



DEVELOPING TOGETHER SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP



EARLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:

A Useful Handbook

Introduction

The transition from Newly Qualified Social Worker can be a challenging one and the metaphorical 'cliff-edge' post the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) is often referred to within the social work sector. After the ASYE, social workers will find themselves negotiating new terrain, managing an increased caseload and often taking on additional responsibilities, sometimes without sufficient support or training.

However, the transition period is also a hugely rewarding one, representing the end of a significant period of study, with most social workers having studied for two or three years at University before going on to complete an intensive ASYE programme with demanding portfolio requirements. Practitioners report satisfaction at being seen as 'fully-fledged' social workers and there has previously been a reluctance to continue to categorise social workers at this stage of their career as 'learners'.

Taking some of the learnings from the Department for Education's (DfE) pilot Early Professional Development programme (2009-2011), and working closely with local employers and our academic partner, the Developing Together Social Work Teaching Partnership (TP) has developed an Early Professional Development (EPD) Framework for social workers in the second and third years of their career. We will refer to these social workers as 'EPD social workers' throughout this document.

We hope you find the Framework clear and helpful and benefit from the additional opportunities. If you have any questions about the Framework, please get in touch.

Teaching Partnership Team.



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Early Professional Development OVERVIEW

YEAR 2									
ASYE finishes	Workload management techniques	Workload management techniques	Workload management techniques		Project skills	Transitions	Transitions	Transitions	Trauma Informed Communication
	Workload management managers' workshop	Culture and identity	Trauma Informed Practice						
SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN/ JUL
OSS course		Admissions training			PEPS course				
PEPS course					Project skills				
Introduction to Mentoring					Leadership skills				
					OSS course				
YEAR 3									

FAQ's

WHEN DOES THE EPD FRAMEWORK COME INTO EFFECT?

The framework comes into effect at the end of the ASYE and aims to provide EPD social workers with the support and opportunities they need to develop as practitioners in the coming years.

DO I NEED TO COMPLETE A PORTFOLIO?

No, it is not intended to be a training programme and there are no requirements to produce a portfolio. However, it is recommended to keep a record of any Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events and to register these with Social Work England (SWE).

DO I NEED TO UNDERTAKE ANY OTHER CPD IN ADDITION TO THIS?

The EPD Framework should complement other CPD that you are required to, or choose to, complete as part of your role. It does not replace any in-house Learning & Development Programmes or the TP's general CPD provision; EPD social workers are still able to access these opportunities in addition to any learning they undertake through the EPD Framework and are encouraged to do so.

Some of the CPD options from the TP's general CPD Provision are particularly relevant for EPD social workers - you may want to look over the annual offer with your manager and agree what additional sessions you would like to book on to.



WILL I GET A CERTIFICATE FOR THE SESSIONS I TAKE PART IN?

Certificates are issued for all recommended courses and training and should contribute to your overall Personal Development Plan (PDP). They also have attached reflection logs, which can support writing up your reflections for CPD on your Social Work England account. Some courses may also be officially accredited by the CPD Standards Office, and this will be reflected in any certification you receive. An example PDP can be found in the appendix.

Action Learning Sets (ALS)

Action Learning Sets are an important tool and outlet used to support social workers. ALS help to embed learning by discussing day to day issues and dilemmas with peers that may arise in the workplace. Action Learning is a proactive method of solution focused learning and helps individuals to problem solve, cope with stress, increase motivation and build resilience. The format will usually involve being divided into small groups of 6-8, who will be your 'set' for the ALS sessions. The sets will have a facilitator and as participants you will contribute either by bringing a dilemma or tricky problem to the group, or by asking open and reflective questions to enable the person who is presenting their problem to explore the issue and come up with some actions to 'take away'.

Many employers now use this methodology as part of their 'support package' for social workers, to enhance supervision and reflective practice discussions, provide additional learning opportunities or as a support for supervisors and managers.

