

Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership

'Statutory Placement' Definition

The Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership (TP) aims to produce capable and knowledgeable social workers who, by the end of the student journey, are well prepared to take up their first year of practice in any setting. Towards this goal, we will provide each student with two contrasting placements, each offering statutory tasks. This document outlines what is meant by 'statutory experience', gives an idea of the types of placement opportunities on offer, and explains the guidelines for placement assignment and auditing

Background and Rationale

The Department of Health's Requirements for Social Work Training (2002) states that all social work students in England must have experience in at least two contrasting practice settings, and of "statutory social work tasks involving legal interventions". This was reiterated by TCSW (2012a), when they brought out the 'Overview of New Arrangements for Practice Learning'. The HCPC Standards of Education and Training (HCPC, 2014) states that; 'the number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.'

The DfE Teaching Partnerships 2015–16: Invitation to Express Interest stated that, while 'experience of non-statutory working can be valuable for students... both Croisdale-Appleby and Narey recommended that good quality statutory placements should be available to all social work students' with a view to better-preparing students for practice. Therefore, all potential TP's should guarantee one statutory placement for all students, and priority would be given to expressions of interest from TP's that provide two statutory placements.

In our bid, the Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership committed to providing two statutory placements. Local Authorities have offered an agreed number of student statutory places within the region, and a variety of other providers in the area are also in a position to offer statutory learning experiences. The DfE's guidance on statutory placements is as follows.

Department for Education Guidance 2015

In 'Teaching Partnerships: Invitation to Express Interest' (2015), the DfE defines statutory placements as those which:

1. take place in a local authority setting;
2. involve work on S17 and S47 cases (under the Children Act 1989);
3. involve work on delivering requirements of the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005;
4. require case records to be updated by the student, under appropriate supervision.

They go on to state that 'In child and family settings, these will offer all students significant experience of using the statutory framework for child and family social work. In adult services, students will have experience of using statutory frameworks for adult social care in delivering outcome-focused, personalised responses'. Additionally, 'where PVIs offer placements that deliver statutory work, proposals must show how they are equivalent to statutory placements as defined above.'

There is an ongoing debate about what can be considered 'statutory' social work within this guidance. In their consultation for the National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS), the DfE (2017) give a broader definition of statutory work with children and families. They state that they expect social workers working across child protection, children in need, children in care and care leavers, looked after children, young carers, fostering and adoption to undertake the following statutory tasks:

- make decisions about accepting a referral into children's social care;
- lead s.47 enquiries;
- hold case responsibility for children in need and looked after children;
- carry out statutory assessments of children in need, looked after children and family members, prospective and approved foster carers and adopters or plans related to private court proceedings;
- make, implement and review statutory plans;
- hold supervisory responsibility for foster carers; and
- approve and review prospective and approved foster carers.

For student social workers, their involvement in these tasks may be restricted; they would not, for example, lead s. 47 enquiries, although they may take responsibility for aspects of an enquiry. However, the TP would want to give student social workers the opportunity to engage with a range of these tasks.

In terms of the organisations that are able to offer students an experience of statutory tasks, the DfE TP Pilot Evaluation (DFE 2016a) notes that 'some Private and Voluntary Institutions (PVIs) that previously would have been considered as providing 'statutory work', on investigation were found not to meet the more stretching definitions for the [pilot] partnerships. There was concern at losing the richness of experience that can be offered by good quality PVI placements and some innovative approaches were adopted to ensure that experience was captured.' Similarly, BASW (2015) expresses concerns that 'PVIs [are] being pushed out of social work education when it appears that they will be central to the development of the future of the profession.' PVI placements allow students to cultivate fundamental skills for social work, particularly in relationship-building, advocacy and community development, and they give students an essential understanding of local resources to take forward into qualified practice. Statutory social workers depend on this broader landscape of PVI provision, and a broad understanding of the range of social interventions is essential for effective social work practice. The DfE (2016a) recognise this when they laud the creative approaches used by pilot TP's to involve PVI's in placement provision.

Students have also noted the potential loss to their journey if PVI organisations are not able to host/co-host placements. 'It must be noted that, in focus groups, a small number of student social workers thought there were benefits to having occasional placements in non-statutory settings, for example in PVIs whose work enabled them to better see and understand service users' issues and experiences related to a particular specialism' (DFE 2016a). In feedback sessions with UoY's current student cohorts, a significant number of students have been forthright with their concerns that sound social work experiences may be lost if PVI's are prevented from offering placement experiences.

