Case study 'Joanne', evidence 5: Action plan

Domain 1, Professionalism
Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession, a title protected in UK law. Social workers demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for their conduct, practice and learning, with support through supervision. As representatives of the social work profession they safeguard its reputation and are accountable to the professional regulator.

Joanne is using supervision to seek advice on what to do with her work. She is not yet making wider use of the supervision offered as part of the assessed and supported year. We agreed that Joanne will seek to make more effective use of supervision to meet the specific capability statement: **make proactive use of supervision to reflect critically on practice, explore different approaches to your work, support your development across the nine capabilities and understand the boundaries of professional accountability.**

Joanne is also finding the transition to a professional and the workload that this implies challenging. She needs to further develop her time and workload management skills, as identified in the learning agreement, in order to meet the specific capability statement: **demonstrate workload management skills and develop the ability to prioritize.**

Domain 2 - Values and Ethics: Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making, including through partnership with people who use their services. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of their profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

It would be useful for Joanne to give more critical consideration to the values conflicts she faces in her practice. There have been some specific examples in reviews she has completed recently where parents have been resistant to service users developing relationships. In review documentation Joanne has recorded the views of the parents clearly - but this has not necessarily been balanced with the views of the service user.

We have agreed that we will keep this issue under review in supervision.
Domain 3. Diversity: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice

Social workers understand that diversity characterises and shapes human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Diversity is multidimensional and includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender and transgender, faith and belief. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim, and are able to challenge appropriately.

Joanne is understandably sometimes drawn more towards what parents and carers are saying, particularly where a service user has limited verbal communication - as the example above demonstrates. This means that Joanne is not always recognizing the oppression that service users can face from within their own family. Again we agreed to keep this issue under review in supervision.

Domain 4. Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic well-being

Social workers recognise the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. They ensure these principles underpin their practice. Social workers understand the importance of using and contributing to case law and applying these rights in their own practice. They understand the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty.

Joanne is beginning to develop her understanding in this area, although again her tendency to over identify with the views of parents means that she may miss issues of human rights for service users.

Domain 5. Knowledge: Apply knowledge of social sciences, law and social work practice theory

Social workers understand psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and physical influences on people; human development throughout the life span and the legal framework for practice. They apply this knowledge in their work with individuals, families and communities. They know and use theories and methods of social work practice.

Joanne is developing her knowledge of agency policy and procedure and she has developed a good working knowledge of the area which the team covers. The reflective account which Joanne has completed for her portfolio demonstrates that she has knowledge - for example of the Human Rights Act and the Bournewood ruling. However, how she makes use of this knowledge in her practice is not so clear. In supervision Joanne is developing more of an ability to identify relevant theory - however, again she is not always able to discuss how she has used this in her practice. We agreed that we will consider the impact of Joanne's knowledge on her practice and the impact of her knowledge on the outcomes for service users in supervision sessions.
Domain 6. Critical reflection and Analysis - Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making

Social workers are knowledgeable about and apply the principles of critical thinking and reasoned discernment. They identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. These include practice evidence, their own practice experience, service user and carer experience together with research-based, organisational, policy and legal knowledge. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.

Joanne needs to develop her skills in critically reflective in order to meet both of the specific capability statements in this domain. Isabella recently identified that she finds reflective writing a challenge. Marian will ensure that Joanne is provided with some examples of good quality reflective writing. Marian will also look into whether there is any training available which may be able to assist Joanne to become more reflective.

Domain 7. Intervention and Skills: Use judgement and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse

Social workers engage with individuals, families, groups and communities, working alongside people to assess and intervene. They enable effective relationships and are effective communicators, using appropriate skills. Using their professional judgement, they employ a range of interventions: promoting independence, providing support and protection, taking preventative action and ensuring safety whilst balancing rights and risks. They understand and take account of differentials in power, and are able to use authority appropriately. They evaluate their own practice and the outcomes for those they work with.

Domain 8. Contexts and organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice.

Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations.

Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships and settings

Social workers are informed about and pro-actively responsive to the challenges and opportunities that come with changing social contexts and constructs. They fulfill this responsibility in accordance with their professional values and ethics, both as individual professionals and as members of the organisation in which they work. They collaborate, inform and are informed by their work with others, inter-professionally and with communities.

Joanne feels that the team have been very supportive and she feels that she has become very much a member of the team. Marian feels that it would be useful for Joanne to develop a closer relationship with the more experienced practitioners on
the team. It was therefore agreed that Joanne will be linked to Anton a senior practitioner on the team. Anton can provide Joanne with support and will encourage Joanne to go on joint visits with him to more complex cases to develop her skills in this area.

The agency are developing a keyworker / named worker system. Marian would like Joanne to consider the communication that has been sent to the team about this and present her thoughts on the proposed system in a supervision session.

**Domain 9. Professional Leadership: Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management**

The social work profession evolves through the contribution of its members in activities such as practice research, supervision, assessment of practice, teaching and management. An individual's contribution will gain influence when undertaken as part of a learning, practice-focused organisation.

Learning may be facilitated with a wide range of people including social work colleagues, service users and carers, volunteers, foster carers and other professionals.

As yet, Joanne is still developing her practice skills and is not yet demonstrating the potential for professional leadership. Joanne said she would like to provide support to a student who will be shadowing the team for two days. Marian feels that at this stage it would be preferable for Joanne to focus on other areas of her development.

**Portfolio progress**

Joanne has completed one reflective account on her work with Mary. As detailed, Marian feels that this is not at the standard she would expect. Joanne will be given some examples of reflective writing and Marian will look at whether there is any training which Joanne can undertake.

Joanne has obtained some carer feedback. Marian felt that Joanne should not have used the student feedback form. To date Joanne has located some forms / questionnaires to gather user feedback. Marian advised that sometimes user feedback approaches need to be more creative - particularly in relation to the service user group. Marian advised Joanne to ask for some advice from the local self-advocacy group when she visits about creative ways of obtaining feedback. She also asked Joanne to raise this issue at the next action learning set.

We have completed one direct observation of practice. This is still to be written up for the portfolio.

We agreed that Joanne will bring some review documentation to supervision for Marian to review in relation to the capability statements. This will assist Marian in developing her report.

We also agreed that Joanne will seek some peer feedback on her practice. Since Joanne is going to link up with Anton it may be useful for Anton to complete a direct
observation form in relation to a joint visit - this will ensure that the peer feedback is sufficiently focused.

Marian suggested that Joanne re-read the guidance she has been given on the completion of the portfolio - particularly the guidance on critical reflection and on gathering user feedback.

We agreed that the portfolio will be kept under review in supervision. Joanne also advised Joanne that she might like to take the portfolio to the action learning set facilitator for feedback and advice.