“A process which brings people together to find solutions to problems and, in doing so, develops both the individual and organisation”

- McGill and Beaty 1995

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE PART IN ALS?

ALS is a useful practice throughout your career, but you may find it particularly helpful as an EPD social worker, as you develop your skill set and come across new obstacles and challenges. As part of the EPD framework, we recommend that you partake in ALS at 6-weekly intervals for the duration of your second year. This should be scheduled by your ASYE Coordinator or Workforce Development Team at the end of your ASYE year.

WHY SHOULD I TAKE PART IN ALS?

Regularly taking part in ALS is an invaluable practice in order to help develop problem solving skills and to build resilience in the profession.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, ALS is offered free of charge as part of your continuous professional development by your organisation and the TP sponsors a number of practitioners to undertake training for becoming an ALS Facilitator each year.

WHO FACILITATES THE ALS?

Within your organisation there are trained ALS facilitators who will provide the ALS.

There are also trained ALS facilitators in the TP Team who can organise cross-partnership sessions upon request.



More Information:

You may find [this book](#), covering ALS within Social Work practice useful;

You may find [this report](#) published by Skills For Care on critically reflective action learning interesting;

For example ALS questions, please see [here](#)

Kingston University Seminars

These seminars are facilitated by Kingston University and cover a range of beneficial topics for improving practice and developing knowledge and skill set. They are held throughout the year, either during lunchtime or in the evening. Speakers at these events are leading national and international researchers, policy makers and commentators, who are invited to deliver talks on issues of topical and contemporary importance.

These events are CPD-certificated and open to all staff and students at Kingston University and at St George's, University of London, staff in local social services in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, people with lived experience and the organisations who assist with the Department's social work education programmes. Previous seminar subjects include: *BME Attainment Gap in Higher education*, *Approved Mental Health Professionals and the Law*, *How Contemporary Attachment Research Can Help with Current Challenges in Child Protection*, *New Arenas For Adult Safeguarding*, *Forced Marriage and Honour Abuse*.

WHEN SHOULD I ATTEND THESE SEMINARS?

These seminars are incredibly useful throughout your career as a social worker. As part of the EPD framework, we strongly recommend that you make a habit of attending these from the end of your ASYE (or even during your ASYE!) and continue to do so regularly throughout your career. Most TP organisations will require you to attend a minimum of two seminars a year after your ASYE.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF ATTENDING THESE SEMINARS?

The intended purpose of these seminars is to provide you with additional knowledge and further prepare you for the workplace. These seminars are also an excellent opportunity to enhance and develop your ways of thinking, through discussing research, new ways of working and innovative approaches in the profession. They are also useful forums to share good practice and develop professional networks. It is part of your commitment to the profession as a social worker, to stay in touch with new developments and to continuously improve on your practice.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, these seminars are provided free of charge by Kingston University, as a commitment to your continuous professional development and in order to share learnings, best practice and research outcomes with the sector.



More Information:

For more information on the seminars including previous and upcoming topics, as well as time, dates and where to book, please see the Kingston University website [here](#).

The TP will also share seminars we think are particularly relevant to your professional practice as an EPD social worker throughout the course of the year.

Workload Management Training Course

High levels of workload have been connected with negative impacts on social work practice and outcomes, and are also associated with increased stress in a profession that already suffers higher than average levels. This one day course is aimed at properly equipping you with the tools to better enable you to prioritise workload and caseloads. An essential aspect of workload management, particularly as a social worker, is the determination of priorities. Workload management almost always involves a significant element of calculating the degree of urgency, risk of inaction or priority when services are potentially required. This is an essential course for all social workers, helping to ensure the best possible outcomes for people with lived experience.

In conjunction with this, and to ensure a joined up approach, we are also running a workshop to help support managers in allocating cases according to nature and complexity.

"Dawn was great, very engaging, knowledgeable, with a great sense of humour. She used very good examples throughout, that Children and Adult Social Workers could relate to."

