

North East Lincolnshire Council's
Children's Services

ASYE & Career Progression



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Key

ASYE	Assessed & Supported Year in Employment
NQ	Newly Qualified
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
Level 1	Social Worker
Level 2	Experienced Social Worker
Level 3	Senior Social Worker
PQS	Post Qualifying Standards
Practice Improvement Practitioner	Advanced level Social Work Practitioner with a specific remit for improving social work practice across Children's Services
Assistant Team Manager	The line manager of a social work team
ASYE Co-ordinator	An Advanced Practitioner who has the lead for the ASYE Programme in North East Lincolnshire Council's Children's Services
Buddy	A more experienced worker who will provide support and assistance to ASYE workers
PDP	Personal Development Plan
MACE	Multi Agency Child Exploitation
SCP	Safeguarding Children's Partnership
SoS	Signs of Safety
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Harassment

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

ASYE Policy and Procedure

North East Lincolnshire Council's Children's Services Supervision Guidance and Policy Vision for the Children of North East Lincolnshire (2022)



INTRODUCTION

This career pathway handbook has been developed as part of our Recruitment and Retention Strategy and relates to all social work posts in North East Lincolnshire Council. It aims to provide clarity about the criteria and processes to be followed in order for qualified and registered (Social Work England) professionals to progress between:-

- ASYE
- Level 1 Social Worker
- Level 2 Experienced Social Worker
- Level 3 Senior Social Worker.

It also seeks to explain the different career pathways that exist beyond Level 3 and how you could achieve them. This document should be read in conjunction with the Role Profile(s) for the posts.

Progression between the levels of Social Worker does not automatically happen after a set period of post qualifying experience. Some social workers will take longer than others to progress through the levels, particularly between Level 2 and Level 3 and indeed, some workers may decide to practice at Level 2 for a number of years without wishing to progress. It is acknowledged that this approach has high value both in consistency and in the experience such workers bring.

Progression at the end of a worker's ASYE year will be determined by a Panel and will be the culmination of a process which is both supportive and challenging in order to prepare workers for their future social work careers. Section 2 of this handbook gives more detailed information about our ASYE programme.

A social worker's readiness for progression to a more senior level will be decided by their Assistant Team Manager in conjunction with the social worker themselves with input from an Practice Improvement Practitioner. Section 3 of this handbook will give more detailed information about the processes to be followed once the decision to apply for progression has been taken.

It is important that we do not view 'career progression' as simply a process to be 'got through' or as a tick box exercise. We believe it is important that we, (both employer and worker), take every opportunity to embed good practice; broaden skills and knowledge and evidence our good

work as social workers. To do this, this document is underpinned by the requirements of the Department for Education's PQS for Child and Family Practitioners which encourages excellent social work practice.



SUCCESSION PLANNING

We are serious about developing, supporting and encouraging our staff to be the best social workers they can be and this process seeks to support that commitment. We also want to ensure that we have talented individuals ready and willing to apply for our managerial and advanced practice posts as they arise.

Our commitment is to provide good quality practice placements for social work students, an excellent ASYE programme and a framework for continued development and learning for social workers who wish to progress to a senior level. We are committed to creating time for reflective learning, continuous professional development and quality, regular supervision.

SOCIAL WORK ACADEMY

North East Lincolnshire Council Children's Social Work Academy is to support and empower all children and families to live the best lives they can by creating a culture of unity and collaboration. Enabling us to work with children and families in our area to achieve positive outcomes. As your social work career unfolds, our Academy is designed to support staff every step of the way from point of entry as a student through to senior management positions.

SECTION 1

PROGRESSION THROUGH THE LEVELS GENERAL

Some Social Workers may wish to stay operating at Level 2 for a number of years; this may be for a variety of reasons, such as their own confidence level or comfortableness or due to other personal considerations. Some Level 3 Senior Social Workers may not wish to progress into a 'managerial' role with all the incumbent responsibilities that entails.

