



The professional association for
social work and social workers

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BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

PRACTICE EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Executive Summary

BASW has issued these refreshed standards to promote the development, and awareness, of Professional Standards in Social Work Education within the social work profession and with people with lived experience of social work. It is hoped that this document will be used to promote the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) and lead to a wider understanding of the role of the practice educator (PE) by students, employers and anyone involved in practice education.

At the heart of this document is a set of values and standards which should guide all parties involved in practice education. The core values set out the key principles governing the relationship between PE and student, learners (trainee PEs) and their overriding responsibility to those whom they are serving. The PE Domains identify the requirements for the delivery of training, development and support of those who are responsible for the teaching, supervising and assessing of social work students in practice.

The Guidance for Implementation sets out the delivery of PE courses and training, eligibility and selection processes. Emphasis is given to the vital role of agencies and learning partnerships in providing the environment and resources for the PE to be valued and supported and the placement to be an effective learning and assessment environment. It is also acknowledged that the knowledge and skills of PE's equip them to be able to play a key role in the support and assessment of other groups of new social work practitioners.

"We fully support the refresh of the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS), it is important that as a profession we set high standards of practice education and support future generations of social workers in their education and career pathways. We would like to thank BASW and stakeholders for producing these important revised standards."

**Lyn Romeo, Chief Social Worker Adults and
Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children and Families**

1. Context and Glossary

Introduction

- 1.1** This revised edition of the PEPS has been produced by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in consultation with stakeholders and refreshes the original document from the College of Social Work (2013)¹. This document retains the principles and structure developed by the Social Work Reform Board and the College of Social Work and also updates content. The Standards are now more closely aligned to the refresh of the Professional Capabilities Statement (PCF)² and Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) for Practice Supervisors in Child and Family Social Work March 2018³ and Adult Social Care December 2018⁴. These Standards provide guidance for all parties involved in the experience and delivery of practice education including both new and experienced practice educators; on-site supervisors (who may be registered social workers and also other qualified or experienced professionals); social work students; PE trainees; providers of social work and practice education including Higher Education Institutions; and employers of social work staff.
- 1.2** BASW's Code of Ethics for Social Work (revised 2014)⁵ incorporates statements of principles drawn up by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASW). This Code should underlie all social work practice.
- 1.3** BASW will continue the role of promoting, supporting and updating the Practice Educator Professional Standards while seeking to provide support and professional development opportunities for practice educators.
- 1.4** The Local Government Association standards for employers of social workers in England⁶, set out the eight standards for the support of social workers recommended by the Social Work Task Force that social work employers should strive to meet⁷.

¹ www.basw.co.uk/resources/practice-educator-professional-standards-social-work-0

² www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-work-post-qualifying-standards-knowledge-and-skills-statement

⁵ www.basw.co.uk/about-basw/code-ethics

⁶ www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/social-workerstandards/standards-employers

⁷ www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/social-worker-standards/standards-employers

Glossary

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) The first year in employment for a newly qualified social worker (NQSW)

HEI Higher Education Institution

Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) The Knowledge and Skills Statements set out what social workers, supervisors and practice leaders should know and be able to do within the context of their role in different settings.

Student An individual undertaking training to qualify as a social worker

Other Learner A qualified social worker undertaking a post qualifying programme (e.g. NQSW, ASYE, BIA).

Practice Educator Assessor The Assessor role in PEPS training is about developing a PE trainee's skills and knowledge by using the assessor's experience, knowledge and understanding of practice education to support, assist and assess the PE trainee against the required professional domains for PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 training. The assessor should be a PEPS 2 qualified practice educator.

PE Trainee The trainee will be mentored and assessed during training. These roles may be separate or carried out by the same person during PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 training.

Mentor Mentoring is about developing PE trainee's skills and knowledge by using the mentor's experience, knowledge and understanding of practice education to support and assist a PE trainee. A mentor should be a PEPS 2 qualified practice educator. Mentors may also sit on review panels for failing students and provide practical guidance and support to current PEs. An Assessor and mentor role may overlap and may be the same person during PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 training.

Practice Educator (PE) This person takes overall responsibility for the student's learning and assessment, utilising information from a range of evidence sources. The practice educator is the person who makes the recommendation to the practice assessment panel and the course examination board about the learner's competence in relation to the PCF. A practice educator may also be the student's supervisor, employed in another part of the agency or located outside the agency.

Off-Site Practice Educator A person located away from the student's practice area contracted by the programme provider to undertake the role of practice educator. The off-site practice educator will be a qualified social worker trained to PEPS 2 level and will work jointly with an on-site supervisor.

On-Site Supervisor A person in the same work site as the student who is designated to manage the day-to-day activity of the student and who makes an important contribution to the student's learning and assessment. (Note: the term 'on-site supervisor' has been used to emphasise the importance of the supervisor being located in the same team or work-place as the student. The term is also used to differentiate the role from 'practice supervisor' which has been used to indicate supervisors of qualified staff).

NQSW Newly Qualified Social Worker who is on their first year in practice which is an Assessed and Supported Year (ASYE) or any other post qualifying programme.

PCF Professional Capability Framework This is the social work framework which sets out the knowledge, skills and values which students and qualified social workers should be able to demonstrate at each stage of their career.

PEPS Practice Educator Professional Standards are often referred to as PEPS and the terms PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 refer to the level the practice educator has attained.

Blended Learning This could include a combination of self-learning and reading, as well as traditional face-to-face teaching.

2. Values and Domains for Practice Educator Professional Standards

The value statement below has been adapted from 'Values for Work-Based Assessors' Social Work Reform Board (2010). It is the core value statement for Practice Education. The value statement closely reflects the BASW Code of Ethics and the domains of the Professional Capability Framework, particularly the 'Purpose' Super Domain which refers to how social work practitioners approach their work. The value statement is central to becoming a practice educator.

2.1 Statement of Values

In order to promote anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices, practice educators and supervisors will:

- i. Ensure that consideration is given to the needs and interests of people with lived experience of Social Work when assessing the capability and skills of students at all stages of the assessment process.
- ii. Manage professional/personal boundaries, their use of authority and power within the assessment relationship and recognise and act upon the implications for their assessment of practice.
- iii. Update themselves on best practice in assessment and research on adult learning and apply this knowledge in promoting the rights and choices of students and managing the assessment process.
- iv. Advise students and other learners of their rights and actively challenge oppression and discrimination which may be experienced by the student or other learners.
- v. Identify and question their own values and prejudices and respect and value the uniqueness and diversity of students and other learners.
- vi. Accept and respect student's and other learner's circumstances and understand how these impact on the learning and assessment process. Practice educators and supervisors should recognise and build on student's and other learner's strengths and consider individual learning styles and a range of assessment methods (including those preferred by the student).
- vii. Assess in a manner that does not stigmatise or disadvantage individuals and ensures equality of opportunity. Show applied knowledge and understanding of the significance of lived experience, poverty, racism, ill health, disability, gender, social class and sexual orientation in managing the assessment process and recognise and work to prevent and counter unjustifiable discrimination and disadvantage in all aspects of the assessment process.
- viii. Take responsibility for the quality of their work and ensure that it is monitored and appraised; critically reflect on their own practice and identify development needs in order to improve their own performance, raise standards, and contribute to the learning and development of others.

2.2 Practice Educator Domains

The Practice Educator Standards are split into four Domains. These Domains set out standards expected of those responsible for facilitating, supporting and assessing the learning of social work practice and professional development of students in practice. This set of standards has been refreshed after consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and have been aligned to the Professional Capability Framework.

Although mode of delivery will be agreed at a local level in partnerships between employers and programme providers, the principle of these PEPS is to ensure all staff involved in the teaching, supervising and assessing of students are experienced practitioners with an interest in promoting social work education.

The important contribution of those involved in allied professions to social work should be acknowledged by ensuring their involvement in student placements, at the same time students will need social workers to act as role models in their learning. Where an on-site supervisor has experience but is not social work qualified, the student should have the opportunity to work alongside an experienced and qualified social worker during the placement.

Practice educators should be experienced and skilled social workers with at least 2 full years' post-qualifying experience at the start of the practice education training programme.

- i. All practice educators must be registered social workers.
- ii. All practice educators should be able to demonstrate that they are practicing at PCF Experienced Social Worker level in their practitioner role before enrolling on a practice educator course. This is to ensure that practice educators have the appropriate experience and capability to support and guide students through case work complex enough that they are fully prepared for practice by the end of their final placement and sufficiently experienced to meet the requirements of PCF at final placement.
- iii. On-site supervisors of learners may be experienced or hold professional qualifications other than social work. If this is the case, there should also be a registered social worker practice educator involved in the learner's placement.
- iv. Practice education programmes may be delivered in one or two 'stages' but irrespective of mode of delivery practice educators need to have had responsibility for supporting, supervising and assessing at least two students before full qualification as a practice educator can be achieved.
- v. Practice educators at both PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 should meet all Domain statements in Section A, B, C and D. By progressing through PEPS 1 and PEPS 2. The PE trainee should be able to demonstrate an increased competency and reflection as they develop their skills and knowledge for each Domain.

Table 1

| Practice Educator Professional Standards | PCF Domain | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|---|---|---|--|
| Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | | |
| Domain A Work with *others to organise an effective learning environment | 8 Contexts and Organisation | | |
| (A1) Establish an effective collaborative working relationship with learners and manage the power and authority in the educator/ assessor role skilfully. | 2 Values and Ethics | KSS 2 Developing excellent practitioner KSS 4 Effective use of power and authority | KSS 1 Values and Ethics KSS 2 Influencing and governing practice excellence within the organisation and community |
| (A2) Devise an induction programme that considers learners' needs and their previous experience. | 9 Professional Leadership | | |
| (A3) Create reflective spaces for learners' growth and development and provide regular reflective supervision. | 1 Professionalism 6 Critical Reflection and Analysis | KSS 3 Shaping and influencing the practice system KSS 7 Emotionally intelligent practice supervision | |
| (A4) Ensure all those involved in supporting the student have clarity and understanding of each other's roles. | 1 Professionalism 9 Professional Leadership | | KSS 2 Influencing and governing practice excellence within the organisation and community KSS 3 Developing confident and capable social workers |
| (A5) Work openly and cooperatively with others in the planning of learning opportunities and key activities at all stages of learning and assessment. | 8 Contexts and Organisation | | KSS 3 Developing confident and capable social workers |

| Practice Educator Professional Standards | PCF Domain | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|--|---|--|--|
| Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | | |
| (A6) Consider student confidentiality and ensure all student information is maintained in a secure environment according to General Data Protection Regulations. | 2 Values & Ethics | | |
| (A7) Contribute to the learning and development of the agency as a learning organisation. This may include encouraging the student to make links with others in the team by working alongside, making presentations and contributing to team resources. It may also include showing leadership by helping to review and improve the provision, policies and procedures of the learning organisation and identify barriers for learners. | 9 Professional Leadership | KSS 1 Promote and govern excellent practice KSS 3 Shaping and influencing the practice system | KSS 2 Influencing and governing practice excellence within the organisation and community KSS 3 Developing confident and capable social workers |

| Practice Educator Professional Standards Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | PCF Domain Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|--|--|---|--|
| Domain B Teaching, facilitating and supporting learning and professional development in practice | | | |
| (B1) Demonstrate informed expertise in their practitioner role, e.g. an applied knowledge of contemporary issues in research and relevant policy, legislation and practice. | 5 Knowledge | | KSS 4 Assuring good social work practice and development |
| (B2) Using a range of learning methods, including modelling good social work practice. Teach and support the learning of relevant social work knowledge and research, and the integration of theory and research in practice. Knowledge taught should include the powers and duties, and policy and procedures of the agency. | 5 Knowledge | KSS 1 Promote and govern excellent practice KSS 8 Performance Management and Improvement | KSS 8 Performance management and improvement |
| (B3) Help students to understand their own learning processes and to develop different models and strategies for critical reflection and analysis. | 9 Professional Leadership | | KSS 6 Relationship based practice supervision |
| (B4) Discuss and plan with the student the learning and assessment programme, the student's particular needs and capabilities, and how best the learner can derive further support for learning. | 2 Values & Ethics | | KSS 6 Relationship based practice supervision |

| Practice Educator Professional Standards | PCF Domain | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|--|---|--|--|
| Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | | |
| (B5) Make sound reasoned judgements about the level of work the student can be allocated, and the support required to achieve both learning and the work goals. | 6 Critical Reflection & Analysis | | KSS 6 Relationship based practice supervision KSS 7 Effective use of power and authority as a practice supervisor |
| (B6) Demonstrate an understanding of, and critical engagement with, learning theories, to make professional educational judgments about students' needs and how to meet them. | 5 Knowledge | KSS 5 Confident analysis and decision-making | KSS 5 Promoting and supporting critical analysis and decision making |
| Domain C Manage the fair and transparent assessment of students in practice | | | |
| (C1) Ensure that holistic assessment decisions are the outcomes of informed, evidence-based judgments, drawing on evidence, which is relevant, valid, reliable and sufficient from a range of sources, including direct observation. Clearly explain the decisions to students. | 7 Skills & Interventions | | KSS 4 Assuring good social work practice and development KSS 5 Promoting and supporting critical analysis and decision making |
| (C2) Encourage students to self-evaluate and seek service users, carers and work-based colleagues feedback to develop their performance. | 1 Professionalism | | KSS 3 Developing confident and capable social workers |

| Practice Educator Professional Standards | PCF Domain | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | | |
| (C3) Provide timely, honest and constructive feedback on student performance in an appropriate format. Review student progress throughout the assessment process, identifying strengths and any areas requiring improvement, making clear to students how they may improve to meet the acceptable standard. | 2 Values & Ethics | | KSS 3 Developing confident and capable social workers KSS 6 Relationship based practice supervision |
| (C4) Ensure that all assessment decisions, and the supporting evidence, are documented and recorded according to the required standard. Provide holistic assessment reports which demonstrate clear evidence for decisions. Demonstrate ability to work well with others in the assessment process, particularly if learner's practice is marginal or failing. | 1 Professionalism 7 Skills & Interventions 9 Professional Leadership | | KSS 5 Promoting and supporting critical analysis and decision making KSS 7 Effective use of power and authority as a practice supervisor |
| (C5) Engage students in the design, planning and implementation of methods to assess students' performance against the appropriate standards. | 2 Values & Ethics | | KSS 5 Promoting and supporting critical analysis and decision making |
| (C6) Extend the development of all students including those who already have strong skills or are experiencing difficulties. Ensure that disagreements about assessment judgements and complaints made about the assessment process are managed in accordance with agreed procedures. | 7 Skills & Interventions 9 Professional Leadership | | |

| Practice Educator Professional Standards Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | PCF Domain Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|--|--|--|--|
| Domain D Developing knowledge and continuing performance as a practice educator | | | |
| (D1) Seek feedback from students on their experience of being assessed and the consequences of the assessment programme for them. Incorporate the feedback into future assessment activity. | 2 Values & Ethics | | KSS 2 Influencing and governing practice excellence within the organisation and community |
| (D2) Show understanding of, and the ability to apply, models and theories of supervision, knowledge and research on assessment, teaching and learning, and critical reflection. | 5 Knowledge | | KSS 3 Developing confident and capable social workers KSS 6 Relationship based practice supervision |
| (D3) Establish and maintain effective resources for their own support and supervision in respect of their role in workplace learning. Demonstrate the ability to consult and work with others in contentious and challenging contexts such as dealing with struggling students and formal appeals and complaints. | 1 Professionalism | | |
| (D4) Demonstrate critical reflection on their own development as practice educators, including the use of feedback from direct observations, colleagues and HEI tutors and other assessment sources. | 6 Critical Reflection & Analysis | | KSS 8 Performance management and improvement |

| Practice Educator Professional Standards | PCF Domain | KSS for child and family practice supervisors | KSS for adults' settings practice supervisors |
|--|---|---|---|
| Fully qualified practice educators should be able to demonstrate adherence to Value statements and 4 Domains of Practice Education Professional Standards as set out below: | Domains quoted are at Experienced Social Worker level | | |
| (D5) Apply learning to subsequent practice education experience using a range of methods. | 1 Professionalism 6 Critical Reflection & Analysis | | |
| (D6) Contribute to the development of the agency as a learning organisation by providing information and advice from their experience on the quality and effectiveness of placement learning. | 5 Knowledge 9 Professional Leadership | | KSS 2 Influencing and governing practice excellence within the organisation and community |
| (D7) Demonstrate an ability to deepen and extend their ability and expertise as a practice educator. This may also include the transfer of practice educator skills, knowledge and values to new roles in mentoring, supervision, teaching and/or assessment and show leadership in workplace learning. | 1 Professionalism | | |
| (D8) Show ability to; critique and apply models and theories of supervision, and knowledge and research on assessment, teaching and learning, critical reflection and other relevant knowledge. Contribute to the extension of that knowledge through their expertise and research. Promote the profile of the practice educator as playing a key role in the development of excellent early career practitioners. | 5 Knowledge | KSS 1 Promote and govern excellent practice KSS 2 Developing excellent practitioners | KSS 6 Relationship based practice supervision |
| *Where mention is made of those involved in supporting the learning this refers to practice supervisors, practice educators, university tutors, people with lived experience of social work, line managers, workplace colleagues, and other professionals and agencies. | | | |

3. Guidance for Implementation

Pathway to Qualifying as a Practice Educator

3.1 Eligibility criteria and pre-requisites for enrolment on a practice education course

- i. Practitioners must have practised for at least two years following qualification and should demonstrate ability to practice at PCF Experienced Social Work level.
- ii. During this minimum two-year period, practitioners interested in qualifying as a practice educator should demonstrate their interest and commitment to practice education through activities such as supporting students and other new staff.
- iii. Candidates for a PE qualification will participate in a selection process for acceptance on a course.

3.2 Stages of practice education qualification

In order to be fully qualified to undertake sole responsibility for the teaching, supervising and assessing of a final year social work student, a practitioner will be a registered social worker, will have a minimum of three years relevant social work experience and must have undertaken a considerable amount of tuition, self-study and assessment as detailed in Section 3.5. In addition, a practitioner must have taught, supervised and assessed at least two different social work learners, at least one of which must be at pre-qualification level, including primary responsibility for at least one. Practice education programme providers will normally deliver the course in two 'stages' for the practitioner to develop expertise in the practice educator role. A PE trainee may therefore be at 'stage 1' or 'stage 2' as follows:

Stage 1

Practice educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to, but not being solely responsible for, the final assessment prior to qualification. Stage 1 practice educators supervising final placement students will need to have their decision ratified and overseen by a PEPS 2 qualified PE mentor or assessor.

Stage 2

Practice educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to, and including the last placement. These practice educators will have the authority to recommend, based on appropriate evidence, that social work learners are fit to practise at the point of qualification.

Table 2: At what stage a practice educator can independently assess pre-qualifying students

| | STAGE 1: Studying | STAGE 1: Qualified | STAGE 2: Studying | STAGE 2: Qualified |
|------------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------|
| First Placement | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Final Placement | Yes, with oversight from a PEPS 2 qualified PE | Yes, with oversight from a PEPS 2 qualified PE | Yes, with ratification of a PE mentor/ assessor | Yes |

3.3 Practice mentors/assessors should be PEPS 2 qualified practice educators and have an appropriate level of experience and capability to support less experienced practice educators through complex decision making. Prior to taking on a mentor/assessor role Practice Educators should have had experience of supervising 5 learners including students or newly qualified social workers they supervised during PEPS 1 and 2 training.

3.4 Practice educators and practice educator mentor/assessors, as registered social workers, need to apply their professional value base to whatever role they undertake in a range of contexts. They will need to ensure that the values on which they base their own practice and on which they teach, supervise and assess students are in line with current social work regulatory standards.