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THIS COURSE?

Attendance at this course is expected as part of the first year of the EPD framework. You will be booked onto an occurrence of this training and sent a calendar invite by the TP to hold the date.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING THE MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSE?

You may find that sometimes you have a large caseload, which can seem overwhelming and impossible to manoeuvre. In order to be an effective social worker and provide the best quality and high level of service to people with lived experience, it is a critical skill to be able to prioritise and manage workloads efficiently. This one day course will better equip you with the knowledge and skills to do this.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, this one day course is provided by the Teaching Partnership.



Course Dates and Accessing the Course

Click your preferred date below to book. These will be on a first come first served basis, and you must select your session by the end of August 2023:

22.9.23 (virtual)

12.10.23 (in person, Kingston University)

15.11.23 (virtual)

23.11.23 (in person, Kingston University)

All 09:30 - 16:30

Practice-based Training

These courses are delivered by a host of experienced facilitators from within the profession and cover a range of useful topics relating to practice, which have been identified as particularly useful for social workers in their early years of development, whether in Adult or Children and Families services. The topics covered are:

CULTURE AND IDENTITY:

Culture and identity shape the way that individuals think, feel and act. They play an important role in making us who we are. This course will explore some of the ideas that have contributed to social workers' understanding of the concept and importance of culture and 'identity' and the theories surrounding them, that inform social work practice.

"The workshop has given me a greater awareness of the importance of cultural competence as a Practitioner, and how we can understand various aspects of culture and identity to avoid anti-oppressive/discriminatory practice".

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

This training is being rolled out to all qualified social workers in the TP, and addresses the need for partnership organisations to become more trauma-informed and the workforce to become:

- more adept at recognising where people are affected by trauma and adversity;
- better able to respond in ways that prevent further harm while supporting recovery; and
- capable of addressing inequalities and improving life chances.

The training will be held over 4 half-day sessions covering topics such as: What is Trauma Informed Practice, How to Respond to Trauma, How Trauma Can Affect Staff and Tools to use in practice to understanding trauma responses.

Dates are being released at regular intervals throughout the year and this is the only core training contained in this section that you will need to book onto yourself.

Keep an eye out for the information from your Workforce Development Leads or contact the TP team for the latest list of dates: admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk

TRANSITIONS

There are specific requirements relating to support for care leavers. The ultimate aim of leaving care services is to support care leavers so that they can live successful, independent lives. Each care leaver will reach that point at a different age and there should be no assumption that the duty means that all care leavers will require statutory support until the age of 25.

Young people are not adults and also transition through developmental stages which impact on their decision-making, reasoning, risk taking choices and ability to learn and use life skills. As part of this course, you will look at brain development in adolescence and how to support young adults through a range of transition situations.

The session will look at the concept of corporate parenting through the leaving care transition into adulthood.



TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Many of the children, young people and adults social workers come into contact with will have experienced current or historic trauma. Trauma is an emotional response that can be triggered by any number of challenging life experiences or distressing events and will affect each person in a unique way. People may or may not be aware of past trauma, for example if this happened in early childhood. Moreover, they may or may not choose to share those experiences with professionals who will therefore often not know who has experienced trauma, or the circumstances of their trauma.

Feelings, thought processes, and behaviour can all be heavily influenced by trauma, which in turn can impact on how people are being perceived and are being communicated with by professionals. In order to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation it is important that social workers are aware of how to approach conversations in a trauma-informed way.

This training session will endeavour to offer practical tips, information and examples to guide

positive, respectful conversations with children, young people and adults by looking at communication skills with a trauma-informed lens.

This training session is not intended to replace the 2-day Trauma Informed Practice Training provision on offer through the Teaching Partnership but is meant to complement this with a particular focus on communication skills.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THESE COURSES?

Attendance at these is expected as part of the first year of the EPD framework. You will be booked onto all of these courses, with the exception of Trauma Informed Practice training, by the TP team and sent calendar invites to hold the dates.

