

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment – Frequently asked questions

1. General

What is the ASYE?

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment is a 12 month programme which Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW's) can complete in their first year of employment to help consolidate their learning from their social work training and prepare them for their career as a social worker. During the course of the ASYE programme the Social Worker will be assessed against the [Knowledge and Skills Statement \(KSS\) for social workers in Adult services](#). The social worker will also be provided with support from the employer to meet the KSS.

Do NQSWs have to undertake the ASYE?

NQSWs do not have to undertake the ASYE, however it is strongly endorsed by the Chief Social Worker for adult services in England and increasing numbers of employers (in all sectors) are introducing schemes and linking completion of the ASYE to recruitment processes. Employers have fed back that providing an ASYE programme can support their recruitment and retention of NQSW's.

Why was an ASYE framework introduced?

The ASYE framework was developed in response to the [Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in adult services](#) (published March 2015).

The purpose of the framework is to introduce a national system of quality assurance so that the profession can have confidence that employer' judgments are consistent across the country.

Were employers been involved in developing the ASYE programme?

Yes employers and universities from across the country were involved in the revision and design of the new arrangement. The principles upon which the revision has been taken forward include:

- build upon employer's previous experience of ASYE
- minimize bureaucracy
- reduce burden on assessors
- provide clarity about evidence requirements
- support progressive assessment
- facilitate portability
- raise standards of individual and organizational practice.

Is it the same as the ASYE framework for children and families services?

No, there is a separate [Knowledge and Skills Statement for child and family practitioners](#) However, if you work in a child and family setting or an integrated

service you can find out more information on the child and family ASYE page on the [Skills for Care website](#).

Is the ASYE framework be linked to employment contracts?

The relationship between the ASYE and employment contracts is a matter for individual employers and staff.

2. Funding and registration via the online portal

What funding support is available?

We are pleased to confirm that the Department of Health and Social Care have agreed funding support for ASYE in adult services for 2018, to be disbursed by Skills for Care. As in previous years, there will be a fixed 'pot' of money to be distributed among employers.

Is the funding linked to meeting the requirements of the Knowledge and Skills Statement?

Yes acceptance of the grant funding will require employers to agree that the funding will be used to meet the requirements of the Knowledge and Skills Statement including standardised arrangements for assessment and moderation.

When and how do I apply for funding?

You can find out more information about funding by looking at our registration and funding FAQ's [here](#).

Can the ASYE funding be used to support assessors as well as the NQSWs?

Yes, the funding can be used in whatever way the employer feels in most useful to support the ASYE process. Examples of the ways in which the funding is utilised focus around the provision of training for NQSWs and assessors and the purchase of resources to support the programme. A significant number of organisations use the funding to contribute to the costs of paying assessors and coordinators in various roles.

ASYE privacy and data protection considerations

Why do Skills for Care need to collect data about NQSWs on the portal and what is done with this data?

Skills for Care will only collect data about NQSW's which is required to grant ASYE funding to an employer. Reports on the data are submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care, however no individual data is ever sold or shared with third parties. Only employers have access to their NQSW data, as well as the person responsible at Skills for Care for processing NQSW applications. This data is accessed with a secure log in which is not shared with anyone else.

Do I need to upload documents to the ASYE portal?

Employers are required to update the ASYE portal at 6 months and 12 months by completing the relevant sections within the NQSW record. It is not a requirement for employers to upload documents, although this is an option available to them on the portal. Should employers choose to upload documents, they should ensure that portfolios are anonymised using the Skills for Care [statement of anonymisation and confidentiality](#) as guidance. Skills for Care will not share any documents that are uploaded with third parties.

Skills for Care privacy policy

When GDPR was introduced in 2018 the privacy statement was updated for all employers. The privacy policy can be found [here](#).

Skills for Care recommend that employers share this GDPR statement with their data protection officers to ensure that they are meeting their roles and responsibilities under the legislation.

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

The organisation that takes overall responsibility for the support and assessment of the NQSW should register them for funding. This is a matter for negotiation between the recruitment agency and the organisation within which the NQSW is placed.

3. Eligibility

Are all NQSWs eligible to complete the ASYE?

Yes, provided that:

- They are registered with the HCPC.
- Their employer registers them for an ASYE programme within two years of successfully completing a recognised social work qualification. Those individuals who have, for whatever reason, not taken up a social work or equivalent role more than two years after qualification will need to satisfy their employers that they have maintained their social work skills and knowledge in other ways.
- They are employed in roles of a sufficient breadth and complexity that will enable them to demonstrate their capability against the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the PCF capabilities.

How should an NQSW who completed their social work qualification more than two years ago demonstrate the currency of their skills and knowledge to enable them to start the ASYE?

If you have employed a person to a first post as a registered social worker more than two years after they qualified, they will have satisfied the recruitment panel of their fitness to practice and demonstrated that they at least maintained if not developed their knowledge and skills during this period.

They may have been in employment in a social care or other related role and have complemented this experience by reading, reflecting and taking advantage of opportunities for CPD.

