

Social Work Students and Statutory and non-Statutory Task experiences during Placement Learning Experiences

Social Work in Statutory and Non-Statutory settings

Social workers in the public/statutory sector tend to have fairly fixed job descriptions and responsibilities. They are generally assigned to one department, exclusively dealing with either children or adults, or specialising in assisting homeless or disabled people. This is a chance to specialise, but there is not that much flexibility.

In the private, voluntary or independent sectors however, some agencies accept more than one service user group. Social workers could be assigned to a variety of service users or tasks, depending on their own personal skills, interest and the needs of the organisation and its service users.

Statutory and/or Non-Statutory Social Work tasks

Statutory and/or non-statutory Social Work tasks may be observed by social work students and/or participated in under supervision by a Registered Social Worker (RSW) during Placement Learning Experiences in either statutory or non-statutory settings:

"...preparation for statutory social work should be defined by the **tasks undertaken by the student on placement**, rather than the setting (e.g. local authority). This maximises the availability of placements across statutory and non-statutory sectors, to include all settings where formal assessment of risk and safeguarding takes place." [The Social Work Reform Board and The College of Social Work guidance on Placement Criteria, 2013, currently hosted by the [British Association of Social Work](#)]

Statutory tasks may be carried out EITHER by local authority social services teams OR by social workers employed in the private, voluntary or independent sectors.

"The College of Social Work advises that social workers should be used in two sets of circumstances. First, they should be used in situations defined by law where organisations have a legal duty to intervene professionally and social workers are uniquely educated, trained and qualified to undertake the work required. In many of these situations, social workers have clear and unambiguous roles and functions, defined through legal frameworks and national statutory guidance. Social workers **must** be the lead professionals in undertaking these roles and functions." [The College of Social Work, Roles and Functions of Social Workers in England: Advice Note, 2014, currently hosted by the [British Association of Social Work](#)]