Assessed and Supported Year in Employment - Frequently Asked Questions

1. The model for ASYE

- How does the ASYE fit with other Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) developments?
  The ASYE is being implemented alongside other SWRB reforms, such as the Professional Capabilities Framework (of which the ASYE forms part), Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework and proposals for partnership working and continuing professional development (CPD). Implementing the ASYE is reliant on these other reforms and will be more successful if introduced alongside them.

- Will the ASYE be linked to pay and progression?
  The relationship between the ASYE and pay and progression is a matter for individual employers and staff.

- If an NQSW has been employed in another occupational area or in an unqualified care role prior to commencing employment in a social work post, and it is over two years since they graduated, would they still be expected to undertake the ASYE?
  A: The ASYE is not compulsory but it has been endorsed by the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) as the successor to the newly qualified social worker programmes offered by CWDC and Skills for Care. In future employers are likely to see ASYE success as evidence of a new social worker's ability to apply their learning in employment.

- When and how do I apply for the funding?
  Employers not currently participating in DfE social work programmes can register their organisation's interest in funding for the ASYE programme.
  Local authorities and voluntary organisations that are already currently engaged with the Department's social work programmes have been contacted directly.
  If you employ NQSWs working in an adult social work setting please visit Registration and funding for more information.
What funding support is there for the ASYE?

The Government has announced funding of £2000 for each newly qualified social worker for the ASYE programme in 2012/13. This funding will assist employers of newly qualified social workers to:

1. implement the ASYE, which supersedes the NQSW framework from September 2012;
2. provide regular support for NQSWs; and
3. assess each NQSW during their first year of employment

Any NQSW employer who undertakes the ASYE is entitled to apply for this funding which is available through Skills for Care for adults' services, and the Department for Education, for children and families services.

Who should apply for funding for ASYE candidates who are employed via a recruitment agency?

The organisation that carries out the employer role of support and assessment for an NQSW on the ASYE programme should register the social worker for funding.

2. Eligibility

Are all NQSWs eligible to complete the ASYE?

Yes - provided that NQSWs register for an ASYE programme within two years of successfully completing a recognised social work degree programme. For those outside that timescale employers will want to be satisfied with the currency of the NQSW's skills and knowledge prior to approving eligibility for the programme.

What arrangements are there for those appointed before September 2012 to undertake the ASYE?

The ASYE began in September 2012 and employers can put NQSWs appointed before this date on the programme. Employers are not able to receive funding for the same social worker under both the NQSW and ASYE programmes.

Do NQSWs have to be employed by a local authority to be eligible for the ASYE?

No. The ASYE can be used in all settings including the voluntary, private and independent sectors. The role in which the NQSW is employed needs to include work that is of a sufficient level and kind to meet the expectations of all nine domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) at ASYE level.

We would encourage small employers to join partnerships in their area to ensure sufficient support is available for the NQSW and employers. This is in line with Social Work Reform Board partnership principles.

Do NQSWs have to complete the ASYE to register or re-register with the HCPC?

No. Social work degree students will be able to register as social workers following successful completion of a recognised social work degree - as is currently the case.
The SWRB has decided there will be no direct link between registration, regulation and the ASYE. Social workers will not be required to complete the ASYE to register as a social worker. However, the learning undertaken during an ASYE can count towards a social worker's CPD requirements. Please contact the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for further information regarding registration.

- Can social workers who qualified outside England access the ASYE?
  Yes. The ASYE is for eligible social workers employed by an organisation based in England. Eligibility relates to having successfully completed a recognised social work degree no more than two years before the start of the ASYE, or for those outside that timescale that the employer is satisfied with the currency of the social worker's knowledge and skills.

3. Timescales

- How long will it take to complete the ASYE?
  For most full-time employees it will take 12 months to complete the ASYE.

- How can NQSWs who work part-time or go on a leave of absence complete their ASYE in 12 months?
  The 12-month timescale for completion is an indication of the time it will normally take an NQSW to complete their ASYE. At the start of the ASYE the employer and NQSW will complete a learning agreement which should take account of the NQSW’s normal pattern of work and adjust the timescales accordingly. Employers may also agree to defer the assessment of NQSWs in cases such as maternity leave or long-term sickness.

- Are there different arrangements and timescales for students on the employment-based route? For example, employees who are supported via their organisation to complete their social work qualification.
  No. The SWRB is clear that the ASYE is a year of development and not just assessment. It believes all qualified social workers, whatever their background, should be offered a single ASYE programme completed in 12 months. Employers will determine the pace at which NQSWs complete the ASYE programme, though for most full-time employees it will take 12 months.

- Will an NQSW have to start the ASYE again if they move to a different employer within their ASYE year?
  No, an employer should decide on the sufficiency of evidence NQSWs present for the ASYE assessment, including any statements from previous employment about how the NQSW has progressed and the standard achieved.

