



Internal moderation

Supporting guidance

Internal moderation: Supporting guidance

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Overview

The model described in this guidance document has been developed by a group of employers who have consulted widely across the sector. The model outlines an internal moderation process to confirm the assessment outcome for each NQSW at the end of the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE).

Internal moderation is a key element of the national system of quality assurance incorporated within the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services 2015. The purpose of the national quality assurance system is to give the profession confidence that employers' judgements are consistent across the country.

The internal moderation process confirms the assessment outcome on behalf of the employer through reviewing and scrutinising the assessment decisions of individuals. Responsibility for the final ASYE assessment judgement does not lie with any individual employee of the organisation alone (e.g. the assessor, the line manager of the NQSW, ASYE co-ordinator).

The process is relevant for all organisations whether they are a large local authority with a significant number of NQSWs undertaking the ASYE, or a small independent or voluntary organisation employing one NQSW every few years.

Guidance will be developed to demonstrate how small organisations can link with larger ASYE programmes run by organisations or partnerships.

Purpose of internal moderation

Internal moderation combines two distinct activities:

A - Confirming the assessment outcome through scrutiny and challenge.

B - Moderation.

A- Confirming the assessment outcome through scrutiny and challenge.

- To confirm the formal decision for ASYE on behalf of the employer or employers party to the internal moderation process.
- To ensure the assessment decision has been scrutinised through an agreed process and in line with nationally agreed standards (see below¹).
- To take action if there are concerns that the assessor's judgement is not accurate, valid, robust and consistent with the expected standards (see below at 5).

B - Moderation

- To take an overview of the quality and consistency of assessment decisions and give feedback to assessors and the organisation, in order to promote high standards and the continuous development of the ASYE process.
- To ensure all assessment decisions are made in line with the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services, underpinned by the PCF capabilities, and are therefore eligible to be recognised nationally.
- To provide samples/materials/evidence to the partnership moderation process and external moderation process and contribute to these processes as required.
- To receive and act on feedback from the partnership and external moderation process.

Internal moderation standards

1. An internal moderation process

Every ASYE employer should have a formal internal moderation process to review and scrutinise ASYE assessment decisions and confirm the final employer's judgement. NQSWs and assessors should be informed that the final decision as to whether the NQSW has met the requirements of the ASYE will be confirmed by the internal moderation process. NQSWs and assessors should be provided with specified timescales as to when outcomes will be made available.

2. Overall management and delivery of the ASYE assessment process

A principal social worker or senior manager nominated by the organisation should be responsible for overall management of the ASYE assessment process. In some organisations, elements of this work can be delegated to an ASYE co-ordinator. The key tasks include:

2.1 Ensuring the employer has a process for allocating, developing and supporting a sufficient number of ASYE assessors. ASYE assessors should aspire to meeting practice development educator capabilities. There should be mechanisms for supporting and developing assessors and managing those who are not able to meet these standards.

2.2 Monitoring the progress of NQSWs over the course of ASYE and identifying issues relating to support, development, capability and assessment. This role can be delegated to an ASYE coordinator.

¹ For small organisations where there is no other social worker other arrangements may be made. These include asking for a social worker, familiar with the ASYE, from another organisation to moderate the recommendation or to formally join the ASYE moderation panel of another organisation.

2.3 Ensuring reviews of the NQSW are completed to agreed timescales and their progress is monitored in order to ensure that their work is presented in a timely way to the internal moderation process.

3. Management of the internal moderation process

In addition to the tasks outlined in 2, the principal social worker or senior manager nominated by the organisation should be responsible for the management and co-ordination of the internal moderation process.

3.1 They will convene an internal moderation process which will be accountable (on behalf of the employer) for the assessment decisions.

3.2 A minimum of two people should participate in the internal moderation decision-making.

3.3 Assessment decisions should be reviewed by a registered social worker who should aspire to meeting practice development educator capabilities.

3.4 Other members of the moderation process who are not registered social workers may share the role of scrutinising the quality of the ASYE process.

3.5 The process will ideally involve face to face meetings, but virtual meetings may also be possible, depending on local circumstances.

4. Internal moderation: Review and scrutiny of the ASYE assessment decisions

The internal moderation process should ensure that:

4.1 Confirmation of the assessment outcomes is based on:

- a scrutiny of all ASYE assessment decisions made in the organisation
- a full reading of the evidence/material submitted by each NQSW and assessor (except professional documentation which will be verified by the assessor).

4.2 Each set of evidence/material is read and reviewed by at least one other person who is:

- a member of the moderation process and not the assessor
- a registered social worker.

