Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

Handbook for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW’s) and Assessor/Supervisors

Children’s Services

September 2014 cohort
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The Social Work Reform Board

Understanding the Acronyms

The Social Work Reform Board has introduced a wide range of new phrases, titles, organisations. Here is a brief introduction to the new acronyms, with an explanation of each term:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Stands for</th>
<th>Brief introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCSW</td>
<td>The College of Social Work</td>
<td>The College of Social Work is the independent professional body for social workers in England. It is a not-for-profit organisation committed to developing and promoting the social work profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>Professional Capabilities Framework</td>
<td>The Professional Capabilities Framework was introduced in 2012 as the single way in which social workers should think about and plan their careers and professional development. The PCF is a ‘living’ document, in that it is likely to develop as the profession develops. It is owned by TCSW on behalf of the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASYE</td>
<td>Assessed and Supported Year in Employment</td>
<td>An assessed first year in practice for NQSWs. Assessment is linked to the PCF. Support is provided by the employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQSW</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Social Worker</td>
<td>A self-explanatory term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
<td>Replaced the PQ framework. States that Professional Development should be linked to the PCF, be flexible and supported by employers through supervision and protected time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCPC</td>
<td>Health &amp; Care Professions Council</td>
<td>The regulatory body responsible for setting and maintaining standards of professional training, skills, behaviour and registration. Replaced the GSCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employer Standards &amp; Supervision Framework</td>
<td>Sets out the shared core expectations of employers of s/w’s to work effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

Handbook for NQSWs and Supervisors/Managers

Welcome to the West Sussex Assessed and Supported Year in Employment that is run in partnership with the University of Chichester. This handbook provides information and guidance that will support both NQSWs and their supervisors throughout the year.

Introduction to ASYE:

ASYE is one of the recommendations of the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB). The aim of ASYE is to ensure that NQSWs receive consistent support in their first year of employment, so that they are able to become confident, competent professionals. Responsibility for both support and assessment lies with the employer.

Introduction to the West Sussex Scheme

Philosophy of the West Sussex ASYE: the foundation for a successful ASYE is the relationship between the NQSW and their supervisor. The guidance and requirements laid out in this handbook are designed to inform and guide the process. ASYE is not meant to be a ‘tick box’ experience and supervisors can use their professional judgement to use the guidance according to the specific needs of their NQSW.

Support for NQSWs

Support is provided in a variety of different ways and will vary according to the needs of the individual, but the West Sussex scheme includes:

- **A planned and comprehensive induction** to the team and to West Sussex.

- **Regular structured and reflective supervision**: ASYE guidance states that supervision should take place weekly for the first six weeks, at least fortnightly for up to six months and at least monthly thereafter. This is the minimum requirement and may vary according to needs. Even for NQSWs with a lot of previous experience, ASYE supervision provides an opportunity to consolidate their learning and to continue to reflect and develop their practice.

If the ASYE supervisor is not the Team Manager, then the differences and frequency between the two sets of supervision need to be clearly stated in the learning agreement.

Supervision should have a clearly stated agenda which includes the opportunity to critically reflect and analyse, alongside case and workload management etc. The Supervision and Learning Agreements should both state how links with the PCF will be embedded in the supervision process.

The Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework clearly state the standards expected for all staff.

http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=7e6d2140-fc0e-47cd-8b2f-2375812700ad&groupId=10171
• **Attendance at Core Learning Opportunities (Pathway Courses):** the Core Learning Opportunities are designed to provide the NQSW with a range of learning experiences that will support their development during their ASYE. Some of the courses are mandatory; attendance on others will be in discussion with the NQSW and supervisor. An important aspect of the Core Learning Opportunities and any other courses completed during ASYE is identification of learning by the NQSW. To support this, the NQSW should provide a brief reflective commentary identifying the learning they have achieved. This will be included in the portfolio. Information about the Pathway Training can be found at: [http://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/courses/bookings/pathways.asp?pid=11&pathway_search=1&ds=1&frompage=pathways.asp](http://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/courses/bookings/pathways.asp?pid=11&pathway_search=1&ds=1&frompage=pathways.asp)

• **Involvement in additional learning activities** in order to meet identified learning needs, NQSWs should be given the opportunity to meet their developmental needs in a variety of different learning experiences. This could include shadowing opportunities, attendance at local conferences and visits to associated organisations.

• **Attendance at 4 Reflective Workshops:** 4 Reflective Workshops will run throughout the year. The purpose of the Workshops is to provide:

  1) additional support to NQSWs and give them the opportunity to critically reflect on their practice in a peer group environment.
  2) information about relevant national developments in social work, including legal updates.

