



Dear colleague,

Re: Funding for the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in adult services 2020-21

Skills for Care is pleased to announce that an initial stage of funding for the ASYE grant has been agreed with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), with a second stage to be allocated later in the year. This means that we will now open the ASYE portal so that employers can begin to register newly qualified social workers.

It is anticipated that the level of funding for supporting the ASYE will be similar to the financial year 2019-20. We apologise in advance for the uncertainty, but the pandemic has meant that we had to adapt our usual process. We are working with DHSC to confirm the exact level of funding available and we will communicate this at the second stage.

Please read this letter and supporting information carefully to ensure you understand the process. Due to COVID-19 we have relaxed the requirement for a pre-registration application in most cases.

Overview

DHSC has allocated a fixed budget to support NQSWs through their ASYE subject to confirmation as mentioned above. Funding will be allocated based on the NQSWs starting the ASYE between 1 February 2020 and 31 January 2021. In order to ensure fairness, we'll disburse funds to employers using a funding formula that is based on the principles outlined below:

1. No employer should receive less than £1,000 per NQSW
2. No local authority or NHS employer should receive more than £2,000 per NQSW
3. No voluntary or private employer (small organisations) should receive more than £3,000 per NQSW (see FAQ 2)

The full amount of funding an employer will receive will be paid in two instalments.

The first payment will be £800 per NQSW. This will be allocated at the first milestone.

The remaining amount payable will be calculated using the funding formula and will be based on the number of social workers employed and the actual number of NQSWs registered for ASYE. This will be allocated at the second milestone. (See FAQ1 for further information). Please note, we will be required to recoup excess funding at milestone two in the event of employers recruiting fewer NQSWs than estimated and an over payment therefore having been made at milestone one.

The specific needs of voluntary sector employers, especially where they are very small organisations, have been taken into account.

It is expected that the funding you receive for ASYE will be used flexibly to sustain all activity - including support and training for supervisors and assessors - linked to your ASYE programme.

Process

There are four steps in the process:

1. Pre-registration process – **please note the changes to this set out below**
2. Registration of NQSWs
3. Milestone one: first payment
4. Milestone two: final payment

Following the pre-registration application, it's expected that employers will continue to register and keep us informed of the progress of the NQSW through the same electronic process as used in 2019-20.

Step one: pre-registration application

In light of the pressures on all employers due to COVID-19, we reviewed the pre-registration process to make it as easy as possible for employers to draw on the funding. The below information offers further details of our plans:

For those employers who have claimed the adults ASYE funding in previous years, we will use an average of available data of your actual NQSW registrations over the last three years (2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20) to estimate your number of NQSWs and calculate your milestone 1 payment, **which means that you will not need to complete a pre-registration form this year**. We will also use your most recent Memorandum of Collaboration as proof of your membership of an External Moderation Partnership.

New employers, or employers who have not registered for funding in the last three years, will be required to complete an online [pre-registration form](#) and provide evidence of their membership of an external moderation partnership when they submit.

The pre-registration application for new employers is a crucial element to the disbursement process in that it enables us to predict the likely demand of the available resources. The application form must be completed to be able to access the funding. This will require you to give us the following information:

- the number of registered social workers you employ
- the number of NQSWs you plan to recruit and register for ASYE between 1 February 2020 and 31 January 2021 (See FAQ 8 for further information)

- at this stage we also require evidence of your membership of an external partnership

For new small private and voluntary employers, and local authorities/NHS/community interest companies/social enterprise employers who have not claimed funding in the last three years, the deadline for receipt of online pre-registration applications is **Friday 8 January 2021**.

Please make your application as soon as you have employed an NQSW.

Receipt of pre-registration applications will be confirmed within two weeks of application, and the milestone one payment will be confirmed within two weeks following the deadline.

Step two: start the process of electronic application and registration of NQSWs

The registration portal (<https://id.skillsforcare.org.uk/Account/Login>) will open on 27 July 2020. NQSWs may be registered from this point.

The process of registering further NQSWs should be undertaken as they come into post throughout the year.