3.5 Developing Pathways or Programmes to meet the standards

It is for Practice Education Providers and employers together to develop suitable ways of enabling candidates to meet and demonstrate the PEPS learning outcomes. Practice Education courses will be taught at the equivalent of post graduate level. Although the HEI may take a lead role in the delivery of the practice education curriculum, this should include self-managed portfolio development and presentation and/or a variety of distance and open learning or employer-based activities. For a practice educator to be fully qualified to stage 2 they should have completed the equivalent of 70 hours of direct learning over both stages, delivered through the variety of methods outlined above. Individual study and portfolio preparation and assessment tasks will be in addition. If the PEPS course is being delivered by a HEI, PE trainees are working to achieve postgraduate credits. For every 10 credits achieved there is an expectation of 100 hours study, for example a 30-credit course requires 300 hours' study in total. This is in line with any other HEI delivered courses.

3.6 Programme providers may wish to combine the delivery of stage 1 and stage 2 teaching and assessment of learning outcomes into an integrated programme to maximise flexibility and to meet local workforce planning needs. However, for a practice educator to be fully qualified to stage 2 they should have completed a minimum of 70 hours of blended learning as above.

3.7 The practice education curriculum

PEPS training courses will be taught and assessed at Post Graduate Level. An indicative Practice Education Curriculum may include some or all of the following;

- i. Models and theories of supervision/how to be a reflective supervisor/building a learning relationship.
- ii. Developing a student's capacity to be critically reflective/helping students to understand and manage the emotional demand of social work and providing challenging and positive constructive feedback.
- iii. Theories of adult learning and how these can be applied in the PE trainee's own practice and in work with students to enhance reflection on development.
- iv. The concept of the learning organisation and community of practice and how these can be applied when working with the team and agency in the context of the contemporary framework of social work education.
- v. Research mindedness and developing the student's capacity to make good use of knowledge in practice. Developing the practice educator learner's ability to use practice education research to inform practice and contribute to the knowledge base of practice education.
- vi. Making fair and transparent assessments of students. Working with students who are struggling and whose practice is failing and enhancing the potential of all students including high achievers.
- vii. Understanding of, and critical engagement with, the experiences of people with lived experience of social work including issues of culture and discrimination and social justice.
- viii. Self-reflection and professional development/practice educators as leaders in the

- organisation/using own supervision/becoming a mentor.
- ix. Knowledge of social work professional development frameworks for assessment and development.
- x. Expertise in reflective supervision and completing holistic assessments of the student's social work ability.

Assessment will always include:

Direct observation of the PE trainee. To be fully qualified as a PE2, the PE trainee has been observed on at least three occasions during the course. Two of these observations must be of supervising a social work student and the third can be undertaken by a peer, i.e. PE colleague, observing another activity and can include;

- i. Peer reviewed supervision.
- ii. Leading a group supervision.
- iii. Leading a teaching and development opportunity for student.

3.8 Organisational Support for the practice educator

All practice educators and on-site supervisors whether in training, or fully qualified and experienced, will require on-going support while supervising and assessing a social work learner. Both HEIs and Employers should work together and consider a shared approach to supporting learners wherever possible. Agencies need to recognise that acceptance of a student placement is a commitment for the whole team concerned and that managers need to ensure that, where possible, team members are involved in supporting the student and practice educator. The following policies should be in place:

- i. Support for practice educators by providing regular supervision with supervisor.
- ii. Provision of employer based or HEI based mentors for new/in training practice educators.
- iii. Regular group meetings of practice educators where issues and challenges can be worked through.
- iv. Workload relief while learner is on placement, this can include;
 - a) honorarium
 - b) reduced caseload
 - c) no new work
 - d) agreed time off in lieu
 - e) protected time for completion of reports and other documentation
- v. The whole team in which the practice educator is located takes responsibility for the learner with named practitioners providing cover where necessary
- vi. Employers and HEIs should ensure opportunities for the continuing professional development of practice educators are provided and be mindful that practice educators need to supervise a learner every two years to maintain currency. However, practice educators who do not have the opportunity to supervise a student may actively maintain currency through other means (see section 3.9 and 3.10).
- vii. Employers may consider offering remuneration for those involved in social work student placements.

