Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

ASYE Handbook for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) and Practice Assessors/Supervisors

Authors: Simone Johnson, Practice Development Officer / Anna Kouridis, Service Development Lead for Professional Practice, April 2018
West Sussex County Council: **Adults’ Services**  
**ASYE Handbook**

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**Authors:** Simone Johnson; ASYE coordinator, Anna Kouridis; Service Development Lead – Professional Practice

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| Tracy Davis, Principal Social Worker | 19th April 2018 |

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West Sussex County Council: **Adults’ Services ASYE Handbook**

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Welcome to the West Sussex Assessed and Supported Year in Employment that is run in partnership with the University of Chichester. This handbook provides information and guidance that will support both NQSWs and their supervisors throughout the year.

Introduction to the West Sussex Scheme

Since 2012 all Newly Qualified Social Workers are required to complete an Assessed Year in Employment (ASYE). The aim of the West Sussex scheme is to provide a supportive framework in order to develop confident and competent workers, who will work within legal duties to support the residents of West Sussex to live as independently and safely as possible.

The ASYE scheme has two cohorts per year, one beginning in February and one in September. Throughout the year there are regular reviews at 3 month, 6 months, 9 months (optional) and at the end. There is also a programme of reflective and peer support workshops throughout the year. NQSW must be in post and registered Social Workers to start and will join the group nearest their start date.

Every NQSW will be assigned an assessor to support them throughout their year and there is also an ASYE co-ordinator available to provide advice, support and co-ordination of the scheme.

The foundation for a successful ASYE is the relationship between the NQSW and their supervisor/assessor. From September 2015, the ASYE has been standardised throughout England, and the guidance and requirements laid out in this handbook are designed to inform and guide the process. However, ASYE is not meant to be a ‘tick box’ experience and assessors can use their professional judgement to use the guidance according to the specific needs of their NQSW. Guidance for staff in Adults’ Services on a wide range of practice and professional issues can all now be found in the Professional Zone on the West Sussex Connect to Support website (visit: www.westsussexconnecttosupport.org). Staff are encouraged to visit the website, click on the link to the Professional Zone, and save its home page as a ‘favourite’ so that it can be referred back too easily when needed.
Any Social Worker who completed their degree after 2012 is expected to have completed their ASYE within two years of qualifying. There may be exceptional circumstances when a Social Worker may not have completed within this timeframe and this does not preclude starting the ASYE. Similarly there may also be situations where a Social Worker, who qualified before 2012, may need to update their CPD profile to move from ASYE level of the HR and CPD profile. Please discuss with Anna Kouridis, Service Development Lead, Professional Practice (anna.kouridis@westsussex.gov.uk).

**Support for NQSWs**

Support is provided in variety of different ways and will vary according to the needs of the individual, but the West Sussex scheme includes:

1. **A planned and comprehensive induction** to the team and to West Sussex.

   **Regular structured and reflective supervision:** Skills for Care (SfC) guidance states that **supervision should take place weekly for the first six weeks, at least fortnightly for up to six months and at least monthly thereafter.** This is the minimum requirement and may vary according to needs, but these standards must be adhered to and reflected in the ASYE documentation.

   If the ASYE supervisor is not the Team Manager, and supervision is also provided by the team manager, then the differences and frequency between the two sets of supervision need to be clearly stated in the Record of Support and Progressive Assessment part 1 document (see below).

   Supervision should have a clearly stated agenda which includes the opportunity to critically reflect and analyse, alongside case and workload management etc.

   Six group supervision sessions are provided in the first six months. Details about the frequency of supervision, including provision for group supervision should be recorded in the ‘Record of Support and Progressive Assessment’ and Critical Reflection Log document.

   A West Sussex supervision agreement should also be completed regarding the practicalities and expectations of providing and participating in supervision.
Supervision should not just be a performance or case audit but should offer critical reflection and support. The following resource may be helpful to supervisors in supporting a NQSW to develop their critical thinking;

http://www.swiss.qut.edu.au/supervising-students/field-education-supervision/helping-your-student-develop-critical-reflection-skills.jsp

2. **Involvement in training courses and additional learning activities:** In order to meet identified learning needs, NQSWs should be given the opportunity to meet their developmental needs in a variety of different learning experiences. This includes attending appropriate in-house training courses, online courses and additional activities such as shadowing opportunities (including in another team if appropriate), attendance at local conferences and visits to associated organisations.

