CommunityCare
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Practice Guidance

Managing newly qualified social workers in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)

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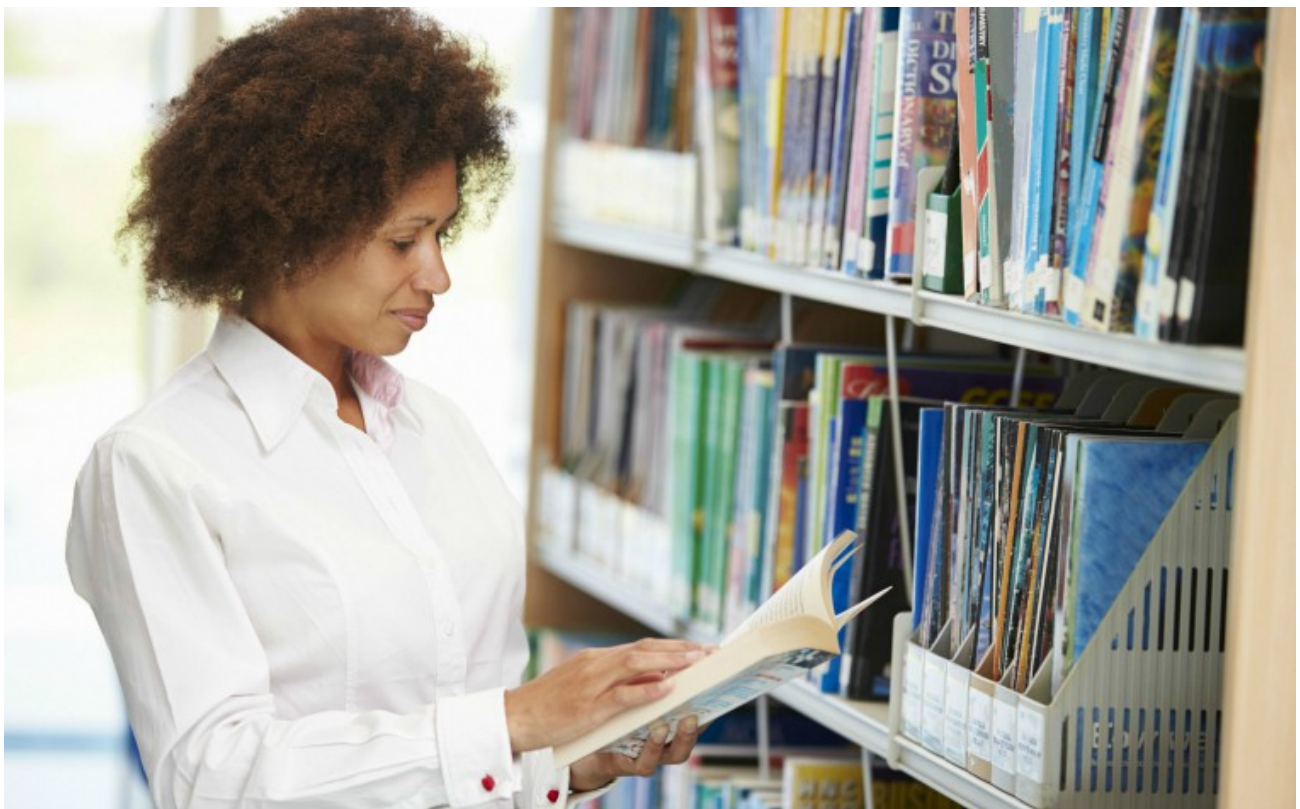**Publication Date:** 18 May 2018

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Contents

Learning points

- How to focus on supporting learning, rather than completing forms, while ensuring you meet the requirements of ASYE schemes.
- Different assessment methods that can be used: deciding which to use and ensuring assessment is transparent and fair.
- Tips on techniques such as action learning and critical reflection, as well as how to manage a tripartite relationship if there is a line manager/supervisor and separate mentor, assessor or practice educator.

