**Support for Social Workers who are new to working in the UK – Practice Guidance**

Consultant Social Worker Group

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# Introduction and Purpose

The following guidance was developed, in response to and informed by, a working group of social workers experiences of joining Somerset Children Social Care from outside the UK. This document details the additional support that should be made available, if required, above the universal support offered.

The Team Manager, based on their recruitment and initial discussions with the member of staff, should make a judgement about whether this additional support is needed. The 6-month probation period would continue to run alongside as normal.

# Recruitment Process

When completing interviews, this may need to be virtual if a social worker is not yet living in the UK. The written exercise element should be completed alongside the interview to undertake a full assessment of competency. This task, alongside the application ensures the Fluency Duty is met under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016. Further details can be found at: [Fluency Duty (sharepoint.com)](https://somersetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/HROD/SitePages/Fluency-Duty.aspx)e

# Support and Guidance

1. To support with the transition both professionally and personally, the opportunity for an allocated mentor should be offered for peer support, usually for up to a year. Ideally, this would be a social worker with similar experience, previously joining Somerset from abroad. For details on the mentoring scheme, contact a Consultant Social Worker in your area.
2. There is support available through the BME Now (Black and Minority Ethnic Network of Workers) group.  This is a county-wide group that meets monthly and is open to all Black and Ethnic Minority workers. It is an entitlement to attend in work time.  This is currently chaired by Di Hutchins (CLA Team Manager in Taunton).
3. A Consultant Social Worker or Advanced Practitioner should be allocated upon the start of employment and provide monthly reflective supervision. This will be focused on learning and development. To guide this involvement and provide accountability, a Professional Development Plan (template available at appendix A) should be developed at an initial 3-way meeting with the Team Manager which identifies some objectives to focus up and details how this will be done (by all parties).
4. During the first 4 months, the relevant tasks should be completed from the Child Protection Sign off sheet (available at appendix B). This provides a checklist of opportunities for the employee to develop their experience in child protection processes and managing level 4 risk.
5. At the 4-month point, a review 3-way meeting with the Team Manager and CSW should take place. At this meeting, the CP sign off sheet will be reviewed, and child protection work could commence once agreement is reached that the social worker can effectively manage and hold that level of risk. Allocated CSW involvement would end at the 4-month point.
6. If concerns are raised at the 4-month review about a worker’s ability to meet the required standards, this would alert us to the possibility of the probation period needing extending beyond the 6-month point. This would be in line with normal probation procedures. If further support is needed as part of an action plan, this would be accessed in the same way as other staff members.

# Induction and Caseload Management

The normal induction processes will apply, including access to the induction pack and the Somerset Children’s Social Care Induction e-book, link below:

<http://online.pubhtml5.com/fuxz/ucfi/#p=1>

In recognition of the cultural differences in social work practice if a worker has not worked within the UK before, an extended period of induction should be considered where there are no case allocations but focus is on joint working and shadowing social workers in their own team and the wider service. This should be up to 4 weeks.

The social worker should have a reduced caseload of approximately 50% of the average caseload in their team, rising towards the 4-month review in line with their individual competency. This also allows for the additional training which should be provided during this time.

# HR Guidance

Employees coming to work in the UK from abroad may need additional financial support in the short term due to securing accommodation, transport and setting up costs. An upfront payment of up to £2500 of the relocation allowance is available on day 1 of employment to assist with immediate costs. Full details of the Relocation Allowance policy can be found at [Relocation Allowance (sharepoint.com)](https://somersetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/HROD/SitePages/Relocation-Allowance.aspx)

# Recommended Training

There are mandatory training courses for all social workers joining Somerset. See link below to L&D offer:

[http://extranet.somerset.gov.uk/children-and-families-learning-and-development/annual-training-plans/qualified-social-workers-cpd/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fextranet.somerset.gov.uk%2Fchildren-and-families-learning-and-development%2Fannual-training-plans%2Fqualified-social-workers-cpd%2F&data=04%7C01%7CEChurch%40somerset.gov.uk%7Ca129e1e4128e4e1f604608d8df071806%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637504568847979920%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=2UO0EG6YBxgsVksxeNf1JwhVjOKF7%2BZuRUQOuq%2FZE84%3D&reserved=0)

In addition to these courses, the following should be considered if applicable and form part of the Professional Development Plan. Some of these are from the ASYE programme, others identified as beneficial by staff who have previously moved to the UK.

* [Key Legislation and the Court Process](https://somerset.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=1467) (1 day)
* Court Skills 5 day (differences in court systems overseas often cited)
* Mindfulness (reported beneficial in helping to manage the impact of the transition to UK plus work stressors)
* CPD sessions (also helped to integrate with the wider office teams)
* Analytical report writing
* Attachment based parenting
* Understanding your role – e-learning

# Appendix A

**Professional development plan for the first four months**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Period covered** |  |

| **Learning objective**(KSS) | **How will you meet the objective?** Development activity or action planned. | **How will you know if the objective is met?** Intended outcomes for practice and children and young people | **Timescales?** Date for completion and/or review. | **What was the impact on your practice?**(complete prior to review) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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# Appendix B

**Child Protection, Team Manager and Operations Manager sign-off form**

In order to be approved as able to undertake Child Protection work

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ has undertaken the following:

I confirm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has demonstrated their ability to critically reflect and analyse risk through the completion of the tasks above and through subsequent conversations with observing Social Worker and with Team Manager to the level that they are now deemed competent to undertake Child Protection work.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Designation | Consultant Social Worker/Advanced Practitioner |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Task  | Reflection on task  | Date |
| 1. Completed the two day ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ Training (‘designated lead’) |  |  |
| 2. Observed/been observed on a Child Protection Home Visit Or a CLA visit where risk is level 4 |  |  |
| 3. Observed a Child Protection Conference |  |  |
| 4. Observed a CP core group meeting, Risk Management Meeting, or similar |  |  |
| 5. Involvement in Sec 47 enquiry |  |  |
| 6. Complete e-learning Child Protection Processes |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Designation | Team Manager |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |

Operations Manager agreement for to undertake Child Protection work: YES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name  |  |
| Designation | Operations Manager |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |