

**Managers' How to Guide.....
Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy**

Policy statement Hampshire County Council is committed to supporting all newly qualified social workers (NQSWS) through the implementation of a robust post graduate competency framework referred to as the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment is intended to be the first stage of the continuing professional development for Registered Social Workers, and the framework will be closely allied to the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

Scope All NQSWS appointed to social worker posts in both Children's Services and Adult's Health and Care within the Council.

How to use this document This document is not part of the formal policy. Instead it provides additional information to help you as a manager in the practical day to day application of the policy.

It is expected that you will have an understanding of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy prior to using this guide.

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Context

The national programmes for both the ASYE for Children Services and the ASYE for Adult Services are similar but the recording requirements attached to each programme are different. For this reason this How to Guide should be read in conjunction with the programme materials issued by each department's Workforce Development team.

Framework of the ASYE programme

The framework adopted by the Council expects that NQSW's:

- are appointed into a qualified social worker vacancy but be matched to the NQSW role profile for the duration of their ASYE
- will start the ASYE programme when they start in their role and have a valid HCPC registration
- are entitled to the reimbursement of HCPC professional fees where payment is required during the period of the ASYE
- receive regular supervision in accordance with the national guidance
- have their workload adjusted, both in terms of volume and complexity, to reflect national guidance
- receive regular formal review meetings in accordance with the relevant programme requirements
- are given clear feedback about their progress and have any additional support requirements identified
- are provided with a written record of the discussion following each regular review meeting confirming:
 - whether they are making satisfactory progress (or not)
 - that entitlements to supervision, reduced workload, etc have been met (or not)
 - any requirement for further development/support that have been discussed.

Appointment and Pay

A NQSW is to be appointed into a qualified social worker post (grade F) and for the duration of their ASYE they will be matched to the NQSW role profile, which is evaluated at grade E. For the duration of the ASYE the NQSW receives a salary at the maximum point of the grade E salary scale.

A NQSW appointed into a qualified social worker post will be matched to a QSW role profile (grade F) on confirmation of successful completion of the ASYE. The outcome of the ASYE

cannot be confirmed until the decision to pass has been reviewed and confirmed by the ASYE moderation panel. Progression from grade E to grade F salary is to be backdated to the date the NQSW submitted their completed portfolio to the relevant Workforce Development team.

If a NQSW has been unable to secure a qualified social worker post and has applied for, and been appointed into, an unqualified social worker post, then you, in conjunction with the Workforce Development team, should wherever possible consider if you are able to support the NQSW in completing their ASYE while in the unqualified post. Consideration of this should include:

- can the NQSW be provided with sufficient suitable work at a qualified social worker level so they can demonstrate work in line with the ASYE Knowledge and Skills Statement and the Professional Capabilities Framework?
- if so, what will be the impact on other unqualified workers in the team?
- is the NQSW prepared to work at the level of a qualified social worker when in an unqualified post?
- has the NQSW demonstrated that they will actively seek appointment to a qualified post with the Council
- does the NQSW understand there is no guarantee of a qualified post (and increased pay) on successful completion of the ASYE?

Adjustment to workload

You should ensure the NQSW's workload is reduced in line with role profile for a NQSW.

You should build up the NQSW's workload to 90% of what is expected of a confident and competent social worker in your team in their second year of employment. This should be weighted gradually over the course of the ASYE period by case complexity, risk and growing proficiency (rather than the average number of cases). Evidence of how you manage their workload should be demonstrated at each review.

You must ensure the NQSW has 10% of their working time protected for ASYE specific development activities.

Reasonable Adjustments

NQSWs will have any need for reasonable adjustments considered in line with the Managing Reasonable Adjustments Policy [Reasonable adjustments](#)

Valuing Performance

NQSWs will participate in the Council's Valuing Performance appraisal process.

Formal Assessment during the ASYE programme

The assessment of the ASYE is an holistic process over the ASYE period, reviewed at regular formal review meetings in line with the relevant national programme.

A formal written record of these formal reviews should be completed in conjunction with the NQSW using the relevant programme documentation.

Formal review meetings and the right to be accompanied

Formal ASYE review meetings are arranged with the NQSW at the start of the ASYE year. These review meetings should address any performance issues.

You must inform the NQSW that they may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a Hampshire County Council colleague at any formal review session. The companion is allowed to make representations on behalf of the NQSW but is not allowed to answer questions on behalf of the NQSW. It is the NQSW's responsibility to arrange their own companion if they wish to be accompanied at a formal review meeting and to advise you of this.

How to identify and respond to performance concerns

Where there are concerns about performance and/or lack of progress against the standards you should discuss these with the NQSW.

Normally you will use the ASYE review and assessment process to manage performance. *The one exception to this is where there are concerns regarding potential gross incompetence, in this circumstance the Managing Performance policy will apply.*

You may need to hold interim reviews to discuss performance and review any action plans. A record of these discussions should be included within the ASYE documentation.

At formal review meetings, you, the practice educator and the NQSW are expected to provide details of any significant issues and relevant evidence of work being undertaken. This will include:

- reviewing the NQSWs written evidence in line with the relevant programme requirement
- discussing recent work and how this links to relevant

Knowledge and Skills Statements and the Professional Capabilities Framework

- identifying any performance concerns and discuss measures that could help resolve them
- reviewing any action plans that are in place
- checking if there is any reason for an extension to the ASYE to be requested

You and the NQSW should agree any actions to be undertaken and when these should be completed by.

During discussions with the NQSW you may find it useful to consider the following:

- are there clear examples of unacceptable performance you can share with the NQSW?
- has sufficient training and support been provided?
- does the NQSW have a disability covered by the Equality Act 2010 that may impact upon their performance?

You should then decide on a course of action:

- where support or training has been lacking, make arrangements to put this in place and monitor for improvement
- where you are happy the employee has the right support and training, hold regular supervision/monitoring discussions
- where there may be a medical condition or disability, make a referral to Occupational Health and consider reasonable adjustments
- where a NQSW is not meeting the expectations under the ASYE programme you should contact the Workforce Development team for advice
- if concerns relates to potential gross incompetence you must inform your line manager and contact HR Operations for advice.

Notes on these discussions should be recorded by you or the practice educator on the relevant programme documentation. The information in the programme review documentation should cover any performance issues and include any evidence that may need to be considered now or in the future.

The NQSW should incorporate any relevant actions onto their sections of the relevant programme documentation.

Extension of the ASYE programme

A NQSW is expected to raise with you any circumstances that could potentially be a reason for an extension to the ASYE. This should take place as soon as the possible justification for an extension is identified.

You and the NQSW should discuss any possible request for an extension with the practice educator. If the reason for the extension meets one of the possible reasons for an extension you should request an ASYE Mitigating Circumstances form from the Workforce Development team. An extension of up to 4 weeks may be requested. If a further extension is required you should request a further Mitigating Circumstances form.

You should complete the initial sections of the Mitigating Circumstances form for the NQSW to sign. The form should then be signed by you, the practice educator and a senior manager before being sent to the Workforce Development team for authorisation.

The completed Mitigating Circumstances form (whether the extension is authorised or not) is returned to the NQSW for retention with their ASYE portfolio.

If the request for an extension is declined the reason for this decision is to be stated on the mitigation form. In this circumstance, the ASYE portfolio should be submitted within the previously set ASYE timeframe.

Where an extension is granted you should discuss the frequency of further supervision and agree an action plan with the NQSW.

Extension due to working hours

If the NQSW is contracted to work part-time they are unlikely to have the same opportunity to develop the necessary experience as their full-time colleagues during a 12 month period. Therefore the following extended ASYE periods will be applied without a Mitigation Circumstances form being required:

- NQSWs working more than 0.75 fte are to complete the ASYE assessment period in 12 months
- NQSWs working more than 0.5 fte up to a maximum of 0.75 fte should have the assessment period extended to 15 months
- NQSWs working 0.5 fte or less should have the assessment period extended to 18 months.