Introduction

This guide is aimed at those overseeing and managing the learning of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE). It makes reference to the national standards and frameworks in place for this vital first year in

practice where relevant (see box for detail on these). However, as information about the core requirements is available from the government and Skills for Care (and you may also have local documentation for your organisation's own ASYE programme), the focus of this guide is on how you as an individual can best support and assess a new worker and deal with some common challenges. It draws on theories of learning, supervision and staff development and encourages you to think about how your team or service may be enhanced as a place of learning for NQSWs.

Creating an environment for learning and assessment

Most employers have a formal scheme in place to implement ASYE; if this is the case in your organisation, you will need to familiarise yourself with the programme, which may include partnerships with educational providers for academic elements. Your role is to help make clear what the standards and expectations look like in practice, as well as providing support and helping establish a support network for an individual's learning.

ASYE schemes have sometimes been criticised for being 'tick box'. Social workers at all levels are under intense workload pressure, with time for support, reflection and supervision often being squeezed and the impact of this is perhaps inevitably felt by ASYEs. However, if you can use your meetings to focus on learning and critical reflection, knowing that this will enable the NQSW to meet formal requirements, rather than being led by 'ticking off' forms, this will provide the best support and learning.

Conceptualising what is involved in learning – for example what we mean by "knowledge", "competency", "novice" and "expert" – can be very helpful when thinking how you will do this. NQSWs are by definition novices and at the start of a journey towards building practice wisdom.

The frameworks for assessment

Assessment will be based on the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) for adults' or child and family social workers which describe what practitioners should know and be able to do at the end of their first year in practice. These provide a useful framework to help both you and the NQSW think about the specific skills and knowledge required for their role and how they will develop them. Whilst not essential, depending on your local ASYE scheme, the NQSW may also been trained with reference to the PCF. The KSSs support the use of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) as a set of standards for all social workers throughout their careers and can be seen as contextualising the PCF for either adults' or children's social workers at practitioner level.

At the time of writing (2018), the functions of the knowledge and skills statements for the workforce more widely, and how they might differ in

Social work expertise is often about tacit knowledge – that is, we learn (often unconsciously) through experience and observing those around us, as opposed to explicitly being told how to do something or reading about it. Framing your support around how to embed tacit learning can help build a strong foundation of knowledge and develop the NQSW's confidence.

adults' and children's social work, specific knowledge and skills statements for different areas of practice and the ongoing role of the PCF are still developing. The changes to the ASYE since 2015 do, however, indicate clear expectations for consistency in what social workers should know and be able to do at the end of their first year.

Expert practitioners may be "unconsciously competent": they don't necessarily articulate their thinking process during decision-making, but are engaging in reasoning and drawing on past experience to make predictions without conscious reflection. As a novice, the NQSW's processes may be more limited and inflexible, requiring strict rules to govern practice because they have limited experiences to access (Benner, 1984). Expertise develops as they test and refine "propositions, hypotheses, and principle-based expectations in actual practice situations" (Benner, op cit). Read more about how new practitioners might develop expertise by clicking to expand the box below.

+ Developing expertise

One also has to recognise the emotional dimensions of learning. Reflective learning can only thrive in a climate where expressing feelings is accepted and legitimised in supervision and the overall team culture. (See, for example, Community Care Inform's guide to promoting critical reflection in supervision or use of self and emotional intelligence in practice education).

Initial discussions and baseline assessment

As part of getting to know an NQSW, you will want to undertake a thorough assessment of how they view prior learning from their course and placements, particular needs or gaps in knowledge and skills and how the role can meet these. As a broad outline, you may want to discuss:

- Qualifications and previous experience; the strengths and areas of further development identified at the end of their social work training;
- Any theoretical models or interventions they have developed an interest in;
- Personal needs (including requirements under equality or health and safety legislation);
- Their motivation and interest for working in this particular team or role;
- Other areas of interest within social work.