This does not mean our social workers cannot access opportunities to broaden their knowledge,



experience or skills. We may consider lateral moves, secondments, engagement in project work, shadowing, specialist training and a myriad of other such opportunities to keep our social workers engaged, motivated and up-skilled.

ASYE (Newly Qualified Social Worker)

We have developed, (and seek to continually improve), our programme of development and support for ASYE staff. Our purpose in doing this is to ensure our ASYE staff have the support and development they need to develop their professional competence, their skills, knowledge and capability and their confidence. ASYE staff receive on-going assessment by their line manager and the Practice Improvement Practitioner (ASYE Co-ordinator) in order that development plans stay on track and that the worker receives a rounded introduction into social work, which aims to develop and enhance their competence and confidence.

LEVEL 1 (Social Worker)

On successful completion of their ASYE, social workers will progress to Level 1. In the main, Level 1 Social Workers will be expected to:-

- Practice effectively and competently and with an increasing level of autonomy and independence
- Make good quality judgements and sound decisions in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge and be able to effectively explain and justify them.
- Demonstrate increasing confidence, deepening understanding and independence (but know when to ask for help, advice or support)
- Have a broader knowledge of local resource networks and how to access them
- Have a broader repertoire of responses
- Be a source of reliable and accurate knowledge and advice
- Increasingly collaborate, on equal terms, with other professionals.

See Section 2 for more details about the progression criteria from ASYE to Level 1 Social Worker.

LEVEL 2 (Experienced Social Worker)

Following a period of time continuing to build and

develop social work skills and knowledge at Level 1 there will be opportunity to progress to Level 2. The progression to Level 2 is a stepping stone towards Level 3 Senior Social Worker and provides practitioners with an opportunity to consolidate their practice skills and increase their confidence in working more complex cases and supporting those within their team. As a Level 2 Social Worker you will in the main

- Practice effectively and competently and with an increasing level of autonomy and independence when working more complex cases
- Make good quality judgements and sound decisions in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge and be able to effectively explain and justify them.
- Become a practice champion in a specific area of practice such as SOS, Domestic Abuse or other practice interests.
- Practice with confidence, deepened understanding, and independence (but know when to ask for help, advice or support)
- Be a source of reliable and accurate knowledge and advice
- Commit to extending their practice and knowledge through advanced training such as ABE training, Best Interest Assessor or other training available.
- Be a buddy or mentor for students and ASYE's within the team.

See Section 3 for the progression criteria from Level 1 to Level 2 Social Worker.

LEVEL 3 (Senior Social Worker)

A number of Senior Social Worker posts exist across NELC's Children's Services in the various areas of the service. Subject to successfully meeting the criteria for progression, post holders will be progressed into a Senior Social Worker vacancy,

In the main, Level 3 Senior Social Workers will be expected to:

- Be autonomous in their role, capable of using own initiative, managing higher level risks & have advanced decision making skills
- Model professional standards and good practice to others

- Manage a caseload of predominantly the most complex, challenging, difficult and potentially contentious cases
- Chair a range of meetings and offer expert opinion both within and external to the organisation
- Start to take accountability and responsibility for other, less experienced staff, e.g. formal mentoring, case supervision etc.

See Section 4 for the progression criteria from Level 2 to Level 3 Social Worker.

SECTION 2

PROGRESSION FROM ASYE TO LEVEL 1

OVERVIEW

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) was introduced nationally in 2012 following a review of social work in England and a recommendation by the Social Work Task Force in 2009.

The ASYE is a year-long programme designed to support newly qualified (NQ) workers to develop their professional capability and to transition successfully from their academic place of learning into work based practice. It is expected that during the year workers will develop their skills, knowledge, experience and, as importantly, their professional confidence.

