



Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy

Policy statement	<p>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).</p> <p>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 national Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).</p>
Scope	<p>All NQSWs appointed to social worker posts in both Children’s Services and Adult’s Health and Care within the Council.</p>
Policy outcomes	<p>The aims of this policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• implement the recommendations of the Social Work Reform Board in respect of NQSWs• promote the highest levels of professionalism and competency within the Council’s social workers, and to foster NQSWs’ ownership of their future professional development• provide a conducive and supportive environment to foster the NQSWs’ development and to ensure the best opportunity for success• instil employer and service user confidence in the capability of social workers• promote increased professional confidence and ability• provide a single framework to be applied consistently within the Council

Check which policy to use

Where there are concerns relating to a NQSW's conduct or sickness absence these should be managed using the Managing Misconduct Policy or Managing Sickness Absence Policy.

Where there are concerns relating to a NQSW's performance or capabilities, these should be managed by managers under this policy. The one exception is where there are concerns regarding potential gross incompetence, in this circumstance the Managing Performance policy will apply. Gross incompetence is where a person appears to have failed to perform the duties of their role to an extent that caused (or potentially caused) serious harm and/or puts people or the reputation of the Council at risk.
If a NQSW is dismissed on the grounds of gross incompetence this is an automatic fail of the ASYE.

Concerns raised by a NQSW about a decision or action taken when applying this policy should be addressed through management discussions and a separate 'Workplace issue' (e.g. grievance) should not be raised.

Timescales

A NQSW must register for an ASYE programme within two years of successfully completing a Social Work degree programme.

The ASYE framework should normally be completed within 12 months, although a longer period of time is permitted for employees working 0.75 FTE or less.

It is possible to extend the ASYE period for a number of reasons including maternity leave or significant sickness absence.

In exceptional circumstances the ASYE may end before the final formal assessment if, after due investigation, a decision is made that the NQSW has failed the ASYE on the grounds of gross incompetence or gross misconduct.

Supervision/ workload

A NQSW will have their workload adjusted and increased progressively, both in terms of volume and complexity, to reflect national guidance. This guidance states that normally, by the end of the ASYE year, 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 year of employment. The NQSW's progress is reviewed at formal review meetings during their ASYE.

Policy stages

Assessment against the ASYE standards is undertaken through a framework of formal review meetings. As well as assessing progress against the standards, these meetings are to ensure a NQSW's entitlements to regular supervision, protected workload and personal development are being met.

There are three possible stages:

- regular formal review meetings
- final formal assessment
- appeal meeting (if applicable)

Formal action concerning a trade union representative

Where there are concerns involving a NQSW who is a trade union representative, advice must be sought from HR Operations before taking formal action.

Right to be accompanied

A NQSW has the right to be accompanied at formal review meetings by a trade union representative or a Hampshire County Council colleague. The companion is allowed to make representations on behalf of the NQSW, submit papers and address a meeting but is not allowed to answer questions on behalf of the NQSW. It is the NQSW's responsibility to arrange for a companion to attend a formal meeting if they wish to exercise this right and to tell management the name of their companion prior to the meeting.

Salary band / pay

Taking account of the reduced workload and significant supervision, NQSWs are appointed to a specific role profile and a pay band determined in accordance with evaluation of the role.

Principles of the Final formal assessment

At the final formal assessment the NQSW is assessed in accordance with the appropriate competency framework, 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 a 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/or has not successfully completed the ASYE

The final formal assessment decision is taken by the line

manager in consultation with the workforce development officer (WDO) and/or the practice educator. This decision is reviewed by the ASYE moderation panel. The final decision is confirmed in writing to the NQSW by the ASYE Co-ordinator.

If the final decision is that the NQSW has not passed the ASYE then the NQSW is notified that:

- they will return to a role equivalent to their previous substantive post on the appropriate grade/salary
- or
- they will be dismissed from their NQSW role and be offered redeployment under the Council's Redeployment policy.

Progression into a qualified social worker role

A NQSW who is already appointed into a qualified social worker post will progress to the qualified social worker role profile, with the appropriate pay band, when they successfully pass the ASYE programme.

In the exceptional case where a NQSW is 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.

Completing and failing the ASYE

The NQSW will no longer be able to remain in a qualified social worker post with the Council.

National guidance states that where the ASYE framework has been completed and failed, it will not be possible for the NQSW to re-take the ASYE.

The Council will not appoint an individual to a NQSW role where the ASYE has previously been taken and failed.

Referrals to professional bodies

Where there are concerns relating to a NQSW's fitness and competence to practice that are being considered under the Managing Performance or Managing Misconduct policies, or the NQSW fails the ASYE, there is a duty to refer the NQSW to the HCPC¹ and/or any relevant professional body.

¹ See HCPC guidance hcpc-uk.co.uk

Right of appeal

The NQSW has a right of appeal against a decision that they have failed their ASYE and consequentially been dismissed on the grounds of capability.

A NQSW may appeal against the decision that they have failed the ASYE and consequentially returned to a role equivalent to their previous post.

The NQSW must ensure any appeal is in writing and received by their line manager within **10 calendar days** of the decision being confirmed. The full reasons for the appeal must be given along with the supporting evidence.

Key definitions

Newly qualified social worker (NQSW) – someone who has recently completed their social work degree.

Qualified social worker (QSW) – someone who has completed all the necessary training and qualifications. Within Hampshire County Council this will include the successful completion of the ASYE competency framework.

Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) – is a concise document setting out what a newly qualified social worker needs to know and is able to do. The KSS enables social workers to understand more clearly what is expected of them as practitioners. Employers will be able to identify where social workers have achieved the requisite knowledge and skills, and be able to identify and put in place support where required.

Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) - is an overarching professional standards framework. The PCF applies to all social workers in England (including independent social workers), in all roles and settings.

Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) – is a post graduate competency framework provided by an employer and completed by a NQSW.

Calendar days - where reference is made to calendar days, these are defined as Monday to Sunday, including Bank Holidays or Public Holidays. This is consistently applied irrespective of an employee's work pattern.

- Related documents** To help with the application of this policy please read :
- Managers' How to Guide – Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

Support

Employees:

Queries should be directed to your line manager.

General queries relating to the ASYE standards, assessment and entitlements should be directed to the appropriate Workforce Development Team.

Access to free, confidential and impartial Employee Support is available to all employees. Please visit the webpages for further information <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/occupational-health/employee-support.htm> or call 0800 030 5182

Your trade union or professional association may be able to provide you with additional support.

Managers:

Further information is available in the Managers' How To Guide Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

General queries relating to the ASYE standards, assessment and entitlements should be directed to the appropriate Workforce Development team.

Advice on remaining queries can be directed to HR Operations.

Policy Governance

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Employees of non Hampshire County Council bodies are excluded from this policy and should refer to their own employer's policies and procedures.