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

No, the Knowledge and Skills Statement relates to all social workers working with adults who contribute to delivering statutory health and wellbeing outcomes for people and their carers, regardless of the sector in which they are employed. They can be employed in local authority, NHS, voluntary, private or independent sector organisations. Additional guidance for employers in the private, voluntary and independent sector can be found [here](#).

Can NQSW's meet the KSS if they are not based in the local authority?

This is a question for your organisation to consider when recruiting an NQSW to fulfil a particular role and the ASYE. The role will need to be complex enough to allow opportunities for the NQSW to meet the requirements of the KSS at the relevant PCF level. (See the 'Assessment' section below for further information about the evidence required to meet the KSS).

Do NQSW's 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 qualification - as is currently the case.

There is no direct link between registration, regulation and the ASYE. Social workers are not 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 and re-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.

4. 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 the support and assessment agreement (contained within part 1 of the record of support and progressive assessment) 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.

Can the ASYE be extended for longer than a year?

For a social worker in full time work there are only exceptional circumstances in which the year can be extended - as above for sickness, maternity, leave of absence etc. or where the appropriate level of support has not been made available. In the latter case the ASYE process should be suspended for a prescribed and limited time to allow for the support arrangements to be put in place. The suspension the reason why and the action plan should be recorded in the review section of the record of support and progressive assessment. The year may not be extended for capability reasons.

Can an experienced NQSW complete the ASYE in less than a year?

No, The ASYE runs for a year whatever the level of capability of the NQSW. The NQSW needs to demonstrate progressive development over this period of time.

Are there different arrangements and timescales for students on the employment-based route? e.g. employees who are supported via their organisation to complete their social work qualification

No. The ASYE is a year of progressive development and not just assessment. All newly qualified social workers, whatever their background or level of experience, should be offered a single ASYE programme and expected to demonstrate professional development across the year. Completion of the record of support and progressive assessment and the critical reflection log, evidences this process.

Will an NQSW be required to start the ASYE again if they move to a different employer within their ASYE year?

No, the revised ASYE arrangements are designed to facilitate national consistency and portability. As long as the record of support and progressive assessment and the critical reflection log are completed in accordance to the guidance, the original assessment can be taken forward by the new employer.

5. Assessment

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

The Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in adult services stipulates the following minimum evidence requirements for the assessment process:

- Three formal direct observations of practice undertaken by a registered social worker (at least two of these to be completed by the assessor).
- At least three pieces of feedback over the course of the year from other professionals.
- The assessment of a written piece of work demonstrating the ability of the employee to reflect on and learn from practice: it should show how the employee has used critical reflection on their practice to improve their professional skills and demonstrate reasoned judgment relating to a practice decision.
- The assessment of least three examples of written report and records including a report written for an external decision making processes and a set of case recordings.
- The assessor report.

Use of Skills for Care documentation i.e. the [record of support and progressive assessment](#) and the [critical reflection log](#) will enable the assessor and the NQSW to meet the minimum evidence requirements.

Who will carry out the assessment?

Holistic assessment and professional supervision must be carried out by a qualified, registered and experienced social worker. Ideally they should also meet practice development educator standards.

Where the NQSW is line managed by such a person, they will be likely to take on the assessment role.

Where NQSWs have a non-social work qualified line manager, the employer will need to make arrangements for the assessment to be carried out by a suitably qualified social worker. If no such person is employed within the organisation they will need to bring in an external assessor.

What criteria will be used to undertake the holistic assessment?

Assessment of the ASYE will be against the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the PCF. The Knowledge and Skills Statement provides a level descriptor for the ASYE (paragraph 11) based on the PCF, and the holistic assessment of capability should be based on this statement.

Skills for Care has extracted holistic assessment outcomes from the KSS and the PCF in order to assist in the construction of the PDP, the structure of the evidence and the final assessment. These are contained within the [record of support and progressive assessment](#) and the [critical reflection log](#).

The holistic assessment outcomes are minimum requirements at the end of the ASYE. All NQSWs need to demonstrate progression whatever their level of capability at the start of the year. The higher levels of the PCF should be referred to where the NQSW is demonstrating capability beyond the ASYE.

How do the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the Professional Capabilities Framework link together for the purposes of assessment?

The [Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in adult services](#) sets out the role of a social worker in adult services and what a social worker working with adults should know and be able to do by the end of their assessed and supported year in employment.

[The Professional Capabilities Framework](#) provides a benchmark for the level and complexity, the detail of which is contained in the capabilities. This will provide the detail that should be referred to when defining the NQSW's learning needs. The PCF can also be used as a diagnostic tool because it describes the level and complexity with which the requirements of the Knowledge and Skills statement will be met.

You can find out more information about the link between the KSS and PCF below.

The Chief Social Workers have issued a joint [statement](#) which describes the relationship between the KSS and PCF.

BASW has recently undertaken a [review](#) of the PCF

6. Outcomes

Who is responsible for the assessment outcome?

At the end of the ASYE the assessor completes a final assessment report for the NQSW and makes a recommendation about the outcome. This is then scrutinised and confirmed by an internal moderation process. [Click here](#) for further information about the role of the internal moderation process.

