

The social work ASYE

Guidance for NQSWs completing the ASYE
in adults and child and family settings

The social work ASYE: *Guidance for NQSWs completing the ASYE in adults and child and family settings*

Published by Skills for Care, West Gate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds LS1 2RP
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Skills for Care is the employer-led strategic body for leadership, management and workforce development in social care for adults in England. It is part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development.

Bibliographic reference data for Harvard-style author/date referencing system:

Short reference: Skills for Care [or SfC] 2015

Long reference: Skills for Care, *The social work ASYE: Guidance for NQSWs completing the ASYE in adults and child and family settings* (Leeds, 2015) www.skillsforcare.org.uk

Skills for Care would like to acknowledge the assistance of Sage Publications Ltd in the development of this work.

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1 The assessment frameworks for social workers in adult and child and family settings



This guide is predominantly for newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) undertaking the Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE), but it should also be useful for their assessors. It examines the current arrangements for the support and assessment of the ASYE as required by the two Knowledge and Skills statements published by the Department for Education (2014) and the Department of Health (2015). The publication of these statements has introduced some differences in the arrangements for the assessment of NQSWs in adult and child and family settings. The final picture of how the Approved Child and Family Practitioner (ACFP) assessment and accreditation will link with the ASYE in child and family social work settings is still in development, however it's likely that the ASYE will continue as an induction year.

This guide will give you a basic understanding of the ASYE. It will consider the similarities and the differences between the assessments frameworks in child and family and adult social work, highlight how you can build on your qualifying education experience to enhance your experience of the ASYE, and give you some tips on how you can prepare for your first year in employment.

Skills for Care was involved in developing the original framework and guidance introduced in 2012. We were also responsible for developing the ASYE capability statements in the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

More recently, we were part of the group working closely with the office of the Chief Social Worker (adults) to finalise the development of the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) for Social Workers in Adult Services 2015, in response to the consultation.

Skills for Care worked with employers on the revision and design of new ASYE (2015) materials to meet the requirements of the KSS (adults) 2015 and is responsible for the Department for Education contract, which provides support for employers in child and family services to implement the new requirements for ASYE, including assessment against the KSS (child and family) 2014.

 **The ASYE allowed me to find my social work style and learn in a supportive environment which I believe has now led me to be a confident social worker - if I had personally gone straight in without the ASYE I would have struggled...the difference from being a social work student to a social worker is enormous and ASYE bridges that gap.** 

Social worker (child and family setting).

2 How we got here

Helping new social workers to make the transition from qualifying education to the world of professional work is not new. In 2008 the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) introduced a framework for the assessment of NQSWs in child and family services followed in 2009 by the introduction of Skills for Care's NQSW framework for social workers in adult services. The introduction of special arrangements for the first year in practice brought social work in line with other regulated professions who were already running induction schemes. Since this date the management and process, for this first year in practice has undergone several changes.

The ASYE was introduced in September 2012 building on the previous NQSW frameworks. The major change was that the ASYE, rather than having separate frameworks was now a generic framework. The ASYE was designed as an employer-led and managed scheme but the social work education reviews of 2014 (e.g. Croisdale-Appleby 2014) noted the potential for discrepancies in the way employers might be delivering and assessing the ASYE, thereby creating a potential lack of consistency in assessment across the country. The Chief Social Workers, in part, responded to these concerns by publishing the Knowledge and Skills statements:

- Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services <https://goo.gl/OaEFSD>
- Knowledge and skills statement for child and family social work <https://goo.gl/06yJ2V>

These statements describe what social workers should be able to do at the end of their first year in practice and are looked at in more detail later in this guide.

At the same time as the publication of the Knowledge and Skills Statement (child and family social work) 2014 the Secretary of State for Education announced the government's intention to develop a new assessment and accreditation system for three levels of professional practice for children's social workers in England.

- Nicky Morgan announces children's social work reforms <https://goo.gl/RwCWVX>
- Consultation on knowledge and skills for child and family social work Government response <https://goo.gl/06yJ2V>



The first level of these, the Approved Child and Family Practitioner status (ACFP) (refer to page 11 of the Consultation on knowledge and skills for child and family social work Government response), is intended for those social workers who are working with our most at risk children - children in need (Children Act 1989), children in need of protection and children in public care. An assessment and accreditation process is currently being developed for the ACFP and during this "proof of concept" phase decisions have not yet been made on which social workers employed in child and family settings will be required to sit the assessment. Whatever the outcome of the development phase for the ACFP, testing of the ACFP assessment and accreditation will commence in November 2015. It is expected that core aspects of the ASYE will continue to be delivered, because of the proven benefits for people who need care and support, NQSWs, and organisations. Therefore social workers in child and family settings should find this guide useful to understand the core support and development requirements for the ASYE.

For those of you who are taking up your first social work post in adult services, the Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in adult services (2015) provides a clear statement of ASYE requirements. The intention of the Chief Social Worker (Adults) has been to ensure that a nationally consistent assessment framework is in place in which both NQSWs and employers could have full confidence. In practice, this means that the evidence requirements are standardised, and that internal and external moderation processes including a national moderation process are in place to measure the standards across the country. From your point of view there is clarity about what is expected of you, and you can be reassured that the support and the standard of the assessment is being scrutinised through an internal and external moderation process. Details of the assessment and moderation requirements can be found on the Skills for Care website at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/internalmoderation.