The ASYE Coordinator will confirm this extension and the planned end date to all parties at the start of the ASYE programme.

Extension due to reduction in working hours The ASYE assessment period should be extended if the NQSW's contracted hours are reduced part way through the ASYE period. You should seek advice from the Workforce Development team in this circumstance. This extension will not require a Mitigating Circumstances form. The Workforce Development team will confirm the revised submission date for the ASYE portfolio.

Extension due to absence In cases of sickness absence, the absence should be managed in the normal way under the Managing Sickness Absence Policy. Where there is significant absence the ASYE period may be extended.

Any extension should be considered as soon as it may apply and not left until the final assessment.

Any request for an extension will be reviewed on an individual basis, following discussion between the NQSW, the manager and the practice educator.

The practice educator is expected to liaise with the ASYE Coordinator to highlight any issues.

Potential reasons for an extension being requested include:

- where the NQSW has been absent due to sickness for a minimum of 4 consecutive weeks. If the NQSW is absent for a significant period of time as a result of short term frequent absence then consideration may be given to an extension if the total absence amounts to a loss of 10% or more of contracted working hours
- where the NQSW has been absent due to maternity, adoption or shared parental leave for a minimum of 4 consecutive weeks
- where the NQSW has been absent for compassionate reasons/personal circumstances for a minimum of 4 weeks
- where absence following sickness or on compassionate grounds is followed by a phased return to work and where the NQSW is unable to fully engage with the ASYE programme immediately consideration can be given to a further extension on a case by case basis.

In any of these circumstances you should request a Mitigating Circumstances form from the Workforce Development team and seek approval for the extension once the form has been signed by the NQSW.

Extension due to operational reasons Any extension should be considered as soon as it may apply and not left until the final assessment.

Any request for an extension will be reviewed on an individual basis following discussion between the NQSW, the manager and the practice educator.

The practice educator is expected to liaise with the ASYE Coordinator to highlight any issues.

Potential reasons for an extension being requested include:

- where operational circumstances are impacting on the NQSW to the extent that it is not been possible to reduce their workload by 10% during the ASYE (if this may be the case you should highlight this to the practice educator at an early stage of the ASYE)
- if it has not been possible to provide the NQSW with adequate supervision in line with the ASYE programme requirements (if this may be the case you should highlight this to the practice educator at an early stage of the ASYE)
- if the NQSW's work has been significantly impacted as a result of organisational change during the period of the ASYE (this potential circumstance should be monitored by you and highlighted to the practice educator as soon as it is identified)

In any of these circumstances you should request a Mitigating Circumstances form from the Workforce Development team and seek approval for the extension once the form has been signed by the NQSW.

Extension due to competency or capability The ASYE assessment period **is not extended** for reasons of competency or capability.

Change of role A NQSW may move into a different role during the ASYE. They do not need to restart the ASYE programme, however an additional review meeting should be held with the new line manager and practice educator to ensure continuity.

Consideration should be given to whether an extension to the ASYE period is needed as a result of the change of role. If so, you should request a Mitigating Circumstances form from the Workforce Development team and seek approval for the extension once the form has been signed by the NQSW.

Suspension

If a NQSW is suspended from their duties and is then able to return to full duties an extension to the ASYE period will be requested for a similar time period to the suspension. A Mitigating Circumstances form should be completed in this instance.

Potential to fail the ASYE before the end of the planned ASYE period

You should take all reasonable steps to support the NQSW through the ASYE.

Where there are concerns about poor performance the NQSW will normally be given the full ASYE period to demonstrate their capabilities, therefore consideration should not normally be given to failing the NQSW before the end of the planned ASYE period.

Potential gross incompetence

In exceptional circumstances where there are concerns about potential gross incompetence then the issue(s) will be managed under the Council's Managing Performance policy.

