**Childrens Services**

**Social Work Apprentice**

**Handbook 23/24**

Handbook for Apprentices, Practice Educators,

Practice Supervisors and Team Managers.

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**Terminology**

The Apprentice is an employee of West Berkshire Council Childrens Services, a student at the University, and an Apprentice under-going work-based learning.

**The Apprentice will be known as a Social Work Apprentice (SWA).**

**Introduction**

The Apprentice will be working towards a BA (Hons) Social Work (Apprenticeship) qualification. This is a professional qualification which on successful completion will entitle the Apprentice to apply to register as a Social Worker with Social Work England. The qualification has been designed to give the Apprentice the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to be a successful Social Worker and prepare them for the next step in their career.

**Apprenticeship Standards**

All Social Work Apprentices will be assessed against Social Work Apprenticeship Standards.

Link below to the Social Work Apprenticeship professional standards -

[Social worker (integrated degree) / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/social-worker-integrated-degree-v1-1)

**Apprenticeship Funding**

The Social Work Apprenticeship is levy funded; levy funding has been introduced by the Government to support people of all ages to earn while they learn and gain the skills, they need practice as a Social Worker.

The Levy is used to cover the education costs of the Apprenticeship, the Apprentices salary continues to be paid by West Berkshire Council.

**Expectations**

There is a clear expectation that all staff who are supported by West Berkshire Council to complete the Social Work Apprenticeship will, following successful completion of the programme, commence in a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) role and complete their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

All Newly Qualified Social Workers will be employed at SCP 26

All those applying to complete the Social Work Apprenticeship should do so with the understanding that they will be appointed to a NQSW role at SCP 26, even if they were previous appointed on a higher salary.

**Development Time**

All Apprentices must undertake 20% development time. This is defined as learning which is done outside of the normal day-today working environment. It also counts as one of the key elements towards completing an Apprenticeship.

Development time must be directly relevant to the Apprenticeship and could include the following:

* Attendance at University on a fortnightly basis.
* Study time, time spent writing university assignments.
* Shadowing other workers or teams, attending peer groups.

Apprentices must have evidence of learning for 20% of the duration of their apprenticeship. This can be spread in a flexible way to suit employer and employee demand. Apprentices will complete in a timely manner their ‘off the job’ learning log.

Guidance for completion of this log will be provided by the university.

If the Apprentice is unavailable for work, be that on annual leave, sickness, compassionate leave etc then they cannot take back the 20% development time.

The operational manager may feel it appropriate to come to an agreement with the Apprentice depending on the circumstances surrounding the request.

**University Attendance**

The expectation is that the Apprentice attends University as required on their university taught day. The expectation is that the Apprentice stays to the end of the University Day unless of course they have extenuating circumstances.

**Bank Holidays & Development Time**

During a week which contains a bank holiday, the Apprentice should be supported to take their 20% development time. This should be agreed between the manager and the Apprentice.   If for example a bank holiday falls on a Monday and this is the apprentices university / study day, then agreement would need to be made between the manage and Apprentice as to when they can take back this development time. This should be done at the earliest possible opportunity; 20 % development time cannot be accumulated.

**Annual Leave**

Annual leave should be requested in the normal way and agreed with the Apprentices substantive team manager. If an Apprentice has a week’s annual leave for example, the expectation is that they take five days leave not four plus a study / university day.

When an Apprentice is completing a practice learning experience in a different team, they will request leave in the normal way, this will be authorised by their substantive team manager. The Apprentice should also ensure that their practice learning supervisor is made aware of the dates of their requested leave.

**Breaks in Learning**

The Apprentice is an employee of West Berkshire Council enrolled on and undertaking an Apprenticeship programme. The Apprenticeship and work are intrinsically linked, if an Apprentice is off work for any reason be that on annual leave, sickness, compassionate leave, maternity leave etc then the Apprentice **should not be** attending university.

If the Apprentice is away from work for any reason for four weeks or more, then the **Workforce Development Officer will need to be advised**. A break or pause in the Apprenticeship will be put in place via the Apprenticeships Officer and they will be advised using the email address [apprenticeships@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@westberks.gov.uk)

Once the Apprentice returns to work, a meeting will be arranged with their Manager, Practice Learning Supervisor (if applicable), University Tutor and Apprenticeship Lead to agree a plan to support them to re-join the programme (as appropriate).