Central to the previous ASYE framework, introduced in 2012 in England, were a number of products developed by the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB 2010).

These products influenced the design and the delivery of the ASYE, for example, the Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework (SWRB 2012) laid down expectations of the support and supervision arrangements that would apply to the first year. This meant that for the first time there was transparency for NQSWs and employers about the expectations of support for this protected year, and these same arrangements will continue to apply to you as you progress through the current ASYE framework.

At the same time the assessment standard for the ASYE moved from the National Occupational Standards to the standards contained in the Professional Capability Framework (PCF). The PCF signalled a move away from a mechanistic competency approach to assessment and replaced it with progressive, holistic assessment. A holistic assessment remains a requirement of ASYE assessment following the incorporation of the Knowledge and Skills statements.

 I think most newly qualified workers have some anxieties about starting their first post in social work – the ASYE programme...has been invaluable for me during this time. Being a frontline children’s social worker has been a challenging and rewarding experience; I have been impressed at the high level of training and development opportunities the ASYE has provided, helping to develop my skills, knowledge and confidence which are required to meet the needs of the children and provide families with the best possible service. 

Social worker (child and family setting).



3 Why support the first year in practice?

The quote below is just one of many examples expressing the appreciation of NQSWs and their enthusiasm for the support and guidance that they have received in their first year of practice. A number of large and small evaluations of the

NQSW framework and the subsequent ASYE in child and family and adult services have reiterated and reinforced key messages about the value of the protected year.

Key messages about the ASYE:

- Two thirds of NQSWs agreed that supervision had improved the quality of their practice (Skills for Care 2011). Regular structured supervision was rated as the most beneficial component of the programme (Carpenter et al 2011).
- More NQSWs are completing personal development plans and embarking on post-qualifying education. Three quarters of NQSWs agreed with the statement, 'My employer takes my professional development seriously' (Skills for Care 2011).
- Two thirds of NQSWs agreed that the overall quality of their practice had 'improved a great deal' and so had their 'own professional abilities'.
- Three quarters of NQSW supervisors believed the quality of NQSW practice had improved as a result of the framework. (Skills for Care 2011).
- The vast majority of NQSWs stated their supervision was supporting their reflective practice either very or quite well. (Skills for Care 2013).
- NQSWs and supervisors/assessors identified a range of benefits for the NQSW in taking part in the ASYE, the main one of which was the 'development of professional confidence'. (Skills for Care 2013).
- For NQSWs the main messages to sell the ASYE to another NQSW included time for reflection, receiving structured support and guidance and the importance of peer support (Skills for Care 2013).
- A quarter of social workers who responded a year after completing the ASYE felt that the ASYE had prepared them 'very well' for the transition from student to social worker and almost three-fifths felt it had prepared them 'fairly well' (Skills for Care 2015).

 I have found my ASYE year to be a good opportunity for learning and development...I feel that the programme has been a useful tool that has enabled me to integrate well into an adult social care team during my first year as a qualified social worker. I look forward to my next step in my career as a social worker. 

Social worker (adult social care setting).

There is a danger that an NQSW could approach the ASYE thinking that it is more of the same i.e. another, albeit very long, practice placement. It is important that you don't fall into that way of thinking. I'd like you to think of it instead as the year where you consolidate the learning from your qualifying training and develop new learning pertinent to the setting in which you are employed.

As an NQSW, you are now working as a registered social worker and everything relates back to your practice, so developing good habits in this first year will stand you in good stead for the rest of your career.

Do grasp this golden opportunity with both hands. This is not just about assessment; it is about your right to a supported and protected year in which you can find your feet in the social work setting with all its complexities and challenges. You will still be expected to hit the ground running but jogging, not sprinting.



The ASYE year is a good way to bridge the gap between finishing university and going into a full time career. The sessions have promoted critical reflection in a comfortable, relaxed and friendly environment. I feel that ...and ...(names removed) have been really supportive and encouraging throughout the ASYE and I believe these qualities have developed me as a practitioner and as a person. I feel the ASYE year has put me in good stead for a career in social work”

Social worker in supported housing (adult social care setting).

4 The Knowledge and Skills statements and the PCF: how they support your learning and assessment

If you are not already familiar with the two Knowledge and Skills Statements, now is the time to refer to the statement that is most applicable to your intended or actual first employment setting. The Knowledge and Skills statements describe what social workers should know and be able to do at the end of their first year in practice. They will help you get started in your first post, providing a useful tool to help you think about the specific skills and knowledge that you will require for the context in which you are employed.