You will need to book yourself onto a cohort of the Trauma Informed Practice Training. Contact your Workforce Development Lead for details of the dates and register using the links to Eventbrite. Please ensure that you can attend all 4 sessions of your chosen cohort.

"I want to constantly reinforce with colleagues, including students and support workers, via my own practice, that almost entirely our service users have trauma backgrounds and that MUST be explored and acknowledged, and reflected in their assessments and care plans."

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING THESE COURSES?

Throughout your career as a social worker, it is important to maintain an interest in new developments and thinking in the profession, to make an ongoing commitment to diversify your skills and interests. These courses will help to prepare you for dealing with these common areas of social work and thus enable you to provide better levels of service to people with lived experience.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, these courses are funded or facilitated by the TP.

Course Dates

Culture and Identity

You will be sent a calendar invite by the TP 2.11.2023

This session will be virtual.

Transitions

Click your preferred date below to book. These will be on a first come first served basis, and you must select your session by the end of August 2023:

- **12.3.24 (virtual)**
- **25.3.24 (in person, Kingston University)**
- **24.4.24 (in person, Kingston University)**
- **16.5.24 (virtual)**

All 09:30 - 16:30

Trauma Informed Communication

You will be sent a calendar invite by the TP 6.6.2024

This session will be in person at Kingston University.

Trauma Informed Practice

New dates are released regularly, and will be circulated by your Workforce Development Lead. You should use the links in the flyer to book directly via Eventbrite.



Project Skills & Development Course

Social workers need to be aware of the challenges and opportunities surrounding them and aspire to show creativity and willingness to consider more radical approaches and solutions. Through developing a capacity for achieving sustainable change you will be able pioneer new methods of social work practice and seek to solve common problems. The project skills and development course is intended for social workers who have an interest in practice improvement and would like to develop essential knowledge and project skills required to manage a wide portfolio of issues, in a demanding and real life context.

Prior to the course, participants are asked to have discussions with their team or service around possible service improvement so that they can bring this to the training day and begin to develop their ideas with their peers. We will explore how to develop a project, through managing resources, identifying barriers and measuring outcomes and provide social workers with the knowledge, tools and skills to be able to develop a project in their own service to support practice improvement and outcomes for people with lived experience.

"I will soon have to develop a project for my team and this session gave me lots of idea[s] and model[s] to work with"

"I think the presenter was good, very patient and listened to every point that was discussed by learners."

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THIS COURSE?

We recommend that you take this course as part of your second year of practice, however social workers in their third year of practice are also invited to attend. This course will take place once a year.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING THIS COURSE?

Throughout your career, it will be important to take an active interest in the sector and to seek new approaches and pioneering new methods to working. As you develop throughout your career as a social worker, you may have to take on extra responsibilities and duties, which may involve taking on a project. This training will ensure you are better equipped to take on these extra responsibilities. There are a wide range of possible projects that you may come across in your career: long-term and short-term, on large and small scales, in partnership with other agencies, and covering a broad range of issues and contexts. Management of these projects requires specific skills, this course will set out what these core skills are and how they can be achieved.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, this course is provided by the TP and will take place once a year.



Course Dates

Project Skills & Development

Date and Time: 28.02.2024, 09:30-12:30

Venue: Kingston University, Kingston Hill Campus

If you are in Year 2 of the programme, you will be sent a calendar invite by the TP to hold the date.

If you are in Year 3 of the programme, this session will be an option on your choices form.

Leadership in Social Work Practice

As a profession, social work faces unprecedented pressures. It is therefore crucial that we have confident and effective social work leaders. Good social work leadership is hugely important to the effectiveness and impact of delivering the best social care services. The Leadership in Social Work Practice course is intended for social workers who have an interest in progressing in their career and would like to inspire and lead teams and organisations in complex, multi-agency social care system, through developing their leadership skills. This course is not purely for those looking to progress into management roles, it is a useful tool for anybody looking to enhance their career by motivating others and inspiring change in the workforce. Effective leadership within social work encompasses many facets, including the ability to engage and inspire others, think clearly, lead services and influence change.

