

# Dudley Children's Services



## Practice Educator and Student Placement Handbook



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## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide key information and guidance around the arrangements in place to support Practice Education in Dudley Children Services.



The handbook is divided into three sections and aims to provide prospective Practice Educators with guidance in relation to:

- Applying for and completing practice education qualifications;
- Teaching, supervising and assessing a student in the first or final placement;
- Support arrangements for both students and Practice Educators.

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## 1. Practice Education Awards



The Practice Educator Professional Standards set out two stages of qualification:

**Stage 1 Practice Educators** can supervise, teach and assess students on their first placement. They may contribute to the assessment of a student in the final placement, but they should not take full responsibility for the assessment of a student as fit to practice at the point of qualification. Applicants must be qualified and registered social workers and have at least two years post-qualifying experience.

**Stage 2 Practice Educators** can supervise, teach and assess students up to and including the last placement and have the authority to recommend that social work students are fit to practice at the point of qualification. Final placement students can only be assessed by a Stage 2 Practice Educator. Applicants must have previously met the Practice Educator Stage 1 requirements to be eligible to apply for this award.

**Stages a Practice Educator can independently assess pre-qualifying students (from BASW Practice Educator Professional Standards for Social Work)**

	Stage 1 (studying)	Stage 1 (qualified)	Stage 2 (studying)	Stage 2 (qualified)
First Placement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Final Placement	Yes with oversight from a PEPs 2 qualified PE	Yes with oversight from a PEPs 2 qualified PE	Yes with ratification of a PE mentor/assessor	Yes

For both awards, currently completed at the University of Birmingham, the practice education course needs to have been completed and the portfolio submitted within two years of the course start date.

**Eligibility to apply for a Practice Education Qualification Course**

Prospective Practice Educators must meet internal eligibility requirements and have the agreement and support of their manager before applying for either the Stage 1 or 2 course. Management approval must also be evidenced on the application form, as well as agreement for a student to be placed in the Practice Educator's team. This can include Social Workers who work part time, with agreement and support of the team and manager as to the available support for the student on the Practice Educator's non-working days.

Those holding the Practice Teacher Award or a Higher Specialist Award in Practice Education are deemed to be Stage 2 qualified.

Practice Educators are required to ensure their continued proficiency in their practice education skills and maintain the currency of the qualification by taking a student every two years minimum. If a Practice Educator does not support a student for two years, the qualification will lapse and they will need to complete a refresher course and support a student in order to regain the currency of their qualification.

Stage 1 Practice Educators will be supported by an experienced Stage 2 Practice Educator if supporting a final year student, whose role is to help them in their assessment decisions and take some part in the teaching and assessment of the student. This may be a long arm Practice Educator within Dudley MBC, or a long arm Practice Educator provided by the University.

Any new employees to Dudley who are already Stage 1 or 2 Practice Educators and are keen to continue their development with students, should notify the student placement lead within Dudley's Centre for Professional Practice (CPP) to be included in any Practice Educator development support or considered for student placement allocation. New employees will be made aware of this in their Induction to Dudley.

## **2. Practice Educator Support Offer**



### **Practice Educator Workshops**

All Practice Educators in Dudley, whether already qualified or undertaking the awards, are invited to attend internal Practice Educator workshops delivered by Dudley's Centre for Professional Practice, as well as any relevant regional events. The internal workshops will focus on the domains of the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPs) and will be held as far as possible to coincide with placement start, midpoint and end dates, which vary through the academic year and between different Higher Education Institution programmes. The workshops will be in October, January, April and July in each academic year. There will also be an opportunity for Practice Educators to attend one to one sessions as required to discuss their development, any support requirements and potential future student placements to continue their Practice Educator status.

There is a small library of practice education resources held within CPP that can be accessed by Practice Educators as and when required.

### **Workload relief**

Both Stage 1 and 2 Practice Educators will be funded to attend the course and released from their teams to attend the 5 university taught days.

It is recommended that a Practice Educator's workload be adjusted by 20% during the period that they are supervising a student. This is to ensure the Practice Educator can adequately manage and oversee the student social worker's caseload and provide the required supervision, support and assessment. This should be agreed with the social work Team Manager in advance of the student starting their placement.

Practice Educators who are supervising a student are also entitled to one day's protected time per student to allow time to complete the assessment reports for their students. The scheduling of this will need to be agreed with their Team Manager.

## **Practice Educator Toolkit**



CPP will provide each Practice Educator with a toolkit, containing relevant resources to aid their development as Practice Educators. The toolkits will contain useful resources to aid reflective supervision, support students with linking theory to practice, and the assessment of practice and development over the course of a student placement.