Photo: Community Care Inform

From here, you can together identify learning opportunities within their day-to-day work, with support from their team, and if there are particular tasks or experiences that will involve other teams or agencies. It can be helpful for the NQSW to write, with your input, a series of statements about the different activities they are expected to become involved with, their expected level of engagement and the learning outcomes linked to the KSS (and PCF) they expect to achieve.

A learning contact or agreement

These statements can be incorporated into a learning agreement, which sets out the milestones for the year, supervision arrangements and the different assessments that will take place. It should also make clear how any issues will be tackled, including workload, and the responsibilities of everyone concerned. The agreed reduction in caseload during the ASYE period should also be spelt out.

The Skills for Care record of support and progressive assessment (RSPA) is a helpful template to document this process (it can be pre-populated with, for examples, expectations of workload management in line with the organisation's scheme).

You should also clarify the lines of accountability and support if the NQSW has a line manager and a separate mentor, practice educator or other supervisor. The communication arrangements need to be clear and transparent to avoid any gaps or duplication, with agreement as to how supervision and assessment notes will be shared. Building in three-way meetings at regular intervals as well as making the NQSW's supervision a regular agenda item in your own supervision can help facilitate smoother communication.

The example role and responsibility table below may help you ensure all the NQSW's needs are met, even if your set up is different.

Depending on the organisational structures in place and how formalised an ASYE programme exists, you may need to consider how to link the NQSW with their peers. This might include those starting their ASYE and those who have successfully completed it. If it doesn't exist within formal structures, consider how you can you help build a community of practice among NQSWs and establish peer support networks, which might include other organisations in the area.

Roles and responsibilities for ASYE

ASYE co-ordinator

- Oversee the implementation of the ASYE programme in the organisation
- Advise, develop and support everyone involved in ASYE
- Provide mediation where there are any disputes and identify good practice
- Oversee governance and quality assurance, including evaluation. Use evidence to improve the regional and local scheme and workforce development
- Keep abreast of wider national developments in CPD
- Maintain records of all NQSWs and monitor their progress throughout the scheme

Practice educator/mentor/assessor (must be registered as a social worker with the HCPC)

- In conjunction with the NQSW's line manager, draw up a learning agreement (LA), action plan and professional development plan (PDP) and review regularly. Through supervision, mentoring and regular assessment, support the NQSW to develop their skills, knowledge and reflective practice so that, by the end of the period of the ASYE, the NQSW meets the requirements of the KSS and any other frameworks used in the organisation
- Make a holistic assessment and judgement of the NQSW's evidence and performance over the period of the ASYE against the KSS and the nine domains of the ASYE level of the PCF if used. Encourage the NQSW to identify learning opportunities and suitable sources to reflect, develop and evidence their practice

NQSW's line manager

- Attend and be involved in the initial learning agreement (LA) meeting and subsequent reviews. Consider the professional development plan (PDP) with the NQSW and the mentor/assesso.
- Carry out line management supervision with NQSW as normal practice and ensure their caseload is reduced in line with requirements. Introduce more complex cases over the course of the year, requiring increasing autonomy
- Help the NQSW to identify suitable opportunities for CPD and provide appropriate release
- Carry out and record direct observations of the NQSW's practice in conjunction with suitably experienced colleagues and contribute to the final assessment report

- Liaise with others working with the NQSW to provide feedback and discuss and resolve any concerns or issues. Endorse final assessment and contribute to overall scheme evaluation

NQSW

- Be proactive during the ASYE process
- Prepare for meetings with mentor/assessor and circulate relevant documents
- Carry out agreed actions in timely way
- Take responsibility for gathering and presenting evidence, including identifying opportunities from own practice and direct observations and critical reflection on progress and milestones to meet the requirements of the KSS and other frameworks used over the course of the year

As the year progresses and the NQSW finds their feet, support should move from 'teaching' styles towards more active learning approaches, engaging other staff and encouraging the NQSW to take more initiative. This might include, for example, reflective enquiry or action learning using a problem or case study which also benefits other team members. They could be supported to develop a structured analysis of a critical incident to share and stimulate debates on current practice issues or problems. Click to expand the box below to read more about action learning approaches.

