



PRACTICE EDUCATION:

INFORMATION & OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

A key focus of our Social Work Teaching Partnership is to guarantee all social work students within the partnership two high quality placements which offer experience of undertaking statutory social work and support students to develop their capabilities and confidence to practice. This will enable students to have experience of statutory work in two different areas of practice and support students to be more fully prepared for qualified practice, enhancing employability and successful progression through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

We take a partnership approach towards Practice Education training and supporting organisations and individual teams to develop the skills and knowledge to effectively supervise and train students.

We are committed to ensuring that staff involved in practice education are well supported and valued and recognise the demands of undertaking these roles alongside your day job.

Having a social work student is an opportunity for your organisation and team to influence the training of student social workers and offers several benefits:

- The opportunity to promote a learning culture where the Professional Capabilities Framework and Knowledge and Skills Statements are embedded in Practice;
- Opportunities to learn from students and be exposed to the latest academic research and theories that underpin current social work education;
- Career development for staff who may wish to undertake the role of Work Based Supervisor, Practice Educator or Practice Educator Mentor;
- Improving awareness of your service area with the future workforce and generating interest in future ASYE roles.

Read on to learn more about the different roles involved in supporting student placements and the training and support available to placement providers.



PRACTICE EDUCATOR

CONSULTANT ROLE

“Since the valuable introduction of the PEC I have felt very well supported” - Practice Educator, Kirklees Council

Practice Educator Consultants (PECs) are key to implementing our vision to deliver well trained, competent and confident social workers who can meet the challenges of practice. This new, innovative role has been created and funded through the Partnership to lead work on new approaches to practice learning, including:

- Developing new placement opportunities in teams and agencies with little prior experience of offering placements;
- Managing student allocations and inductions;
- Quality assurance of placements to deliver the best practice placement experience to all social work students;
- Creating resources to support Practice Educators, Practice Education Mentors, Work Based Supervisors and students;
- Working with universities to co-design and co-deliver practice education courses;
- Supporting Social Workers to refresh their practice education skills;
- Contributing to ongoing training and development for Practice Educators.

“Student support groups have allowed me to communicate with other students and discuss any concerns or worries I had. The groups have also been extremely informative and provided a lot of useful information about many different areas of social work and qualifying.”

Placement Student, Kirklees Council



WORK BASED

SUPERVISOR ROLE

A Work Based Supervisor (WBS) is a worker based in the agency who usually has line management responsibility for the work done by the student; they are available for responding to day to day situations and queries that arise.

The WBS role is a great way for Social Workers to engage in the Practice Educator process, but not be fully responsible for the placement. It may also be a first step to working with a student before undertaking the Practice Educator training or progressing your career through gaining experience of supervising and managing staff.

The role involves:

- Offering formal and informal supervision and management on a day-to-day basis;
- Consulting with the Practice Educator and student to identify suitable pieces of work for the student's practice learning;
- Sharing with the Practice Educator any concerns regarding the student's progress and supporting development of an action plan to address these;
- Providing feedback to the Practice Educator about the student's learning;
- Attending formal meetings throughout the placement with the student, practice educator and placement tutor as agreed;
- Contributing to the mid-point and final reports.

There are certain eligibility requirements for the WBS role:

- May be a registered social worker (this is an essential requirement for a final placement).
- Competent to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students.
- Ideally working towards the Practice Educator Standards (PEPs) Stage 1 proficiency.
- Must be located in the same office as the student's practice learning workplace.



A Practice Educator is a Social Worker who teaches, supervises, assesses and supports students who are undertaking a formal 'Learning Placement' in a practice setting. The role of the Practice Educator is crucial in the support, assessment and continuing professional development of student Social Workers.

To be eligible to apply for Practice Educator training you must be:

- A Registered Social Worker with a minimum of two years post qualified experience;
- Committed and able to complete both Stage 1 and Stage 2 training to become a qualified Practice Educator. This includes supervising two student placements;
- Approved by your manager/Workforce Development and meet any local eligibility criteria.

The role involves:

- Assessing your social work student against the professional standards;
 - Providing a range of work for the student that allows them to have an appropriate level of responsibility and demonstrate the necessary skills, knowledge and values required to be a Social Worker;
 - Supporting the student to integrate theory and evidence-based practice into day-to-day work and help the student explore their values;
 - Providing 'formal' regular supervision to your student.
- If you have previously undertaken Practice Educator training but it has been more than 2 years since supporting a student, please speak to your local PEC/Social Work Development Team who can provide support and advice on the process for refreshing your qualification currency.





PRACTICE EDUCATOR

MENTOR ROLE

All Practice Educators undertaking Practice Educator stage one or two training require the support of a Practice Educator mentor; this must be a registered Social Worker who has successfully completed Practice Educator stage 2 training or alternatively holds the Practice Teachers' Award. The role of the mentor is crucial in the support, assessment and continuing professional development of trainee Practice Educators.

As a mentor you will have the overall responsibility for the management of the practice learning opportunity, including the assessment of the student's development. You will observe the Practice Educator in practice and support the final sign off of the placement.

The role involves:

- **Preparation and planning** – Attending the placement learning agreement meeting and supporting the trainee Practice Education with preparing the induction programme and practice curriculum and any special arrangements.
- **Observations** – Undertaking direct observations of the trainee Practice Educator and obtaining feedback from the student. Additionally the mentor will undertake a direct observation of the student.
- **Interim/Final report** – The mentor will contribute comments to the interim and final reports and provide support, advice and guidance on completion of these. They will also attend the interim meeting and final meeting if one is required.
- **Support and guidance** – The mentor will attend any concerns meetings to address issues, and be available to answer any queries/questions that the trainee Practice Educator or Social Work Student may have in relation to the Practice Educator role. The mentor will also ensure that they either meet with or have contact with the trainee Practice Educator no less than four weekly.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

We are committed to providing ongoing support and development for staff who undertake the roles of Work Based Supervisor, Practice Educator and Practice Educator Mentor. This includes offering:

- University accredited and non-accredited (NYCC only) Practice Educator training;
- Work Based Supervisor training sessions;
- Regular Practice Education support groups delivered by PECs;
- Ongoing advice and support for all roles from Practice Educator Consultants/Social Work Development teams;
- Practice Education toolkits containing social work theory cards, resources to support reflective supervision and copies of the practice learning curriculum;
- Annual Practice Educator masterclass.

“[The PE masterclass] has made me think differently about having a student and the impact that my practice and team culture has on a student’s future” - Social Worker, North Yorkshire County Council.

Further Information

Details of the Partnership’s Practice Education courses are available in our CPD brochure available via www.inspiringsocialwork.org where you can also sign up for our newsletter which includes regular information and resources relating to Practice Education.

To discuss any of the Practice Education Roles or register your interest for training please contact your PEC or Social Work Development Team.

North Yorkshire – Janet.Cox@northyorks.gov.uk

Kirklees Adults PEC – Ruth.Cooling@kirklees.gov.uk

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The Yorkshire Urban and Rural Teaching Partnership is a social work teaching partnership consisting of four local authorities and two universities in West and North Yorkshire. We're working collaboratively to deliver inspirational education and training that leads to high quality social work.

Our partnership includes the following organisations:

- **Calderdale Council**
- **City of York Council**
- **Kirklees Council**
- **North Yorkshire County Council**
- **University of Huddersfield**
- **University of York**

The partnership is funded by the Department of Education and Department of Health.



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