



Department
for Education



Resource 1: Seeking feedback from people who need care and support

Obtaining feedback from the people who are supported by social work services is essential to support critical reflection and to aid practitioners in improving their practice. Seeking feedback both formally and informally is the basis of the relationship building and effective partnership working that become the toolkit of intuitive working.

Seeking feedback from people who need care and support is a crucial aspect of the ASYE, in that feedback can contribute both to the assessment process and to supporting newly qualified social workers to continually develop their practice.

The importance of feedback from people who are supported by social work services is being increasingly recognised. There is a consensus that feedback should be used as part of standardisation and quality assurance process and there is a move towards considering the role of feedback in the regulation of social workers.

The College of Social Work has developed a set of [principles for gathering feedback from people who use services and those that care for them](#). This paper seeks to provide a model for considering a process for gathering feedback and is linked to a range of support material and resources. It should be read in conjunction with the principles paper.

Critical reflection and feedback

Feedback from people who need care and support is intrinsically linked to critically reflective practice. Ensuring that a reflective approach is taken to seeking feedback from people who need care and support is important. To enable a reflective approach to be taken it is useful to consider the stages of reflective practice, as follows:

Schön's work on reflection (e.g. 1983) is well known in social work. Schön highlighted two key 'stages' of reflection:

Reflection *in* action: Reflecting as an event is occurring
Reflection *on* action: Reflecting after an event has occurred

Later, Killian and Todnem (1991) added a third stage of reflection:

Reflection *for* action: Reflecting in preparation for an event

Effectively, this creates a cycle of reflection:

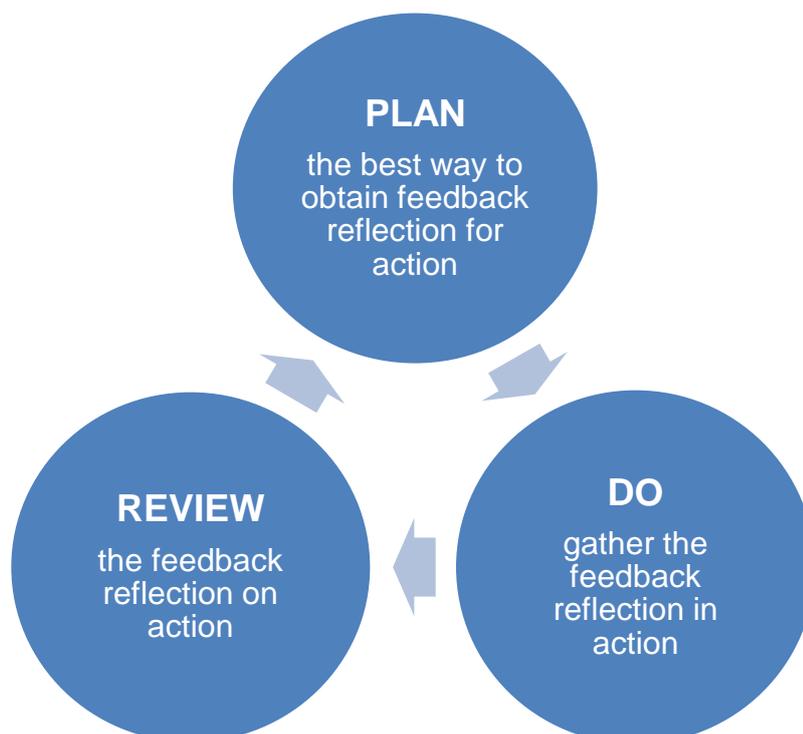
Plan: reflection for action

Do: reflection in action

Review: reflection on action

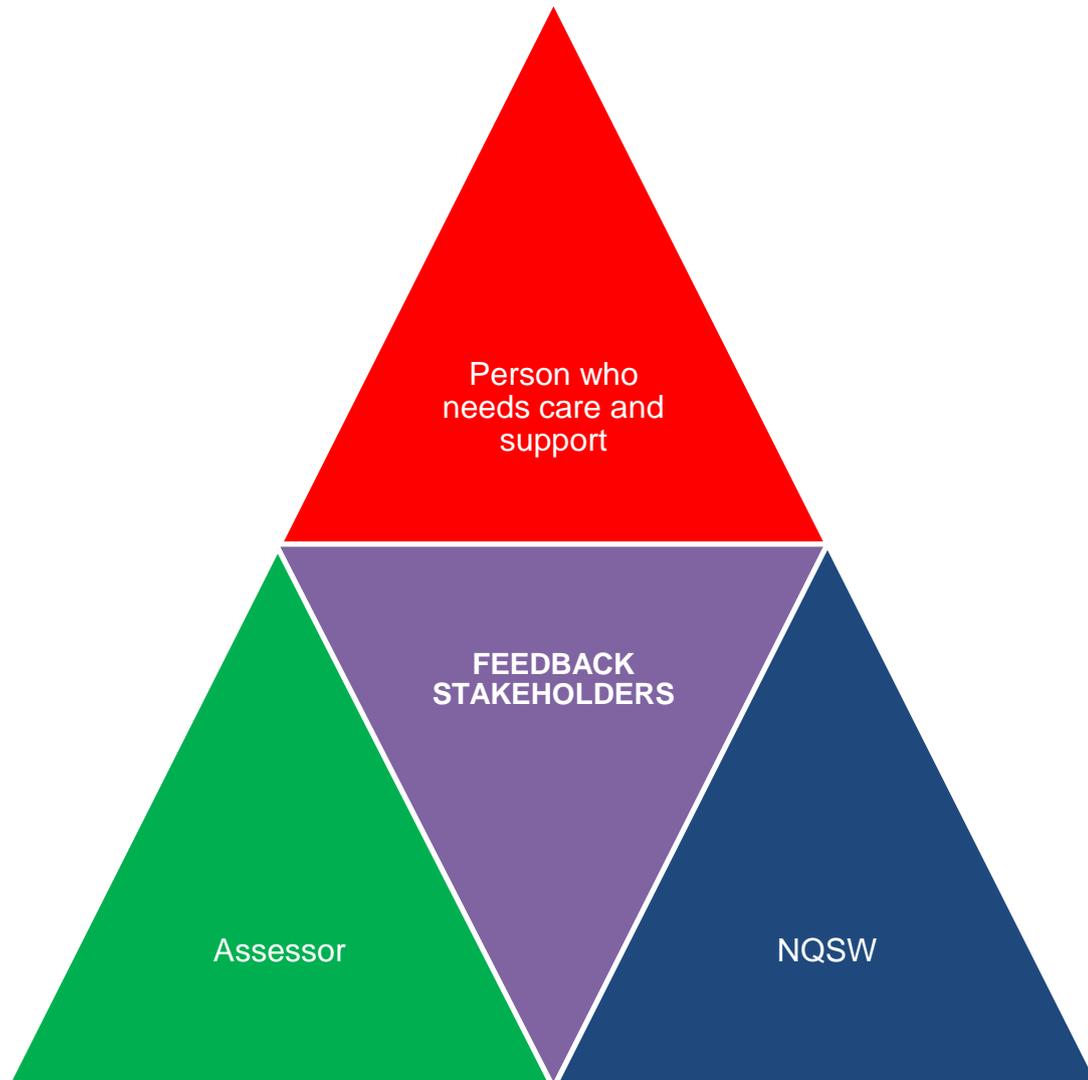
In order to promote effective reflective practice and good practice in seeking feedback, this reflective cycle demonstrates the importance of employing reflective practice techniques in:

- planning to gather feedback
- gathering the feedback
- debriefing and reflecting on the feedback and how it can be used



Stakeholders in the feedback process

There are three key stakeholders in the feedback process:



3x3 approach

Recognising the three key stakeholders and the three stage process to gathering feedback can be referred to as the 3x3 model of feedback. The best quality and deepest levels of feedback are achieved when all three stakeholders are involved in all three stages of the feedback process. .