+ **The use of action learning for NQSWs**

Team and interdisciplinary working

Emphasising the importance of shared purpose and team working to an ASYE is crucial. While it can initially feel like having a novice worker is creating extra work for others, NQSWs often bring fresh enthusiasm and energy so consider whether steps are needed to ensure other workers make the most of the recently qualified worker's perspective, as well as supporting them.

It can be helpful for the NQSW and for you to reflect on how they contribute to team meetings and the team generally. Quinney (2009) suggests the following checklist to consider:

Am I happy with my contribution so far?	[ ]
Do I help others to express their ideas?	[ ]
Do I listen well?	[ ]
Do I communicate my ideas well?	[ ]

Do I avoid conflict when I shouldn't?	[ ]
Do I tend to hold on to my own opinions without taking account of the views of others?	[ ]
Do I take on a leadership role?	[ ]
Am I too quiet?	[ ]
Do I give in too quickly when challenged?	[ ]
Do I tend to stick to my own views despite criticism?	[ ]

NQSWs may need particular support in interdisciplinary teams, to feel confident in knowing and being able to describe to others their own roles and responsibilities and those of other professionals. You may want discuss with them how they build interprofessional relationships, as well as how they tolerate differences, misunderstandings, ambiguities and shortcomings in team working (Barr, 2005). For NQSWs in a multi-professional or integrated team, establishing their professional identity may feel harder than for those surrounded by social workers. Providing opportunities for them to stay connected with other social workers, to seek clarity about their role and contribution through discussion with colleagues, in supervision and action learning sets all merit consideration.

Assessment

Photo: John Birdsall

The purpose of assessment is to ensure the NQSW is learning and developing during the year and is competent in their practice. It usually incorporates collecting evidence from everyday work experiences in a portfolio, with a critical reflective commentary by the NQSW.

There needs to be a measurable element whereby the learner and you have a sense of how knowledge and skills are developing against the KSS and/or PCF ASYE descriptors from their entry to the ASYE, at midway points and completion.

This will require different methods to simultaneously monitor performance and developing the learner's belief and confidence in their own competence and efficacy (see list of suggested methods below).

Transparent and equitable assessment

Both assessor and learner bring to the assessment relationship their own personal values and beliefs about what good practice looks like, alongside external expectations from service users and carers, education providers, professional bodies, the employer and so on. There may be a tension between the supportive role of providing feedback and learning opportunities, and the idea of assessing performance.

> It is often helpful to explicitly address possible tensions and power dynamics, and build trust through transparency about the assessment methods and criteria being used.

Visible and invisible similarities and differences (such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and class) should also be recognised and discussed.

The professional value base of the assessor and team should be made explicit to the learner, with agreed ground rules about how you will work within an anti-oppressive framework, including how discrimination will be addressed (Hafford-Letchfield et al, 2008). See Community Care Inform's practice education hub for guidance on anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice education, and assessing students – the general principles are equally applicable to newly qualified workers.

Methods of assessment to measure capability and competency may include:

- direct observation of practice in planned, intentional contexts;
- video/audio recordings (made with consent). These may be recordings of direct work with service users, case presentation or supervision sessions;
- written work (such as case records, critical incident analysis, statutory reports or records);
- competence checklists (whilst fairly crude, these are useful for noting specific gaps against the professional requirements to identify where further learning opportunities or assessments need to be developed);
- oral assessment using question and answer or discussion formats and oral presentations;
- structured reflective discussion (recorded or notes made);
- documenting achievements against and pre-planned goals and tasks;
- feedback from others e.g. service users and carers, peer professionals, managers or members of the interprofessional team (again, consent will be needed to seek and share feedback);
- self-assessment: usually via a portfolio of evidence such as a critical reflection log.