3. **Attendance on Reflective Workshops:** The purpose of the Workshops is to provide additional support to NQSWs and to give them the opportunity to critically reflect on their practice in a peer group environment.

West Sussex and Chichester jointly run 5 workshops for NQSW’s. In addition it is expected that all NQSW’s should attend Mental Capacity Act, Deprivation of Liberty and Safeguarding training run by West Sussex learning and Development as soon as they are able to book onto a course. These workshops are mandatory and NQSWs must attend each one. Absence due to sickness cannot be avoided, but the NQSW must make arrangements for sending apologies to the tutors. NQSW’s **must** not miss Reflective Workshops due to work commitments.

In addition there are non-mandatory support workshops offered by the ASYE co-ordinator to support both assessors and NQSW’s. The aim of these sessions is to explore the ASYE paperwork, offer advice and guidance regarding the ASYE process, support critical reflection and to provide a venue for peer support.
4. **Study Days:** NQSW’s are entitled to 3 Study Days during the 12 month period. This can be used for activities such as writing the Critical Reflection Log or developing portfolios. It is in addition to the 10% workload reduction.

5. **A 10% reduction in workload and protected development time:** It is expected that, over the course of the year, the NQSW would have a workload equivalent of 90% of what is expected of a confident social worker in the same role in their second and third year of employment, weighted over the course of the year by aspects such as case complexity, risk and growing proficiency. The 10% workload reduction ensures that the NQSW has time to attend agreed learning and developmental activities and the 6 reflective workshops.

Some teams will be able to reduce the NQSW’s workload by reducing the number of cases by 10% and this is the most straightforward way to manage the reduction. If this doesn’t work in your team, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to manage the allocation of cases so that the NQSW has a reduction that equates to 10%. The number of cases might reduce more if the cases are considered complex.

**Additional Support**

NQSW’s should inform their assessor if they require any support due to a medical condition, disability, or specific learning disability and provide any relevant reports from University. This should be done prior to commencing ASYE to allow time for consideration of an occupational health referral and any associated reasonable adjustments to be put in place. The plan for support should be clearly documented in the Support and Progressive Assessment agreement.

**Support for Holistic Assessors**

Holistic assessors support and assess the progressive development of NQSW’s. They may or may not be the same person who provides line or case management and supervision. *Assessors must be a Registered Social Worker and should ideally be qualified Practice Educators*. The role can be carried out by the Team Manager or a Senior Practitioner or other suitably experienced member of staff. *If they have not yet undertaken the*
Practice Education training then the assessor must have attended West Sussex training on both Supervision and Appraisal.

1. Support for assessors is provided as follows: two workshops within the first three months of the ASYE to introduce and explore key concepts in the ASYE, provide guidance on what is expected from both NQSW’s and assessors.
2. Peer support workshop at five months.
3. Regular feedback and support as required from the ASYE Co-ordinator
4. Access to informal peer mentoring if required.

The Assessment Process

Assessment follows the principles of Holistic Assessment, that is, rather than focusing on a single point of assessment, or assessing in a ‘tick box’ manner, evidence is built up throughout the year and will be demonstrated via the completion of the Critical Reflection Log. **Assessors will be looking for evidence of progression against the assessment criteria during the year.**

NQSWs are assessed against the ASYE level of the Professional Capability Framework and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Adults (DOH 2015).

To facilitate assessment Skills for Care (SfC) have mapped the PCF and the Knowledge and Skills statement together as holistic assessment outcomes and guidance on this and on the ASYE in general can be found at:


West Sussex is using the documentation developed by SfC. These include:

- A Critical Reflection Log or CRL- completed by the NQSW.
- A Record of Support and Progressive Assessment or ROSPA - completed by the Assessor.

Assessment is both formative and summative; that is an NQSW can expect to be provided with feedback on their progress throughout the year, as well as getting a pass or fail assessment at the end. In particular feedback should be given at both the formal 3 and 6 month review
regarding whether an NQSW is on course to pass. Assessment is made against the holistic assessment outcomes, using the following evidence:

1. Critical Reflection Log
2. Direct observations (min 3 and one must be of a mental capacity assessment under the Mental Capacity Act 2005)
3. Feedback from customers and carers (min 3 pieces, all anonymised)
4. Feedback from other professionals (min 3 pieces)
5. Sampling of professional documentation
6. Supervision notes
7. Casework evidence (anonymised)

### 9 month review

*If there is insufficient evidence at each formal review then a clear plan should be put in place to support the NQSW to obtain the evidence required. In some circumstances it may be necessary to carry out a further 9 month review to check on progress and to obtain more evidence.*

*A 9 month review follows the same process and requires the same evidence as the other reviews.*

### Submission

All work should be submitted at regular intervals to SharePoint by the NQSW and a link will be provided to enable you to do this.