All Social Workers are expected to demonstrate leadership skills in their everyday practice. The Professional Capabilities Framework sets out that social workers are to 'develop and show our leadership, individually and collectively, through promoting social work's purpose, practices and impact'.

"I have learnt about the meaning of leadership and the key qualities of a good leader. I need to have a plan to improve my leadership skills in practice and at organisational level. I need to have an action an to develop my leadership skills."

This one day training course will explore leadership skills and styles and reflect on how we demonstrate leadership both within direct practice and also organisational practice. Participants will look at how they can further develop leadership skills through developing practice initiatives, developing others and promoting the social work profession, both within and outside their organisations. By the end of the session we aim for you to have an action plan linked to how you will progress your own style of leadership.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THIS COURSE?

We recommend that you take this course at the start of your third year in practice (Year 2 of this Framework).

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING THIS COURSE?

Some fundamental skills required to develop effective leadership are empathy, problem solving, positivity and organisational skills. Even if you don't supervise a team, you need to work on these skills in order to be a productive employee and a fully contributing member of your team. Furthermore, you'll be in a better position to advance your career, as leadership skills are an important facet for any professional to possess and cultivate. This course also complements the OSS course and PEPS course.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, this course is provided by Kingston University and funded by the TP. This course will take place once a year.



Course Dates

Leadership in Social Work Practice

Date and Time: 28.02.2024, 13:30-16:30

Venue: Kingston University, Kingston Hill Campus

Onsite Supervisor Programme

The Onsite Supervisor (OSS) Programme is a three (half) day course which is intended to prepare you to become an onsite supervisor to a student on placement. An OSS (also often referred to as a work-based or practice supervisor) is based in the same team as the student, usually has line management responsibility for the student's work and is available for day-to-day support.

Some of the responsibilities of an OSS include: being jointly responsible for planning and managing the placement, including the student's induction, allocating work to the student, providing day-to-day support and formal supervision focusing on cases, contributing to the holistic assessment of the student's learning and development by regularly sharing information with the PE and contributing to the midway and final reports, attending placement meetings, OSS training and support days before and during placements and contributing to the quality assurance and evaluation of the placement.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING THE OSS PROGRAMME?

This role is ideal for those wanting to contribute to, but not take full responsibility for, assessing a student. It may be the first step towards undertaking the Practice Educator course or progressing your career through gaining experience in supervising and managing.

On successful completion of this programme, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the placement learning outcomes (PCF and / SWE) and the student's particular learning needs
- Contribute to the planning for and management of a practice placement for a social work degree student, including taking a lead in planning an induction programme and helping the student to settle in
- Work closely with the student, supervising their day-to-day practice, providing feedback on their progress and supporting their learning
- Carry out direct observations of the student's practice and provide constructive feedback to the student and the PE
- Work collaboratively with the PE to contribute to the written assessment of the student's learning and development
- Reflect on and record your own development as an on site supervisor

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE OSS PROGRAMME?

We recommend that you take the OSS programme early on in your third year of practice, perhaps with a view to progressing onto the PEPS course thereafter.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, this course is provided by Kingston University free of charge. This programme runs twice a year.



Course Dates

Autumn 2023

Day 1: Wednesday 6.9.23, 1.30 - 4.30pm

Day 2: Tuesday 12.9.23, 10am - 1pm

Day 3: Thursday 14.9.23, 1.30 - 4.30pm

Spring 2024

Day 1: Tuesday 20.2.24, 10am - 1pm

Day 2: Tuesday 27.2.24, 1.30 - 4.30pm

Day 3: Tuesday 3.3.24, 10am - 1pm

You must be able to attend all 3 sessions of your selected cohort.

