Case study 'Anya', evidence 4: Feedback plan

In developing this feedback plan I have found the principles for evidencing feedback from people being supported, and from carers (College of Social Work) useful. Reading these principles has helped me to recognise the importance of not gaining feedback simply to tick boxes, but that the important thing is how I reflect on the feedback and how I can use it to inform my future development.

I have picked out some of the principles to inform my plan, as follows:

1. Feedback happens all the time
   At the end of one-to-one sessions I always ask the women I am working with to share how they are feeling about what we have discussed. I have realised that sometimes what they say could be taken as feedback on my work with them. There might also be other occasions when women say things to me which I could take as informal feedback. Having read the principles I also recognise that even body language could be providing me with informal feedback. I recognise that I may not always have been open to this feedback. Therefore I have decided to keep a running account of any such comments - which I can bring to supervision with Laura for discussion.

2. People being supported, and carers, as 'partners' in the observation process
   After each formal observation of practice I will ask the observer to seek feedback from the woman involved. I will ensure that the observer has a copy of the questions included in the principles document as these seem to be helpful. Linking this with the fact that feedback happens all of the time, I will also ask colleagues to seek feedback if it seems appropriate. I will also ask other staff involved in any aspects of my practice to provide feedback on their perceptions of the work.

3. Timing! Timing! Timing!
   Linked with the desire to seek feedback after each observation I will be mindful of the fact that sometimes after a lengthy one-to-one session the women simply want to get back to their children. So at the end of a direct observation it might not always be the right time to gather feedback. I will ensure that women have the option of providing feedback later if they prefer.

4. Focusing on the process, rather than the decision
   Sometimes women are unhappy with decisions which are made - particularly in relation to housing. I will need to ensure that when I am explaining the process of feedback to them I explain that the feedback is about the way that I supported them rather than about the actual decision. I will also need to reflect on the feedback that
is gathered to ensure that I am aware of any bias that might be present because of decisions which have affected the women (either positively or negatively).

5. Getting the style right - communicating with different people
I recognise that as I work with women who have children it would be useful for me to obtain feedback from the children as well as from their mothers and this will require a different approach. I am not confident that the feedback will be totally honest if I just ask the children themselves as I have found many of the children to be overly eager to please me, so I will enlist the support of the children's workers in obtaining feedback from the children. It would be useful if they could incorporate gathering feedback about my practice into some creative artwork activities as the children seem to enjoy this and are often much more open about their feelings in their artwork than in talking to adults.

6. Reflecting together - saying goodbye
When women move on from the refuge or decide to cease outreach support we complete a final outcomes ladder with them. I will use this opportunity to ask the women I have worked with for feedback on my practice. If it is possible I will ask them to link this to any changes in their scores, although I recognise that this may be challenging - it might help me to have specific evidence (score changes) to reflect on the outcomes of my practice.

Conclusions
Initially I approached the requirement to obtain feedback from people being supported very mechanistically. I only really thought about using questionnaires. As I have explored the principles for gathering feedback I recognise that this was a very limited view. I hope that this initial plan will help me to remain focused on gathering feedback in a range of ways and I will revisit it regularly to monitor my progress in gathering feedback.