The Academy will provide a robust package of support, which includes:

- An induction programme
- A training package including both mandatory training and specifically designed training to start your social work career
- One-to-one and group supervision through ASYE development days and team meetings.
- Bespoke workshops to provide you with all the basic skills to start your practice
- Support and advice from the ASYE coordinator
- Self-directed learning
- Extensive shadowing of other social workers
- A structured pathway of case allocation over an initial 6 month period





All ASYE social workers will have a Support and Assessment Agreement in place that outlines the expectations of both ASYE and NELC. All ASYE's will also have their own Personal Development Plan that will be utilised to ensure individualised support is in place for all ASYE's to grow and develop.

Progress to an social worker post (Level 1) and subsequent pay increase will be dependent on you passing the ASYE Programme.

As a ASYE worker in North East Lincolnshire the first four weeks of your training year will be spent with our Social Work Academy Team who will oversee this initial induction period with us; our aim in doing this is to give you the best start with our organisation. During this period you will receive an intensive orientation into North East Lincolnshire and its procedures and processes and receive dedicated support and development. There will also be opportunities for you to shadow more experienced workers in order that you gain knowledge of practice, the local area and resources and our client base.

On completion of the induction period you will be placed within a social work team and assigned a buddy who will support your transition into their team. At this stage you will start to be allocated cases to work which will be done incrementally to allow your line manager to assess your readiness and to ensure such allocations are appropriate.

EXPECTATIONS OF OUR ASYE WORKERS PORTFOLIO

To successfully progress from ASYE to Level 1, you will be expected to complete your ASYE Portfolio during your first year with guidance and a commitment to protected time to allow you to do so. We monitor your Portfolio progress during regular review meetings held at 3, 6 and 9 months with a final 12 month Review Panel meeting to decide on progression.

Your portfolio will be subject to both internal (in collaboration with Adult Social Work) and external (Humber Teaching Partnership) moderation to ensure that the content of the portfolio accurately reflects your journey through the ASYE Programme and adequately evidences completion.

DEVELOPMENT DAYS

During your first 12 months, we deliver monthly Development Days. Mornings are dedicated to



enhancing your skills and knowledge (with a variety of topics and guest speakers to make your learning useful and enjoyable). Afternoons act as protected time for you to complete your ASYE paperwork or indulge in other learning opportunities which you may not get time for in your normal day to day activity.

To successfully progress from ASYE to Level 1 you will need to achieve at least 85% attendance at these Development Days (although any individual extenuating circumstances for non-compliance will be taken into account).

MANDATORY TRAINING

There are a number of mandatory or statutory training workshops that you will be expected to attend within your first year. Attendance at these workshops will be monitored within the ASYE Review Panel process.

SUPERVISION

In line with the Local Government Association's Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England we have an expectation that supervision for NQ social workers will be undertaken:-

- Weekly for the first 6 weeks of employment (with an Practice Improvement Practitioner / Assistant Team Manager)
- Fortnightly for the duration of the remaining first six months of employment (with your line manager)
- Monthly for the remainder of your employment with us (with your line manager)

You have a role to play in your supervision. We expect you to engage positively and proactively with your supervision and in addition attend the Group Supervision sessions undertaken by the ASYE Co-ordinator (or other Practice Improvement Practitioner). These group supervisions are an opportunity for discussions around feedback received from yourself, other ASYE's or Assistant Team Managers relating to practice or procedural issues and deliver another opportunity for reflective learning.

It is also beneficial if you attend the supervision session of your buddy when you are shadowing or co-working a case with them; this will enable you to further build your knowledge and skills and support your transition into a social work team.



CASELOAD AND WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

Every ASYE is individual and their development and progression across the ASYE must respect that. This is why reviews and supervision is so important. Case allocation must be guided by each individual ASYE.

From the 5-week stage cases will be allocated on an incremental basis based on the readiness of the individual ASYE. It is expected that the cases will complexity and variety but this does not always mean an increase in case number as the ASYE progresses, and this increase would be a decision supported by supervision and the ASYE's current circumstances. The Academy would have oversight and regular monitoring through the checking of caseload data and from the ASYE via the support network within the opportunities provided to them for reflection and to share how they feel about their progression, case load and wellbeing.

THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

To successfully progress from ASYE to Level 1 you will need to meet the expectations of our ASYE Programme and to manage and maintain, to the required professional standards, an average caseload for NQSW's.

The following documentation will be required in your ASYE portfolio:

1. A completed critical reflective log and PDP from you, evidencing your journey through the ASYE programme, which makes reference to the PQS statement for Child & Family Practitioners. The critical logs should demonstrate your growth, both in practice and knowledge gained; providing examples of practice that has both being a positive or a difficult situation or challenge faced.
2. A self-assessment, completed by yourself and your Line Manager, against the Knowledge and Skills statement for Child & Family Practitioners.
3. Three direct observations of practice, one to be completed by the ASYE Co-ordinator, one completed by direct line manager and the third to be completed by either line manager or senior social worker. These can be observations of any area of practice and at any stage of the ASYE programme, provided they are completed prior to the twelve month review.
4. A completed record of support and progressive

assessment from your direct line manager, this should reference the work undertaken in line with the Knowledge and Skills statement for Child & Family Practitioners. Examples should be provided to outline the practice undertaken by the social worker over the course of the programme; highlighting positives, any difficult situations faced and the learning taken away from these. The report should also reference areas for further development to enable development plans to reflect this accurately. This type of learning can be used as evidence of improving competence.

5. Evidence of at least 85% (10 out of 12) attendance at monthly ASYE development days throughout the 12 month programme. Non-attendance will be approved for annual leave, sickness or a worker being required in court.



THE PROCESS

Your progress through the ASYE Programme will be reviewed on a 3 monthly basis through a Panel Process.

The purpose of the formal review panels is to ensure that you are progressing through the ASYE programme as expected, all paperwork is up to date, your practice is continually evolving and you are being afforded all learning opportunities necessary to ensure successful completion of the Programme.

The Progress Panels are a positive forum to reflect on a social worker's growth in confidence and competence as a practitioner. However they also serve as an opportunity to identify any worries or concerns regarding a social worker's practice, skills or knowledge and enable plans to be devised that will offer support to bridge the gap.

THE DECISION

A final 12 month review panel will be held in which all evidence will be collated and submitted and a recommendation as to successful completion of the ASYE programme will be made by panel members. If progression is recommended, the workers on-going development needs will be identified, a Personal Development Plan (PDP) will be agreed and the worker will move to a Level 1 Social Worker.

In a situation where progression is not



recommended, there are several courses of action open to both the worker and the organisation, (see ASYE Policy and Procedure for further details).

THE APPEALS PROCESS

Please see the ASYE Policy and Procedure for full details of the appeals process.

SECTION 3

PROGRESSION FROM LEVEL (Social Worker) TO LEVEL 2 (Experienced Social Worker)

OVERVIEW

North East Lincolnshire Council endeavour to support the progression and growth of all our social workers. We recognise the move from Level 1 to Level 3 senior social worker can be big jump for practitioners, therefore we devised the level 2 social worker position to provide a stepping stone for our practitioners. The step transition into a level 2 social worker position will provide practitioners opportunities to further their experience, knowledge and practice skills in readiness for their progression to senior social worker. This will in turn support the workforce in having competent and confident senior social workers.

THE PROCESS

A decision is made to begin the progression process through supervision with the social worker and ATM, this should be to explore the practitioner's readiness to progress based on evidence of their development in practice. Once it is felt the social worker is ready this is to be endorsed by the Team Manager and the social worker submits a piece of work showcasing their skills and knowledge to be working at Level 2. This piece of work could be an assessment or court report for example. Once the work has been submitted and Team Manager endorsement is in place, Head of Service agreement will be sought to progress to the panel stage of the progression process. Once all is in place a panel will be set where the social worker will join with their ATM and is chaired by Principle Social Worker and Practice Improvement Practitioner. The panel is a reflective conversation based on the piece of work submitted and the panel will explore the piece of work to

reflect on the developmental journey and readiness to progress of the social worker. Following the panel a decision is made as to whether the social worker is ready to progress to Level 2, should it be that a positive decision is not made a conversation will be held with the social worker to identify a support plan.