4.3 The purpose of reading the evidence for internal moderation of the assessment outcome is:

- to ensure that the requirements of the ASYE have been met (e.g. protected caseload, supervision etc.) and that the evidence/material submitted is sufficient (e.g. the correct number of direct observations have been completed). (This element will be recorded in a Quality Checklist. This can be assessed by any member involved in the process).
- to ensure the assessment judgement made by the assessor is accurate, valid and robust, and in line with the PCF ASYE capabilities and Knowledge and Skills Statement (This element will be recorded in review of assessment decision checklist. This can only be assessed by a registered social worker).
- to contribute to the gathering of information and evidence for feedback about the ASYE process to the organisation including, for example, the capabilities of assessors and the quality of practice demonstrated by NQSWs (This element should take into account that there may be other mechanisms for gathering this information both internally and externally).

5. Reviewing the assessment decision

If the internal moderators do not agree with the assessor's judgement or deem that there is not sufficient evidence to support the assessor's decision, agreed action should be taken within a given timescale.

In relation to the NQSW, this may take the form of:

5.1 A request for more evidence.

5.2 A reassessment with a view to bringing the assessment up to the expected standard

5.3 A request that a second assessor reassesses the evidence and makes an assessment decision on behalf of the organisation

In relation to the assessor, this may indicate a learning and development need. Agreed action to support the assessor's development should be planned and enabled.

6. Recording and reporting.

Common templates/checklists² should be used to guide the reviewer(s) and contribute to maintaining consistency in internal moderation. These templates will enable information about quality and themes to be collected. They may be sent to the external moderation process. They may also be used to review organisational processes and develop strategies to enhance the quality of the ASYE process within the organisation.

7. Capability issues.

Confirmation of the employer decision should be fully integrated into the employer's Human Resources' (HR) processes and internal activities should be co-ordinated to ensure final decisions are communicated to HR/team managers/NQSWs in a timely way. HR capability processes should be used in the event of the NQSW failing the ASYE with the expectation that any capability issues will be managed separately from, and in advance of, their final assessment, and therefore will not be considered by internal moderation.

² See internal assessment and moderation template attached to this document

Internal assessment and moderation templates

Part 1: Quality checklist

(can be completed by any member of the internal moderation process)

Please confirm that all the requirements of ASYE have been met and that the evidence/material submitted is sufficient.

1. Have all parts of the record of support and progressive assessment been completed?	Yes	No
A - Support and assessment agreement.		
B - Interim reviews at three and six months.		
C - Final assessment report.		
D - Evidence/confirmation that supervision has taken place at the specified frequency?		
E - Evidence/confirmation that the NQSW's workload was reduced?		
F - Evidence/confirmation that the NQSW has attended additional workshops and/or has a record of how 10% protected time was used?		
Comments		

2. Have all parts of the NQSW's critical reflection log been completed?	Yes	No
A - Preparation for the support and assessment agreement meeting.		
B - Critical reflection for the three month review.		
C - Critical reflection for the six month review		
D - Critical reflection for the final review		
E - PDPs for: 0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-13 months and end of ASYE		
F - Are there at least three direct observations?		
G - Are there at least three pieces of feedback from other professionals?		
H - Are there at least three pieces of feedback from people in need of care and support?		
I - Has the assessor signed off the NQSW's professional documentation?		

Comments

3. Have any organisational or support issues affected the NQSW during the ASYE? For example, have there been any issues in the provision of support and reflective supervision, workload relief or professional development time (as identified in the support and assessment agreement)? Please give details and current position.

4. Have any employment or capability issues affected the NQSW during the ASYE? Please give details and current position.

5. Are there any themes or issues from the quality checklist you would like to feed back to the moderation process?

Part 2: Review of the assessor's decision
(to be undertaken by a registered social worker only)

After reading all the material submitted, please comment on the assessor's final report and their recommendation of pass or fail.

1. Does the assessor provide clear evidence of why they have made their recommendation?	Yes	No
A - Is it consistent with the assessment criteria?		
B - Accurate: Is it consistent with the expectations of the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the PCF capabilities?		
C - Valid: Is it based on evidence that reflects the breadth of the NQSW's work throughout the year and their progression?		
D - Robust: Is it based on evidence that is checked and consistent and leads to a defensible judgement?		
E - Sufficient: Is it based on a sufficiently broad and varied range of different types of evidence?		
Comments		

2. Do you agree that the evidence you have reviewed is consistent with the assessor's recommendation?	Yes	No
Please provide additional comments to support your decision		
If you do not agree with the assessor's recommendation, please identify what further evidence/action is required		

3. Are there any themes or issues from your review of the assessment decision you would like to feed back to the moderation process?

Part 3: Evaluation and feedback

1. Do you consider this evidence/material to be outstanding and worthy of use as an exemplar? Please give details/identify what should be shared.

2. Feedback to the assessor:

Is there any feedback you would like to give to the assessor to assist in their future professional development? Please give details.

3. Feedback to the NQSW:

Is there any feedback you would like to give to the NQSW to assist in their future professional development? Please give details.

4. Feedback to the organisation:

Is there any feedback you would like to give to the organisation to assist in the future delivery of the ASYE? Please give details.