How are outcomes recorded?

Employers use their HR processes to record and act upon ASYE assessment outcomes.

How does an NQSW make an appeal against the assessment outcome?

Each employer should have in place a process by which a social worker can appeal the assessment decision. The details of this will be provided in the record of support and progressive assessment.

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.

If the employer has concerns about the NQSW's fitness to practice, they should contact the HCPC for further information about the [HCPC Fitness to Practice process](#).

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 extra element of the programmes 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 work place 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.

7. Supporting national consistency

Why have Skills for Care copyrighted the key guidance documents and templates?

The following guidance documents and templates have been copyrighted by Skills for Care:

- i. The record of support and progressive assessment.
- ii. The critical reflection log.
- iii. The standards for internal moderation.

They are copyrighted because they:

- facilitate national consistency in the recording and evidencing of the ASYE
- represent the views and needs of employers across the country
- include the minimum evidence requirements for the revised ASYE framework
- align with the Standards for Employers of social workers in England
- meet the College of Social Works' endorsement criteria for the national validation scheme.

For these reasons employers are not permitted to alter any part of the documents, other than in the sections where this has been expressly allowed. They are however free to copy them for the purpose for which they have been designed and add additional material relevant to their particular organisation or scheme with the proviso that they clearly identify the additions they have made.

Can employers of child and family social workers get permission for the copyright to be lifted in order to alter the adult ASYE documents to take account of the Knowledge and Skills Statement child and family social work?

Skills for Care has lifted the copyright on the adults ASYE assessment documentation to allow a limited number of employers in a working group of child and family workforce leads to develop materials for use with NQSWs in child and family services.

Is use of the Skills for Care documentation mandatory?

No, use of the Skills for Care key documents is not mandatory. They provide an approach to evidencing the Knowledge and Skills Statement requirements that has been developed and agreed by a large number of employers from all over the country.

However, employers are free to devise their own approaches and documentation if they wish to do so.

If they choose to do this they must ensure that they can demonstrate how they have met the evidence requirements outlined in the Knowledge and Skills Statement in order to receive Department of Health and Social Care funding.

How will employers be supported to make robust decisions?

The Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in adult services introduced a national system of quality assurance to ensure that employer's judgments are consistent across the country.

Processes have been developed for the internal and external moderation of assessment decisions. A national validation scheme for ASYE is being developed by The College of Social Work.

What is meant by a report written for “an external decision making process” in the KSS?

The reason for including a report written for an external decision-making process in the KSS is to enable the NQSW to evidence their ability in formal report writing. The type of report will vary depending on the setting where the NQSW is employed, so professional judgement needs to be exercised in deciding what constitutes “external”. When considering if a piece of work meets this requirement it is probably useful to consider the following.

Is the decision maker external to the setting where the NQSW works?

- Does the report require the social worker to have undertaken an assessment and analysed evidence to reach a recommendation?
- Does the report require the social worker to consider alternative option and make an evidence based recommendation?
- Does the report require the social worker to have ascertained the wishes and feelings of the person who needs care and support, their family and significant others and represented these in the assessment explaining the weight given to these and why?
- Does the report need to be presented in a formal and professional manner?

If the answer to all of these questions is yes then the assessment will meet the requirements of it being a report written for an external decision making process. If the answer to any of these questions is no then it will not.

8. Mental Health Trust - ASYE

An increasing number of NQSW's are completing their ASYE in multi-disciplinary teams within the NHS, rather than the local authority. These NQSW's are mainly placed in multi-disciplinary teams within NHS Trusts. Often, in these situations, colleagues or managers will not have a social work background or may not be familiar with the ASYE programme.

Can I set up my own ASYE programme?

Yes, you can set up your own ASYE programme. However, you will need to ensure that a qualified and registered social worker is available to be the assessor. Some employers who only have a few NQSW's per year prefer to put their NQSW's on an ASYE programme within their local authority. This option is also fine, but requires you to make contact with a local programme to ensure there is enough space.

A requirement of setting up an ASYE programme is a commitment to external moderation. You will need to make contact with and join your local authority external moderation panel before setting up your own programme and registering an NQSW.

You may find it useful to read the [guidance for private, voluntary and independent organisations](#).

What is the benefit of offering the ASYE?

The ASYE is the first step of a social worker's Continued Professional Development (CPD) journey. It helps NQSW's to consolidate their training and tailor their learning for the particular job role they are undertaking. The ASYE can also be an attractive incentive for an NQSW to accept a job and can support recruitment and retention rates within an organisation.

What support for employers can Skills for Care provide?

- Advice and guidance about all aspects of the framework can be found on the [Skills for Care website](#).
- The social work briefing provides regular updates about new developments. You can sign up for this by [registering on our website](#) and ticking the box for social work briefing.
- Individual queries can be addressed to the ASYE inbox asyeadults@skillsforcare.org.uk
- National and local events and workshops, plus attendance at network meetings.
- Contact with the programme head and project managers within the national social work team, and [locality managers in the areas](#).