Please note that it is not possible to complete the ASYE in less than a year, but if both the NQSW and their supervisor are in agreement and there are no problems with the ASYE, then it is acceptable to begin the final review and report from 11 months onwards.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the NQSW to gather the evidence and submit it onto SharePoint.

### Change of assessor

Wherever possible a NQSW should have the same assessor throughout the ASYE. However, there may be times e.g. through sickness, when an assessor is not available to provide support and assessment. It is therefore important to ensure that a contingency plan is in place from the 9

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beginning of the ASYE and an alternative assessor is identified for this eventuality. This contingency plan should be discussed and agreed with the line manager and NQSW at the beginning of the ASYE and clearly recorded in the ROSPA.

Under some circumstances, e.g. a change of team, a NQSW may change to another assessor. In this case the following protocols apply:

1. The assessor should ensure that they have reviewed the progress the NQSW has made against the assessment criteria until the point of handover and record this in the ROSPA.
2. If an observation has taken place then the observer should ensure that they complete the observation form before transfer to a new assessor.
3. All paperwork should be complete to the date of transfer prior to transfer to a new assessor.
4. The new assessor should meet with the NQSW as soon as possible after taking over the assessor role and review and update the Support and Progressive Assessment agreement.

**Moderation**

The West Sussex ASYE is required to meet the Internal, Regional and National moderation requirements that are specified by SfC. In order to meet these requirements, it is the responsibility of both NQSW’s and their supervisors to adhere to the review timescales.

As information will be shared it is also important to ensure that all work is anonymised, including the names of any providers.

**Internal Moderation Panel**

The aim of the internal moderation panel is to ensure that there is consistency in decision making across the department, as well as confirming the assessment decision. Please follow the link below for further details:


Internal Moderation Panels will be chaired by the Principal Social Worker and will take place at 6 months and on completion. Delegates on the panel will usually be:
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1. Principal Social Worker for Adults
2. Service Development Lead for Adults
3. Service Development Lead for Children
4. Customer/carer representation
5. Higher Education Institution (HEI) representation
6. ASYE Co-ordinator for Adults

At the end of the ASYE all portfolios are moderated at the panel. Feedback is provided to the NQSW and the assessor. A sample of these portfolios goes to the external moderation panel.

**External Moderation Panel**

External Moderation is carried out in partnership with Surrey Adults Service, Brighton & Hove, East Sussex County Council and local PVI Organisations. ASYE documentation is shared between these organisations electronically and **candidates should ensure that work is anonymised.**

The external moderation panel considers a random 10% sample of work sent by each organisation to ensure consistency and decision making locally and to share best practice. Feedback is provided to the organisation and to the national moderation panel.

**National Moderation panel**

The National Moderation Panel also reviews a sample of work from each Local Authority to ensure consistency and to quality assure nationally. Feedback is given to each organisation on the quality of individual work and on the ASYE scheme to ensure consistency of assessment and quality assure the moderation process.

Summary feedback of the whole moderation process will be provided to the Adults’ Services Quality Assurance Management Board.

**Failing ASYE; Performance Improvement Policy and Disciplinary Procedures**

At the beginning of the ASYE every NQSW is registered with Skills for Care. Each NQSW starting in West Sussex will be expected to complete
their ASYE within one year in order to be able to practice as a registered Social Worker and to receive a nationally recognised certificate.

The ASYE may only be put on hold in the following circumstances, with the agreement of the assessor and the Principal Social Worker;

- Where the NQSW has an extended period of sickness absence of more than 6 weeks.
- Where the NQSW takes maternity leave.

In these circumstances the ASYE will be recorded as ‘on hold’ and will be recommenced on the NQSW’s return.

The support and assessment mechanisms embedded in the ASYE Scheme ensure that NQSWs who are on a failing profile will be identified early on in the year by their assessor or through the moderation process; this should be at either the three or six month review. **However, both NQSW and/or assessor should contact the ASYE Co-ordinator as soon as any concerns are raised and should not delay until the review stage.**

In some cases, for West Sussex employees, the Performance Improvement Policy (PIP) will be instigated to provide extra support and management of the situation. Further guidance is available for staff on this from the HR department.