Both statements support the use of the PCF as the generic standard for all social workers. The Knowledge and Skills statements do not reiterate all of the PCF capabilities because they were designed to contextualise, not replicate, the PCF. You will be familiar with the content and the expectations of the PCF from your qualifying education but now is the time to understand the requirements of the next level for the ASYE. The knowledge and skills set out in the published statements are specific to either child and family social work or adult social work. The PCF is the overarching standards framework intended to be applicable to all social workers in whatever role or setting. A review of the PCF has recently been undertaken by The College of Social Work (TCSW 2015) and includes a recommendation about how relationships and connections between new standards and the PCF can be managed. Following the closure of TCSW the responsibility for taking forward the recommendations is very likely to be passed to the British Association of Social Workers (BASW).

The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services (2015) reflects the changing context of social work in adult services. Working within the parameters of new and recent legislation, including the Care Act (2014) and the Mental Capacity Act (2005), it places an emphasis on statutory health and wellbeing outcomes. Together with the Care Act, this statement provides the opening for social workers in adult services to grasp an opportunity to take a leadership role and be recognised as central to the development of a robust and caring adult social care sector.

The ASYE assessment in adult services requires that social workers demonstrate legal literacy through the application of these and other pieces of legislation. The statement places an emphasis on the skills and values of working in partnership with people in need of care and support and supports independence and wellbeing.

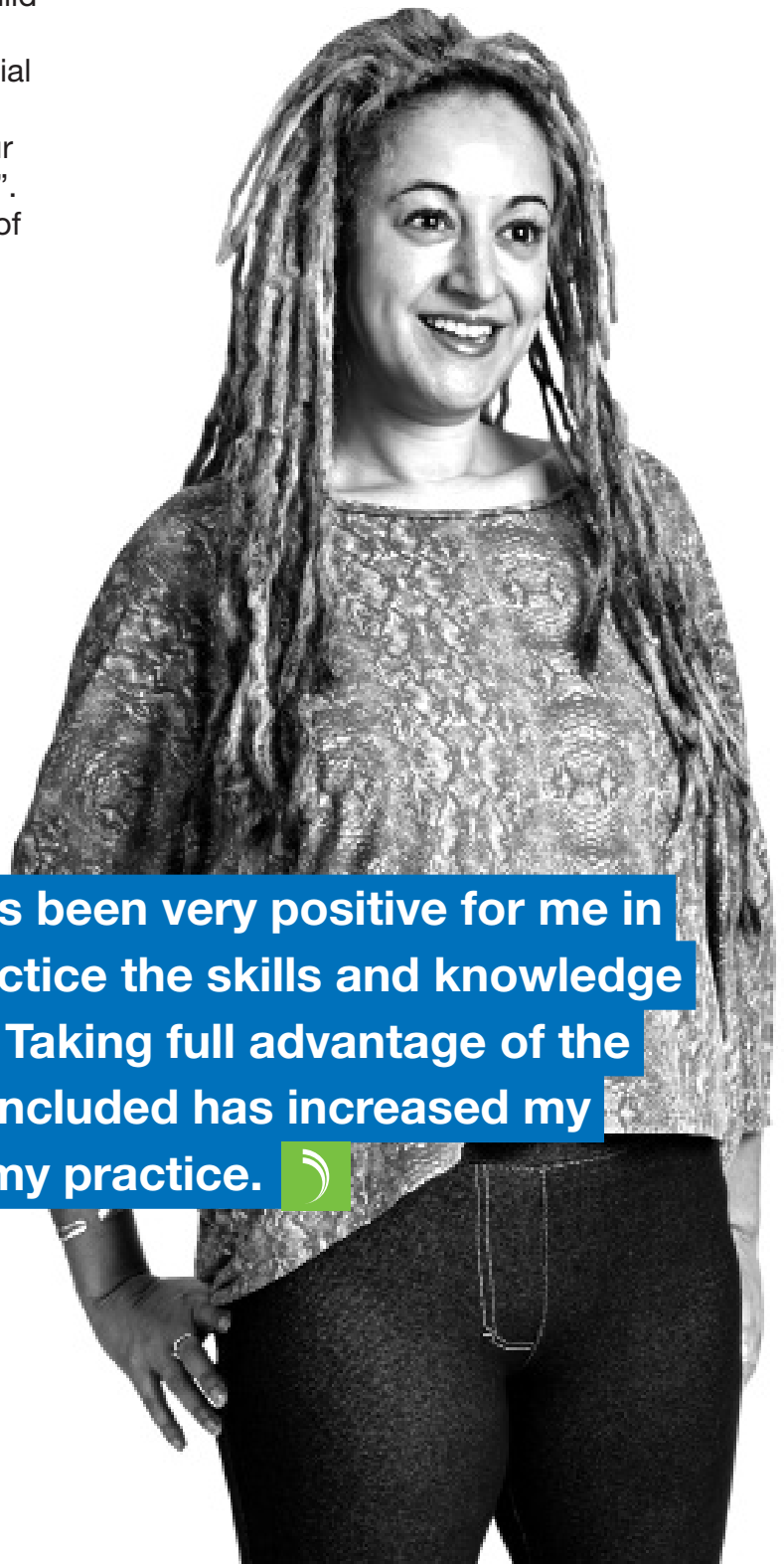
ASYE assessment requires demonstration of understanding, application and management of all aspects of risk and safeguarding including positive risk taking.