**Performance Management**

The expectation is that the Apprentice is performing in their substantive role to the required standard and according to West Berkshire Council’s code of conduct for staff. If there are concerns about the Apprentices, practice or performance these would need to be addressed according to West Berkshire’s Capability Procedure [Capability Procedure](https://intranet/media/40524/Capability-Procedure-December-2022/pdf/Capability_procedure__15122022_FINAL.doc.pdf?m=638096400090470000)

Any concerns around performance should be recorded in the Apprentices supervision notes.

The Apprentice would need to know their enrolment on the Apprenticeship could be looked at and considered if any concerns raised are not resolved.

First and foremost, the focus for Apprentice should be on doing their job and performing to required standard and not on Apprenticeship per se.

**Travel Claims**

Apprentices will claim travel expenses in the normal way through MyView

Apprentices can claim for mileage to and from the University, claims should be made from the office/ home (whichever is the closest).

If applicable, the apprentice’s workplace would meet the cost of any **excess** home to placement mileage (i.e., if usual home to workplace is 10 miles, and travel to the practice learning team is 20 miles, it would be the excess 10 miles there and back each time the journey is made that could be claimed).  This mileage will be paid by the workplace team (not practice learning), and the Apprentice would need to ensure they use the **workplace** **team cost centre code** to claim this.

It is essential that the Apprentice submits their travel claim monthly.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

West Berkshire Council recognises that it is important for Social Work Apprentices to be supported throughout the apprenticeship to meet course requirements both academic, work-based and practice learning (placements).

**Apprentice**

The Apprentice will attend university and engage in and take responsibility for their own learning and development across the programme. They are responsible for preparing and completing assessment documentation to the required standard of the programme.

Development time will form part of the programme, which can include study time.  It is however realistic for an Apprentice to expect to undertake some study in their own time.

**Role of the Manager**

The Apprentices manager is responsible for the Apprentice as any other employee within the workplace. The manager needs to ensure that the Apprentice has an appropriate workload reduction and the time to attend university and study.

The manager would be expected to allow for a workload reduction to enable the Apprentice to have a minimum of 20% off the job learning time. The manager will ensure the Apprentice receives supervision as required. If applicable, themanager will need to make a recommendation in year one and year two as to whether the Apprentice has passed the work-based module (to be made in conjunction with the university tutor).

**DBS Check**

It is the managers responsibility in conjunction with the Apprentice, to ensure that the Apprentice has a current, clear DBS check that is of the correct level and covers the Apprentice throughout the duration of the apprenticeship programme.

* The Apprentice should have an Enhanced Adults and Children’s DBS check.
* The Children’s & Adults Barred list has been checked and recorded as such on the DBS.
* The DBS will cover the duration of the apprenticeship.

If the Apprentice does not have the correct level and type of clearance in place, a new DBS will need to be requested.

**The DBS check does not eliminate the Apprentices on-going responsibility to notify their employer and the University as soon as possible of any changes to their circumstances that may bring to question their suitability to train as a Social Worker.**

**University**

The university staff and tutors will provide the taught element of the programme. The university is responsible for establishing the framework for learning, quality assurance and overall assessment.

The university will provide each Apprentice with a personal tutor who will support them in their academic development. The personal tutor is primarily concerned with assisting the Apprentice in meeting the academic requirements of the programme and supporting the Apprentice in applying academic learning to practice settings.

Study skills support is available from the University of Winchester. Support can be accessed through Student Services, this includes disability and learning diversity support and guidance link to [University of Winchester Student Support Services](https://www.winchester.ac.uk/accommodation-and-winchester-life/student-life/student-support/wellbeing/)

**Resources**

The university has an extensive library and subject specialist area for Apprentices to access. All Apprentices will have login for Canvas the University of Winchester electronic system and ability to access electronic material from the library.

**West Berkshire Council will not provide any funding for the purchase of books**.

**Social Work Academy**

The Social Work Academy will work in partnership with Apprentices, managers, and the University of Winchester to provide the Social Work Apprenticeship Degree. The learning and development team are responsible for co-ordinating the apprenticeship initial assessment / skills scan process. Their role includes provision of guidance and support for Apprentice’s and staff involved in the programme. A key role of the team is to identify practice learning experiences (placements) and allocation of suitably qualified Practice Supervisor and Practice Educator to support the Apprentice whilst undertaking practice learning.