In deciding whether an assessment method is suitable in a specific context and refining it, consider whether it has the following attributes:

1   **Valid**: Does it test what is meant to be tested? For example, before observing the learner's practice, it is important to be clear about what is being observed and why. It must be valid for the actual role of the social worker.

2   **Reliable**: Can it can be trusted over time and agreed by others? This may entail repeating and reassessing certain skills and knowledge in different situations to look at how the learner transfers knowledge from one to the other.

3   **Authentic**: Is it directly attributable to the learner and has it been robustly evidenced?

4   **Sufficient**: Is it enough to approve that the learner has reached a certain standard and good enough?

5   **Current**: Is it based on current practice experience and relevant to the service they are working in?

Assessment via observation

Direct observations of practice should always follow some basic ground rules and be viewed as a shared task between the NQSW and assessor. Ensure you have discussed the following areas together:

[]   How will you obtain signed permission from the service user or carer? This may include providing some feedback from their perspective.

[]   What are the key aspects of practice being assessed?

[]   Where it will take place and the seating arrangements.

[]   How and what you will record to provide specific evidence of competence.

[]   Agreement that you will only intervene if the level of practice is unacceptable.

[]   Timescales for feedback (if possible, immediate verbal feedback, with more detailed and reflective discussion and written feedback as soon as practicable, ideally within a week).

[]   What other evidence will support or validate the observation evidence, for example, the ASYE's own recording or supervision records?

The role of service users and carers

Once they have qualified, social workers do not need us for 'feedback' in the same way as student social

workers do. The power has shifted; they spend less time with you and are harder to get hold of

(comments from service user, cited by McPhail, 2011)

The above comment illustrates the importance of avoiding tokenism in service user participation and integrating it into professional and service development at all stages and levels. Co-production can make an incredibly valuable contribution to learning but everyone involved must be adequately supported.

Wright et al (2006) have identified specific competencies for both staff and service users to make any involvement meaningful. At a basic level, the service users that the NQSW is working with could be asked in advance if they would agree to give feedback on their experiences. They should be consulted on whether, for example, they will write it down, respond to a questionnaire or give feedback verbally. At a more strategic level, user involvement should be woven into individual, organisational and policy structures so all practitioners and managers can tap into users' engagement in the development of practice rather than it being an add-on or seen primarily in the context of students and novices.

Hafford-Letchfield et al (2008) give examples of outreach work to user organisations where service users can become engaged in more creative forms of learning such as group supervision sessions, non-managerial support, mentoring and opportunities to explore reflective diaries or learning journals together.

The table below illustrates some of the skills and knowledge that both practitioners and service users need to engage in user participation.

Competencies required by practitioners	Competencies required by service users and carers

• Understanding what participation means and why it is important
• Understanding the potential impact of participation (on service users and carers and the organisation)
• Opportunity to explore attitudes towards participation and working in partnership with service users and carers
• Knowledge about different methods that can be used to involve service users and carers
• Communication techniques that enable the involvement of all service users and carers
• Sensitivity to and awareness of the individual needs of service users and carers
• Opportunity to develop imaginative and creative techniques
• Knowledge about how to work with service users and carers safely and establish appropriate boundaries for their involvement

• Understanding what participation means and why is it important
• Understanding the potential impact of participation (on them and the organisation
• Opportunity to explore attitudes to participation and working in partnership with trainees and practitioners
• Knowledge about different methods that might be used to involve service users and carers
• Opportunity to explore how they would like to be able to participate and what they would like to see changed
• Team-building activities that enable the development of skills such as listening, being responsive to others, taking responsibility for specific roles, debating, communicating
• Opportunity to develop confidence in expressing their own views
• Skills in presenting own views and views of other service users and carers
• Skills and experience in relation to specific participation activities

Dealing with issues and problems

As the ASYE is a period of learning, the NQSW is likely to face challenges and may struggle with certain elements of the programme or set of standards they are expected to meet. Managers and assessors need to be able to quickly identify when there are problems and provide support and feedback.