There are clear expectations of the knowledge requirements including human development, personalisation, the social model of disability and the impact of trauma and loss etc. There is an increased emphasis on the social worker as professionally confident, demonstrating a professional social work identity and taking a leadership role in all settings including inter professional working.

Such professional confidence requires the ability to continually update knowledge; use evidence based interventions and reflect on practice. How you can be supported in this process will be discussed later in this guide but the ASYE will assist you in becoming that highly professional confident leader.

If you are starting a career in a child and family setting, the KSS for child and family social work will help you to understand the specific knowledge, skills and responsibilities that are required of every social worker working in a child and family setting. In the introduction to the statement (page 3), Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker (child and family) says, “the statement affirms just how skilled and wise we expect our social workers to be to meet these challenges”. The statement will provide you with the detail of the combined aspects of skills and wisdom. The statement places an emphasis on

the development and demonstration of interpersonal, relationship building, empathic skills, but in the context of the social worker as the authoritative professional capable of using knowledge and evidence based practice.





The ASYE programme has been very positive for me in being able to put into practice the skills and knowledge I gained from my degree. Taking full advantage of the training and supervision included has increased my confidence and belief in my practice.

Social worker in supported housing (adult social care setting).

Through the reflective process the social worker, over the course of the year, is expected to develop a combination of evidence based practice that draws on knowledge, including legal literacy, and practice experience to understand, assess and work with children and families. Central to this is the recognition of potential harm and risk, and the importance of developing skills in this area. There is an expectation that the social worker will demonstrate the ability to lead investigations on allegations of significant harm, albeit in consultation with others.

Throughout your qualifying programme you will have developed your knowledge base but you may not have covered everything in detail.

The statement provides a list of core knowledge requirements, including an understanding of child development, the impact of mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse on children and families. The list is not exhaustive and you will need to identify the knowledge requirements that are specific to your employment setting. As in the KSS for adults the statement emphasises the ability to reflect, analyse and demonstrate reasoned, defensible decision making. Your development as a professional will be through a combination of all of these capabilities.

 **During the year I believe I have gained experience and confidence within my work as a direct result of knowing support is there if needed. Consequently I have been able to improve and grow in areas of work in which I was already relatively confident, whilst also being supported to gain confidence in areas of work I have not previously experienced. This has been particularly relevant within legal and court processes, as until they are experienced what to expect is not known – by shadowing a supportive consultant the process becomes a little less scary.** 

Social worker- child in need (child and family setting).

5 The relationship of the Knowledge and Skills statements to the PCF

Having analysed the key elements of the Knowledge and Skills statements you may well be wondering about the role of the PCF in identifying learning needs and in the assessment process. It is important to remember that the PCF is the generic framework and provides the standards for social workers throughout their careers not just at qualifying and ASYE levels. As such it is the bedrock when identifying the learning that you will need to prioritise as you progress through your ASYE year.

Seeing the relationship between the two may be helpful, i.e. the Knowledge and Skills statements set out what a social worker working with adults or children and families should know and be able to do by the end of the ASYE and they are designed to strengthen and enhance the PCF.

The PCF is the overarching standard for all social workers and in providing detail of the capabilities at each level it pinpoints the expectation. The PCF can be used as a diagnostic tool and will assist you in identifying your learning needs.

Example:

When you commence your ASYE you will be expected to undertake an audit of your knowledge and skills against the relevant KSS. You might identify that you need to develop your ability to use “practice evidence and research to inform complex judgements and decisions” (DH 2015, statement 8). You can analyse the detail of what and how this can be achieved by referring to the PCF. If you want further detail about how the KSS and the PCF overlap, there are mapping documents on the Skills for Care website that you will find useful at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asyegoodpractice



¹ Knowledge and skills statement for social workers in adult services (March 2015) – statement 8, supervision, critical reflection and analysis.

6 Assessment of the ASYE: similarities and differences

The PCF was a product of the SWRB (2012) and seen as central to the successful introduction of the final social work reforms and products. The importance of the PCF for you as an NQSW is several-fold. We have already seen how it can be used as a diagnostic tool and to inform professional development activity, but perhaps even more importantly than this, the PCF was designed to support the development of the profession and the capability and confidence of every individual social worker.

Because social work practice is a complex activity, it requires the interplay of knowledge, skills and values, which is exemplified by the PCF. Although there are nine separate PCF domains, these need to be seen as interdependent as they interact in professional practice. There are overlaps between the capabilities and many practice issues will be relevant to more than one domain. Moreover, understanding what a social worker does can only be complete by taking into account all nine domains working in interaction with each other. In order to assess this complexity a holistic assessment is required.

Additionally, the Knowledge and Skills statements require an understanding and demonstration of the complex activity that makes up the social work task, making the holistic assessment of the ASYE a necessity.

The revisions to the ASYE have created an opportunity to improve the guidance and information on holistic assessment to ensure that progressive development is supported and evidenced. Your ASYE is not a snapshot assessment but requires demonstration of your progression over the year.

In adult ASYE the revisions to the framework have strengthened the centrality of critical reflection in all aspects of professional development to ensure that the voice and feedback from people using the service is at the heart of the reflection.

