



Trustees Annual Report 2021

ScOPT is a membership organisation for social work practice teachers and others involved in social work education in Scotland. We promote good practice and represent practice teaching as a professional activity to bodies in Scotland that oversee, develop and regulate Social Work education. Our members work for local authorities, in the voluntary sector, higher and further education institutes, and as independent practice educators.

Notice of 'winding up' of ScOPT

The ScOPT Board of Trustees have reached the decision to cease operating and thus dissolve the Scottish Organisation for Practice Teaching.

There are 2 main reasons for reaching this decision

1. A lack of membership support for the continued operation of the organisation.
2. The purpose of ScOPT no longer holds relevance in how it provides its services and functions.

The Board of Trustees have met on a number of occasions to discuss the future of ScOPT and the sustainability of the organisation. We recognise the valuable contribution that ScOPT has made over the last 20+ years to practice learning in social work education and many of the aims of the organisation have been achieved. However, ScOPT has continued to operate with a small number of Trustees who undertake this work voluntarily, and the current Board of Trustees have all expressed their intention to stand down from their roles at the next AGM. The organisation's purpose – to promote practice learning in social work education – has been, in many ways, fulfilled and a number of other organisations now exist who share many of the same objectives as ScOPT and have the resources and infrastructure to continue to do this.

ScOPT is therefore serving notice to the ScOPT membership of the Boards' intention to dissolve the organisation. Should any members be interested in the organisation transferring to them or to establish a new and replacement Board of Trustees, we ask you to please contact ScOPT on info@scopt.co.uk before the Annual General Meeting, which is being held virtually on Thursday 27 January 2022 at 4.30pm.

ScOPT Activities 2020-2021

Our last annual report included details on ScOPT activities until June 2020. Since June 2020, ScOPT has continued to maintain the website, where we have advertised events of interest to members and maintained the free web resource ScOPTbox.

In spring 2021 we issued the ScOPT membership survey, which closed in June. 39 members completed the survey, a response rate of 4% of the membership. We received responses from all areas of Scotland, with a majority from the central belt. Participants fulfilled the practice educator role across Local Authority, Third Sector and Independent provision.

Despite the low overall response rate, there were a number of interesting themes that emerged from the analysis. The majority of respondents stated their utilisation of ScOPT comprised of accessing the website (79%), using ScOPTbox (57%) or reading *ThursdayThinking* articles (49%). Fewer than 3% of respondents indicated they had contributed resources to ScOPTbox or made use of hosted practice educator spaces, perhaps indicative of a sense of ScOPT as a resource rather than a member community. Members also indicated they most frequently made use of ScOPT when looking for practice learning resources to support a placement (70%) thus reinforcing this sense. Of the 39 respondents, 30 (83%) indicated there were no barriers to prevent them personally engaging with ScOPT and qualitative data also highlighted practice learning resources as the most valued element of ScOPT. 80% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they contributed to meeting ScOPT objectives through active participation in the organisation, again highlighting satisfaction with ScOPT as a practice learning resource.

Significantly, when asked how members should be involved in ScOPT a wide variety of suggestions were offered ranging from virtual meetings, further surveys, webinars, discussion groups, virtual forums and volunteering for short-life working groups. All of the suggestions were active and participatory in nature. However, when asked whether members would be willing to support ScOPT in running future conferences/workshops/webinars, only 16 positive responses were received. A similar proportion indicated willing to pay a subscription fee to support maintenance costs. The closing part of the survey asked for notes of interest in trusteeship and none were received. From the results of the survey therefore, there appears to be a disconnect between the objective for ScOPT to be an active membership organisation, and the reality of usage as a repository for practice education resources.

ScOPT Trustees have continued to contribute to the work of the Social Work Education Partnership and the national discussion and work on the future of Practice Learning within the social work sector.

Covid has had an impact on all of the Practice Learning and Social Work practice community and like many others, this has also affected the Trustees of ScOPT, resulting in some of our normal activities being curtailed as we too have faced the challenges in our paid and personal lives.

Board of Trustees & Office Bearers

During this year, one Trustee stood down – Cath Shaw. The Board would like to extend our thanks to Cath for her contribution to ScOPT. We have one new Trustee who has joined us this year Janet Renouf-Miller and we welcomed her and her contributions to ScOPT warmly. Our current Board of Trustees are:

- Fiona Stansfield – Chair
- Jon Bolton – Treasurer & Secretary
- Gillian Muir
- Gail Murphy
- Janet Renouf-Miller
- Kirstin Parkes
- Moira Godfrey

The Board has continued their commitment to the work of ScOPT on behalf of the membership. We hold regular meetings and we have specific tasks shared out - finance, event planning, the Web Team, and responding to requests to attend events and consultations. We take every opportunity to promote the work of ScOPT and the importance and contribution of Practice Educators to social work education.

Membership

Membership of ScOPT has continued to be free. It connects you with a community of like-minded people, access to our website, regular updates about developments in practice education and enhanced features on ScOPTbox.

We currently have 1035 members registered on the website but we are very aware that we really only regularly engage with less than 5% of that number.

ScOPTbox

ScOPTbox was launched in 2015 and its creation was supported by funding from Learning Network West. It is a curated practice-learning library. Hundreds of resources have been recommended by practice educators – things that they have authored and are happy to share with others, or things that they have found useful and want to recommend.

In addition to those materials, ScOPTbox also offers hosted spaces for practice educators who wish to engage with students online, or to provide secure access to resources for their students. Hosted spaces for communities of practice are also available. These spaces could be used for online discussion, revision quizzes, assessment, evaluation, interactive case studies, reflective journals, a CPD/PRTL Register, certificates of attendance/completion, a repository of resources... and much more!

We have found that the low uptake of these hosted spaces now indicates that this resource is now longer needed and that there are likely other resources readily available, indicating that this part of ScOPT services is no longer required by the membership.

We have continued the development of ScOPTbox training to ScOPT members. Thanks to all of the Trustees for their continued effort and hard work in promoting ScOPTbox to such a variety of people throughout the world who are committed and passionate about social work practice learning.

It is the Board's wish that the ScOPTbox resource continues to be accessible and free to practice educators once ScOPT dissolves. We are currently in discussion with other organisations who may be able to support this.

The Web Team

The Web Team is a subgroup of the main Board. They run the website and initially respond to all queries and ideas that come in, consulting with the Board as needed.

ThursdayThinking articles have not continued since October 2020, although previous articles are available on the website and are available to members.

Journal of Practice Teaching and Learning

Moira Dunworth, as a ScOPT member, has been on the editorial Board for the *Journal of Practice Teaching and Learning* for a number of years. Moira has advised that she is now resigning from this position. Moira has provided a valued contribution to the Journal through supporting the activity of book reviews relevant to social work, practice learning and inter-professional practice.

Thank you to Moira for her work in this.

SUMMARY

ScOPT, and the Trustees, have worked tirelessly and voluntarily throughout the year to promote good practice and represent practice teaching as a professional activity.

We look forward to welcoming you to the AGM on Thursday 27th January 2022 where the business of dissolution will be the main agenda item for this meeting of the membership.

Fiona Stansfield
Chair
December 2021