> Challenging situations will nearly always be learning experiences for the NQSW as there is likely to be something that may have been done differently or that highlights

skills or knowledge gaps for those involved

There may be situations where you are concerned that an NQSW's struggles to perform in their role or meet the criteria in the frameworks being used mean they should not pass the ASYE, and this is discussed below. However, the first step should be identifying concerns early on, and supporting the NQSW to address them, so the next section considers some strategies for this.

We may sometimes feel generally uncertain about a new practitioner's suitability for their role or working in the profession but to initiate work to highlight issues, help them improve or (when necessary) provide evidence that they should not pass, concerns need to be specific. Boran (2009) suggests that unprofessional behaviour or professional unsuitability is demonstrated through any "action or omission which could be judged to endanger [a service] user's safety or bring the agency or profession into disrepute" and when expressing concerns you need to draw on specific examples. These might include incidents of:

- failure to comply with the code of professional conduct;
- poor attendance and time-keeping;
- failure to exercise due consideration for the safety and welfare of service users;
- failure to show commitment and consistent application to developing professional skills (for example, not engaging or interacting with those supporting learning or the process);
- consistent failure to maintain adequate communication, with consequences for service delivery;
- failure to comply with professional guidelines and policies such as reporting whereabouts or sickness;
- unacceptable behaviour in any environment;
- any actions leading to disciplinary procedures.

It is important to raise issues as soon as possible by utilising constructive critical feedback: praising elements that are genuinely good (see the 'praise sandwich' case vignette below), whilst letting the NQSW know that things aren't progressing as they should be. This should be rigorously and speedily followed up with some practical goal-setting and positive exploration of ways in which goals can be accomplished. Critical feedback or bringing up problems need not be a negative experience; it may sometimes be a relief for those who feel they are struggling or floundering but do not have the courage or know where to start with addressing it themselves.

It is worth considering the following:

– Are they struggling with working in this specific part of the service? Return to initial conversations you had about their motivations for working in this team. If it's feasible within the service structure and workloads, is there scope to try working in another area?

– Is something specific "blocking" learning or demonstrating good practice such as lack of confidence on a particularly challenging case or responding negatively to a piece of constructive criticism?

– Is it useful to categorise all the areas of concerns: i.e. are they around general skills given in the KSS such as communication or building relationships, specific areas of knowledge such as around parental needs or mental capacity, or complying with policies and/or social work values? This may help in working out how the problem(s) can be tackled.

NQSWs will self-evidently have passed the hurdle of qualification but some of the tips in CC Inform's guide to working with struggling and failing students may be useful.

People sometimes talk about "personality clashes" when there are challenges with a new social worker they manage but it is worth thinking about whether it is a difference in learning styles or expectations that can be managed by an open conversation about the issues.

Ten top tips for giving feedback about concerns

1   Always use natural opportunities to give constructive critical feedback. Initiating these in person is always preferable followed by telephone conversations and only use email as a last resort. If you need to put something in writing, this should be as a follow up to a conversation.

2   Personal style can get in the way, so practice first and seek advice on your form of words if this helps.

3   In your opening statement, explain or name the issue and provide a concrete example.

4   Take responsibility for your part in the conversation.

5   Describe your emotions, which facilitates emotional intelligence, and be aware of body language.

6   Clarify why it is important.

7   Anticipate the NQSW's concerns and make time to listen. Then be curious and seek information.

8   Always invite a response and be supportive.

9   Try to identify and promote an incentive for the NQSW to change. Promote self-care strategies and seek a solution.

10   Agree actions and schedule a follow up.

For more advice, see CC Inform's Tips for giving feedback to team members or supervisees.