If the NQSW's behaviour or actions have raised concerns about their fitness to practice and you have taken a decision to suspend or you have instructed them to undertake alternative work, including working under supervision, then you must inform the HCPC¹ of your concerns.

If the NQSW is dismissed on grounds of incompetence this will be an automatic fail of the ASYE.

If the NQSW is not dismissed and continues in their NQSW role you should continue managing their performance as part of your normal management under the ASYE policy.

Principles of the Final formal review and assessment

The final formal assessment is assessed in accordance with standards identified in the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the Professional Capabilities Framework.

The NQSW meets with the line manager and the practice educator for a final formal review and assessment.

¹ See HCPC guidance hcpc-uk.co.uk

The provisional decision on whether the NQSW has passed or failed is made by the NQSW's line manager in consultation with the practice educator.

This provisional decision must then be reviewed by the ASYE moderation panel.

Moderation

All portfolios and the provisional decisions from the final assessments are reviewed by the relevant internal ASYE moderation panel.

It is the responsibility of the moderation panel to make the final decision on whether the NQSW has passed or failed.

Outcome of the final assessment

The possible outcomes are:

- pass – NQSW is assessed as meeting the standards identified in the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and has successfully completed the ASYE
- fail – in the exceptional circumstance NQSW is assessed as failing to meet the standards identified in the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) and/or the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and has not successfully completed the ASYE

Given the need to demonstrate professional competence against the ASYE framework, the Council does not permit a NQSW who does not successfully complete the ASYE to remain in a NQSW or QSW post.

Confirmation of the outcome

Following the ASYE moderation, the decision will be confirmed in writing by the ASYE Co-ordinator within **4 calendar days** of the moderation panel. A template letter should be used to ensure all the necessary information is included.

A copy of the confirmation letter must be placed on the ePF by the line manager.

Recording the outcome

The outcome of the final formal assessment is recorded on the relevant ASYE programme documentation.

Implications of the final assessment

Pass NQSW in a QSW post A NQSW who is already appointed to a qualified social worker post and successfully completes the ASYE programme will progress to the qualified social worker role without further recruitment/selection procedures. They will advance to the role profile and grade of a qualified social worker. The effective date of this progression will be backdated to the date the NQSW submitted their completed portfolio to the relevant workforce development team.

Pass NQSW in an UQSW post In the exceptional case where a NQSW is undertaking the ASYE while in an unqualified social worker post then on the successful completion of the ASYE programme they will remain in the unqualified post, on the role profile and pay band for the unqualified post. In this circumstance the NQSW is required to be actively seeking a qualified social worker post with the Council.

Fail - internally recruited If the NQSW fails the ASYE programme they will return to a role equivalent to their previous substantive role on the appropriate grade/salary.

Fail - externally recruited Externally recruited NQSW's are employed on permanent contracts with a clear review point at the end of the ASYE assessment period. If they fail the ASYE they will therefore be dismissed from their employment with the Council on the grounds of capability.

Redeployment under the Redeployment Policy will be offered. Redeployment and notice periods normally run simultaneously.

Where a NQSW gains redeployment into a role at a lower grade, the Council's salary protection **will not** apply. The evaluated grade for the role will apply. This is to ensure that internal NQSWs who do not successfully complete the ASYE and therefore have to return to a role equivalent to their previous role are not treated less favourably than externally recruited NQSWs.

Implementing the outcome of final formal assessment

Pass NQSW in a QSW post Using the manager's portal, you must action the pay change by completing the Change Form for Exceptions - selecting the option: 'Promotion within a formal Career Progression scheme'.

The IBC will then action the change on SAP and send the

contractual change notification to the NQSW.

Pass NQSW in an UQSW post No action required by you. The NQSW is required to seek a qualified social work post.

Fail - internal recruited You should review with the District Service/Service manager any posts that are equivalent to the one previously held by the employee. Work with senior management and the IBC to arrange for the employee to be appointed into an appropriate post.