The structure of the Workshops can be found at: [http://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/_images/14106/Info%20for%20social%20workers/Reflective_Workshop_Format.pdf](http://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/_images/14106/Info%20for%20social%20workers/Reflective_Workshop_Format.pdf)

The Workshops are run by tutors from the University of Chichester and will take place in West Sussex venues. The workshops are mandatory and NQSWs must attend each one. Absence due to sickness cannot be avoided, but the NQSW must make arrangements for sending apologies to the tutors. NQSWs must not miss Reflective Workshops due to work commitments.

• **A 10% reduction in workload and protected development time:** it is expected that, over the course of the year, the NQSW would have a workload equivalent of 90% of what is expected of a confident social worker in the same role in their second and third year of employment. This can be weighted over the course of the year by aspects such as case complexity, risk and growing proficiency.

The 10% workload reduction ensures that the NQSW has time to attend agreed learning and developmental activities and the 4 reflective workshops. Some teams will be able to reduce the NQSWs workload by reducing the number of cases by 10% and this is the most straightforward way to manage the reduction. If this doesn’t work in your team, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to manage the allocation of cases so that the NQSW has a reduction that equates to 10%. The number of cases might reduce more if the cases are considered complex.
• **Study Days**: NQSW’s are entitled to 3 Study Days. This can be used for activities such as writing the Critical Summaries or developing their portfolio. It is in addition to the 10% workload reduction. The details of this support should be included in the learning agreement and revisited at the three and six month reviews.

**The Assessment Process**

NQSWs are assessed against the ASYE level of the PCF. This link will take you to an overview of the PCF.

http://www.tcsv.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/_CollegeLibrary/Reform_resources/PCFfancolour.pdf

This link takes you to a breakdown of the Capability Statements for ASYE.

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Shared%20Documents/ASYE%20July%2030th%20start/Breakdown%20of%20PCF%20ASYE.docx

Assessment follows the principles of **Holistic Assessment**, that is, rather than focusing on a single point of assessment, or assessing in a ‘tick box’ manner, evidence is built up throughout the year. The assessment process should demonstrate progression throughout the year and evidence of progression will come from a variety of sources, such as:

1. **A Self Assessment based on the ASYE levels of the PCF**: the self-assessment is designed to encourage NQSWs to identify their strengths and areas for development at the start of the year. It is intended to be used as a tool in supervision throughout the year and can contribute to the holistic assessment by identifying progression and areas of growth; with direct links to the PCF. It will assist in the identification of learning needs which are a requirement of both ASYE and PDP’s. **The Self Assessment is not meant to be a ‘tick box’ exercise.**

2. **An in-depth learning agreement and regular structured reviews** at three and six months. It is expected that the NQSW and supervisor will complete the reviews together using the pro-formas provided. The reviews will ensure that progression is identified and areas for development will be constantly reviewed. This will also ensure that NQSWs who are assessed by their supervisor to be failing the year will be made aware at an early stage and appropriate support can be provided.

3. **Observations of Practice**: at least three observations will be undertaken; in accordance with the principles of holistic assessment, these should be undertaken at different times during the year. One must be undertaken by the supervisor, others can be undertaken by a colleague. The observations not only provide evidence for the final report, but they also form a basis for further reflective discussion in supervision.

It is recommended that more than 3 observations are carried out during the ASYE and this will be a requirement if the ASYE is on a failing profile.
4. **Critically Reflective Analysis of Practice**: Critical reflection on social work practice will form an important part of the Reflective Workshops and NQSWs will be expected to prepare a Critically Reflective Analysis to take to the workshops to discuss with their colleagues. Four Critically Reflective Analysis are required for the final portfolio, but it is advisable and good practice to write more throughout the year. They should be discussed with your supervisor in supervision. They provide a valuable source of evidence that you are meeting the ASYE PCF requirements. The Analysis should be supported by references from your reading. This can be from a variety of sources such as books, journals, web-based study or knowledge gained on taught courses.

5. **Supervision** will provide a valuable source of evidence. Reflective supervision is key to effective social work practice. Supervision should challenge practitioners to reflect critically on their cases and should foster an inquisitive approach to social work.

6. **Feedback from professionals, customers and team members**: there is no set format for obtaining feedback; this should be agreed between the NQSW and supervisor. It is important, however, for the NQSW to identify what they have learnt from the feedback and a short, reflective commentary should be written for each piece of feedback included in the portfolio. It is recommended that there are at least two pieces of service user feedback and two pieces of feedback from colleagues/professionals.