Support for and demonstration of progressive development over the year is linked to a cycle of critically reflective logs and reviews. The ASYE (adults) guidance is separated into the record of support and progressive assessment (RSPA) and the critical reflection log (CRL). The RSPA should be completed by the assessor and the CRL should be completed by the NQSW. In practice, the two documents are interwoven so if your first post is in adult services you need to familiarise yourself with both documents. These can be found on the Skills for Care website at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asye

In child and family social work the ASYE assessment framework and requirements are not prescribed in the same way. In practice many employers will be either doing something similar to the new adult framework or will continue to follow the guidance issued for the introduction of the ASYE (2012). In both cases there will be an initial audit against the Knowledge and Skills statements to inform learning needs and your professional development plan. Guidance on both of these frameworks and examples of what evidence requirements employers in child and family social work are using can be found on the Skills for Care website at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asyecf

Although the introduction of the two separate Knowledge and Skills statements and the introduction of the ACFP appear to signal a departure from the generic ASYE assessment framework that was introduced in September 2012, you can be reassured that in the immediate future the assessment requirements remain similar. As adult social work tests how it can develop a nationally consistent assessment of ASYE, child and family social work is also testing an assessment and accreditation framework. It is possible that what appears to be two divergent tracks may converge again in the future as each learns the lessons from the others experience.

The table below shows a summary of the similarities and differences between the two frameworks. As you can see there are more similarities than there are differences.

ASYE assessment requirements	Adult	Child and family
Audit against the KSS	Yes	Yes
Learning agreement and PDP	Yes	Yes
Direct observations	Minimum of three	Yes, but number not prescribed
Feedback from other professionals	Minimum of three	Highly recommended but number not prescribed
Feedback from people in need of care and support, children and their carers	Minimum of three	Highly recommended but number not prescribed
Critical reflection	Critical reflection log or equivalent	Required but no prescribed format
Assessment of record and report writing	Yes	Highly recommended
Holistic assessment	Yes against the KSS and the PCF	Yes against the KSS and the PCF
Moderation	Required	Recommended

7 Critical reflection and the development of professional practice and professional judgement

Why is critical reflection so important?

Central to social work practice and to the development of professional judgement and expertise is the ability of every social worker to critically reflect on their work. The table on the previous page shows that the ability to critically reflect on practice and to demonstrate this is central to the assessment of the ASYE in both child and family and adult settings. Through this reflective process, the insight and the learning will ensure that your practice can be continually improved. The practice of critical reflection is something that you will have already commenced in your qualifying education and you should revisit any programme guidance you were given.

The reflective process is not confined to your qualifying training and the ASYE because the purpose of this emphasis on critically reflective practice at these stages is to ensure that the process is embedded and develops with you as you progress throughout your career.

What do we mean by reflective practice?

One source that provides important detail of what is meant by this is the PCF domain - critical reflection and analysis. Both of the Knowledge and Skills statements place significant emphasis on the development and use of reflective practice, framed within an understanding of theory, legislation and research in order to be able to develop and articulate your reasoned, evidence based decision making. The Skills for Care website provides further information on critical reflection and gives pointers for how you can conduct critically reflective dialogues at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asye

To support the progressive development of reflective practice the critical reflection log, originally created for use in ASYE (adults), has been adapted for use in child and family settings and can be used to guide you through the process.

8 Feedback from people in need of care and support, children, young people, their families and carers

Central to any reflection on practice is the ability to continually take account of and respond to feedback from people in need of care and support. This feedback will be implicit as well as explicit whether collected formally or on an ongoing basis and all these aspects need to be considered in understanding the impact on your practice. At every stage of their work, social workers are expected to consider, obtain evidence from, and respond appropriately to the views of the people they are supporting about the social work intervention and the professional relationship the social worker has with them.

There is no single correct way by which a social worker should seek feedback, and indeed best practice would dictate that the process and tools will differ according to situation and those being supported. The Skills for Care website provides more information on how to develop feedback from people in need of care and support at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/gatheringfeedback. At the beginning of a critical reflection log you will be asked to consider and plan for how you will collect this feedback.



9 Professional supervision

As an NQSW, you will receive professional supervision regularly from your line manager, or from another experienced social worker if your line manager isn't a registered social worker or for other operational reasons. Supervision is not just about reporting on your day-to-day social work practice with your line manager, clarifying policies and procedures and agreeing the next steps, although these are all important. Supervision is crucial as it should give you the opportunity to critically reflect on your practice and enable you to grow and develop in confidence and capability as a social worker.

Your supervisor should help you to review all aspects of your practice, including, for example, your direct work with the people you support and as a member of a team or working with other partners or external organisations.

Most importantly, reflective supervision sessions should help you to develop skills in critical analysis and reflective practice by providing a forum for you to explore your practice. The aim is for you to become highly skilled in this area and you should use supervision to share and gain feedback on your insights and ideas. You should take a proactive approach and prepare for supervision sessions and suggest items for the agenda.