Case vignette: a praise sandwich

1. Start off with positive feedback and authentic praise of an activity that went well recently:

"Naresh, I wanted to thank you for stepping in on duty last week. We were really under a lot of pressure and the support that you gave Amena in that assessment was invaluable – Amena commented on that to me specifically. That was a good example of the sort of teamwork we are trying to develop here."

2. Allow the person to digest the positive feedback and then provide your constructive criticism. Keep this brief, clear and specific, particularly emphasising how it can help the social worker meet their own goals.

"I am aware that you need the opportunity to demonstrate skills across all areas of practice. One thing that I noticed might be challenging for you is to ensure that you make accurate records of your meetings with service users and risk assessments. Last week, there was a situation where we had a problem giving a full report at a meeting about Mrs Hughes as the record was not up to date. Can we talk about the difficulties you are finding so we can discuss ways this can improve?"

3. Discuss the NQSW's thoughts and reaction, supporting them to identify what specifically was difficult or not fully understood and how they could improve in that areas. End on a positive note.

> *"As I said earlier Naresh, we are really pleased with your contribution to teamwork. It's been very useful to hear your perspectives on making notes from meetings and finding it hard to be organised when you feel there is a lot to do. I understand these areas are difficult and are generally things that become easier with more experience but I am pleased to hear that you recognise this is a problem because of what we need as a service and are keen to learn some skills and strategies.*
>
> *I am bringing this up primarily because it is a core part of the job but you do need to demonstrate competence in this area to meet the parts of the KSS that are about communication and the organisational context. Also, some of your final assessment will be based on case records so we want you to be in a position for these to reflect the work you are doing. We can pursue the idea of Bola helping you with recording over the next month, so let's review at our next ASYE meeting and look through a couple of your recordings together between now and then to keep on top of it."*

If meetings are regular and any issues about the learner's progress aired and recorded, then discussing problems should feel less personal or surprising. Being told that there is a potential for failure should never be a shock. Where there are concerns, the NQSW will need close management and support from you and anyone else involved in assessment or mentoring, and you should also seek support for yourself in dealing with the situation.

Working with borderline or failing NQSWs

Making the decision to fail a qualified social worker is very difficult and occurs relatively rarely. It can sometimes be harder to fail a borderline practitioner than to pass them. If there is a breadth and depth of unmet competencies then the decision may be more clear-cut. It is when the NQSW has met some competencies but not others, and/or where there is a cluster of competencies around the pass/fail borderline that the decision becomes more difficult.

The consequences of failing to fail someone can have enormous implications, first and foremost for service users. The responsibility for ensuring that, however difficult it may be, NQSWs who are not able or ready to progress do fail, lies jointly with line managers, practice educators and the ASYE coordinator. Decisions will inevitably be scrutinised externally so a well-evidenced report will be essential.

Hafford-Letchfield et al (2008) recommend the following key principles in these situations:

1   Liaise with the programme coordinator throughout the year to discuss the academic standards required and inform them of the learners' progress and of any concerns both verbally and in writing.

2   Seek the advice of an experienced assessor and/or your ASYE scheme co-ordinator to talk through the issues and to explore the evidence you have in order to consider if this is balanced, triangulated, valid and reliable, with specific examples and how you are relating it to the relevant competencies and the professional codes of practice.

3   Consider any factors that may be disadvantaging the NQSW in the workplace. For example, not getting the reduced caseload required, a lack of or inconsistent line management or supervision, or failure to provide ongoing assessment and feedback throughout the year. Ensure you work to rectify this and document how this is done and the impact.

4   Return regularly to the learning agreement to review how the learning support relationship is developing, the positives and negatives of the power dynamics. Revisit how the learner learns and identify whether feedback or the facilitation style needs to be varied to meet their learning needs. If this has been tried without success how will you demonstrate this?

What does research tell us about providing a positive ASYE experience?

