

ASYE Programme

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for Newly Qualified Social Workers

Kristina Mountain, ASYE Co-ordinator



Background

This guidance is to support Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) in Adults and Children's Services at Lancashire County Council, Assessors for the ASYE programme and Line Managers who have NQSWs within their Team.

The Assessed and Supported Year (ASYE) programme started in 2012. It is a 12-month programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) to help them make the transition from qualifying education to the world of professional social work in their first year of employment. The ASYE programme is mandatory within Lancashire County Council for all NQSWs who are registered with Social Work England.

The ASYE is funded via Skills for Care and they have recently refreshed the programme [ASYE \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk). From the 1st September 2022 the paperwork has been changed. This guidance will refer to the new paperwork, however, will still be relevant to any NQSWs completing the old paperwork. The LCC Intranet currently only has the old ASYE paperwork and the new ASYE paperwork is stored on Teams, as we transition the new paperwork will be transferred on the Intranet by September 2023. For any queries regarding ASYE paperwork please contact the ASYE Co-ordinator, Kristina Mountain practicelearning@lancashire.gov.uk

Purpose of the ASYE

The expectation is that the knowledge and skills gained through qualifying education will be consolidated in the first year of practice, and that specialist knowledge and skills will be developed in relation to the employment setting and service user group. The programme is not just about assessment; it is about the NQSWs right to a supported and protected year in which they can find their feet in the social work setting with all its complexities and challenges.

The ASYE is a year of assessment by a designated Assessor, where the expectation is that NQSWs will meet certain expectations as set out in the Post Qualifying Standards: The Knowledge and Skills Statement (for Adults see Appendix A and Children's Appendix B) and the Professional Capabilities Framework (Appendix C). You may also make reference to the Social Work England Regulatory Professional Standards (Appendix D).



Full documents can be found at

PCF www.basw.co.uk

KSS/ PQS Children's [Social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

KSS/PQS Adults [Adult social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

SWE Standards [Professional standards - Social Work England](http://www.socialworkengland.org)

For the new paperwork NQSW's have to complete a PQS/KSS self-assessment tool at four stages within the ASYE programme.

Eligibility Criteria

All NQSWs who are employed by Lancashire County Council in a Social Work role are eligible to complete the ASYE programme, provided that they are registered on the programme within **two years** of completing a recognised social work degree programme. We would consider people who qualified over two years dependant on their previous experience. If an existing employee moves into a Social Work role then they would also be eligible for the programme.

- Transferring ASYE Programmes

If a NQSW has started the ASYE at another organisation they can be supported to complete the programme with Lancashire County Council. The NQSW will need to provide evidence of their previous portfolio to the ASYE Co-ordinator to agree what work is outstanding. Equally, if a NQSW moves to another organisation they could discuss taking their portfolio with them and information can be provided if requested by the new employer.

- Timeframe and Part Time NQSW's

The expectation is that a full time NQSW will complete the ASYE programme over 12 months, it can not be completed in less than 12 months. The ASYE programme can be extended, on a pro-rata basis, beyond 12 months if the NQSW works part-time. Where the NQSW has had an extended period of leave or sickness, a request to extend the ASYE can be made (please refer to section 9) by the Assessor completing an Extension Request Form (Appendix E). An extension cannot be provided because an NQSW is not meeting the capabilities.



Academy and Registering for the ASYE

Within Lancashire County Council there is an Academy programme for all Social Workers. In Children's Services, the Social Work Academy is open to all NQSW's; and in Adults there is the Social Care Academy which is extended to include all qualified and non-qualified social care roles. Both Academies consist of an induction followed by a 12 month programme of continued support, learning and development which includes ASYE Recall sessions at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. These Recalls will include some formal learning and some time for the NQSW to complete portfolio work.

Line Managers make the referral for attendance to the Academy and at this point should be identifying an Assessor for the NQSW. The Assessor does not need to be a Practice Educator, though is usually a senior practitioner or Team Manager.

After attending the initial ASYE induction session through the Academy the NQSW will be sent a link to register for the ASYE programme. The NQSW and Assessor must then arrange an Initial Professional Development Meeting (IPDM) and a separate meeting to complete the Support and Assessment Agreement document. The date of the Support and Assessment Agreement Meeting is registered with Skills for Care and will be the start date for the NQSWs 12 months ASYE.

