

COVID-19 and the ASYE – frequently asked questions

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As this situation is so fast moving, we'll continue to monitor the queries that come in and will update these frequently asked questions (FAQs) on a regular basis.

1. What should happen if an NQSWs goes into self-isolation and/or needs to be out of work due to having the virus or childcare commitments and it delays their progress with the ASYE?

Any deferral of ASYE support and assessment because of personal or local organisational arrangements to deal with COVID-19 will be seen as a legitimate deferral. Any deferrals will need to be logged on the portal as an extended projected completion date of an NQSW, giving the reason for the deferral. This can be done by amending the original projected completion date at the appropriate review point in the NQSW record. If you require any support in completing this action, please email the appropriate ASYE inbox and we will be happy to assist you.

2. What should happen if ASYE reviews and direct observations (DOs) cannot take place as planned due to the impact of COVID-19 on operational arrangements? This may include absence within the team, staff being required to fulfil other obligations.

If a review or direct observation cannot take place as planned because of the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery, please log this and the reasons for delay on the portal.

3. Is there an alternative for direct observations if they cannot take place face to face?

If your organisation is changing the way that it is working with service users to minimise the risk of spreading infection i.e. telephone or video link meetings, these can legitimately be used as evidence of a direct observation.

4. Q: If ASYE is to be extended beyond 12 months this will have an impact on the NQSWs salary in some cases?

This is a question for individual employers. Employers have various contractual arrangements for newly qualified social workers undertaking the ASYE. In the event of it being necessary to delay the assessment and outcome of the ASYE due to COVID-19 employers will need to assess the impact on individual employees regarding their contract and terms of employment and make decisions accordingly. Obviously, the priority for employers at this time is to seek to maintain stability in their workforce as much as possible.

5. Could we adjust the length of the CRLs and RSPAs, in terms of word length, so these could still be achieved under the pressures we are facing? This would then enable the support to NQSWs to continue to progress.

We understand that there is increased pressure on all services at this time. We would therefore advise that the focus of the Critical Reflection Log (CRL) and the Record of Support and Progressive Assessment (RSPA) should be on quality rather than word count. The impact of this approach on the quality of ASYE portfolios can then be monitored through moderation, once this is up and running again, and any findings will be fed into the upcoming review of the ASYE.

6. What is the impact upon NQSWs who's 2 year window to complete the ASYE programme will be impeded if they are required to pause their ASYE?

As an example, those who qualified in summer 2018, started their ASYE in summer 2019, are now 6 months into their ASYE, but are pausing for 6 months (due to COVID-19) - meaning they would not be able to complete their ASYE for a further 1 year.

Any deferrals at this time due to the impact of COVID-19 are legitimate deferrals and therefore will not negatively impact on NQSWs being able to complete their ASYE at a later date.