PEPS Stage 1 Award

The Practice Educator Professional Standards (BASW, 2020) course is a two stage programme for those who wish to further their skill set and professional portfolio by becoming a Practice Educator (PE). PEs are experienced Social Workers who have undertaken the PEPS award in order to teach, supervise, assess and support students undertaking a practice placement. The role of the PE is crucial in the teaching, support and assessment of all students and in the 'signing off' of qualifying social workers.

Some of the responsibilities of a PE include: planning and managing the placement; teaching and enabling learning and professional development, assessing the social work student against the Professional Capability Framework (PCF), supporting and enabling students to integrate theory into practice and helping them explore their values, providing the student with regular formal supervision, where based off-site, collaborating with the Onsite Supervisor (OSS) to ensure a coordinated assessment approach, leading on the completion of placement documents, such as the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA), midway and final reports, liaising with the student's tutor as necessary, attending regular support workshops and learning events at the university or inhouse and contributing to the quality assurance and evaluation of the placement.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING PEPS STAGE 1?

Upon completing PEPS Stage 1, you will be able to act as a PE for a social work student on a first placement. This role is ideal for those wanting to contribute to the progression of a social work student. PEs play a crucial role; they offer the opportunity to make a difference, by contributing to the provision of high quality practice learning and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities for the next generation of social workers.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE PEPS STAGE 1?

We recommend taking this towards the end of your third year in practice. You might find it beneficial to complete the OSS Programme and act as an Onsite Supervisor first. The PEPS1 is a step towards the PEPS2, the next stage of the award. Upon completing PEPS2 you will be able to support and assess students in their final placements and to achieve the full PE qualification.

IS THERE A COST INVOLVED?

No, this is delivered at no cost, by Kingston University. The no-fee arrangement is offered on the condition that the trainee takes Kingston University students for the two placements. This award runs twice a year starting in January and May. Please note, whilst this course is free, individual organisations may require an agreement for time release.



More Information:

For more information on the PEPS Stage 1 award, visit the Kingston University module page [here](#):



Become a buddy

Becoming a buddy involves offering support to a NQSW or a student group. There are no formal requirements associated with being a buddy, however we encourage buddies to share knowledge and their experience to help guide their less experienced peers through the early stages of their career development. It could be as simple as being available for a weekly coffee catch up or facilitating some reflective group sessions for student social workers.



Why be a buddy ?

The role is a great way to boost your skills and portfolio and offer invaluable advice to students or NQSWs. We recognise that the first few years as a social worker can be challenging and having a buddy helps create a collaborative learning environment in which peers feel less hesitant to raise questions in an informal way.

When should I become a buddy?

As part of the EPD framework, we recommend a good time to volunteer as a buddy is in your second year, post the ASYE.

How can I become a buddy?

Contact your line manager or Workforce Development Lead, who will be able to advise you on where to find out more information.



How can I access a mentor?

To be paired with a mentor, please inform your manager or Workforce Development Lead who will be able to advise you on the process for connecting with an experienced social worker or a trained mentor within your organisation. These mentors may have either completed the Mentoring, Coaching and Advanced Assessment of Professional Practice post qualifying module at Kingston University or alternative training, such as the short introduction to mentoring course commissioned by the TP as part of this Framework.

Why should I make use of a mentor?

It is understood that the first few years after ASYE can be the most challenging and it has been identified that social workers particularly in these early years of their career benefit from additional peer support.

Become a Mentor

What does becoming a mentor involve?

If you haven't had training previously, becoming a mentor firstly involves attending a short introductory course, to adequately equip you with the knowledge, understanding, values and skills necessary for the mentoring role. If you have recently completed the ASYE yourself, you will also be very well placed to relate to the experiences that your NQSW or year 2 EPD social worker mentee is going through, and therefore offer invaluable advice. The highly practical course will enable participants to understand the mentoring process with its associated roles and responsibilities and to identify, develop and practise key mentoring skills and behaviours.