On this basis, the TP has sought to ensure that valuable PVI opportunities are captured within our placements criteria, while continuing to ensure that we meet the requirement to offer sound statutory tasks. This broad approach to placement experience will allow us to take advantage of valuable learning opportunities for students and, at a macro-level, will have a positive impact on our ability to work with organisations in the PVI sector. It will also reduce the risk of leaving employers short of qualified social workers in the coming years. The next section describes our proposals for placements under the TP.

The Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership Placement Model

Examples of organisations / teams which may be able to offer placements under the DfE placement criteria are included below, although these are not exhaustive and may be subject to change.

We understand statutory experience to mean:

1. 'All relevant social interventions that take place in a local authority setting'.
 - The TP includes four local authorities, who currently aim to offer placements under this criteria.
 - Alternative local authority settings (e.g. in which a student is not based with a specific SW team) may also provide valuable opportunities. For example, placements may be provided within schools and residential children's homes.

Placement settings may change from year to year according to changes within local authorities and individual team capacity. Over the coming year, Practice Educator Consultants will undertake a piece of work to analyse and then maximise local authority capacity for both first and final placements.

2. 'Involve work on s17 and s47 cases (under the Children Act 1989)'.
 - All providers named in s1 provide placements within this category under 'CYPS', although some of the CYPS placements do not involve work under s17 / s47.
 - PVI providers can offer a placement under this category if the local authority has delegated a statutory function to the PVI.
 - PVI providers can offer a placement under this category if there is opportunity to be directly involved with children and families who are subject to s17/s47. As per DfE's clarification, students will need to be given 'significant experience of using the statutory framework for child and family social work' (DfE, 2015). Such experience may include working with the CAF or CP – whether on behalf of the child, the family / carer, or an organisation.
3. 'Involve work on delivering requirements of the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005'.
 - All providers named in s1, except Calderdale (Calderdale Adults Services are not currently in the TP) can provide placements within this category under 'HAS'.
 - PVI providers can offer a placement under this category if the local authority has delegated a statutory function to the PVI. This would include, for example, carers' charities, where the local authority has commissioned them to undertake carers' assessments.
 - The PVI is directly involved with adults or carers who are subject to the Care Act and the Mental Capacity Act. Again, students will need to be able to gain 'experience of using statutory frameworks for adult social care in delivering outcome-focused, personalised responses' (DfE, 2015), whether on behalf of the individual, the family / carer, or an organisation. This may include advocacy organisations that employ individuals to work as an IMCA, or hospices that require individuals to undertake MCA assessments / other statutory work.
4. 'Require case records to be updated by the student, under appropriate supervision'.
 - All of the placements outlined within the above three categories would also meet the requirements of this category.

Additionally, placements that do not involve work on s17 / s47 of the Children Act 1989, or work on the Care Act 2014 / Mental Capacity Act 2005, may be still be authorised under this category as long as they also offer experience of using statutory frameworks as per DfE's requirements (2015). This would take into account DfE's (2017) updated definition of statutory work with children and families, and would allow for opportunities in organisations that deliver, for example, mental health services. It would include:

- Local authority / NHS placements

- Prevention Looked after Children Teams, Adoption, YOT, CAMHs, and MH teams.
 - PVI placements with a mandate from the local authority / NHS / courts to deliver a particular service, for example court ordered work or work with offenders.
 - PVI placements which have a robust recording system, in which students would have the opportunity to work directly within statutory frameworks or with / on behalf of individuals who are subject to statutory frameworks.
5. Split / shared / buddying / hub and spoke placements. This type of placement involves an agreement between an organisation which does not meet the above criteria, and an organisation that does. Janet Cox (NYCC) comments that this would be a means of providing relevant and challenging learning opportunities whilst using the skills and statutory knowledge of experienced social workers. It would also be a good method of quality assurance for potential new placements, and an opportunity to build closer working relationships between different organisations to the benefit of those who use the services. A variety of models could be used, such as:
- Student spends a proportion of placement time in one setting, and then transfers to the other setting. A single PE would oversee the whole placement, drawing out common learning opportunities and ensuring consistent development.
 - This model is currently used to allow students to experience social work in a setting abroad for UoY.
 - Student is hosted entirely by one organisation, while the statutory SW from a related organisation works closely with the student / host organisation.
 - Teams within the local authority, which are not felt to reach statutory criteria, could work alongside another team to provide a placement.
 - PVI organisations could work with other PVI organisations / statutory organisations to provide a placement. This may include cross PVI / LA placements.
 - The PE may provide specific pieces of casework for the student to undertake.
 - The placement could be shared, with part of a week spent in one organisation and part spent in another. One PE would cover the whole placement, although a work place supervisor would also need to be available.