## **Stage 2 Practice Educator Support to training or qualified Stage 1 Practice Educators**

Training or qualified Stage 1 Practice Educators can undertake the full role in assessing a first placement student only, with mentoring support from Dudley's Centre or Professional Practice. Final placements (100 day placement) will be supported by a Stage 2 Practice Educator to complete the final assessment of the student. The Stage 2 Practice Educator will be identified within Dudley or will be provided by the university. The Stage 2 Practice Educator will contribute to the supervision of the student, the learning agreement, and the midway and final report. Stage 1 and 2 Practice Educators will be required to work together to support the student but responsibility for the final assessment decision will be the responsibility of the Stage 2 Practice Educator, although the views of the Stage 1 Practice Educator will contribute to the overall assessment of the student.

## **3. Social Work Student Practice Placement Guidance**

### **Placement Requirements**

Social work students are required to spend 200 days in practice over the course of their training, of which up to 30 days will be spent in developing skills for practice. Placements must take place in at least 2 practice settings providing contrasting experiences. Placements are opportunities for students to learn in practice and prepare for qualification, practice, and professional registration.

### **The Student Placement Process**

#### **Requests for student placements**

All external requests from Higher Education Institutions for student placements must be made through Dudley's Centre for Professional Practice (CPP), and will be explored by the student placement lead who will log details of the request and explore potential student placements.

Requests must be made directly to the placement lead/team by the university and not by a student themselves. Any student attempting to request a placement outside of their HEI processes will be referred back to their university.

If a manager, social worker or other member of staff is contacted requesting a student placement, they should discuss this with the student placement lead within the CPP team in the first instance to ensure the correct process is followed. The student placement lead will be responsible for matching students to available placements and Practice Educators.

Should the student have previous convictions/cautions, they will be considered on a case by case basis so as to not preclude the offer of a placement. The student placement lead will discuss any potential placements with the Principal Social Worker for a final decision to be made around whether placement should go ahead.

The process aims to ensure that no student is discriminated against in line with the Equality Act 2010 and all students applying for placement will be considered, as long as the correct process has been followed.

### **Pre-Placement Process**

The student placement lead based within the CPP team has oversight of the profiles in order to match students to appropriate teams and an available Practice Educator, depending on capacity at the time of the university request. The HEI forwards the student's profile to the CPP student placement lead. Once the decision is made to proceed to offering the student an interview, the student profile will be emailed to the allocated Practice Educator who will read the profile, and make contact with the student within 10 working days to arrange a placement interview.



All students accepted for interview must be offered a pre-placement interview which must take place no later than 15 working days prior to the placement start date, and much earlier where possible.

The guidance in **Appendix 2** provides information on key areas to discuss and cover with the student during the interview. Students must also bring a copy of their DBS check, previous placement report if being interviewed for a final placement, and if relevant, their learning support statement to the meeting, as well as their driving license and vehicle insurance documents. **Please note: students need to hold business class 1 insurance for social work placements and must demonstrate that this cover is in place prior to the placement start date.**

In the event that any concerns are raised in the placement interview about any aspect of the student's presentation or suitability for a placement, then this should be discussed with the student placement lead prior to any agreement for the student to start a placement within Dudley Children's Services. Reasons for a student being unsuccessful at interview may relate to their presentation, attitude, organisational skills, appropriate preparedness for the interview and timekeeping.

If the student has been successful in securing the placement following interview, they should be notified of this no later than 2 working days after the interview. The Practice Educator who conducted the interview should notify the student and the student placement lead within the CPP team of the outcome of the interview. Once the placement has been confirmed, the student placement lead within the CPP team will send the relevant University Placement Handbook directly to the Practice Educator, and if relevant, the Placement Supervisor.

In the event that no concerns have been raised in the interview, the Practice Educator should agree a start date with the student in line with their university placement timescales. The first day will be on a Monday, which is the day Dudley Children's Services Induction take place. Inductions take place at Ward House, Himley.

### **Pre Placement Preparation**

Once the practice placement has been confirmed, CPP will complete the student temporary payroll set up form and forward to HR (**Appendix 3**). Once the student has been set up, then New Starters Checklist should be completed (**Appendix 4**).

The Practice Educator must arrange for the student to obtain their identity badge, ordering and providing a work laptop and mobile phone. This also includes requesting log in details for work extension numbers and IT. **See Appendix 4** for instructions on completing each of the actions required prior to the student's start date, so that they have a laptop, mobile phone and ID badge in place as soon as possible. Please note that a student's ID badge must indicate that they are a student, despite any other potential permanent post held in Dudley by the student.