Why become a mentor ?

It is a great way to boost your skills and portfolio and offer invaluable support to a NQSW or year 2 EPD social worker. We recognise that there are challenges, particularly in the first few years, and peer to peer support is proven to be invaluable in helping individuals to navigate through these difficult initial years.

When should I become a mentor?

We recommend becoming a mentor in your third year of practice. If you are interested in offering peer support but you are in your second year of practice then you may wish to consider becoming a buddy to a NQSW or a student group.

How can I become a mentor?

Contact your line manager or Workforce Development Lead, who will be able to advise you on where to find out more information.

Is there a cost involved?

No, the mentoring course is funded by the TP. This will take place once a year.

Workshop dates:

Introduction to Mentoring

Date and Time: 19.09.23 09:30-16:30

Venue: Online

Access a Mentor

A mentor is an invaluable resource to you as an EPD social worker. Your mentor will be a peer/individual who will have considerable experience and will have already undertaken the same journey and transition that you are on, from ASYE to EPD social worker. They will be able to offer suitable support, give helpful advice and direct you to useful information and resources. They are also there to offer emotional support and encouragement and to help motivate you, as you navigate through the challenges you may encounter in your early years as a qualified social worker.

When should I access a mentor?

A mentor can be extremely useful at any stage in your career, but in your second year of practice, as you navigate the transition out of the ASYE, you may find it particularly beneficial to have a mentor.



How long is the shadowing for?

This will be for a period of no longer than a week, (unless it is mutually agreeable to extend this period). This week could be completed in a single block, or made up of a flexible arrangement on an ad-hoc basis e.g. one day a week across a month. The dates and duration of the shadowing must be agreed by your manager and is at their discretion.

What kinds of things will I be involved in?

You will be introduced to the team of the host social worker and be given an insight into their area of work / specialism. This might involve attending team meetings, observing visits to service users or observing them write up assessments or reports for court.



How do I request a role shadowing opportunity?

We will email out the list of available opportunities periodically during the year. In order to request a role shadowing opportunity, please email: admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk and please specify which local authority you currently work for, which team you are based in, as well as which team you would like to have a role shadowing opportunity in.

Role Shadowing

Undertaking a role shadowing opportunity involves being hosted by a qualified social worker who works within a different team to you, in an area of expertise that you are interested in. This offers the opportunity to gain insight into the roles and responsibilities of other qualified social workers and to reflect and learn from the experiences of your peers. Learning more about different teams and specialities will contribute to your own professional development as a social worker, offering you the opportunity to see new ways of working and may even help you to solidify what area you would like to specialise in.



Participate in Student Admissions

This involves undertaking a half-day training course, provided by Kingston University to better equip you to participate in the admissions process, in collaboration with academic staff. The university has a long track record of involving people with lived experience and social workers in the interview and assessment of prospective students, to further enhance the calibre of the next generation of social workers, as well as improving the quality and experience of the admissions process.



Why should I participate in student admissions?

This is a great opportunity to further your skill set and increase your portfolio. This is also excellent experience, particularly if you are considering entering the field of academia as part of your future career aspirations. It is also vital practice for the university to continually find new ways to improve the admissions process and contributions from recent graduates are an invaluable part of this. Those who regularly take part in admissions find interviewing an extremely rewarding experience and feel invested as part of their duty of care, to contribute to sourcing the best calibre of students.

How do I get involved?

Every year the TP invites expressions of interest from social workers to get involved in admissions at Kingston University. You can register your interest early by emailing us: admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk

Is there a cost involved?

No, the university will provide this training in order to ensure you are fully equipped and confident to begin interviewing and assessing prospective students.

Community of Practice

This section provides you with some information about connecting with other social workers, who will be at a similar stage of their career to you.

In general they consist of a group of people with a common sense of purpose who agree to work together to share information, build knowledge, develop expertise and solve problems.

CoPs are cultivated and nurtured rather than formally managed. In this sense they differ from formal teams.