4. Assessment

- I completed my social work qualification more than two years ago and now want to apply for a first post as a social worker. How can I show a potential employer the currency of my skills and knowledge to enable me to start the ASYE?
If you are applying for a first post as a social worker more than two years after qualifying, it is most likely to be because you have at least maintained if not developed your knowledge and skills. Generally the way to do that is by employment in a social care or other related role and by complementing this by reading, reflecting and taking advantage of opportunities for CPD. In the same way as this will equip you for gaining future employment, it will also be necessary for you to undertake this type of activity to maintain your registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

- **The HCPC offers advice for those with non-England social work qualifications who wish to check their equivalence for work in England. Do NQSWs have to complete the induction standards for those working in children's social care?**

  No - the induction standards are for those working in social care. The requirements of the ASYE more than cover the induction standards.

- **What types of evidence will an NQSW gather during their ASYE?**

  The key principle for assessment is that evidence is gathered from a range of work that is sufficient to demonstrate how the NQSW has met the nine Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) domains at the ASYE level. This can be achieved through submitting a range of evidence with pieces of direct practice supplying evidence which can meet requirements across a number of the domains, thus reducing burdens for both NQSW and employer.

  Employers who contributed to the development of ASYE made recommendations about types of evidence for assessment. Typically, NQSWs might produce the following to show sufficient evidence of capability:

  1. supervision records;
  2. direct observation;
  3. work products;
  4. critical reflection, including a piece of evidence based on direct practice written towards the end of the ASYE year; and
  5. service user feedback.

  Employers and NQSWs may also wish to add or vary evidence to take account of setting and other local factors.

- **Who will carry out the assessment?**

  Professional supervision and assessment should be carried out by a qualified, registered social worker. Some NQSWs may be managed by staff who are not qualified and registered social workers, in those cases the learning agreement will need to clarify the professional and managerial roles in supervision and assessment.
How many capabilities will the NQSW need to demonstrate to 'pass' the ASYE?

Newly qualified social workers must provide evidence of capability across all nine domains of the PCF at ASYE level and the minimum standard must be satisfied in each domain.

How will assessors know if the evidence demonstrates achievement in each capability?

Information will be available to illustrate the level of achievement for the ASYE. This information will be produced in conjunction with The College of Social Work.

Where can I find the capability statements for ASYE?

The standards for the ASYE are in the Professional Capability Framework (PCF) and are available on the College of Social Work website which can be found in the associated resources section.

5. Outcomes

Who is accountable for assessment decisions and outcomes?

Employers are responsible and accountable for assessment decisions and the outcomes. They also need to make arrangements for resolving appeals and complaints. Information is available on the ASYE 3: Support and Assessment to support employers in making decisions.

How will employers be supported to make robust decisions?

Further information will be developed with The College of Social Work to:

1. support employers make accurate, valid and robust decisions;
2. illustrate what employers will wish to do before making assessment decisions; and
3. ensure that appeals or complaints can be handled through due process.

This information can be found in ASYE 3: Support and Assessment. It covers the advantages of working across and between organisations. Such working together will assist small organisations without the capacity to conduct development and assessment independently.

How will outcomes be recorded?

Outcomes should be recorded by employers and notified to The College of Social Work, which is planning to hold a national record. The College will also issue a certificate to those who have successfully completed the ASYE.

What are the possible outcomes from an appeal?

Employers are responsible and accountable for assessment decisions and their outcomes and will also need to make arrangements for resolving appeals and complaints. They may wish to review their existing procedures.
What will be the consequence of an NQSW failing the ASYE?

The ongoing review of an NQSW's development should enable employers to spot concerns at an early stage and to take appropriate action. In the case of an NQSW failing the ASYE, employers will need to consider appropriate options on a case-by-case basis.

The Health and Care Professions Council is the body regulating the work of social workers. More information about the Council and its complaints procedure can be found by following the link to their website on this page.

Does the ASYE have to include an academically accredited component?

No the ASYE does not have to include an academically accredited component but employers may choose to include such a component as an element of the programme delivery and assessment.

If the final assessment of ASYE includes an academically accredited component whose responsibility is it, employer or HEI, for ensuring that the final assessment decision is made within the year of the NQSW commencing the ASYE?

Where employers are delivering the ASYE in conjunction with an academic programme, the final pass/fail assessment decision remains with the employer and should be made within the one year time frame, regardless of academic requirements. If a partnership agreement is in place then it would be desirable that this includes an agreement that passing the HE module is part of their decision making process, and the result will need to be known by the time the employer makes the final decision.

If an NQSW is deemed by their employers to have failed the ASYE but passes the academic element what are the outcomes for the NQSW, in respect of ASYE?

Where employers are delivering the ASYE in conjunction with a university it is expected that all concerned will have an understanding of what the relationship is between assessment of the higher education component, and the employer's assessment of workplace capability. The partnership agreement should take into account and clearly set out the relative weight of each component in the final assessment decision while making clear that the final decision rests with the employer. In addition, an agreement needs to be in place that details how, if at all, failure by the employer of the ASYE will impact on academic credit and its description. Where the module/programme has a title that includes ASYE there needs to be clarity that this academic credit is not automatically a reflection of the employer decision on the assessment.
Further information

- What further information will be available?
  Information is being published at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/asye and will be added to in the course of 2013.