PREPARING FOR A PLACEMENT

If you have agreed to take a trainee, the preparation you do will make a lot of difference to how the placement goes. Where possible, this should begin well before the placement starts, and involve the following:

- Look at the competency headings on the Assessment of Clinical Competence form and identify which of these you are able/unable to provide.

- Familiarise yourself with the Log of Therapy competencies and Log of Neuropsychological competencies. Trainees will use these to keep a track of competency development, in consultation with supervisors, over their three years of training and supervisors will be required 'sign off' their trainee's records at the end of each placement. You will receive log on details that allow you to access the online e-portfolio system, "PebblePad" where you can view your trainee's ACC and Logs once they are completed.

- Find out about your trainee's learning needs, previous/current experience and particular interests. Trainees on the Sheffield Programme will spend a 'pre-placement planning day' with their supervisor before the placement starts (guidelines for these days are contained in Section 3). It is particularly important in avoiding future difficulties that the trainee and supervisor should be as clear as possible about their expectations of the placement and of each other. This includes not only what will be learned, but also the level of independence the trainee will have, the approach to supervision, the material on which the placement will be assessed, and establishing (implicitly or explicitly) the range of professional and personal issues that may be discussed between trainee and supervisor. Quite possibly the initial expectations in all of these areas will need to be reviewed as the placement unfolds, but you can set the ball rolling at this initial meeting.

- Consider what general introduction to the work, and to the role of the psychologist within it, may be necessary for the trainee. Trainees vary considerably in their prior familiarity with different populations and clinical approaches. Some will require more orientation or familiarisation than others. In some cases the trainee may be apprehensive about working with a particular client group – this can usually be easily overcome if it is recognised at the start. If you are providing a trainee with his/her first placement on the Programme, particular attention will need to be given to planning the induction phase.

- As the placement approaches, begin planning and building up a suitable caseload, otherwise valuable time may be lost at the start of the placement. Also, begin planning and preparing colleagues for the trainee's involvement in relevant staff meetings. It can be helpful to put together some introductory information for the trainee on the organisational and geographical layout of the placement.

- There is usually a lot of basic information to convey to the trainees at the beginning of the placement, much of which you may take for granted because it is so familiar. You might like to make a checklist to remind yourself of these issues to run through with the trainee. They might include – who's who, keeping a diary, security arrangements, car parking, maps, tea, coffee and lunch arrangements, resources, local conventions, file and record keeping, local charter standards, data collection requirements etc. Many organisations have induction packs/ checklists available. The Assessment of Clinical Competence form includes a Placement Induction and Contracting checklist, together with suggested headings for a supervision contract.

- It is helpful to have ideas about your own preferences and strengths as a supervisor. You may want to read about or develop skills in a particular model or method of supervision. Attendance at certain supervisor training events should help in this regard. In addition, there are publications and resources that you can borrow or keep, which are available from the Clinical Psychology Unit.