10 Support: what can you expect?

We have spent a lot of time describing and considering the implications for the assessment of the ASYE, however, the other side of the coin is the agreement between employer and NQSW around the level of support that you can expect. SWRB (2012) listed the support expectations for the ASYE within the requirements, as laid down in the employer standards and supervision framework. By doing so it 'mainstreamed' the level of support for those undertaking the ASYE within an overall expectation of support that applies to all employers, managers and social workers.



The Department for Education and the Department of Health expect that you will be given the required level of support as you progress through the ASYE as your employer receives funding to enable them to put this support in place.

Having a completed record of support and progressive assessment or the learning agreement at the start of programme is an important part of the ASYE as it sets out how support and assessment will be undertaken between the employer and the NQSW.

It also helps to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all those involved and includes:

- details of the frequency of reflective supervision
- a statement on a reduced workload during the first year of employment
- a professional development plan
- a time allocation for professional development.

This support and assessment/learning agreement should be reviewed regularly—at least at three and six months. This review will be an opportunity for all involved to come together to consider how well your assessment is progressing and to put in place action plans if necessary. This is also the time for all parties to consider and, importantly, record whether all aspects of the agreement are being adhered to and that includes contributions and comments from the NQSW on the level of support received.

 **Having a forum to meet with other newly qualified social workers gave me the basis to be able to discuss any issues of being a 'newbie' and gave me the confidence to be able develop professionally whilst feeling supported and understood.** 

Social worker - children with disabilities (child and family setting).

11 Are you eligible for the ASYE?

The ASYE is an induction year supporting NQSWs to establish themselves on the first step of their professional career. The expectation is that the learning gained in qualifying education is consolidated and that new knowledge and skills are developed in practice relevant to the employment setting. The learning gained during your qualification programme needs to remain current and should not become a distant memory with no practice experience or continuing professional development (CPD) between leaving university and the ASYE. To be eligible for the ASYE there must be no more two years between graduation and commencing your first role.

There has been some concern expressed that this may disqualify some qualified and registered social workers who have been unable to find social work posts immediately. There is, however, a caveat to the two year time boundary in that it is possible beyond this timescale for the employer to assure themselves of the currency of the social worker's knowledge and skills. In addition re-registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is required every two years and in order to re-register NQSWs will need to be able to evidence they have kept knowledge and skills updated through CPD activity, go to www.hpc-uk.org for more information.

Registered social workers who are employed in private, voluntary, health, education are eligible for the ASYE.

Those employed in other roles that may not be described as 'social work', are also eligible to undertake the ASYE as long as their employment includes work of a sufficient level and kind to meet the expectations of the relevant KSS and the PCF.

This is because we are living in a constantly changing world for the delivery of social work services. Social workers are, and will increasingly be, found employed outside of local authorities in smaller agencies, social enterprises, community interest groups, social work practices, and in multidisciplinary teams. The intention has been to provide an ASYE framework that can be flexibly implemented across a diverse range of employment settings and roles.

The ASYE is available to all social workers working with adults in adult services who contribute to delivering statutory health and wellbeing outcomes for people and their carers, regardless of the sector in which they are employed. The Care Act creates a legal obligation on all providers of care to ensure individual wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional, is at the centre of service provision. Furthermore it places a universal obligation on local authorities and their partners to provide for the wellbeing needs of all local people, not just those in receipt of state funded care and support. This means that all services that help prevent, delay and reduce the need for care and support are covered by the definition of statutory wellbeing outcomes.

As I am not employed directly as a social worker I have found the ASYE very helpful in allowing me to keep in touch with my social work values and ethics. The ASYE has also supported me and enabled me to continue learning and professional development.

Social worker - children with disabilities (child and family setting).

Similarly, the ASYE in child and families services is also available for social workers in a diversity of settings as long as they can meet the requirements of the Knowledge and Skills Statement. Large numbers of social workers in such diverse settings as private fostering and adoption agencies, schools and hospices have already undertaken the ASYE.

Increasing numbers of employers and NQSW's outside of statutory provision are being registered to receive funding for the ASYE. Employers report that the ASYE is beneficial in terms of staff recruitment and retention, service efficiency and improved quality of service provision. Further information and comment from employers and NQSWs can be seen in the video clips on the Skills for Care website at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/independentsectorasye.

If you are an NQSW employed in social care or other related field and you feel that your job includes work of a sufficient level and kind to meet the expectations of the KSS and the PCF, then talk to your employer about registering for the ASYE.

Social workers are increasingly employed on short-term contracts in local authority, health and social care settings. Your employer is not prevented from registering you for the ASYE if the contract is for less than a year. You can start with one employer and finish with another if your new employer is willing to support you in this process. It will be the new employer who will decide on the sufficiency of evidence that you present for assessment, and this can include any statements from previous employers about your progression, the standard achieved and any evidence to illustrate your development. This allows some flexibility but also puts an onus on the NQSW to ensure that the evidence and statements are available to be transferred to the next employer and that this new employer is willing to continue to provide the relevant support and assessment.