<p>Before the NQSW starts ASYE programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Manager to register NQSW for the Academy Adults go to <u>Adult Social Care Academy (lancscc.net)</u> • Children's send an email to <u>SocialWorkAcademy@lancashire.gov.uk</u> • Line Manager to identify the Assessor for NQSW • Assessor attends mandatory training • NQSW attends the Academy which the ASYE Co-ordinator will attend to talk through the ASYE programme.
<p>Following the Academy Induction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A registration link will be sent out to be completed within two weeks of attending the Academy ASYE Induction. • NQSW completes PQS/KSS self-assessment • Assessor and NQSW to arrange Initial Professional Development Meeting (IPDM) and separate meeting to complete the Support and Assessment Agreement document. • Date of the Support and Assessment Meeting (SAA) recorded with Skills for Care as the start date for the ASYE programme. • Once registered with Skills for Care, links for LCC internal ASYE reflective workshops will be sent to NQSW. • NQSW completes Professional Development Plan



	(PDP) following the SAA Meeting.
3 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents to be completed by this point as shown on ASYE Timeline (Appendix F) NQSW to attend 3 month ASYE Recall
6 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents to be completed by this point as shown on ASYE Timeline (Appendix F) NQSW to attend 6 month ASYE Recall NQSW to complete the link they will be sent requesting the date that their 6 month review took place and Quality Assurance Feedback (QAF).
9 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 month review NQSW to attend 9 month ASYE Recall
10/11 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those undertaking the Presentation option will present to panel members Email will be sent to NQSW and Assessor with portfolio submission details
12 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents to be completed by this point as shown on ASYE Timeline (Appendix F) NQSW to attend 12 month ASYE Recall NQSW shares their final Critical Reflection Log with their Assessor, for Assessor to complete final report. NQSW meets with Assessor to review paperwork and ensure all completed ready for submission
End of ASYE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQSW submits the completed portfolio via email to ASYE.submission@lancashire.gov.uk Where additional evidence is required by the panel the portfolio will be deferred and NQSW contacted to advise of further evidence required Successful completion is recorded with Skills for Care and a certificate is provided. In Childrens the NQSW will be invited to attend an ASYE Celebration Event.

Role of the Assessor

The role of the Assessor is to support the NQSW, assess the evidence provided by the NQSW, complete reviews during the programme and ultimately recommend a pass or fail. If the Assessor is different to the line manager then they will share supervision and the line manager will have input in to the overall assessment of the NQSW.

Evidence will be built up and reviewed over the year to show sufficiency in a range of essential skills, knowledge and values. It is very important that the NQSW and their assessor familiarise themselves with the capabilities required at qualifying level.



Requirements of the ASYE

Skills for Care stipulate several basic expectations regarding the ASYE in relation to increased supervision, a reduced caseload and protected learning and development time.

- Caseload Management

By the end of the ASYE, a NQSW should have a workload equivalent to 90% of what is expected of a confident social worker in the same role in their second or third year of employment. For example, if an experienced Social Worker would usually work with 20 people, then by the end of the ASYE the NQSW would be expected to have around 18 people. The caseload needs to be weighted over the course of the year by things such as case complexity, risk and growing proficiency. Part time workers will have a caseload that is reduced according to the hours they work.

The NQSW's case load should be carefully managed; they should be assigned work at a level of complexity and risk that fits their experience. The NQSW's cases should be regularly discussed in supervision and the assessor should ensure the NQSW is managing their caseload and working safely. If the NQSW is struggling to complete the ASYE paperwork as a result of their caseload, the manager and the ASYE Co-ordinator need to be informed.

- Supervision

All NQSWs should receive weekly supervision for the first six weeks of employment, followed by fortnightly supervision for the remainder of the first six months, and at least monthly thereafter. Supervision should take place for a minimum of 90 minutes.

Regular, supportive and critically reflective supervision is essential for NQSWs in order to help them build emotional intelligence and effective professional relationships, develop good practice and exercise both professional judgement and discretion in decision-making. Therefore, the NQSW should have time for reflective supervision and not just case management supervision. Where the Assessor is different to the line manager, responsibility for supervision may be shared.

