring from experienced practitioners and managers, including Independent Reviewing Officers, who can share their experience and expertise and support practitioners to develop their career by providing space for reflection. Mentoring will be made available to all newly qualified social workers as part of the ASYE programme.



## Coaching

Coaching and mentoring is an effective intervention to support career development, progression, job satisfaction and high performance. It is also a perfect follow up tool to help embed practice learning; formal and informal training; e-learning and other self-directed learning activities by providing space for reflection. Coaching is not about teaching you or telling you how to solve difficulties or issues. Instead, a coach will ask questions and support you to reflect, in order to facilitate your learning and support you to work through the specific challenges you bring to coaching. We are committed to exploring coaching skills training and coaching opportunities for staff in Children's Safeguarding and Family Help.



## Delivering our learning offer

At Camden, we believe there are many different ways to deliver learning opportunities; It can be formal and class-based training or informal such as workshops and web-inars; it can be delivered in person or remotely.

We organise practice workshops with experienced staff who can share knowledge and experience and learning sessions run by our Principal Social Worker giving workers an opportunity to explore practice issues.

Whatever your preferred learning style, we can find the best method for you.

## Practice development

The Academy has a quality assurance role and aims to ensure a high quality of practice and to contribute to continuous improvement of practice and service development:

- The Academy supports quality assurance by ensuring that the themes identified in audits are looped into the learning and training offer for staff.
- Practice Development Officers help social workers to develop their practice through the ASYE and Practice Educator programmes.
- The Academy facilitates practice and learning sessions in order to share learning from audits and other quality assurance activity.
- The Academy is responsible for oversight of policy and procedure.
- The Systemic social worker based in the Academy is responsible for helping practitioners implement systemic practice into their everyday work.
- The Family and Systemic psychotherapy service is based in the Academy. This is to support systemic practice to flourish in the organisation.

## How are you feeling?

The Academy recognises that our work can be stressful and the support you receive from managers, colleagues and peers is vital to help you cope and maintain confidence in your professional practice.

The Academy carries out regular surveys and health checks to take the pulse of the workforce and ensure issues faced by practitioners are raised and resolved.

The Academy also hosts a variety of groups that practitioners are welcome to join so you can have an opportunity to share your views and be part of the conversation.

**Camden Children and  
Learning Academy**

