

National evaluation criteria and NEC+

To support the continuous development and the quality of an ASYE programme

What are the national evaluation criteria (NEC)?

- The NEC were introduced in 2018 in child and family ASYE, were subsequently made available for adults ASYE and have been revised since.
- The NEC are developed from the ASYE framework, the employer standards, innovative practice identified by employers and our learning from national level quality assurance activities, such as our quality assurance visits. As the information and evidence from these sources develops, so will the evaluation criteria.
- The NEC provides a benchmark for employers to ensure their ASYE programme provides all the elements for a successful programme. They demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity for all NQSWs and ensuring that the NQSW experience is at the centre of the ASYE.
- Criteria that are one step beyond the NEC (known as NEC+) have been developed by the ASYE quality assurance framework working group, made up of employers and Skills for Care. They set out the areas of a programme where an employer may demonstrate having gone beyond the level of the NEC in developing the NQSWs experience of their support, assessment and outcomes.

Whole profession approach

- The NEC and NEC+ applies to all programmes across both child and family and adult settings.
- This is in line with the approach that the ASYE is a 'one profession' programme. Where necessary, they will reflect separate requirements in both service areas.

A. The NQSW experience is central to the ASYE. Arrangements are in place to ensure that:

ASYE: National evaluation criteria (revised 2021)

A1. Feedback is proactively sought through mechanisms such as the 360 evaluation tool. NQSWs are active participants, rather than passive recipients.

A2. NQSWs, along with other stakeholders (i.e. ASYE supervisors/assessors and people who draw on care and support and their carers) are able to make a meaningful contribution to ASYE quality assurance and continuous improvement.

A3. NQSWs' wellbeing is prioritised from the beginning of the ASYE and NQSWs are made aware of the support structures available to them within the organisation from the outset and how to access this support, such as buddying and peer support networks.

A4. Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the ASYE programme, ensuring that all NQSWs are offered an ASYE experience which is tailored to their individual needs, including cultural and learning needs and identities.

A5. ASYE programmes have policies/procedures in place to ensure NQSWs and those supporting them practice from an anti-racist perspective.

A6. ASYE programmes have an equality and diversity framework in place to ensure NQSWs and those supporting them are not treated unfairly or discriminated against because of their background or characteristics.

A7. The organisation has mechanisms in place to gather and monitor data that is reflective of the diversity of the organisation's workforce. They take action where necessary so that employees from a diverse background are not disadvantaged.

A8. NQSWs are encouraged to engage with the national ASYE framework via the quarterly NQSW online forums.

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A9. A structure is in place for providing specific and impactful support for promoting the NQSWs' health and wellbeing across all stages of the programme, the shape of this support has been influenced by NQSWs.

A10. A structure of post-ASYE learning and development support is in place and is being developed based on feedback. There is evidence that it has supported the retention of NQSWs in their subsequent years in social work practice.

A11. An equality impact assessment has led to the implementation of an action plan that is improving the tailored support experience of NQSWs with protected characteristics and/or specific support needs.

B. The ASYE programme is delivered in accordance with the ASYE framework and employer standards. Arrangements are in place to ensure that:

ASYE: National evaluation criteria (revised 2021)

B1. The transition from student to NQSW clearly identifies the individual support and development needs of NQSWs.

B2. Every NQSW has a professional development plan (PDP).

B3. The support and development needs of NQSWs are clearly identified, recorded and reviewed at each stage of the ASYE through a PDP.

B4. NQSWs receive regular reflective supervision (i.e. weeks 1-6 weekly; week 7 to 6 months, fortnightly and monthly thereafter) with a focus on critical reflection, lasting a minimum of 1.5 hours.

B5. NQSWs receive workload relief appropriate to their stage in the programme (the NQSW's workload is the equivalent of up to 90% of what is expected of a confident social worker in the same role in their second/third year, weighted over the course of the year by such things as case complexity, risk and growing proficiency).

B6. Protected development time is made available to NQSWs (i.e. 2 days per calendar month or pro rata if working reduced hours) to undertake CPD activities. ASYE dedicated training events and other learning.

B7. The support needs of supervisors/ assessors are addressed in ways appropriate to them. Employers should make it possible for them to access peer support through such things as action learning sets and ASYE assessor forums.

B8. NQSWs have access to learning opportunities relevant to their individual and collective development needs.

B9. Supervisors/assessors have access to learning opportunities relevant to their individual and collective development needs.

B10. All aspects of the ASYE programme place emphasis on the importance of critically reflective practice.

B11. There is an emphasis on progressive development and assessment evidence is provided by different people, in different situations and over the duration of the ASYE programme.

B12. Feedback gathered from people, including children and young people who draw on care and support, through direct observations is addressed within the assessment process.

B13. NQSWs and their supervisors/ assessors have a clear understanding of what is required of them in relation to the sufficiency and quality of evidence.

B14. Assessment outcomes are accurate, valid, robust and sufficient.

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B15. There are policies and procedures in place to make it clear what an individual NQSW can expect in terms of support and assessment and there is evidence of the review of these policies.

B16 Assessor/supervisor's practice in providing critical reflection supervision is quality assured on a regular basis and feedback provided to support their development.

B17 Assessor/supervisors are provided with protected time to undertake their ASYE responsibilities, including writing their review reports.

C. The ASYE programme ensures that Post Qualifying Standards (PQS) and Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) underpin professional practice.
Arrangements are in place to ensure that:

ASYE: National evaluation criteria (revised 2021)

- C1. Links are in place with partner universities so that students have understanding around the PQS in advance of their graduation.
- C2. NQSWs are informed about the PQS and the ASYE and the associated organisational expectations as part of the recruitment process.
- C3. All those involved in the ASYE (NQSWs, supervisors/assessors and managers) receive the support they need to understand their role in relation to the development of social work practice underpinned by the PQS and PCF.
- C4. The PQS and PCF are mapped against all the available learning and development opportunities provided by the organisation in relation to the ASYE.
- C5. ASYE assessment is based on the PQS and PCF.

ASYE: One step beyond the NEC (known as NEC+)

- C6. The robust assessment of NQSWs involves people who draw on care and support in a meaningful, supportive and safe way (other than through providing feedback evidence in the portfolio template)

D. The ASYE programme is integrated with the wider organisational system

ASYE: National evaluation criteria (revised 2021)

D1. The organisation takes ownership of the supervisor's/assessor's assessment recommendations through an internal moderation panel.

D2. A clear and transparent quality assurance and continuous improvement process is in place within the organisation. Identified actions for developing a programme are reviewed.

D3. The ASYE is embedded within the workforce strategy and forms part of clearly defined career and CPD pathways for qualified social workers.

D4. The ASYE is integrated within human resources and performance management processes.

D5. Senior management are aware of their key role as leaders in championing the success of the programme. This includes ensuring that NQSWs are not overburdened with their caseloads and that protected CPD and development time is adhered to.

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D6. A transparent and robust process is in place for NQSWs to challenge an organisation's assessment decisions or any part of the assessment process. The process includes a support structure for the NQSWs and there is evidence of the support and process working effectively.

D7. A robust complaints procedure is in place and there is evidence of acting on complaints in a supportive way.

D8. Retention data post-ASYE is recorded and applied to develop the organisation's retention strategies and there is evidence that the ASYE has had an impact on retention.