Ensuring that NQSWs are clear about the importance of feedback from people who need care and support

See [resource two](#) for more information

It is vital that practitioners do not view obtaining feedback about their practice from service users as simply a task which needs to be completed as part of their ASYE. Where NQSWs are involved in regular workshops or action learning sets as part of their programme, the importance of feedback from people who need care and support should form part of these workshops. Examples of issues to be covered in such sessions include:

- The centrality of feedback to the development of critical reflection –in terms of both learning and assessment
- Approaches to gathering and receiving feedback
- The challenges and barriers to obtaining useful feedback
- [The principles of gathering feedback from people who use services and those that care for them](#)
- What constitutes feedback: the importance of both formal and informal feedback
- Methods for obtaining feedback
- How to make use of feedback

To ensure that practitioners take a holistic and personalised approach to seeking feedback it is useful to encourage them to develop an individual feedback plan which they can reflect on as the year progresses and they obtain feedback. Guidance for NQSWs on developing a feedback plan is included in the [‘Anya’ ASYE case study](#).

It is useful to ask NQSWs to reflect on their feedback plan – specifically exploring where they may have avoided seeking feedback. This could highlight areas where the NQSW should actively seek feedback. The guidance offered on seeking feedback in difficult situations could be useful to share with NQSWs.

Whilst understanding the importance of seeking feedback and reflecting fully on how to obtain feedback is important for NQSWs, perhaps the most important issue is ensuring that NQSWs use the feedback effectively to enhance their reflection and evidence analysis of their own practice.

Feedback should be discussed as part of reflective supervision and the NQSW should be encouraged to reflect on the feedback and to develop a plan about how they will use the feedback in their future practice. The following questions can be useful to encourage reflection on the feedback received:

- How do you think the person being supported felt about giving this feedback?
- What difference do you think being involved in providing feedback made to the person?

- What surprised you about the feedback?
- How does the feedback make you feel?
- How might these feelings impact on your practice?
- What might you do differently as a result of the feedback?

Supporting assessors to make effective use of feedback from people who need care and support

See [resource three](#) for more information

It is important that assessors do not view feedback from people who need care and support as simply a requirement of the assessment, but that they recognise the centrality of formal and informal feedback in both supporting the NQSW to develop their practice and in carrying out a holistic assessment.

Assessors should be familiar with the College of Social Work [principles of gathering feedback from people who use services and those that care for them](#).

Part of the standardisation and quality assurance of assessments should address how feedback has been obtained and utilised by the assessor.

Assessors need to be aware that:

- The importance of feedback from people who need care and support should be outlined at all stages of the assessed and supported year. For example, it should be included in the learning agreement and discussed at each review.
- Feedback can be both formal and informal and both should be equally valued
- Holistic assessment involves a recognition of the centrality of the impact of feedback on practice. The feedback should also be sought in a holistic way.
- People who need care and support have a valuable role in assessing the NQSW's practice and seeking feedback is vital in ensuring that this role is valued.
- Obtaining feedback straight after an observation may meet the needs of the NQSW and the assessor but may not be the most appropriate way to seek feedback from the person being supported.
- Some feedback may be important for other purposes – for example if the feedback provides insights into systems and processes or agency policy and practice. NQSWs and assessors will need to ensure that the responsibility for passing on this feedback appropriately is clear.

Supporting people who need care and support to provide feedback

It is important that people who need care and support understand why they are being asked for feedback and how this feedback will be used.

The way that people are informed about their role in providing feedback will depend on their specific needs, particularly in terms of communication and capacity.

However, general principles include:

- The person should be given a free choice about if and how they provide feedback
- Information on how the feedback will be used should be provided
- People should be clear that the feedback they provide will not affect the service they receive in any way

An example resource to share with people who need support and care is included in [tool 1](#). This can be personalised and adapted in a range of ways.

References

Killian, J. and Todnem, G. (1991) *Reflective judgement concepts of justification and their relationship to age and education*. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 2(2) pp. 89-116.

Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals think in action*. (London) Temple Smith.