**Apprenticeship Mentor Support**

Children’s Services will provide mentoring support **as and when a need is identified**. The mentor’s role is to act as a guide by listening, supporting, and encouraging the Apprentice to manage their own learning. They should encourage the Apprentice to develop their skills and maximise their potential to move forward in their career.

Apprentices can also access support from West Berkshire Council’s Coaching Hub to support them.

**Programme Information**

The skill scan is a pre-programme assessment which supports the development of an individualised training plan that is agreed and signed with the Apprentice and manager before the programme can start, and then is reviewed and amended, as necessary, every 8 to 12 weeks, again with the manager.

These reviews are known as tri-partite reviews, they are university led and overseen by a skills coach. The tri-partite reviews are held on a regular basis throughout the apprenticeship.

Once the skill scan process has been completed, Apprentices will be made aware of the agreed level and point at which they will join the programme.

The programme consists of –

Level 4 (year 1)

Level 5 (year 2)

Level 6 (year 3)

**Level 4 (year 1)**

During level 4, Apprentices will remain based in their substantive team.

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| Module Title | Credits |
| Introduction to Professional Practice  (remains in own work setting) | 40 |
| Introduction to Social Work | 20 |
| Introduction to Social Work Knowledge | 20 |
| Relationship based Social Work | 20 |
| Introduction to Law, Ethics and Social Policy | 20 |

**Level 5 (year 2)**

Consolidation of Professional Practice (for **some** apprentices this will include a 70 day practice learning experience)

Not all apprentices will be required to complete a 70-day learning experience, the decision about whether an apprentice is required to complete a 70 day learning experience will be made by the university following an assessment of the learning opportunities available within their substantive team.

If during level 5 the Apprentices undertakes a 70-day practice learning experience they will have an allocated Practice Supervisor and Practice Educator. An Apprentice who undertakes their 70-day practice learning experience out-side of their own team will not case hold. Please see guidance below under section *Allocation of Work.*

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| --- | --- |
| Module Title | Credits |
| Consolidation of Professional Practice  70 days | 60 |
| Critical Analysis and Investigation of Practice | 20 |
| Introduction to Social Work Law | 20 |
| Risk and Assessment | 20 |

**Level 6 (year 3)**

**Level 6 (year 3) – Readiness for Practice (100-day practice learning experience)**

During level 6 or year 3, Apprentices will undertake a 100-day practice learning experience. It is expected that this practice learning experience will be completed within CAAS, CWDT or Family Safeguarding teams.

Apprentices will have an allocated Practice Supervisor and Practice Educator and be required to complete a portfolio of evidence.

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| --- | --- |
| Module Title | Credits |
| Applied Legal Knowledge and Decision Making | 30 |
| Applied Practice Issues | 30 |
| Ready for Practice 100 days – End Point Assessment starts on completion of 300 cts.  (Placed in own service but within different service) | 60 |

**Practice Learning Experiences (PLE) the below outlines procedures for work allocation, case accountability and supervision.**

**Student Assessment and Practice**

The overall aim of the learning experience is to enable the Apprentice to undertake social work practice to demonstrate their learning, values, skills and abilities.

Apprentices are assessed against the Apprenticeship Knowledge Skills and Behaviours (KSB’s) [Social worker (integrated degree) / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/social-worker-integrated-degree-v1-1).

**Allocation of Work**

**Apprentices within their substantive positions/ teams will continue to case hold if they were prior to the commencement of the Apprenticeship. It is expected that this caseload would be similar to the that of a Family Support Worker/ Intervention Worker.**

The Apprentice on their practice learning experience will not case hold but will work on specific tasks identified by their Practice Supervisor. The Apprentice may also work on cases and specific tasks alongside (and allocated to) other qualified social workers, subject to agreement and oversight by their Line Manager.

Any identified opportunities must meet the Apprentices learning needs, be within their competence and capability and subject to risk assessment by the Practice Supervisor.

As all Apprentices will be different, the work tasks undertaken will reflect this. It is expected during practice learning experience that, the complexity of work and workload would increase in accordance with the Apprentices level of competence and developing capability.