"A group of people who engage in collective learning in a common area of interest" - Wenger: 1998

Some benefits of a CoP include:

- Encourage knowledge sharing
- Give members a networking platform to share personal knowledge, information and experience
- Provide a platform for turning knowledge and research into practice.
- Combination of practitioner knowledge and experience with published information supports evidence based practice.
- Open to both explicit (published) knowledge - articles, reports, websites, and guidelines - and tacit (personal) knowledge gained through experience and reflection
- Reflect the dual nature of knowledge management
- Promote a learning environment

If you are interested in connecting with your peers, please get in touch with:
admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk and we can facilitate this.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

We spend the majority of our time at work and our working environment can have a significant impact on our mental health and wellbeing and ultimately, our ability to perform well in our job. In the Teaching Partnership, we recognise that Social Work is an incredibly challenging profession and are committed to ensuring that our workforce is healthy, happy and feels supported to deal with the diverse challenges of frontline practice with children and adults. It is vital to take care of your mental health and wellbeing.

Please see our dedicated [wellbeing hub](#) for more information on a variety of issues that you might need support with, and to access our signposting links and other helpful resources.

For BASW's Useful Toolkit on Social Worker Wellbeing, please [click here](#)

If you or someone you know is struggling with an issue that's affecting your wellbeing, help is available. Please see below for more information and some useful links and resources from different organisations:

Talk to the Samaritans:

The Samaritans offer emotional support 24 hours a day - in full confidence.

- **Call 116 123 - it's FREE**

Shout Crisis Text Line:

For support in a crisis, **Text Shout to 85258**. If you're experiencing a personal crisis, are unable to cope and need support.

Shout can help with urgent issues such as:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Abuse or assault
- Self-harm
- Bullying
- Relationship challenges

Rethink Mental Illness

You can call the Rethink advice and information line Monday to Friday, 10am-2pm for practical advice on:

- different types of therapy and medication
- benefits, debt, money issues
- police, courts, prison
- your rights under the Mental Health Act.
- **Call Rethink on 0300 5000 927 (UK calls are charged at your local rate).**

Mind: The Mind infoline

Mind offer an information line to answer questions about:

- types of mental health problems
- where to get help
- drug and alternative treatments
- Advocacy.
- **Call the Mind infoline on 0300 123 3393 (UK calls are charged at local rates). Or email info@mind.org.uk.**

Talk to your GP

Your GP may be the first person you talk to about your mental health problems. If you have a good relationship with your doctor, you may find it helpful just to know there is someone you can talk to about the feelings you are having. Your GP may refer you to specialist services if he/she feels they will help you.

Access Peer Support

Many groups, organisations and individuals offer different types of peer support, for coping with various issues. Peer support brings together people with shared experiences, and these experiences can vary. Peer support might involve meeting in person or it might be something you access online - for example social media networks or communities dedicated to online support. Some example organisations, include:

- <https://sidebyside.mind.org.uk/>
- http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/about_sane/
- <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>
- <https://support.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>



Feedback

In order to constantly improve and facilitate the best possible services for EPD social workers, it is vital that we continuously receive user experience and feedback. At the end of each training day or course that you complete, you will be issued with a short feedback form that should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. It is really important that we receive this feedback after each session so we can review and incorporate any improvements required for future sessions.

You may also be invited to share your feedback and thoughts about the overall EPD Framework at the end of each year completed. In the future, we may also ask you about the impact you perceive it has had on your practice.

We are really grateful for all feedback provided so thank you in advance for taking the time to share your experiences.



Appendix

Please find links below to some additional resources which you may find helpful:

- To see an example of a Personal Development Plan, please click [here](#):
- For some useful black, ethnic and minority community resources, please click [here](#):
- '[Clarity from the chaos](#)': [tips for time management in social work](#).
- '[Time management: how to feel more in control of your workload](#)'.
- For example ALS questions, please see [here](#).



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