If a candidate fails the ASYE this will be recorded on the Skills for Care portal and, if concerns are raised about practice, they could be reported to HCPC, which could affect professional registration. HR will also be informed and this could have implications for employment. Please see ASYE PiP Absence and Disciplinary. Each situation will be considered on its’ own merits by HR and reasons for failure taken into account. There is also a right of appeal. See below.

For West Sussex employees Disciplinary Procedures will also apply to NQSWs in accordance with local policy. Further guidance is available for staff on this from HR.

Employees of other organisation, e.g. Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust, should follow their own organisation’s procedures.

**Plagiarism** is taking someone else’s work and or ideas and passing it off as your own. The work an NQSW submits for the ASYE should be a true
representation of the practice they have undertaken and of their own professional development. Plagiarism therefore is unacceptable. It is also contrary to the HCPC ‘Standards of conduct, performance and ethics’ (January 2016) and Domain 1 of the Professional Capabilities Framework (2012). If it occurs it will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

**Appeal Process**

Since this is an assessment of competence, concerns about the NQSWs practice are managed under WSCC policies and procedures. The NQSW has a right of appeal and challenge to performance assessments under those. Should the NQSW have a concern governing the way in which WSCC is meeting the employer standards this would be initially raised with their line manager with a right of appeal through the Grievance policy. Further guidance is available for staff from HR.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**The role/responsibilities of the designated supervisor/holistic assessor**

- Ensure the ‘support and assessment agreement’ and the 3, 6, and where relevant 9 month reviews take place in a timely fashion.

- Ensure that the ‘Support and assessment agreement’ takes into account learning needs identified by the previous placement report and provides details of support with reasonable adjustments.

- Ensure that a contingency plan is in place to supervise/assess NQSW progress in the absence/change of assessor.


- Complete the final review and assessment, including the pass/fail recommendation.
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- Carry out at least 2 observations. The third must be carried out by an alternative observer, who is a registered Social Worker.

- Provide **individual supervision** for the first 6 weeks of ASYE.
- Provide **fortnightly supervision** until month 6.
- Provide **monthly supervision** for the remainder of the ASYE.
- Supervision will include reflection on practice, including the application of theory and methodology approaches, link training to practice, and link with the written work required for ASYE (such as Critical Reflection Logs).
- Where applicable ensure completion of any outstanding work on the ‘Record of Support and Progressive Assessment’ before transferring to another assessor.

**Please note:** Supervisor/Assessors must be a Registered Social Worker and should ideally be qualified Practice Educators. The role can be carried out by the Team Manager or a Senior Practitioner or other suitably experienced member of staff. If they have not yet undertaken the Practice Education training then the assessor must have attended West Sussex training on both Supervision and Appraisal.

**The role/responsibilities of the NQSW**

- To provide a copy of final student placement report for the start of the ASYE and to provide any relevant information regarding your learning and support needs
- Be familiar with the requirements of the programme and be pro-active in ensuring that the requirements are being met.
- Complete the Reflective Logs as an honest account of work they themselves have undertaken. Further guidance can be found from Skills for Care regarding completion of the CRL: [http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/ASYE-adults/Completing-the-CRL-supporting-guidance.pdf](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/ASYE-adults/Completing-the-CRL-supporting-guidance.pdf)
- Gain feedback from supervisors at the appropriate times.
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- Collate and upload ASYE documentation to SharePoint as it becomes due. All documents must be signed by the supervisor and NQSW electronically

The role of University of Chichester Tutors
- Provide the Reflective Workshops.
- Contribute to the internal moderation process.

The role of the ASYE Programme Co-ordinator (Simone Johnson) and Service Development Lead for Professional Practice (Anna Kouridis)
- Provide a link between NQSW’s, supervisors/assessors, Adults’ Services, University of Chichester staff, the DfH and SfC.
- Develop and organise moderation in accordance to the requirements set by SfC.
- Provide support to both NQSWs and supervisors/assessors.
- Ensure that the West Sussex ASYE meets the requirements set by SfC.
- Make appropriate arrangements for informal peer mentoring for new ASYE assessors if required.

Contacts

Anna Kouridis: Service Development Lead (Professional Practice)
anna.kouridis@westsussex.gov.uk

Simone Johnson: Development Worker; Professional Practice (Adults) simone.johnson@westsussex.gov.uk