All equipment must be returned to the Practice Educator on the last day of placement. Under no circumstances should students be using their personal mobile phones for work purposes.

### **Role of the Team Manager and Team**

The Team Manager and Team play a vital role in supporting the success of the placement and the development of the student. It is expected that the student be made to feel part of the team and that team members also offer learning opportunities to the student.

The Team Manager will need to ensure regular supervision is provided to the Practice Educator to address learning issues and for consideration of workload relief.

Team Managers must support their Social Workers in maintaining their Practice Educator status by accepting students every two years.

### **Student Induction**



It is the responsibility of the Practice Educator (Stage 1 or 2) to ensure that the student completes the Dudley Children's Services Induction on day 1 of their placement, taking into account any university requirements outside of this.

Further information around Dudley Children's Services Induction Programme, please access the following link: <https://www.dudleycpp.org.uk/inductionpack>

As part of the induction process, students should also complete mandatory e-learning modules, as per the below guidance.



Students will spend the first two weeks of placement shadowing and observing colleagues and gaining an understanding of key policy documents. Students will also be required to spend time visiting different services across Children's to understand the journey of the child and the types of practice undertaken in each service. Services include:

- Family centres within Early Help services;
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **Please note that the student will need to obtain the appropriate security clearances to observe within this service;**
- Duty and Assessment;
- Care Management;
- Care Proceedings, Children in Care, and Care Leavers;
- Dudley Disability Service;
- Safeguarding and Review (Independent Reviewing Officers and the Local Authority Designated Officer).

Students should also observe the following practice panels:

- Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel;
- Access to Resources Panel;
- Legal Gateway Panel;
- Achieving Permanency Panel.

Each visit time will be no longer than half day per service unless otherwise agreed. The Practice Educator will need to provide contact details for all services above in order for arrangements to be made by the student as part of their induction.

### **Student Working Hours**

Students undertaking practice placements with Dudley must comply with the contractual attendance and hours of duties of Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. These will be confirmed in the practice learning agreement within the portfolio and as per the social work programme requirements. It is recognised that there will be times that duties may require flexibility in the working hours due to the nature of the role. In this situation, the Practice Educator will need to ensure that the student takes back the extra hours worked as per the flexible working policy. However, students should not build up time and take whole days out of the placement.

### **Sickness/Absence**

Students are required to complete the placement attendance requirements in full. Should the student be unwell or absent from work at any time they are required to contact the office and notify the Practice Educator of the absence on the first and last day of sickness. If the student is unable to attend due to sickness for more than one week, then they must provide a GP fit note to the Practice Educator and University Practice Tutor, confirming they are well enough to return, and identifying any additional support requirements for the student if necessary. If the student is an internal candidate, i.e. a Social Work Apprentice, any annual leave to be taken during the programme must be agreed by the Practice Educator in advance. In all cases, any missed days must be clearly recorded and made up at the end of the placement unless otherwise agreed by the university.

### **Travel**

Students are required to travel to and from placement and make appropriate arrangements for any travel during the working day to meet with service users or partner agencies as needed.



Car users will need to ensure that they hold business class 1 car insurance. It is the student's responsibility to see check their policy and make any changes needed prior to the placement start date. Dudley will not provide any financial contribution to any potential required payments.

Students who do not drive will need to ensure they make alternative arrangements for transport to carry out duties required of them within their case work.

Any travel expenses occurred during working hours can be claimed back through the Practice Educators and team they are placed in. The specific service in which the student is placed will be responsible for reimbursing the student's travel costs. Receipts and necessary evidence of expenses must be provided with the claim. Students cannot claim back for travel expenses incurred during their journey to and from placement and home.

Students are required to complete the mileage log form, and the Practice Educator and Team Manager will need to sign off and agree the mileage log. All receipts and/or parking tickets will need to be attached to the completed form. The student will need to give the approved log to their finance team (Senior Business Support Team) who will process the application via a supplier payment request.



### **Workload**

It is the responsibility of the Practice Educator together with their manager to allocate and manage casework to the Student Social Worker. Cases allocated should take into consideration the student's ability and previous experience.

It is recommended that the student has up to eight children during a first placement, and up to twelve children during a final placement, but this can be increased dependent upon capabilities and previous experience of individual students.

Cases cannot be allocated to students in their own right. All cases need to be recorded on the child's electronic file as having a named qualified registered social worker allocated to the case. All cases that the student will be working on will need to be recorded as being co-worked by the student and not the allocated Social Worker.