In a similar way, this will also apply to agency workers; however, in this scenario the recruitment agency and the commissioning agency will need to decide who will register and receive funding for the NQSW. This decision will need to be based on who, in this situation, will provide the support and the assessment. Both parties and the employee would need to agree on the responsibilities for supervision, assessment and the funding to support this. The supervision arrangement would need to be laid out clearly in the learning agreement. In many instances the feasibility of these arrangements for those on short term contracts and agency workers may well depend on the length of contract.

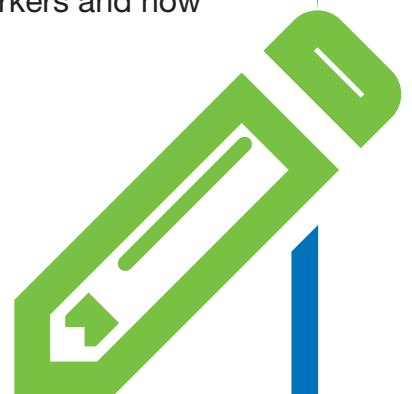
The ASYE has intentionally been designed as a year long programme of support and assessment. This means that there is no fast track to achieving the ASYE and the converse is also true that under normal circumstances it will not take longer than a year to complete. As an NQSW it is in your interest to ensure that you receive support over a whole year as you embed your practice. The year will be automatically extended if you work part time, go on maternity leave or are off sick for a period of time or for whatever reason the support arrangements are not available to you. In all of these cases you should ensure that the length of the extension and the reason are clearly documented. It is important to note that the year will not be extended if the reason is to do with your capability, in this case the expectation is that under normal circumstances all NQSW's should be able to reach the standard within one year.

12 Useful checklist

In advance of taking up your post, or even in advance of the interview, here are some useful tips to help you prepare.

Engaging in this self-assessment will not only help you to identify your learning needs but will also help you identify, from your experience to date, the knowledge and strengths that you have and can bring to the role:

- ✓ **Familiarise yourself with the relevant Knowledge and Skills statement.**
Practice auditing your current knowledge and skills against the expectations detailed in the KSS. This will help you when completing this for real at the start of the ASYE. Examples of audit tools can be found on the Skills for Care website at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asyegoodpractice.
- ✓ **Familiarise yourself with the ASYE level of the PCF.**
Go back to your final placement report and review the future learning needs identified by the assessor. Think about these in the context of the role that you are undertaking and the KSS requirements. Use the PCF at the ASYE level to help you to clarify your learning needs. The first section of the critical reflection log will give you guidance and help you to organise your thoughts.
- ✓ **Identify your learning style and model of reflective practice.**
Think about what you have discovered on your qualifying course about your learning style and the model of reflective practice that suits you. If you want more information about this area check out the Skills for Care website at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asyecriticalreflection.
- ✓ **Develop your analytical skills.**
Both of the Knowledge and Skills statements stress the importance of critical reflection in the development of analytical skills for decision making. Employers are looking for a reflective analytical approach in new social workers and how this develops over the year.
- ✓ **Collect feedback from people in need of care and support.**
Start to think about and plan for how you will collect feedback from people in need of care and support. How you do this will depend on your service group and setting. The Skills for Care website provides more information at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/gatheringfeedback.



13 Final thoughts

Social workers will enter the ASYE year with different levels of experience and knowledge. The audit that you will undertake against the Knowledge and Skills statements and the analysis of the level and detail expected of you in the PCF will provide you with an accurate measure of all that you need to learn and achieve over the year. It's important to remember that the ASYE expects you to show progression regardless of your starting point so it's important for those more experienced social workers to ensure that they continually improve and progress as this is central to the assessment and must be demonstrated over the year.

You will be supported throughout the year by ensuring that you have a reduced case load and protected time for the professional development activity that you have identified at the start and at regular review points throughout the year.

Over the year the level of complexity of your case load will increase and you will be expected to become more autonomous in your practice and decision making.



The Knowledge and Skills statements, the PCF and indications from the developing ACFP assessment place greater emphasis on your ability to reflect in and on your practice.

The reflective supervision process and where available other support in the form of workshops, action learning sets and group supervision will provide you with the settings to explore your practice and develop these skills.

If you are in a setting where other levels of support outside of individual reflective supervision are not available there is nothing to stop you setting up peer support and supervision arrangements. The section on critical reflection and holistic assessment and the completed example of the critical reflection log will support you in this process, go to www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asyecriticalreflection.

The ASYE is an employer owned and administered programme and the final assessment decision therefore sits with the employer. The KSS (adults) has resulted in more standardisation and a requirement for assessment decisions to be moderated.

KSS for child and family social work requires the assessment decision to be defensible by being accurate, valid, robust and sufficient although there are no requirements for employers to follow standardised arrangements for the process.

 I am pleased to read in the report that I have asked for guidance appropriately and when necessary. I have noticed that as my knowledge and experience has grown over the year, the level of support has changed. I continue to seek advice from others and managers; however I do feel that I have developed my ability to use my own initiative more and to use relevant previous experience to inform particular areas of current work. I am pleased to see that this development has been referred to in my report also. 

Social worker (adult social care setting).