- Protected Development Time

Skills for Care set a requirement for social workers in their ASYE to have 10% of their work time as protected learning and development time. For a full time NQSW this equates to half a day per week, or some staff may take one day per fortnight, dependent on service need. All protected time should be negotiated between the NQSW and their Assessor/ Line Manager and must be recorded in the Support and Assessment Agreement document and evidence of these days recorded on the Supporting Information form.



The protected development time could include attending ASYE Recall Days, research and reading, shadowing colleagues, visiting other services, attendance and participation in critical reflective groups and also the completion of the ASYE paperwork. This time should be reviewed regularly in supervision and during review meetings.

Lancashire County Council offer ASYE Recall Days at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months, these days are a mixture of formal learning and time for the NQSW to work on their portfolio. In addition, there are also four ASYE Reflective Training sessions that should be attended as part of the protected development time. There are monthly drop-in sessions available to NQSWs to come and ask any questions in relation to their ASYE and portfolio work. All NQSWs also have membership to Research in Practice through the local authority.

- Final Critical Reflection Log and Presentation Option

Within the new paperwork at the end of the portfolio the NQSW needs to complete a final critical reflection log. This can be completed in two ways

- As a written critical reflection log (2000 words), or
- As a presentation (a 15 minute presentation and 10 minutes for questions and answers)

Whether the critical reflection log is submitted in writing or delivered through presentation, it must provide evidence of the NQSW's learning journey over the ASYE and the impact on their decision making. They must refer to theory, research, legislation, PCF and PQS (KSS) and contain a bibliography.

The presentation will be delivered to two panel members and a cohort of their peers. The NQSW must decide at the 6 month Recall which option they would like to select and inform the ASYE Co-ordinator. A date will then be provided for the presentation panel in line with their cohorts 10/11 month stage, it is therefore essential that the NQSW keeps on track with the ASYE programme.

At the 9 month Recall Day there will be support provided to those doing the presentation route. It will be recommended that the NQSW has a trial run through their presentation with their Assessor before presenting to the panel. The two panel members will complete an internal moderation form following the presentation, this form will be returned to the NQSW and their Assessor who must then insert it into the portfolio before submitting to panel at the end of the ASYE programme.



Support for Assessors

Assessors and Line Managers will be sent details of Assessor Training when they register the NQSW for the Academy. During the training, information is provided to Assessors on their role and the paperwork requirements. This training is mandatory for those Assessors who have not already attended. Alongside this, there is an informal ASYE Assessor drop-in session held every 2 months.

An ASYE Assessor group has been set up on Microsoft Teams so that Assessors have access to folders containing the ASYE paperwork and relevant documents and information can also be shared. Assessors can also raise queries through the Teams group as a way to seek additional support from other Assessors.

Assessors can also contact the ASYE Co-ordinator, Kristina Mountain, directly for any specific queries or Practice Development Managers (PDMs) in Children's Services or Lisa Gilleade-Smith in Adult Services.

Extension to ASYE

Skills for Care are clear in their guidance around extension to the ASYE. This can only be done in exceptional circumstances and due to a prolonged period of leave, for example; maternity, sickness over a two week period, or reasonable adjustments that have not been resolved resulting in the NQSW not been able to demonstrate the necessary standards. In these circumstances, the line manager and ASYE Co-ordinator, following discussion may consider extending or pausing the ASYE programme.

The ASYE cannot be extended where a NQSW is consistently failing to meet the required standards. If an extension is required the ASYE Assessor or line manager will need to contact the Practice Learning Team practicelearning@lancashire.gov.uk and complete an Extension Request Form (Appendix E). This must be returned to the ASYE Co-ordinator for approval.

Additional Needs, Concern or Failing ASYE

There is an expectation placed on the NQSW to highlight any additional needs or disability they have and for this to be recorded within the Support and Assessment Agreement document. Any difficulties in ensuring the appropriate level of support should be brought to the attention of the Team Manager and the ASYE Co-ordinator. It may be that reasonable adjustments are needed (please refer to LCC's [Disability policy \(lancsccl.net\)](http://lancsccl.net) and guidance on [Considering reasonable adjustments guide \(lancsccl.net\)](http://lancsccl.net)) or a referral to Occupational Health. If any equipment or software is required to support the NQSW then the ASYE Assessor should contact the ASYE Co-ordinator to discuss whether the ASYE programme can be 'paused' whilst the equipment is put in place and then restarted.