Should any conflict of interest in cases arise, such as the student knowing a service user personally, the student must notify the Practice Educator immediately so that the family can be re-allocated to another worker.

### **Student Supervision**

Practice Educators will be required to provide weekly supervision to their student throughout the placement, if a first placement, to include case oversight and reflective practice and development. Any case discussions should be recorded directly onto the child's file by the practice educator in line with the Supervision Policy.



For final placement students, at the midpoint review, a discussion can be held as to whether the student's supervision can be reduced to fortnightly for the second half of the placement.

Where there is a Stage 1 Practice Educator and an off-site Stage 2 Practice Educator, supervision will be undertaken alternately between the two.

Should there be a Stage 1 Practice Educator and long arm Stage 2 Practice Educator both based within Dudley Children's Services, the Supervisor and Educator at the start of the placement should agree who records case oversight onto the child's file.

Practice Educators should receive supervision with their manager in line with the Supervision Policy on a monthly basis.

### **When concerns are raised**

Where there are concerns about a student's practice and there is a likelihood that the student will fail the placement, the Practice Educator and student must inform the university placement tutor and student placement lead within the CPP team at the earliest opportunity, and a Placement Concerns Meeting should be convened at the earliest opportunity, in line with the relevant university programme policy.



The Practice Educator should be prepared to provide written evidence of the concerns and identify links to the relevant domain/s of the PCF in preparation for the concerns meeting.

The meeting will be convened with the relevant practice tutor, student, Practice Educator and student placement lead from the CPP team present. It is possible that during this meeting, a recommendation will be made to end the placement. This may be due to a number of reasons, such as breach of Dudley's policies or concerns around risk to service users or the ability of the student to demonstrate the required professional capability. The Practice Educator should ensure that responses to concerns are appropriate and liaise with student placement lead within the CPP team to formulate steps of support.

At times, there may be disagreements or disputes between a Practice Educator and student. Any disagreements should be addressed by raising the issues with the other party and this should be recorded and dated by all parties as they occur. In most cases, the issues will be resolved over the course of the placement.

If the issue cannot be resolved directly, then the CPP placement lead should be notified, as well as the university representative so that a plan to address the dispute can be agreed.

Any concerns relating to the practice of the Practice Educator will be explored jointly with the Team Manager and student placement lead, and appropriate steps taken as necessary, in line with Dudley's policies and procedures.

### **Support for Students**

Students are not able to attend training that incurs a charge, however can attend any training relevant to their post with agreement of their Practice Educator and student placement lead.

Students will also have the opportunity to attend taught sessions with newly qualified social workers undertaking Dudley's Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. The ASYE programme lead based within the CPP team will make contact with students to inform them of these potential opportunities as and when these become available.

Students will also be able to access support and guidance from their Team Manager and colleagues within the team as well as the student placement lead within the CPP team.

### **Resources and Tools**



The CPP website has a tools and resources folder which includes a student and Practice Educator section (<https://www.dudleycpp.org.uk/practice-educators-and-students>).

Here there are key documents and links that can be used in the completion of portfolio work and research. The resource folder will also contain a link to the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership repository of useful Practice Education documents, presentations and other useful materials.

### **Research in Practice**

Students can register with Research in Practice whilst on placement with Dudley and have access to a full range of relevant resources to inform and underpin their practice. Students should visit the home page and register using their Dudley email address.

### **Post Social Work Qualification**

If the student has successfully completed their final placement with Dudley, arrangements may be made in supporting the student to complete an application for a newly qualified Social Worker post. This will then secure the successful students with an interview to potentially remain in Dudley as an employee and complete Dudley's ASYE programme. However, the availability of NQSW post will be subject to the needs of services and vacancies at the time of the student placement completion.

**Ruth Kernarne, Advanced Social Work Practitioner, Dudley's Centre for Professional Practice. July 2020.**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Practice Educator Support and Development Workshop Programme 20 - 21**

<b>Date/time</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Workshop 1</b> <b>October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020</b> <b>10am - 12pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introducing the Practice Educator Toolkit</li><li>• Introducing the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS)</li><li>• Professionals Capabilities Framework (PCF) – First Year and Final Year Placements</li><li>• Adapting Placements to Remote Working</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Supervision and Theories</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 2</b> <b>January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b> <b>10am - 12pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid Way Reviews</li> <li>• Direct Observation of Practice</li> <li>• Anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory approaches in practice education</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 3</b> <b>March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b> <b>10am - 12pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing the Final Report</li> <li>• Evidencing the PCF domains</li> <li>• Evidencing the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS)</li> <li>• Addressing Issues or Concerns on Placement – Action Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Workshop 4</b> <b>July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021</b> <b>10 – 12pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued Professional Development for Practice Educators – Evidencing on Social Work England</li> <li>• Reflection on the student placement experience</li> <li>• Developing knowledge and continuing performance</li> <li>• Practice Educator Evaluation and feedback</li> </ul>