It is expected that by the end of the first 70 day learning experience Apprentices would be meeting the PCF descriptors expected for the end of the first placement [End of first placement | BASW](https://new.basw.co.uk/training-cpd/professional-capabilities-framework/end-first-placement) and by the end of the final 100 day learning experience Apprentices would be meeting the PCF descriptors expected for the final placement [pcf-last-placement.pdf (basw.co.uk)](https://new.basw.co.uk/sites/default/files/resources/pcf-last-placement.pdf)

**Contact with Service Users (Meetings, Visits & Observations)**

After the induction period, the Practice Supervisor will assess the competency and capability of the Apprentice and their ability to participate in professional meetings, home visits or other events where they will engage with service users. Best practice would be that the Apprentice shadows a qualified worker first, taking on more of a role during visits or meetings as they progress.

**Statutory Visits to children – Home, School or Other**

Apprentices will not be responsible for independently completing assessment and monitoring visits under s17 and s47. They can complete **joint visits** alongside their Practice Supervisor (or other qualified Social Worker)

The Apprentice may make further lone visits to children under SC17 and Sc47 where these are:

* **in addition to** the minimum requirement of statutory monitoring, to complete specific pieces of parenting work or direct work with children.
* the Apprentice has **already been part of a joint visit** with a social worker, to the child and family and
* the **Practice Supervisor/ other qualified social worker** has undertaken a risk assessment.
* the visit or specific tasks, are **appropriate for the Apprentice’s development.**
* Apprentice has completed mandatory training requirements in relation to Personal Safety when completing home visits and are using the PeopleSafe App.

**Statutory Meetings**

Apprentices must not lead in statutory meetings, such as a Looked After Child Review, but may participate or take a lead role if supervised by another qualified social worker. The Apprentice can prepare the paperwork for the review and record the meeting but, their work must be overseen, authorised and endorsed in writing by the Practice Supervisor or, the allocated Social Worker.

The Practice Supervisor is expected to monitor the quality of the Apprentices practice and contact with Service Users through observation, records, supervision and feedback from other Professionals and Service Users.

**Statutory Assessment Plans and Records**

All assessments and care plans completed by the Apprentice will be overseen and authorised by the Practice Supervisor or other allocated social worker. Any learning points or comments on Apprentice practice should be, communicated to the Practice Supervisor.

**Appropriate tasks or roles for Apprentice Social Workers**

Apprentice social workers come with a variety of skills and competencies and their learning needs will be individual. It is therefore difficult to be prescriptive on the appropriateness of tasks. It is important for learners who may have minimal previous work experience, that the Practice Supervisor ascertains their level of competency and assigns work accordingly. This is also important for learners who may come with considerable knowledge and experience. Although generally more competent, experienced learners still require opportunity and support to develop their capability in accordance with the KSB’s and the Professional Capabilities Framework descriptors which should be used as a guide.

The Practice Supervisor and their line manager will have the final say in operational matters. **In exceptional circumstances they may end or suspend the practice learning experience if, safety is compromised.**

The Apprentice is a learner and as such, will not undertake all the tasks that would be expected of a qualified Social Worker or be a case holder. They are expected to support the team and be an effective part of it and to be accountable for their work. The Apprentice must meet the learning outcomes of the programme practice learning module and generally, those undertaking their final practice learning experience have a higher degree of autonomy, complexity, and risk in what is expected.

**IT Access**

The Apprentice will have a West Berkshire Council identity and will have access to relevant record systems, supported by appropriate training. An Apprentice will come to practice learning experience with appropriate login and a prior knowledge of the systems. However, if an Apprentice requires further training this would be provided. The Apprentice may record all their work on system as a person involved in each case. These records will be seen by the allocated Social Worker for each case and overseen by the Practice Supervisor.

**An Apprentice must not be recorded as the allocated social worker for any cases as they are not qualified**.

**Considerations prior to undertaking Practice Learning Experience (PLE)**

**Pre-Practice learning Experience Considerations**

If applicable, Apprentices will be asked to contact their Practice Supervisor to introduce themselves prior to starting their practice learning experience. It should be noted that in some cases, the Apprentice may have limited information about the service, team or setting and may not be aware of what is expected or required.

**Disability**

Changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) introduced by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, mean that institutions must take action to ensure Apprentices with additional needs have the same opportunities as others to benefit from work-based learning.