14 Conclusion

This guide has shown that despite the apparent differences in the arrangements of ASYE for adult and child and family social work we see that in practice there are many more similarities than differences. The arrangements for assessment and moderation prescribed for social workers in adult services are in many cases being adopted for child and family social work settings. Many local social work partnerships are already moderating the ASYE assessment process and assessment decisions across a number of employers including both adult and child and family settings. In time this should ensure that the assessment decisions made in Durham will be the same as those made in Devon, meaning you can be assured that there will be a transparency in the decision making and that you have reached a national standard whether you work in statutory, voluntary, private, child and family or adult settings.

The value to you of being able to undertake the ASYE is enormous; you will have noted the positive comments from NQSWs throughout this guide who have completed the programme so talk to other NQSWs if you can.

A certificate of successful completion of the programme will be issued by Daisy Bogg Consultancy on behalf of the Department of Health for social workers in Adult services. The Department for Education will be sharing more information on child and family ASYE certification shortly.

The responsibility for the success of the ASYE scheme is a joint one. The employer provides you with the appropriate support and you take responsibility for your learning in practice. This is the beginning of your career as a professional social worker so make the most of the support and take the initiative for your learning, which will pay dividends in terms of your professional confidence, resilience and joy in being part of this young but vital international profession.



15 Further reading

- Carpenter et al 2011 Carpenter J, Patsios D, Wood M, Shardlow S, Blewett J, Platt D, Scholar H, Haines C, Tunstill J and Wong C (2011), *Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme evaluation report on the second year (2009–10)* <http://goo.gl/bvp0lJ>
- Croisdale-Appleby 2014 Croisdale Appleby, D. (2014) *Revisioning Social Work an Independent Review*. <https://goo.gl/9kic6z>
- DFE 2014 Department for Education (DfE) (2014) *Knowledge and Skills Statement child and family social work*.<https://goo.gl/RwCWVX>
- DH 2015 Department of Health (DH) (2015) *Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services* <https://goo.gl/OaEFSD>
- SfC 2011 Skills for Care, *Getting a good start: Evaluation of the first year of the Newly Qualified Social Worker framework for adult services, 2009/10* (Skills for Care, Leeds, 2011) <http://goo.gl/njEooN>
- SfC 2013 Skills for Care, *Concept to reality: Implementation of the ASYE with social workers in adult services* (Skills for Care, Leeds, 2013) <http://goo.gl/dZc8QV>
- SfC 2015 Skills for Care, *ASYE longitudinal study report one – Social worker and supervisor surveys* (Skills for Care, Leeds, 2015) <http://goo.gl/trExQj>
- SWRB 2010 Social Work Reform Board, *Building a safe and confident future: one year on* (London, Social Work Reform Board, 2010) <http://goo.gl/ELNM9m>
- LGA 2014 Local Government Association, *Standards for employers of Social Workers in England* (LGA, 2014) <http://goo.gl/Cm9tY3>
- BASW 2015 British Association of Social Workers, *BASW England Response to the Review of the Professional Capabilities Framework* <http://goo.gl/Cm9tY3>
- DH 2014 Department of Health (DH) (2014), *The Care Act*. <http://goo.gl/uvShns>
- DH 2005 Department of Health (DH) (2005), *The Mental Capacity Act* <http://goo.gl/uvShns>

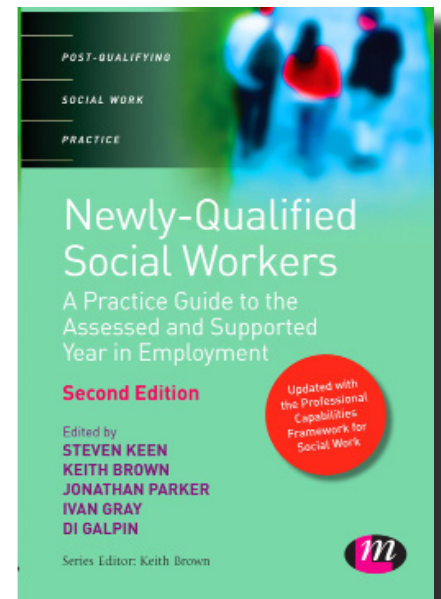
Newly-Qualified Social Workers: A Practice guide to the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

Edited by Steve Keen, Keith Brown, Jonathan Parker, Ivan Gray and Di Galpin with a foreword by Prof. David Croisdale-Appleby.

The first year of practice can be a particularly challenging time for newly-qualified social workers. This practical book is essential reading not only for NQSWs entering the workplace but for students on qualifying programmes who wish to develop their skills beyond graduation.

Now in its second edition, this book now includes:

- Guidance on the new Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for NQSWs.
- Revised material by service users, NQSWs and managers – which will provide students with a varied range of perspectives and experiences that they can then keep in mind and apply in their own practice.
- Links to current legislation and policy – which will keep students up-to-date with recent changes to the profession and new information for those working in children's or adults' settings.
- Practical features written to support undergraduates as well as NQSWs, including tips on report writing, what to expect when attending a court hearing and how to avoid stress and burnout.



To order go to

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/newly-qualified-social-workers/book238812>

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