At the time of writing, there has been limited research investigating the journeys that NQSWs go on in their early years of practice. It is difficult to assess the impact of large scale programmes such as ASYE when individuals' motivation, persistence and self-direction play a key role.

However, evaluations of earlier NQSW programmes indicate that novice social workers value being able to develop their own self confidence through critical reflection and opportunities to integrate new learning with their developing skills, knowledge and professional values. (Carpenter 2010). In this study, the "enhanced supervision" that NQSWs on the then new programme received was strongly associated with overall satisfaction, compared to other newly qualified workers who weren't receiving it. In a related study, Healey et al 2010 found that novices wanted supervision, mentoring and support that is accessible and available when required. Further, they valued supervision that is credible, because it is provided by professionals with substantial experience and expertise; emotionally and intellectually supportive, enabling the practitioner to review their work openly; and has a professional development focus that connects practitioners' professional foundations and their practice context.

A Skills for Care study (2015) of the early ASYE cohorts found that whilst the ASYE had an overall positive effect on NQSWs, there were discrepancies in what supervisors reported providing in terms of support, compared to what NQSW's felt that they had received, suggesting that this was a potential communication issue between supervisors and NQSWs. Other areas for improvement identified included:

- Some noted a lack of clarity about what needed to be done by the supervisor/employer or what the ASYE involves (i.e. protected development time, caseloads, etc).
- There was a feeling that it was too generic/not tightly defined enough and therefore open to different interpretations. (This was before the introduction of knowledge and skills statements)
- A sense that some people were treating it as something to 'get through' rather than maximising the opportunities it provides.
- A lack of opportunities to gain more experience in safeguarding/complex areas of practice.
- For those who had already worked in the sector (for example as social work assistants) prior to training, the ASYE felt like it was something imposed upon them that wasn't necessary.
- Some argued that the expectation to participate in study time/action learning/etc was too high (that it was unnecessary or they didn't want to do so much), whilst others complained that it was unrealistic given workloads (that they would have liked to have done more).

Finally, NQSWs wanted more support from peers and more experienced social workers in exploring the dilemmas and challenges encountered.

Other common issues raised that could help inform your approach include:

Some NQSWs felt they were put in a position of having to undertake complex investigations and assessments with little back up from more experienced practitioners and inadequate resources.

ASYEs in some specific roles (most notably, child protection) felt heightened stress through the combination of high demand, low support and low control over decisions and the flow of work. Some wanted opportunities to undertake less conflict-ridden and more supportive roles.

Being unprepared for the emotional intensity of the
work, including aggression from service users.

Finding the realities of practice different from what had
been learnt during training.

Wanting to be able to see clearer career pathways,
illustrating how social workers move from novice to
senior positions.

Further reading

The following CC Inform resources may be especially useful for those working with
ASYEs:

Supervision and management
Management knowledge and practice hub
Practice education knowledge and practice hub

Supporting the ASYE in meeting the requirements of the KSS
This is not an exhaustive list but some examples of resources on the site which may be
useful for different parts of the knowledge and skills statement:

- Making Safeguarding Personal, Personalisation: lessons from research (part 3,
  Person-centred practice)
- Safeguarding knowledge and practice hub; Self-neglect knowledge and practice
  hub (part 4, Safeguarding)
- Mental capacity, deprivation of liberty and best interests knowledge and practice
  hub (part 5, Mental capacity)
- Assessment; Care and support planning (part 6, Effective assessments and
  outcome based support planning
- Assessment: using narratives to improve outcomes; Disability knowledge and
  practice hub (part 7, Direct work with individuals and families)
- Critical reflection: how to develop it in your practice, Guide to analysis and
  decision making (part 8, Supervision, critical reflection and analysis)
- Using professional judgment and decision making in safeguarding (part 9,
  Organisational context)

- Integration knowledge and practice hub, Legal content (part 10, Professional ethics and leadership)

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