### Roles and Responsibilities

**The role of the supervisor/holistic assessor**

TCSW and registration documents refer to a ‘holistic assessor’, the term used for this person in West Sussex is ‘supervisor’. This is the designated person whose role is to:

- Provide reflective supervision in accordance with the requirements of the service and ASYE.
- Manage the assessment process; in partnership with the NQSW, complete the learning agreement and three and six month reviews, plan the timing of the observations and complete the final report.
- Manage and co-ordinate the support that the NQSW receives. This links closely with the assessment process, but also includes managing the 10% workload reduction, assisting the NQSW to identify developmental needs and how those needs can be met. This includes attendance on formal learning experiences, such as the Pathway Courses, but also more flexible opportunities such as shadowing or preparing presentations to team meetings.
- Enable the NQSW to make links with the PCF, including gathering examples of when they have met the standards and also making links with other aspects of ASYE such as courses and the reflective workshops.
• Give feedback on the critical analysis and possibly request more if this would meet gaps in learning or identified learning needs.

The role of an off-site supervisor/assessor
Some NQSW’s will have a supervisor/assessor who is not their direct line manager and not a member of their team. In these cases, the role of the off site supervisor/assessor is to:
• Provide individual or group supervision as required. This will focus on critical reflection, personal development, making links with other aspects of ASYE and the PCF.
• Ensure that the learning agreement, 3 and 6 month reviews are completed in good time and meet the requirements of the scheme.
• Undertake at least one observation and ensure that the others are undertaken at appropriate stages throughout the year and by at least one other observer.
• Organise and chair the learning agreement meeting and the 3 and 6 month reviews.
• Be responsible for the assessment process and ensure appropriate steps are taken if the NQSW is on a fail profile.
• Maintain contact with the Team Manager throughout the year.

The role of the Manager when working with an off-site supervisor/assessor
• Undertake fortnightly supervision which primarily focuses on cases.
• Allocate work, ensuring that the 10% reduction is maintained.
• Contribute to the learning agreement and 3/6 month reviews.
• Contribute to the final report.
• Maintain contact and liaise with the off-site supervisor throughout the year.
• Maintain an overview of the development and progress of the NQSW.

The role of the NQSW
• Be familiar with the requirements of the scheme and be pro-active in ensuring that the requirements are being met.
• Ensure they are available to attend the Reflective Workshops and that they prepare in advance as directed by the tutor.
• NQSW’s are responsible for sending their learning agreement, 3 and six month reviews and their final portfolios to Learning and Development (currently Pat Awcock pat.awcock@westsussex.gov.uk) as soon as they are completed. This is to ensure that the documentation can be quality assured and is a requirement from the DfE.

The role of Learning and Development
• Provide a link between NQSW’s, supervisors, University of Chichester staff, the DfE and TCSW.
• Organise practical aspects of ASYE such as the start-up meetings; dates and venues for the Reflective Workshops, development and maintenance of the handbook etc.
• Ensure that the learning agreements, 3/6 month reviews and final portfolios are Quality Assured and feedback is given to the NQSW and supervisor/assessors.
• Support supervisors/assessors by being available to give guidance. This can be in the form of 3 way meetings, 1:1 meetings with supervisors, telephone conversations or email correspondence.
• Request Certificates from TCSW and distribute to NQSW’s.

The role of University of Chichester Tutors
• Ensure the Reflective Workshops meet the needs of the group they are working with and run in a timely and professional manner.
• Liaise with L&D to ensure that the link between the Reflective Workshops and the scheme in general is maintained.

Performance Development Review (PDR)
A PDR should be completed at the beginning of the ASYE and reviewed after 6 months. It is important that individual learning needs are identified in the ‘Personal Development Needs’ section of the PDR; these will be the same learning needs identified in the learning agreement.

Quality Assurance
Learning Agreements, Reviews, Final Reports and Portfolios will be quality assured by Learning and Development and a tutor from the University of Chichester. Feedback will be sent to supervisors/assessors and NQSW’s.

Submission of Milestone Documents (Learning Agreement, 3 and 6 month review and final report)
The Learning Agreement, 3 Month Review and the 6 Month Review documents must be submitted to Pat Awcock at the appropriate times. This is a requirement from both the DfE and the West Sussex ASYE scheme. Registration and completion of ASYE can be affected if this is not adhered to.