Fail - externally recruited You should contact HR Operations for advice on holding a formal meeting to give notice of dismissal on the grounds of capability.

The NQSW must be given **9 calendar days'** notice of the formal meeting. The only evidence required at this meeting is the formal confirmation of the outcome of the ASYE following moderation. The meeting may proceed in the absence of the NQSW if they do not attend.

Formal meeting for ASYE fail /dismissal

Stage	Chair	Adviser to the Chair
ASYE fail / dismissal	NQSW's second line manager or another senior manager	HR Adviser

Who attends a formal dismissal meeting Attendees at the formal dismissal meeting are:

- the Chair of the meeting
- an HR Adviser to the Chair
- the NQSW
- the line manager

Other attendees may include:

- union representative/workplace colleague
- practice educator
- the ASYE Coordinator

Process to be followed at a formal dismissal meeting The Chair of the meeting will consider the formal outcome of the ASYE plus any representation from the employee. If the Chair of the meeting considers there may be matters that require further clarification then they can question the ASYE Coordinator.

The Chair will then confirm dismissal or an alternative outcome as appropriate.

Confirmation of the outcome of the formal meeting The chair of the meeting must send a letter to the NQSW to confirm the outcome. A template letter is available to ensure all the necessary information is included.

The letter will be sent ideally on the same day as the meeting but if this is not possible it must be sent within **4 calendar days**, and a copy placed on the ePF.

Redeployment

HR Operations will arrange for the employee to be added to the Council's redeployment database.

If redeployment is not successful you need to follow the normal leaver process. This is to ensure that the NQSW is recorded as a leaver by the IBC and receives the correct payments upon leaving.

Appeals

The NQSW may appeal against a decision that they have failed the ASYE but not the outcome of any of the previous ASYE review meetings. The NQSW has a formal right of appeal against dismissal.

A NQSW who has been internally recruited must ensure their written appeal is received by the line manager within **10 calendar days** of the decision of the moderation panel being confirmed by the ASYE Coordinator. The full reasons for the appeal must be given along with the supporting evidence.

A NQSW who has been externally recruited and is appealing against the decision that they have failed the ASYE and consequentially been dismissed must ensure their written appeal is received by the line manager within **10 calendar days** of the formal meeting where they were dismissed. The full reasons for the appeal must be given along with the supporting evidence.

If an appeal is against dismissal on the grounds of capability or gross incompetence and the decision to fail the ASYE, then both aspects of the appeal will be held together.

If an appeal is against dismissal on the grounds of gross incompetence or misconduct and not the decision to fail the ASYE, then the appeal will be held under the relevant policy.

How to invite to an appeal meeting

You must write to the NQSW to invite them to a formal appeal meeting. The letter must give up to **9 calendar days'** notice of the meeting. Use the template letter to ensure you include all the necessary information.

The documents that may be referred to by either party should be shared before the appeal meeting and are normally provided with the notification of the meeting. The appeal documents should include:

- the written appeal from the NQSW setting out the reasons for the appeal
- any documentation provided by the NQSW in support of their appeal
- the confirmation of the decision being appealed against
- the provisional decision reached at the final formal assessment
- relevant documents relating to the NQSWs work and assessment during the ASYE
- any documentation provided by you, the practice educator, or the Workforce Development team in response to the written appeal

The NQSW has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a Hampshire County Council colleague. The companion is allowed to make representations on behalf of the NQSW but is not allowed to answer questions on behalf of the NQSW. It is the NQSW's responsibility to arrange their own companion if they wish to be accompanied at an assessment meeting and to advise you of this.

An alternative date will be arranged if requested.