SECTION 4

PROGRESSION FROM LEVEL 2 (Experienced Social Worker) TO LEVEL 3 (Senior Social Worker)

OVERVIEW

North East Lincolnshire Council value their social work staff and the work they do and are keen to support their development to more senior posts, should that be what they want to achieve. This section provides an overview of what you need to do if you wish to be considered for progression to a Level 3 Senior Social Worker post.

We aim to provide a fair and consistent assessment process in which the criteria are judged at an appropriate level. The level of performance required is a managerial decision which, in this instance, should be based upon the required performance standards of a Social Worker.

THE APPLICATION

Rather than put an arbitrary timeframe on when a Social Worker can apply for progression, we are committed to enabling Social Workers to apply when they are ready to progress to the role of a Senior Social Worker. This may depend on the worker's previous work experience; their level of confidence and competence in the role of social worker or their desire to progress to a more senior role with the incumbent responsibilities.

A portfolio of evidence and supporting documentation to progress to the role of Senior Social Worker will be required to support a request for progression. Workers can start compiling their portfolio at any point after the successful completion of the ASYE year. It is expected that the evidence necessary to support an application for progression will be gained over a significant period of practice experience, which will differ from individual to individual.



When you feel in a position to formally start your application process, you will submit a written Expression of Intent, which should be supported by your Line Manager, and approved by your Team Manager. That Expression of Intent sets out your intention to submit a completed application for progression (portfolio) within the next 6 months.

On occasion, a Line Manager may not support an application as they may feel the worker needs more experience in practice or to improve in particular areas of activity. If this is the case the Line Manager will use supervision, and the requirements of the progression process, to identify the areas that the Social Worker needs to develop in and discuss with them how that development can be achieved.

THE PROCESS

Once the Application of Intent has been approved, a Lead Assessor, (one of our Practice Improvement Practitioners), will be appointed to lead and co-ordinate the process for that worker. They will have an initial meeting with the worker and their supervisor to go through the process, the criteria and the paperwork, give an initial assessment of any

portfolio work completed to date and support the production of an individualised development plan. The aim is that the Lead Assessor and worker will meet at regular intervals to discuss progress against the progression criteria and discuss potential dates for completion.

There will be panel points for progression decision making. The Lead Assessor will work closely with the applicant to look at appropriate timescales based on work undertaken and still to do.

The assessment (see below) is portfolio based. You can commence your portfolio and evidence collation as soon as you progress to a Level 2 post. This will enable you to compile evidence, as you practice and learn, over a period of time.



THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment will be based on your ability to meet the expectations of the PQS for Child and Family Practitioners and to manage and maintain, to the required professional standards, an average caseload.

The following documentation and information will be required in the application portfolio:-





For those qualifying from 2012 onwards, evidence of successful completion of an ASYE year and an appropriate level of post qualifying experience. For those qualifying prior to 2012 an equivalent qualification and appropriate level of post qualifying experience

A completed self-assessment, against the Post Qualifying Standards for Child & Family Practitioners, signed off by an approved signatory OR successful accreditation through the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS). For the portfolio route, an approved signatory may be the worker's own Line Manager or another Manager who has observed the worker in a particular activity, (e.g. another Assistant Team Manager, Practice Improvement Practitioner, Team Manager, Manager or senior officer from another agency). The examples given should demonstrate the worker's growth as a social worker, both in practice and understanding. The examples may not always be 'positive' examples, for example, if a worker has faced a difficult situation or experienced a situation which did not work out as expected, it is acknowledged that these situations can lead to increased learning (about practice, approach or ourselves) and increased knowledge. Such learning can be used as evidence to demonstrate improving competence.