The assessor is responsible for identifying any concerns about practice and/or performance of a NQSW and discussing this with the NQSW, the line manager and ASYE programme co-ordinator at the earliest point. It is not necessary to wait for a formal review, or until the end of the ASYE year to highlight to a NQSWs that they are not meeting the required standards, and that the consequences of not reaching the required standards could lead to the NQSW failing the ASYE programme and/or being dismissed.

A supportive action plan should be put in place, with clear objectives and timeframes for when these need to be met. Additional supervisions will need to be put in place, if no improvements are made more formal action may need to be taken by the line manager.

- Probation

The probation period for Lancashire County Council staff is for 6 months from their start date of employment and can be extended if required, either prior to, or at the 6 month mark, it can not be done retrospectively. If there are performance concerns during probation, these should be addressed through the council's probation arrangements. Please refer to the Council's probationary procedures [Probation arrangements \(lancscc.net\)](http://lancscc.net) and guidance to [Monitor the probationary period \(lancscc.net\)](http://lancscc.net) and all staff should be aware of the Council's Code of Conduct [County council code of conduct \(lancscc.net\)](http://lancscc.net)

The ASYE review meetings should be used to clearly outline the standards required and where and how the NQSW is failing to meet them, if this is the case. The Assessors review should be discussed with the NQSW and Team Manager (if they are not the Assessor) and an action plan agreed to address any specific concerns. The Assessor should contact the Practice Learning Coordinator and the Team Manager may also notify Corporate HR.

If the NQSW is not on track and has received the required Programme's support arrangements then you should consider with your Line Manager whether to commence informal or formal capability procedures under the [Capability Procedure \(lancscc.net\)](http://lancscc.net) which applies to staff outside of the probationary period. In these circumstances the HR process would sit separately to the ASYE programme. The objective is to support the NQSW to reach the required standard and you and the NQSW must develop an Action Plan to support the NQSW, this may run parallel to the Action Plan for HR. It should be developed in conjunction with the NQSW and be:

- specific about the practice capability that is expected and reference the relevant assessment standard e.g PCF 1 and/ or KSS 9
- specific about the time-frame within which development is expected
- specific about when it will be reviewed

- clear about the learning opportunities that will be available to support the NQSW's development to meet the required standard

If the NQSW has continuous local authority service and has already completed the local authority probation period and there are concerns that they are failing the ASYE, the appropriate policy should be followed, e.g the Council's [Disciplinary policy and procedure \(lancscc.net\)](#) or [Capability Procedure \(lancscc.net\)](#)

In the case of an NQSW failing the ASYE programme, employers, managers and the Principal Social Worker (PSW) will need to consider appropriate options on a case-by-case basis. If concerns are raised about the NQSWs fitness to practise, the manager or the PSW should contact Social Work England.

- Appeals

If a NQSW fails their ASYE and this leads to dismissal, they may appeal in writing against dismissal under this scheme.

- Quality Assurance

Lancashire County Council will be implementing a 6 month Quality Assurance Feedback (QAF) to establish how the programme is running and to address any issues before the end of the ASYE.

NQSW and ASYE Assessors may also be randomly selected during or after the ASYE programme to complete the 360 Feedback questionnaire which is organised by Skills for Care. This is anonymised feedback which can be used by the organisation to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the programme and be used in annual Action Plans.

- Internal Panel

At the end of the 12 month programme the full portfolio must be submitted to be moderated by the Internal Moderation Panel. This panel is held every month and is attended by Team Managers from Children's and Adult Services. NQSWs will receive an email with details of how to virtually submit their portfolio to ASYE.submissions@lancashire.gov.uk a week before the panel is held, they must submit before the deadline. If a portfolio is received after the deadline this will automatically be deferred until the next panel date. Principal Social Workers will be notified of those who do not submit their portfolios.

NQSW's and Assessors will receive feedback from the panel and this may include recommendations for future learning and development. In some circumstances the panel may ask for more evidence to be provided, if any documents are missing or



incomplete the portfolio will be marked as deferred and you will be contacted about providing further evidence.

The Panel will aim to feedback to successful NQSWs as soon as possible following panel, however, do allow up to 4-6 weeks. Skills for Care will be notified and a certificate will be issued.