Who chairs an appeal meeting

Stage	Chair	Adviser to the Chair
Appeal against ASYE fail and/or dismissal	2 senior managers	HR Adviser

Who attends an appeal meeting

Attendees at an appeal meeting are:

- the Chair of the meeting
- the HR Adviser to the Chair
- the NQSW

- the NQSW's union representative/workplace colleague (if arranged by NQSW)
- the line manager
- the practice educator
- the ASYE Coordinator to give expert advice on the ASYE programme

How to run an appeal meeting

The chair of the meeting must:

- ask the NQSW or their companion to present their appeal referring to any documents or evidence
- ask you to respond to the appeal and present the grounds for the decision, referring to any documents or evidence
- invite questions from all parties
- seek clarity on the requirements of the ASYE programme from the ASYE Coordinator
- adjourn, if necessary, to consider the evidence and decide on the outcome
- let the NQSW know the outcome at the end of the meeting

Possible outcomes of an appeal meeting

The possible outcomes are that:

- the appeal is not upheld and the previous decision(s) remain
- the appeal is upheld and an alternative outcome is decided

If the NQSW is reinstated on appeal after dismissal, the NQSW's service is continuous and any loss of pay between dismissal and reinstatement is paid.

How to confirm an appeal decision

The chair of the meeting must send a letter to the NQSW to confirm the outcome. A template letter is available to ensure all the necessary information is included.

ASYE Standardisation Panel

Following each ASYE Moderation Panel, a selection of portfolios which have passed, and all portfolios that have failed, will be presented at the next SHIP (Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight & Portsmouth) Regional ASYE Standardisation Panel. All member employers in the region present ASYE portfolios so that they can ensure standardisation of assessment decisions. The panel may make recommendations to individual employers about their ASYE programmes and assessment practice, but it will not have any influence over assessment decisions for individual portfolios.

Roles and responsibilities

Service specific roles are set out in the ASYE programme for each Service.

As the line manager you are responsible for:

- applying the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy (ASYE) accurately
- informing the relevant Workforce Development team ASYE Coordinator at least two weeks before an NQSW is due to start their employment
- ensuring that workloads are reduced in line with the framework, that professional development entitlements are met, and the complexity of the workload is appropriate
- providing regular formal support and supervision in accordance with the requirements of ASYE
- regularly reviewing and assessing the NQSW
- undertaking formal review meetings with the NQSW throughout the duration of their ASYE
- informing the Workforce Development teams where you have concerns and jointly deciding on appropriate action
- arranging meetings as necessary
- instigating a mitigating circumstances form where an extension to the ASYE period is considered appropriate
- telling the NQSW the provisional decision following the final formal assessment and prior to moderation I
- keeping records, drafting and issuing letters / documentation with HR support as necessary

All NQSWs are responsible for:

- familiarising themselves with the contents of the ASYE programme materials issued by the Council's Workforce Development teams
- behaving in a professional manner
- carrying out the work required for the ASYE programme
- arranging their own trade union representative or companion if desired and advising management of this

The Workforce Development Officer or Practice Educator is responsible for:

- providing support to the NQSW during their ASYE
- providing reflective supervision
- completing direct observations of practice
- assisting the line manager with the formal assessment decision

- The District Service/Service manager is responsible for:
- reviewing any request to extend an ASYE assessment
 - reviewing and deciding the provisional assessment decision if the line manager and practice educator do not agree

- The HR person supporting the manager is responsible for:
- advising on policy application
 - supporting with case management
 - advising on the completion of letters, reports and relevant documentation
 - attending appropriate meetings in an advisory capacity
 - HR does not perform a decision making role

- The trade union representative or Hampshire County Council work colleague is responsible for:
- supporting their member/colleague
 - attending arranged meetings or ensuring meetings are covered and not delayed if requested by the NQSW
- They may make representations, submit papers, ask questions and address a meeting on behalf of the NQSW.
They may not answer questions on behalf of the NQSW.

Support

Managers:

Any queries relating to the ASYE programme should be directed to the department’s Workforce Development team or the ASYE Coordinator.

Any remaining queries can be directed to HR Operations on 01962 813915 or [hradvice@hants.gov.uk](mailto:hRADVICE@hants.gov.uk) .

How to guide Governance

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