Placement types / settings

All social work students in England must have experience in at least two practice settings (DoH, 2002; TCSW, 2012b), on the grounds that the HCPC's standards of proficiency for social work are 'based on the principle that a social worker trains and qualifies with a broad experience and understanding of the profession, i.e. a variety of settings and service user groups (although of course, not all)' (TCSW, 2012b) These generic skills can then be developed by 'specialist experience and training after qualification.'

TCSW (2012b) suggests that placements might differ according to settings, service user groups, ages or methods. For example, if a student works in a child protection team for one placement, they might then work with adults, or again with children in a different setting (e.g. educational) or with different needs (e.g. in a Children With a Disability Team). SCIE (2003) suggest that contrasting placements could include 'specialist if students previously had a generic placement; statutory and voluntary; single discipline and multi-disciplinary'. As each student is on an individual path to qualification, we would take into account whether each placement could offer a sufficiently different and challenging experience for the student.

In relation to student preferences, the 'Invitation to Express Interest', DfE (2015) states that TP's must guarantee every student, as a minimum, 'at least one statutory placement relevant to their specialism.' TCSW (2012b), however, warns that 'offering flexibility in the range of different placement experiences will mean that matching with learner needs can be considered, although it will continue to be difficult to allocate placements on the basis of student choice alone'. The reality found by the DfE pilot evaluation (2016) is that

pilot SWTPs had taken 'into account students' preferences where possible'. Within the TP, students are asked about their career preferences, and this is taken into account within the placing process.

First and Final Placements

In determining whether the provision is suitable for a first or final placement, the extent to which the student can be offered opportunities to meet the appropriate PCF level will be central (SWRB, 2010), with appropriate expectations and degrees of responsibility. The Practice Educator Consultants (PECs) will undertake an analysis of placement opportunities to identify key first and final placement tasks. It is anticipated that some providers, who are in a position to offer sound statutory opportunities, will nevertheless be able to offer either first OR final placement (not both), due to the nature and complexity of work. Additionally, the Practice Educator Professional Standards (TCSW, 2013) states that all first placements:

- Should be supervised and assessed by a stage 1 or stage 2 practice educator.
- Should have an on-site supervisor, who is either a RSW or a non-SW who is using the Practice Educator Stage 1 as a developmental framework. This role may be undertaken by the Practice Educator if they are on-site.

All final placements should:

- Prepare students for statutory interventions
- Be supervised and assessed by a RSW stage 2 practice educator.
- If the practice educator is off-site, the on-site supervisor must be a RSW.

In addition, TCSW and the Social Work Reform Board agreed the criteria for a final placement as being:

- **Tasks**
The opportunity to engage with formal assessment processes
Application and understanding of legal frameworks
Organisational policies and decisions and their impact on service delivery to service users
The demands of a high pressured environment
Multiagency working
Presentation of outcomes of formal assessment processes... at, e.g. panels/meetings/courts
Use of formal agency recording for assessment/risk
- **Role of student and support needed**
Working under the supervision of a stage 2 practice educator and provided with appropriate levels of support. If the practice educator is not on-site, students will work alongside a social worker, who must be in a post requiring social work registration. This social worker will take day-to-day responsibility for the supervision of the students. In order to support the development of professional identity, students should not be the sole social work representative in a setting. Students will not hold case responsibility for formal assessment processes that include risk / safeguarding / child protection.

(TCSW, 2012b)

Quality control

In line with the TCSW (2012a) 'Overview of New Arrangements for Practice Learning', both the University of Huddersfield and the University of York have audited all placements to ensure that they meet the 'Quality Assurance for Practice Learning' (QAPL) standards. From our teaching partnership bid: 'There is a thorough and effective system for approving, quality assuring, monitoring and evaluating practice learning, including the use of pre placement visits, QAPL, module evaluation, student-staff panels, practice educator meetings and staff/student panels.'

In order to ensure that all of the organisations hosting our placements are able to offer statutory opportunities according to the updated description, the PECs (overseen by the TP placements stream group) will review audit formats and processes. Where there is any question about the opportunities available, and also for a randomised selection of placement providers, members of the group will quality control audit forms along with members of the 'SUPA' service user and carer groups. This is in line with the HCPC's (2014) standards of education and learning, which states that the 'education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements'.

This document

This document has been prepared for the teaching partnership by P Sykes, and it draws on work undertaken for the research project 'Social Work Placements: Student Experience'. It has been compiled with reference to government and other guidance available as of June 2017; as additional recommendations are released, further revision may be necessary. Revisions have been undertaken following feedback from partnership members, and this document was agreed at partnership board 19/6/2017.

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