At Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), experts in the School of Health and Life Sciences support social work practitioners, who work in a dynamic, challenging and rewarding profession that works to meet the needs of people, protect the most vulnerable members of our society and facilitate change through a commitment to social justice.

GCU’s MSc Social Work programme aims to equip graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills to qualify as effective and critical social work practitioners. Through a mixture of academic and practice-based modules, graduates will apply the necessary independent learning skills required to become reflective, research-minded and professionally accountable social workers. Working from a strongly developed value base, the programme places a particular emphasis on the principles of anti-oppressive and empowering practice. The programme runs over two years and provides an accelerated route to professional qualification. The programme is accredited by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and all students must be registered with the SSSC.

The Scottish Government produced ‘A Strategy and Action Plan for Embedding Knowledge in Practice in Scotland’s Social Services’, describing how a collaboration between Scottish Government, the NHS Education for Scotland, the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services, the Improvement Service for Local Government, the Scottish Social Services Council and the Association of Directors of Social Work will improve outcomes through putting new knowledge into practice.
This strategy and action plan for 2012-15 is of particular relevance for those who have a role in building the capacity and capability of the workforce in order to improve practice. Recognising the increasingly close working of staff across the health and care sectors this strategy is intended to support multi-agency and cross-professions working and maximising shared use of resources.

Part of this strategy is bringing local authorities and higher education institutions together in partnership. Martin Kettle is a lecturer in Social Work within GCU’s Department of Health and Community Sciences and is seconded to South Lanarkshire Council’s Social Work Resources team to support a partnership between the Council and Glasgow Caledonian University.

South Lanarkshire Council is a member of the social services Managed Knowledge Network, a group of organisations committed at a strategic level to improving the management of knowledge within their organisations to support social care. Through a partnership with GCU, staff from the Council’s Social Work team contribute to teaching on the Masters programme and allow MSc students completing their dissertations to work on real-world research topics linked to Council activity and present their findings back to South Lanarkshire Council.

South Lanarkshire Council staff have also linked with GCU through the part-time Health, Social Care and Nursing Professional Doctorate programme, which supports mid-career professionals or aspiring leaders from the health, social care and nursing sectors aiming to achieve a research qualification while continuing to work within the private or public sector.

At Glasgow Caledonian University, we work with industry and public sector partners to ensure our expertise responds to the need for real-world innovation. GCU’s strategic business development and knowledge transfer teams work with academic experts in our Schools and Research Institutes to support businesses with a problem-solving approach.

Contact us to find out more about building a brighter future with GCU at www.gcu.ac.uk/business.

At GCU, expertise in social work spans areas including dementia and the ageing population, child protection, social justice and mental health social work. Mr Kettle’s research background analyses the world of the social worker working in child protection, how they engage in the process of child protection work, what their concerns are and how they try to resolve them. He is also affiliated with research on substance use and misuse in Glasgow Caledonian University’s Institute for Applied Health and the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research.

Mr Kettle says: “Local authorities have a real focus on improving service delivery through an outcomes-focused approach. Some local authorities don’t have a research department and could really benefit from expertise at GCU which could support their service evaluation.”

The 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) ranked GCU’s research in allied health in the top 10 universities in the UK, with our work in rehabilitation sciences ranked top in the UK.

GCU has a unique focus on non-pharmacological interventions for the treatment of dementia, stroke, arthritis and musculoskeletal disorders and visual impairment. Our expertise includes experience in systematic reviews and the design and evaluation of evidence-based interventions, as well as using technology in outcome assessment. Current work concentrates on upper limb rehabilitation and on physical activity after stroke.

The research activities of GCU’s interdisciplinary Later Life group are focused on promoting positive ageing, managing age related conditions and syndromes and improving health and social care. Evidence synthesis and application is a cross cutting theme demonstrating our commitment to work with NHS, independent and third sector providers to advance health and social care practice.

GCU is also involved in a National Institute of Health Research - Health Technology Assessment to collaborate on a multi-centre cluster trial in primary care, comparing a community group exercise programme with home based exercise and with usual care for people aged 65 and over. Additional projects include Enhancing Therapeutic Benefits of Reminiscence Work for People with Dementia; Harnessing the Heritage of Football; and a number of MRC and NIHR grants including Going Outdoors: Falls, Ageing & Resilience (Go Far).

GCU is also home to an exciting range of Enabling Technologies research experts. Psychologist and usability engineer Dr Jonathan Sykes is working with the Scottish Centre for Telehealth and Telecare to identify technology solutions to support young people with caring responsibilities who are disadvantaged due to barriers created by their caring role, through the provision of access to information, advice and peer support.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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