**NB: All sessions will allow time for Practice Educators to discuss their placements thus far, how they are finding it, if there are any practice/placement issues and will leave time for questions and answers.**

## Appendix 2

### **Placement Interview Guidance**

The purpose of this interview is for the student and representative of the agency (usually this will be the Practice Educator and/or the Practice Supervisor) to meet to decide whether the student will be suitable to work in their service and on placement with them, and to discuss their learning needs and how they can be met.



Students should treat the placement interview in the same way they would a job interview and make sure they prepare thoroughly beforehand. All students should be on time (unless unforeseeable circumstances arise), be appropriately dressed, and have prepared thoroughly for the interview.

Once the Practice Educator receives the student profile and is in agreement, they should make contact with the student with contact details provided in the profile and offer dates for an interview. The interview date will need to be prior to the placement agreement meeting.

Students will need to show their DBS check at the placement interview. Practice Educators will need to check the dates and ensure they cover the length of placement.

Students who are on final placement should provide the Practice Educator with an electronic copy of their final report from their first placement.

Potential Interview questions:

- **Can you tell me about any previous experience you have that you think will be relevant to the work you will undertake on this placement?**
- **What are your learning needs for this placement?**
- **Can you tell me some of the qualities and attributes that you think are important for a social worker?**
- **What is it that you would like to get out of a potential placement in Dudley?**
- **Can you talk to me about any areas of interest you have in practice?**

- Do you have any disabilities, health needs or extra learning needs that you need any support with while on placement?
- Are there any questions that you want to want to ask or any further information that you would like?

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**Appendix 3**

**Student Temporary Payroll Number Request**

<b>Information Required</b>	
Salutation	
First Name	
Surname	
Start Date	
Home Address	
Contact Number	
Date of Birth	
NI Number	
Reporting To (Team Manager)	
List name of individual in identical role within the team you are working	
Team	

**For Office Use Only**

<b>Date Received</b>		
<b>Input by</b>		
<b>Dummy Payroll Number</b>		
<b>Manager Notified of payroll number</b>		

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**Appendix 4**

**New Starters Checklist**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Addition information and Links</b>	<b>Complete – date comp</b>
Request Payroll Number	Complete the student temporary payroll number request from.	

<p>HR –</p> <p><a href="mailto:HR.Transactions@dudley.gov.uk">HR.Transactions@dudley.gov.uk</a></p> <p>(☎1300)</p>		
<p>Secure a Laptop <i>(via myICT – Team Manager to request laptop in their name)</i></p>	<p>Order Laptop as soon as the vacancy is agreed.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to access myICT, click Request and report, click 3 Computers, Laptops..., click 'new hardware or Software' for form</p>	
<p>Complete New starter form <i>(Team Manager to complete)</i></p>	<p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to access myICT, click Request and report, click 8. Starters, Leavers &amp; Transfers, click 'New IT User (complete IT Setup)' for form.</p>	
<p>Re assign Lap top to new worker <i>(via myICT)</i></p>	<p>Complete this only if the laptop is in the Team Managers or another works name.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to access myICT, click Request and report, click 3. Computers, Laptops..., click 'Reassign Laptop – Inventory' for form</p>	
<p>Request Extension number <i>(via myICT)</i></p>	<p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to access myICT, click Request and report, click 5. Network, Mobile..., click 2. Telephone – Desk, click 'New extension Mobility account' for form</p>	
<p>Mobile phone ordered <i>(via myICT)</i></p>	<p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to access myICT, click Request and report, click 5. Network, Mobile..., click 3. Telephony – Mobile..., click EITHER 'New Mobile phone (Voice)' or ' New Mobile phone (Voice and Data)' for form</p>	
<p>Appointment made for ID Badge</p>	<p>Call 4965 or 4906 to book appointment date and time.</p>	

ID Badge setup building access <i>(Email Prosoft Admin to request building access)</i>	Team Manager/Business Support to email Prosoft Admin, <a href="mailto:ProSoftAdmin.CS@dudley.gov.uk">ProSoftAdmin.CS@dudley.gov.uk</a> to request building access.	
<b>Send CPP an email of New starters log in details, ID Badge appointment (date/time) and date for the attendance for the induction (this needs to be a Monday)</b>		

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