3.9 Equivalent practice educator qualifications

Currently qualified and registered social workers who have been awarded the Practice Teacher Award (PTA) by the Central Council for Education (CCETSW) or those who have achieved a Higher Specialist Award in practice education within the former GSCC PQ framework, are accepted as having reached the standards for stage 2 of the framework. PTA holders can therefore continue to be responsible for assessing and teaching at all placement levels. They may be able to act as mentors and assessors for PE candidates, if employers and HEIs are satisfied that they have continued to regularly practise as a practice educator. Normally this would mean they have had direct responsibility for at least one student or other learner in the last two years or had relevant experience in practice education and have retained and developed their skills, knowledge and value base.

Evidence that demonstrates that the learning outcomes have already been met may be generated within the workplace without the need for HEI accreditation and approval arrangements. Partnerships and networks may plan together formal Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) arrangements and credit ratings where these are considered appropriate.

3.10 Maintaining Currency

If a practice educator has not had a student for two years, their PE qualification can be considered lapsed. However, if a practice educator has not had an opportunity to take on a pre-qualifying student, they can maintain currency through other practice education activities, such as;

- i. organising and supporting placements
- ii. providing teaching and learning opportunities
- iii. observing other practice educators
- iv. evidence of report writing
- v. supervising and supporting NQSW'S

HEI's have a responsibility to ensure that when placing a student with a practice educator that they have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to practice education. As part of this the HEI has a responsibility for the ongoing development of PEs.

Those PEs who are considered to be lapsed may be able to refresh their qualification in a number of ways including;

- vi. submission of short portfolios
- vii. presenting to a quality assurance panel
- viii. refresher course provided by HEIs
- ix. decisions undertaken by regional boards
- x. other methods agreed in consultation with the HEI providing the student and the placement provider

3.11 Employers – Responsibilities for the development of Practice Educators

Employers should evidence that practice educators have relevant opportunities to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) and are able to demonstrate continued proficiency and capability.

3.12 Employers should record numbers and relevant details of staff completing PEPS training to monitor the currency of practice educators.

3.13 Practice educators should keep a record of CPD relevant to their role as a practice educator and be prepared to present this as evidence for re-registration (if requested by the regulator). Practice educators normally maintain currency through taking full responsibility for a social work student or other learner at least every two years.

3.14 Off Site Practice Educators and Practice Supervisors

Independent off-site practice educators are expected to meet the capabilities within the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) as an Experienced Social Worker and to have demonstrated proficiency at PEPS stage 2 and must therefore be registered social workers. This also applies to any off-site practice educators who are employees of the organisation hosting the placement. It is the responsibility of the placement provider to ensure that they are confident that the independent practice educators are capable and suitable to carry out their responsibilities. This would include ensuring that safeguarding checks have been undertaken. All practice educators including those retired or not in direct practice will be required to maintain their social work registration and demonstrate knowledge of current practice and theory.

3.15 On-site supervisors

On-site supervisors supervise the day-to-day work of a social work student and would not necessarily have to be registered social workers for the first placement⁸ but would be experienced in a role related to social work. However, it is recommended that they should be working towards the stage 1 learning outcomes and should be working within the values and good practice guidance of the PEPS and be adequately supported and prepared for their role.

It is for the line manager to ensure that an on-site supervisor is competent to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students. Wherever possible, on-site supervisors should have minimum training and recent previous experience of supporting student social workers in the team.

Other qualified professionals should have access to training as on-site supervisors and be provided with support by a practice educator.

3.16 Implementation Monitoring and Review

The Practice Educator Professional Standards should be promoted widely. BASW will aim for the Practice Educator Professional Standards to be adopted on a national basis by the new regulatory body Social Work England, local authorities, and teaching partnerships.

Information, guidance and support will be developed for practice educators (including independent educators) and employers. We propose the establishment of a national monitoring body to work with teaching partnerships to monitor quality.

⁸ A practice supervisor who is not a registered social worker will not normally be able to provide day-to-day supervision for the final placement.

References – Policy and Guidance

Human Rights Act 1989 Article 10 Freedom of Expression, Article 14 Prohibition of Discrimination
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/schedule/1

Equality Act 2010 Part 1 S 4-12 Protected Characteristics -
www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

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social work and social workers

PEPS Endorsement by Employers & Stakeholders