Failing ASYE; Performance Improvement Policy and Disciplinary Procedures
The support and assessment mechanisms embedded in the ASYE Scheme ensure that NQSWs who are on a failing profile will be identified early on in the year; this should be at either the three or six month review. In these cases, the Performance Improvement Policy will be instigated to provide extra support and management of the situation. If a candidate fails their ASYE, this will be addressed through this process


Disciplinary Procedures will also apply to NQSWs in accordance with West Sussex Policy

http://intranet.westsussex.gov.uk/policy_and_leadership/plans_policies_and_strategies/employment_support/employee_relations/discipline_policy.aspx
Appeal Process

Since this is an assessment of competence, concerns about the students practice are managed under WSCC policies and procedures. The student has a right of appeal and challenge to performance assessments under those. Should the student have a concern governing the way in which WSCC is meeting the employer standards this would be initially raised with their line manager with a right of appeal through the Grievance policy:

http://intranet.westsussex.gov.uk/policy_and_leadership/plans_policies_and_strategies/employment_support/employee_relations/grievance.aspx

Support for Supervisors

Supervisors can contact Learning and Development (Professional Practice Team) at any time during the year. Support will be arranged as appropriate to the situation. Please contact Pat Awcock.

ASYE Steering Group

The Steering Group is made up of representatives from Children’s Services, Learning and Development and the University of Chichester. The purpose of the Steering group is to manage the development of ASYE and ensure that the scheme meets national requirements. The Group will also monitor the progress of each cohort.
## Portfolio Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Confidentiality statement</td>
<td>Brief statement confirming confidentiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 NQSWs Self-Assessment</td>
<td>In whatever format you have used it during the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Learning agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Three month review document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Six month review document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Minimum of 4 Critical Incident Analysis reports</td>
<td>With academic referencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Minimum of 3 direct observations of practice, including one by an alternative observer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Feedback from Service Users and Carers – minimum of 3 plus reflective statement by NQSW</td>
<td>Brief reflective statement on what the NQSW has learnt from the feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Performance Development Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Confirmation of attendance at Reflective Workshops</td>
<td>List of dates attended. Signed by supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Record of Pathway courses and other Learning and Development activities with a brief reflective commentary</td>
<td>The commentary can be an overview of all courses attended, or a review of one you have found especially useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Supervision verification log</td>
<td>Or list of dates of supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Final report by line manager/supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Links to forms, templates etc

Portfolio Contents

http://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/_images/14106/Info%20for%20social%20workers/Contents_of_portfolio.pdf

Template for Self Assessment

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/Self%20assessment%20tool.docx

Template for Learning Agreement

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/learning%20agreement%20feb%2014.docx

Template for 3 Month Review

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/ASYE%20Three%20Month%20Review%20feb%2014.docx

Template for 6 Month Review

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/ASYE%20Six%20Month%20Review%20feb%2014.docx

Template for Final Report

Please use link on main gateway page.

Template for Observation

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/direct%20observation%20templates.docx

Template for Critically Reflective Analysis of Practice

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/Template%20for%20Critically%20Reflective%20Analysis%20Feb%2014.docx

Core Learning for Social Workers

http://teamspace.westsussex.gov.uk/teams/CLD/Training/Team/Professional%20Practice%20Team/ASYE/SW%20Core%20Learning%20v.2%20Jan14.docx
Links to Additional Resources and Support

**Resources from the College of Social Work:**
The College for Social Work:
http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org

The Professional Capabilities Framework:
PCFfancolour.pdf
http://www.tcsw.org.uk/pcf.aspx

Developing your social work practice using the PCF; Integrated Critical analysis and reflective practice:
PCF21IntegratedCriticalReflectivePractice(1).pdf

Progression between PCF levels:
progression-between-levels-may2012.doc

Understanding what is meant by Holistic Assessment:
holistic-assessment.pdf

Principles for gathering and using feedback from people who use services and those who care for them:
SUandCarerFeedbackPCF20.pdf

PCF Capabilities, experienced social worker level:
PCF12NOVExperienceSocialWorkerLevelCapabilities.pdf

Table showing capability statements for different levels:
PCF6Full-table-Qualifying-to-experienced-level08032012.pdf

**Sources of further information and guidance:**
Department for Education:
http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/social/developing/a00211051/asye

Skills for Care:
http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/introductionsw.aspx

Health and Care Professions Council – CPD pages:
http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/

Social Care Institute for Excellence:

Centre for Excellence in Outcomes for Children: policy and practice examples:
www.c4eo.org.uk/

Research in Practice:
http://www.rip.org.uk/