An examination, by an Practice Improvement Practitioner, of FIVE assessments / case files from the worker's caseload. Two will be chosen by the worker and three will be chosen at random by the Lead Assessor. Attention will be given to recording standards, timeliness of assessments, completion of paperwork, decisions made, actions taken, timely closures, (where appropriate).

By prior arrangement with the service user and their family / carers there will be observations of TWO sequences of practice which evidence strong social work practice skills, (e.g. active participation in Case Mapping, a CIN meeting, a CORE group meeting, leading a case discussion AND completing an assessment/visit with complex issues in a service user's home). One observation will be undertaken by the Lead Assessor and the second observation will be undertaken by an Assistant Team Manager or Practice Improvement Practitioner independent of the progression process. The observer(s) will submit a competency-based evaluation of the observation undertaken.

A presentation, with written report, by the social

worker, to a 3 person Panel, (Lead Assessor, Assistant Team Manager and Senior Social Worker), regarding an anonymised case, highlighting the presenting challenges to the service user, family, carers and service. There should be evidence of objectives and desired outcomes in line with national guidance or key policy framework; the application of social work theory, methods used and legislative framework; demonstration of the ability to undertake risk assessments; evidence of working with increasing autonomy and an evaluation of what has been accomplished.

Contact made with the service users, family and/or carers of two of the worker's cases, chosen by the Lead Assessor, to ascertain their views of the social worker, their practice, the work completed, their engagement and their communication style.

Evidence of formal or informal mentoring of inexperienced or newly appointed staff in line with agreed standards.

Examination of the social worker's personal development paperwork and training record to ensure satisfactory progress is being achieved and that the worker demonstrates a commitment to their own continuing personal and professional development.

THE DECISION

Once the portfolio of evidence has been completed, a Progression Review Panel, (consisting of the Principal Social Worker for Children & Families (chair), a Team Manager and the Lead Assessor) will assess all evidence presented to them by the Lead Assessor.

Prior to that Panel the Lead Assessor will score each element of the assessment. The Lead Assessor will keep secure all evidence collated during the assessment and will maintain same, in case of appeal.

The Lead Assessor will tabulate scores and provide a brief report and recommendation for discussion at the Progression Review Panel.

The worker should be prepared to attend the Progression Review Panel and respond to questions from the Panel if required before a final decision is made.

After consideration of all the evidence, the Panel will make a recommendation as to whether or not the applicant has been successful.



If progression is recommended the worker will move to a Level 3 Senior Social Worker, People and Culture will be informed and contracts will be updated to reflect this.



If progression is not recommended, the application will be deferred and the applicant will be given full feedback on the areas where they did not meet the required standard, together with suggestions of how they can develop their performance in those areas. They will be eligible to apply again once three months have elapsed from the date of their unsuccessful application when they should be able to evidence their ability to now meet the areas not previously achieved.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

The worker has the right to appeal against the decision – not in terms of the decision itself, but if the worker considers that the process has been incorrectly followed.

A written appeal, addressed to the Chair of the Progression Review Panel, must be lodged within

ten working days of the assessment decision being received. The appeal should give clear reasons for the appeal and be able to evidence those areas where the appellant does not feel the processes was correctly administered. Within ten working days of receiving this appeal, the Chair of the original Progression Review Panel will set up an Appeals Panel.



An Appeals Panel, consisting of a Service Manager (Chair), Team Manager and Practice Improvement Practitioner, (none of whom should have been involved in the process thus far), will review the process and the evidence provided by the appellant. If the appellant is required to attend this panel, (e.g. to provide additional information), they can be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

The Chair of the Appeals Panel will respond with the decision of the Panel within ten working days of the Panel hearing.