Step three: Milestone payment one

Successful registration of your first NQSW or group of NQSWs for the year will trigger your grant letter. This will be sent to you by email from EchoSign (see FAQ 17). On receipt of your signed grant acceptance letter, the milestone one allocation will be paid subject to the funding confirmation mentioned above. NB: Where no electronic registration is made no funding will be paid (see FAQs 13 and 14).

Step four: Milestone payment two

This will take place in February 2021. The amount to be paid (subject to funding confirmation) will be based on the actual number of NQSWs registered with Skills for Care by **31 January 2021** (see FAQ 16). As specified above, it is therefore crucial that you are regularly updating the portal throughout the year. Your submitted registrations will be used to calculate your milestone two payment **and** will be part of the evidence required for this milestone. Following the 31 January, we'll undertake an internal review of NQSWs registered on the system by your organisation and allocate funding accordingly.

The milestone two allocation will be adjusted if the number of NQSWs registered by your organisation is less than the number planned for in the pre-registration stage. If the number is significantly less a reclaim of some of the funding already paid may be made. This is because you will have received a higher allocation in milestone one.

NQSWs registered in excess of the number planned for in the pre-registration stage will be taken into account in calculating the milestone two allocation.

Ensuring consistency

The key aim of the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) in adult services is to achieve national consistency in the assessment of ASYE assessment decisions.

All employers receiving funding are required to adhere to the minimum requirements of the KSS, including membership of an external moderation partnership (see FAQs 5 and 19). In addition, employers may be requested to submit evidence to Skills for Care for review by the national moderation panel.

Please refer to appendix 1 for further information.

Kind regards

Skills for Care

Appendix 1

Ensuring consistency: Information for employers in adult services who seek ASYE funding

- The Department of Health and Social Care is seeking to ensure that all NQSWs undertaking the ASYE achieve a consistent level of capability by the end of their first year in practice.
- The Knowledge and Skills Statement (adults) sets out the level and requirements to embed this, and the purpose of ASYE funding is to help employers with this process.
- As the agency responsible for dispersing DHSC funding, Skills for Care is required to ensure that funding is utilised for this intended purpose.
- The approach will always be to offer support and guidance and work with employers who may be experiencing difficulty.
- In circumstances where an employer does not wish to avail themselves of support or guidance, and/or consistently fails to address the standards, Skills for Care reserve the right to withhold all or part of the ASYE funding allocated to that organisation.
- While the final decision rests with Skills for Care, we may take feedback from members of the National Moderation Panel into account.

For reference the section of the KSS which applies to this statement is copied below:

12. The National Framework for the assessment of social workers at the end of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

We will introduce a national system of quality assurance so that the profession can have confidence that employer's judgements are consistent across the country. This national scheme will have two parts: standardised arrangements for assessment and moderation led by us; and a national system for validating the implementation of these arrangements across the country These arrangements will build on existing processes and are intended to produce improved national consistency in standards and assessment of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for social works in adult services.

To ensure national consistency in the assessment of social workers at the end of their first year of practice:

1. The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment assessor must be a registered social worker;
2. The assessment must include:
 - a) Three formal direct observations of practice undertaken by a registered social worker (at least two of these to be completed by the assessor);
 - b) At least three pieces of feedback over the course of the year from people who need care and support, or from their carers;
 - c) At least three pieces of feedback over the course of the year from other professionals; and
 - d) 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 judgement relating to a practice decision;
 - e) The assessment of at least three examples of written reports and records, including a report written for an external decision making process and a set of case recordings; and
 - f) The assessor report
3. The assessment process should be recorded in a learning agreement and include a professional development plan with provision for appropriate reviews: and
4. The process of confirming assessment will include internal and external moderation to confirm the assessment outcomes:

- a) Internal moderation: to confirm the assessment decision;
- b) External Moderation: to ensure the standards are consistently applied, through sampling assessment decisions and providing feedback to employers : and

National validation: to show how the systems and processes which underpin the ASYE programme enable newly qualified social worker to reach the appropriate standard: and to ensure these standards are consistently applied. NB the process for national validation is currently under consideration. Further details will be published when available.