

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy 2016/17

Context

In 2009 the Social Work Task Force reported on their comprehensive review of social work in England 'Building a Safe and Confident Future' making 15 recommendations for reform. The review recognised that *"although there was much good practice, too often the system fell short of providing the conditions needed to support social workers to provide effective help to children, adults and families."* and that *"social workers are unlikely to develop these skills unless provided with high quality education and training that continues throughout their careers; access to research and its practical applications; high quality working conditions with appropriate coaching, mentoring and supervision, and respect."*

The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) was set up in 2010 to implement the taskforce recommendations bringing together employers, educators, professionals and service users and carers to drive forward the reforms. A number of tools and frameworks have since been developed to propel the taskforce reforms including an underpinning set of standards for all social workers, from entry into the profession up to the highest level of professional practice, known as the Professional Capability Framework (PCF). The reforms led to the creation of The College of Social Work (TCSW) which has taken on the responsibility of maintaining and developing the standards to provide a basis for the future education of social workers and their continuing professional development.

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) has been built on the solid foundations of the preceding Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) programmes which emerged in 2010. The ASYE aims to provide a consistent standard against which all new social workers' knowledge and capability can be objectively assessed whilst also establishing a structure to protect and support them in their first year in practice. Daisy Bogg will issue a certificate to social workers who successfully complete ASYE and will keep a national record of successful candidates. Shropshire Council will also undertake quality assurance activity to ensure that the ASYE standards in the PCF and Knowledge and Skills Statement remain fit for purpose.

Shropshire ASYE scheme

The Shropshire ASYE scheme began in January 2013 and includes expectations on both NQSWs and their line managers to evidence the capability of the NQSW through a process of holistic assessment against the PCF standards and the Knowledge and Skills Statement (child and family) describing what's expected of social workers at that level (See ASYE guidance). There will be a learning agreement drawn up at the start of the ASYE setting out what the NQSW can expect in terms of support, including arrangements for supervision and workload management, and how the assessment will be managed, including who is responsible for the final assessment and recommendations. There are three review periods at three months, six months and Final Review and an expectation that at least three formal direct observations of practice are completed through the ASYE programme. The assessor must be a qualified social worker with sufficient experience of practice (senior practitioner with at least five years minimum practice) and competent and confident in undertaking practice assessments. (qualified practice educator or training and experience in undertaking staff appraisals).

During the ASYE the NQSW will develop an individualised professional development plan and demonstrate progression of their learning through completion of a continuing professional development (CPD) portfolio. The assessor will complete the progressive assessment log, including

review points and final assessment, which will be presented to a Panel for confirmation of the completed ASYE.

Induction, Probation and Performance Management

NQSWs will receive an amendment to their contract detailing the expectations of them to complete the ASYE and outlining the parameters of the scheme. The ASYE should be embedded within the process of induction, probation and performance management. A formal induction programme should be given to the NQSW immediately following appointment to include a date for the learning agreement to take place. A training programme should be drawn up including recommended short courses (Appendix 1: ASYE Training Matrix) and induction to council policies and procedures. The normal Council probation process will be followed. ([link to ASK HR probation docs](#)) and satisfactory completion of probation at six months will confirm employment. If, however, at the six month ASYE review concerns exist around issues of either capability or conduct then an Action Plan should be drawn up and an extension of the probationary period should be applied for. Once approval from the ASYE Panel has been received the NQSW will receive an additional increment.

Supervision and Support

The Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England and Supervision Framework identified key elements of effective supervision recognising that:

“Supervision provides a safe environment for critical reflection, challenge and professional support that operates alongside an organisation’s appraisal process.”

To support NQSWs achieve a successful outcome to their ASYE it is imperative that the appropriate level, frequency and focus of supervision is addressed and that the NQSW is given the opportunity to access reflective supervision alongside managerial supervision. The learning agreement(contained within the Critical Reflection Log, identifies the recommended frequency of supervision throughout the ASYE. The line manager and/or assessor should specifically identify how the different components of supervision will be addressed and provide protected time for the NQSW to attend the NQSW peer support sessions. Consideration should also be given to providing a buddy/mentor for the duration of the ASYE.

Assessment and Approval Process

Guidance detailing the standards of practice required against the Holistic Assessment of practice is provided to all manager, ensuring that judgements are robust, accurate and consistent through:

- Observations of several slices of practice
- In different settings and at different times
- Made by those capable of marking and judgements
- With reference to known and agreed criteria or standards

Knight (2006)

The final assessment decision

At the end of the ASYE, the assessor makes a professional recommendation about the final assessment decision. The NQSW’s record of support and progressive assessment and critical reflection log is then scrutinised through an internal moderation process before the recommendation is confirmed by the employer.

It is important for employers to ensure their ASYE co-ordinator has the authority to oversee that assessment reviews are completed to agreed timescales and to monitor the NQSW’s progress in order to ensure that their work is presented in a timely way to the Internal Moderation process.

In addition the ASYE lead person may also act as a link with human resources (HR) in the event of any performance issues being identified at any stage in the process.

Further information about your employer’s internal moderation process can be found as part of the record of support and progressive assessment.

Confirmation of the recommendation will be the responsibility of a Panel made up of:

- Principal Social Worker
- Team manager
- Representative from Business Partners
- Representative from Professional Development Unit/Staff Development Officer
- Service User Representation
- Representative from regional partnerships

Appeals Process

Appeals about decisions can be made in writing to the Chair of the Panel, responses will be considered and re-submissions will be given adequate time to complete, in consultation with line managers. Decisions will be confirmed in writing 5 working days after re-submission or decisions being made, whichever is soonest.