External Panel

The external panel meets every 4 months, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council are partners within the moderation panel. The purpose of external partnership moderation is to moderate 10% of the ASYE portfolios from the Internal Panel. The aim is to ensure the quality and consistency of the ASYE programme and consider whether employer assessments against the KSS and the PCF are consistent, robust and accurate. Partnership moderation will not overturn an employer’s final assessment judgement. The moderation process also aims to identify examples of best practice and areas to be developed. This will allow the partnership to identify the key skills needed for ASYE assessors and develop appropriate support for them.

National Moderation

Skills for Care convene a National Moderation panel to ensure national consistency and employer confidence in ASYE Assessment. The panel meet twice per year with selected representatives. A random sample of at least 5% are drawn directly from employers. The National panel report on collated themes and messages.

Skills for Care can also undertake Quality Assurance visits of ASYE programmes.

Roles and Responsibilities

<p>NQSW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fully participate in the ASYE process including undertaking identified learning and development opportunities and participating in the formal review and assessment processes • To understand the performance requirements as set out in the KSS and PCF at ASYE level • To develop critically reflective practice, linking to theory and relevant legislation • To attend the ASYE Recall days • To access ASYE reflective workshops
-------------	--



<p>Assessor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contribute to an initial meeting with the NQSW • Take responsibility for completing the holistic assessment, evidencing progress against assessment criteria and conducting supervisions • Meet with the NQSW at regular intervals to review progress and complete the assessment document • To identify any concerns and write any supportive plans if required • Inform the Practice Learning Coordinator if there are any concerns. • Provide support by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensuring protected caseload o Addressing development needs o Talking about the management of workload o Providing reflective supervision and conducting reviews o Providing evidence at reviews, progressive feedback and holistic assessment of a pass or fail in line with the assessment criteria • Inform the Practice Learning Team if there is to be a change of Assessor and ensure paperwork is completed and a good handover to the new Assessor.
<p>Line Manager (if different to Assessor)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When recruiting a NQSW, register them for the Academy and identify an Assessor • To manage the ASYE, allocating appropriate workload for the NQSW to ensure the requirements of the ASYE programme are met • To be involved in the supervision and assessment of the NQSW
<p>ASYE Co-ordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform line managers about the council's ASYE programme in line with national guidelines. • To quality assure programme requirements are adhered to and be familiar with performance requirements as set out in the KSS and the PCF at ASYE level • To provide support to ASYE Assessors and NQSWs • To facilitate the internal moderation panel • To attend external moderation



Abbreviations

- **ASYE:** Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
- **NQSW:** Newly Qualified Social Worker
- **KSS:** Knowledge and Skills Statements
- **PDM:** Practice Development Managers
- **PQS:** Post-Qualification Standards
- **PCF:** Professional Capabilities Framework
- **QAF:** Quality Assurance Feedback
- **SI:** Supporting Information

Appendices

Appendix A

Professional Capability Framework for ASYE Level

[PCF - Newly Qualified Social Worker \(ASYE level\) | www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

Appendix B

Post Qualifying Standards: Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services

[KSS.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix C

Post Qualifying Standards for Child and Family practitioners

[Post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practitioners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix D

Social Work England Regulatory Professional Standards

[Professional standards - Social Work England](http://www.socialworkengland.org.uk)



Appendix E – Application for Extension to ASYE Programme

Skills for Care advise that there are only exceptional circumstances in which the ASYE year can be extended. The reason why and the action plan should be recorded. It must be noted that the ASYE year may not be extended for capability reasons.

This form must be **completed and returned by the ASYE Assessor** to:- practicelearning@lancashire.gov.uk

Name NQSW	
SWE Number of NQSW	
Date started ASYE programme	
Submission date	
Reason for extension request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maternity o Sickness o Leave of absence o Appropriate level of support not provided
How long extension is required	
Further information in support of this request	
Action Plan for the extension (what is the plan for the additional time?)	
Assessor Signed / Date	
NQSW Signed/ Date	
Line Manager (if applicable) Signed/ Date	

To be completed by Practice Learning Team

Date received	
Internal Approval/ Not approved	
Name of Approver	



Appendix F - Timeline for ASYE (post September 2022)

