

Partnership Opportunity

Perth and Kinross Learning and Development

January 2027 start

The [Perth and Kinross Learning and Development](#) (PK L&D) team leads a diversity of programmes, including the Perth and Kinross and Dundee University Local Learning Partnership (LLP), set up in 2023. Initially established as a partnership for student placements, the LLP* has grown into a learning community that brings together social work students, practitioners, practice educators, Link Workers, universities, third sector organisations, people with lived experience and local communities. Its ambition is to support social workers across their whole professional journey: from social work education and practice placements, through the Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQS), to continuous professional learning.

PK L&D is inviting M.Res applicants to apply for three partnership opportunities to explore how design-led approaches can strengthen, articulate and extend Learning and Development alongside, and within, the LLP as a collaborative learning community. The project will build on the partnership's ethos of collaboration, inclusion and investment in people, exploring the framing of learning as a lifelong journey strengthened through peer support, reflection and co-creation. This research project will offer three M.Res students the chance to explore how design-led approaches might support one of the following three project options:

1. Stories of learning: voice, narrative and legacy

This project will explore how design-led narrative and storytelling can help the LLP clarify its vision and communicate the value of collaborative learning. It will capture the stories of students, NQSWs, Practice Educators, Link Workers and third sector partners, focusing on empowering practitioner learners to find and share their own voice. A further aim is to explore how creative storytelling can be used to leave a legacy of learning that outlasts individual cohorts. This might include, for example, a co-created and growing collection of learning stories; narrative tools that help practitioners reflect on their professional journey; or visual and film-based storytelling.

2. Learning across difference: inclusion, diversity and person-centred practice

Perth and Kinross Learning and Development brings together learners from diverse backgrounds and roles. This project will explore the value of that diversity and explore how learning alongside other disciplines and practitioners can be actively designed to shape person-centred care. It will ask what makes peer learning inclusive and how insights from cross-disciplinary learning inform person-centred care practices. This might include, for example, participatory design methods that surface how different perspectives shape practice decisions; tools or formats for more inclusive peer learning sessions; or co-designed approaches that connect peer learning to person-centred outcomes. Applicants to this project would have the opportunity to collaborate with the LLP.

3. Designing care together: growing and developing design within health and social care

This project will look at the Learning and Development infrastructure across Perth and Kinross and its partners. It will explore the power of professions coming together as a community of practice and the role of collaboration might play in embedding collaborative design practices in workforce development, service improvement and strategic planning. It will also consider what conditions help a community of practice to sustain itself as people and priorities change. Applicants to this project would have the opportunity to work in collaboration with the LLP, community of practice and other areas across Perth and Kinross. This might include, for example, a collaborative design learning toolkit for practitioners, Practice Educators and Link Workers.

PK L&D are looking for applicants who seek to work in multidisciplinary and collaborative ways, utilising design-led creative practice to support learning and development. Working alongside the Learning and Development team, students, practitioners and third sector partners, applicants will be expected to engage sensitively with the realities and pressures of social work practice. This is a valuable opportunity for students seeking hands-on experience of design in social care, workforce development and the public sector. Applicants should indicate which of the three options their proposal responds to.

Please note that this is not a funded opportunity. Funded studentships are offered through our partner Innovation Centres and are available to apply for separately (please check the eligibility criteria). **Please contact Zoë Prosser for more information: z.prosser@gsa.ac.uk**

**The LLP has grown in recent years with student placements increasing from 25 in 2023 to 38 in 2025, with around a third of students going on to work for PK L&D. A weekly peer learning programme of 18 sessions, led by guest facilitators from across disciplines and sectors, brings together students from statutory and third sector placements. A 'team around the student' model, an NQSW Forum, coaching conversations and communities of practice extend this learning to Practice Educators, Link Workers and newly qualified staff. Nationally, LLPs are being developed through a test-and-learn approach, and Perth and Kinross is one of four partnerships funded by the National Social Work Agency to do this development work in 2026/27.*

Related References

Iriss. (2026) Local Learning Partnerships. Available at <https://iriss.org.uk/project/local-learning-partnerships/>

Scottish Government. (2017) Health and Social Care Standards: My Support, My Life. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life/>

Scottish Social Services Council. Newly Qualified Social Worker Supported Year. Available at <https://www.nqsw.sssc.uk.com/>

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.