

The assessors and supervisors toolkit

Roles and responsibilities

Main themes

The transition from student to qualified practitioner is one of the most significant and challenging changes that any professional makes. This was recognised in 2015 by the introduction of the **knowledge and skills statement for social workers in adult services (KSS)**, which sets out the outcomes for the **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)** and provide employers with a consistent framework for their important task of supporting and assessing NQSWs in their first year of practice.

The social work ASYE – guidance for NQSWs outlines the benefits to both practitioners and employers of the ASYE. NQSWs moving from education into a frontline team can experience a sense of shock when they face the complexity, pace, newness and pressures of their new work place. By combining **assessment** and **support**, the ASYE framework enables new social workers to gain confidence and skills as they address the challenges of the transition. At the same time, it helps employers to develop and retain staff who can practise more autonomously and make sound professional judgements.

The **knowledge and skills statement for social workers in adult services (KSS)** states what NQSWs should be able to do at the end of the ASYE. It fits within the generic Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). The progression of NQSWs is assessed against both the KSS and the PCF throughout their first year in practice. Two key tools are used in this. The **record of support**

and **progressive assessment (RSPA)** is completed by the supervisor/assessor and the **critical reflection log (CRL)** is completed by the NQSW. Together they provide the evidence that the NQSW has reached the expected standards of the ASYE whilst receiving the support of a protected caseload, time for study, regular reflective supervision and a programme of learning activities. **Overview of the ASYE framework for adult services and recording and evidencing the ASYE** are flowcharts which illustrate the framework.

The ASYE is employer-led within a nationally agreed framework of standards and expectations. This includes the progressive assessment decision you, as supervisor/assessor are asked to make about your NQSW. This can seem a considerable responsibility, and make you feel isolated. The information and resources in this **ASYE assessors and supervisors' toolkit** explore the additional skills you may need to develop to feel more confident. The toolkit includes sections on **holistic assessment**, the **professional supervisory relationship** and **recording progressive assessment decisions**.

It also outlines the framework for your own development as a supervisor or assessor. Currently the standard is that of **practice development educator** although a **knowledge and skills statement and practice supervisors** is currently under development. There is more information in the section on **CPD and leadership for ASYE supervisors and assessors**.

A useful first step for you as a supervisor or assessor is to understand the main elements of your role. The supervisor or assessor is responsible for the support and progressive assessment of the NQSW, and the recommendation of an outcome at the end of the ASYE. To do this, you must:

- ensure the support and assessment arrangements identified in the record of support and progressive assessment are in place for the NQSW
- undertake a professional assessment of the NQSW's capability against KSS and the PCF
- record the assessment of the NQSW's progress using the record of support and progressive assessment (RSPA) provide a professional recommendation which can be used for internal moderation and the final assessment decision
- take account of your own continuing professional development

You'll be supported in this by the relationships and roles undertaken by others in your organisation and/or local partnership. These are likely to include:

Line manager – who provides case management and accountability for the NQSW's work

Supervisor/assessor – a registered social worker who provides reflective supervision and learning, and makes the progressive assessment decision about the NQSW

Mentor – who provides supplementary reflective supervision and learning, but the final progressive assessment decision is made by the line manager

ASYE coordinator – who is responsible for the delivery of the ASYE scheme, including communication with senior managers and local partners, ensuring support and training are in place for both the NQSWs and supervisors or assessors. They'll be the first

port of call when there are any problems to address.

HR advisor – the employment of NQSWs may be linked to outcome of the progressive assessment decision, so the HR Advisor manages temporary contracts issued, the relationship with normal probationary periods, and the consequences of an NQSW not passing the assessment including possible fitness to practise referrals to the social work regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Line manager of supervisor/assessor/ NQSW line manager – whatever management arrangements exist around the NQSW, the line manager of the staff involved provides a link into the senior levels of the organisation where the ASYE scheme could be part of wider policies, e.g. to develop and retain staff (both NQSWs and their supervisors), to raise professional standards, to promote wellbeing.

Adults principal social worker – who is responsible for taking a strategic lead and oversight of the delivery of ASYE.

These roles, together with the functions of internal and external moderation in the ASYE framework are explored in the **strategic approaches to support, supervision and assessment** section of this toolkit.

It's important to be aware that, in some schemes, the three functions of line management, supervision and assessment are carried out by one person, the NQSW's line manager, but in others the roles may be split into two i.e. line manager and supervisor, assessor or mentor. Therefore, right from the start, it'll be essential to determine:

- which of the main functions you will be responsible for (i.e. as line manager/supervisor/assessor/mentor?)
- what steps you need to take to establish constructive lines of communication with staff who are providing the other key functions

- what information about this needs to be recorded in the RSPA

Further Information

As an ASYE supervisor or assessor, your prime focus is likely to be your supervisory relationship with your NQSW. However, you may want to find out more about your local scheme/partnership and how your individual decisions about your NQSW's practice will be endorsed internally and externally.

- **ASYE frequently asked questions** gives you more detailed information about the expectations of employers' ASYE schemes and the process of endorsing the decisions made by supervisors or assessors to support national consistency.
- **A framework for external and internal moderation** gives a visual overview of moderation.
- **Key messages from the national moderation panel** is produced twice a year. The panel, which meets in Spring and Autumn, provides scrutiny of ASYE at a national level by reviewing partnership external moderation reports and sampling 5% of assessments.
- **The Standards for employers of Social Workers in England** outline the expectations of employers to support NQSWs in the ASYE.
- Concerns regarding the fitness to practise of NQSWs should be referred to the **HCPC**.
- **ASYE Guide for independent sector employers** is specialist ASYE guidance for voluntary and independent organisations. There's also Additional guidance on NQSW roles that will provide sufficient professional activity for NQSWs to meet the requirements of the ASYE.
- Updates for supervisors or assessors and all staff involved with ASYE can be found our monthly **social work briefings**.

Self audit checklist

- Have you read completing the record of support and progressive assessment - supporting guidance (RSPA)
- Do the local arrangements for supervision in mean you are working in conjunction with your NQSW's line manager or supervisor/assessor/mentor? Have you taken steps to communicate with the other person involved to clarify roles and expectations?
- Who are the key personnel you need to contact if you have any questions/concerns – ASYE scheme co-ordinator, HR etc?
- Has your line manager been informed about the scheme? What role are you expecting them to play? Have you, or anyone else, discussed this with them?
- What support is available for you in your role as ASYE supervisor or assessor?