Reasonable adjustments may already be in place but should be reviewed pre-practice learning to account for any change to working conditions and role expectations in the new practice learning setting.

**Additional Learning Needs**

Apprentices are employees of West Berkshire Council. If and Apprentice has a diagnosed learning need such as Dyslexia or Dyspraxia they can apply for support throughAccess to Work. Access to work will provide an assessment of employees needs and consider if special equipment or software would support them in their role.

Apprentices should advise their Practice Supervisor of any additional needs and reasonable adjustments required prior to the commencement of the practice learning experience so adjustments can be made.

**Induction – Practice Learning Experience**

The Apprentice social worker will be supervised by a Practice Supervisor within their team who must ensure that a suitable induction programme is undertaken in the **first two weeks** of practice learning experience.

**Assessment of the Apprentice during the Practice Learning Experience**

The Apprentice will be assessed against the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB’s) (using University guidance) by the Practice Supervisor and Practice Educator, throughout the practice learning experience.

The Apprentice will be required to complete a portfolio during their practice experience to evidence to the Practice Educator they are meeting the KSB’s The Practice Educator and supervisor will also carry out direct observations of the Apprentice, in practice, and in accordance with the University's guidelines

*It is important that Apprentices, Supervisors and Educators understand 'levels' of professional capabilities as set out in the PCF:*

Level 5 or First Practice learning Experience-

By the end of the first practice learning experience Apprentices should demonstrate effective use of knowledge, skills and commitment to core values in social work in a given setting in predominantly **less, complex situations, with supervision and support**. They will have demonstrated capacity to work with people and situations **where there may not be simple clear-cut solutions.**

Level 6 or Second Practice Learning Experience -

By the end of the last practice learning experience, the Apprentice should:

* have demonstrated the Key Skills and Values to work with a **range of user groups.**
* have the ability to undertake a range of tasks **at a foundation level.**
* have the capacity to work with **more complex situations**.
* be able to **work more autonomously,** whilst recognising that the final decision will rest with their supervisor and.
* **seek appropriate support and supervision**.

**Supervision**

The Practice Supervisor has responsibility for regular supervision and oversight of the Apprentices casework. The Apprentices practice and learning will be supervised by a Practice Educator, who is responsible for the final assessment of their capability. The Practice Supervisor may also be the Practice Educator.

The Apprentice will be supported by their University Tutor who will have responsibility for ensuring that there is appropriate planning and review of their progress throughout the practice learning experience and for addressing any issues arising that may affect safe practice or, the outcome of the practice learning experience.

Whilst on a practice learning experience, Apprentices will have 1.5 hours weekly supervision in line with their university’s requirements. This will be the responsibility of the Practice Supervisor, although where the Practice Supervisor and Practice Educator are not the same person, the Practice Educator will provide supervision once a month to the Apprentice.

All supervision sessions by the Practice Supervisor will be **recorded and retained** in the Supervision file held within the West Berkshire Council team and a copy made available to Apprentice. The supervision notes will remain the property of West Berkshire Council. Notes may contain confidential information pertaining to service users and colleagues. The written notes, or a redacted version **may not be shared by the Apprentice or Practice Supervisor with an external Practice Educator or HEI Tutor to avoid data breach**. It is expected that evidence of learning and progress will be shared with the PE by the Apprentice and /or PS, to contribute towards the overall assessment. This could include reflective comments or feedback arising from supervision sessions in the form of a verbal or written summary by the learner or direct communication between the PS and PE. How this information will be shared should be agreed as part of the Learning Agreement.

**Practice Supervisor (on-site, West Berkshire Council)**

A Practice Supervisor will be in the same team as the Apprentice and is designated to be accountable for their casework and to manage their day-to-day activity. They will contribute to the learning and assessment.

**Practice Educator (onsite/ off-site, West Berkshire Council)**

The Practice Educator takes overall responsibility for the Apprentice’s learning and assessment, utilising information from supervision, observation and from other sources. This person makes the recommendation to the course examination board about the Apprentice’s capability in relation to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours and the Professional Capabilities Framework and holds a suitable qualification (PEPS Stage 1 & 2 – see Practice Educator Qualification) or will be studying to obtain this qualification with support and assessment from the Learning and Development Team.

**Updating the Guide**

This guide is updated regularly and reviewed periodically by HR, The Academy Manager and the Workforce Learning and Development Officer.

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