

# RETURN TO SOCIAL WORK



Getting back into social work after time away can be tough, but with the right support you can regain the confidence and knowledge you need to get back to making a difference to people’s lives. We have created this guidance document for Return to Social Work candidates and their managers to ensure the candidate feels supported when returning to the field of Social Work.

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## **Return to Social Work (RTSW) Candidates**

Calderdale Council recognise that everyone's circumstances are different, and people may have maintained their Social Work registration but have not recently practiced as a Social Worker. This document can help enable them to develop current practice experience to support a return to statutory Social Work. Please refer to the link below to read the 'updating' requirements of Social Work England (SWE).

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/apply-for-restoration/>

The number of 'updating days' required for a Return to Social Work candidate are as follows:

- 0 to 2 years out of practice – no requirements.
- 2 to 5 years out of practice – 30 days of updating.
- 5 or more years out of practice – 60 days of updating

**For new applicants who qualified more than five years ago** (i.e., those who have never worked as a social worker) – 60 days of combined study and supervised practice. Private study can make up no more than half of the 60 days, but this can include shadowing or observing practice. The expectation is that the individual completes the 60 days within a maximum of 6 months from the start of the post to consolidate learning and minimise disruption to children and families. The individual would be able to access internal training opportunities and online resources to support their practice during this period. Calderdale will offer the individual 1 day per month to keep a record of their learning to demonstrate to SWE and Calderdale how they have met the professional standards.

**For individuals returning to social work after 2 years (30 days)** - 30 days of combined study and supervised practice. Private study can make up no more than half of the 30 days, but this can include shadowing or observing practice. The expectation is that the individual completes the 30 days within a maximum of 4 months from the start of the post to consolidate learning and minimise disruption to children and families. The individual would be able to access internal training opportunities and online resources to support their practice during this period. Calderdale will offer the individual 1 day per month to keep a record of their learning to demonstrate to SWE and Calderdale how they have met the professional standards.

**For individuals returning to social work after more than 5 years** - 60 days of combined study and supervised practice. Private study can make up no more than half of the 60 days, but this can include shadowing or observing practice. The expectation is that the individual completes the 60 days within a maximum of 6 months from the start of the post to consolidate learning and minimise disruption for children and families. The individual would be able to access internal training opportunities and online resources to support their practice. Calderdale will offer the individual 1 day per month to keep a record of their learning to demonstrate to SWE and Calderdale how they have met the professional standards.

**For candidates who have maintained their registration, but have not practiced as a Social Worker**, a discussion would need to take place with the Principal Social Worker (PSW), Social Worker, Practice Educator Consultant (PEC) and HR (Human Resources) representative regarding the required numbers of days needed.

The model for Calderdale Return to Social Work candidates is based on an applicant successfully applying for a paid role as a Pre-Registered (Return to Social Work) Worker. The aim of the model is to ensure the candidate enjoys a holistic learning experience that also allows their Mentor or Manager to confirm they meet the requirements of Social Work England. This model offers the candidate some financial recompense and security for the re-registration period, with the opportunity to move into either a Newly Qualified Social Worker or Level 2 Social Worker role at the successful completion of their re-registration and a moderation panel at the 6-month point. The pathway will be determined through discussion and on an individual basis.

In respect of Social Work England's registration requirements, these comprise of:

- Supervised Practice - Social Work England states: "Supervised practice involves working with the supervision of a registered social worker in a social work role. You can undertake supervised practice in the UK or another country."
- Private Study – Social Work England states: "Private study can make up no more than half of the required period. This means that you can undertake private study for up to 30 days if you are completing a period of 60 days, or 15 days if you are completing a period of 30 days". These days will be agreed with the Return to Social Work supervising Manager. Private study can also comprise of shadowing opportunities and training, which would take place in the workplace.

Formal study will not be part of the model, due to Social Work England's definition as to what constitutes formal study, being: "*A postgraduate course will be accepted as formal study as long as a qualification in social work was necessary to enrol on the course.*"

The Return to Social Work candidate will undertake their learning over a block of time, attending placement Monday to Friday. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for an example.

Social Work England states that "a day is defined as a minimum of seven hours. The 30 or 60 days do not need to be continuous, but they must be completed in the last 12 months before you submit your application". Calderdale's approach sets out a plan for consolidating the updating days within a 6-month period. This should better support the individual's learning as well as minimise disruption for children, families, and teams.

The plan for these days will be negotiated with the supervising Manager at the prior meeting.

## Method of Assessment

A Practice Educator Consultant (PEC), Practice Manager (PM) or Advanced Practitioner (AP) will be allocated to the Return to Social Work candidate as their Mentor, in which they will complete the following:

- Weekly Supervision relating to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and PQS (Post Qualifying Standards) and on-going informal supervision
- Minimum of 3 x Direct Observations of Practice ([Appendix B](#)).
- Reading and discussing the RTSW candidates weekly reflective learning journal.
- Assess a presentation (10 minutes) by the RTSW candidate at the end of the updating period.

**Note:** The Mentor must be registered with Social Work England for the duration of the supervised practice and have been registered as a Social Worker for at least 3 years. They must also not be subject to any fitness to practise sanctions or proceedings.

## Supervision

Before the Return to Social Work candidate commences their pre-registration role, a Learning Agreement meeting will take place which will clearly outline what is expected from both the RTSW candidate and their Mentor.

In this meeting the Calderdale supervision policy will be discussed, and supervision dates and times for the duration of the updating period, will be provided. All supervision sessions, both formal and informal will focus on encouraging candidates to reflect on their practice and experiences as a Social Worker, linking this to the PCF's and PQS.

## Direct Observations

A minimum of 3 direct observations ([Appendix B](#)) will be undertaken by the Mentor or other qualified colleagues (Practice Educator, Practice Manager or Advanced Practitioner), with feedback being given at the end of each observation.

The Mentor will also gather 3 pieces of service user and professional feedback.

## Weekly Reflective Learning Journal

The Return to Social Work candidate will complete a weekly Reflective Journal which will allow them to reflect on their work-based experiences and private learning. The RTSW candidate will relate their experiences to the PCF's, PQS, Social Work theories, interventions, and legislation.

## Presentation

The Return to Social Work candidate will, at the end of their updating period, undertake a 10-minute presentation to the PEC/PM/AP and one other Practice Learner, i.e., Practice Educator.

## Confirmation of Evidence

It is the responsibility of the Return to Social Work candidate to complete all the relevant Social Work England documentation to evidence that they have completed the requirements as specified by Social Work England. All evidence and documentation must be provided to the Mentor for 'sign off.'

## Pre-Registration Period Procedures

### Equipment

Calderdale would provide the necessary IT equipment including laptop and mobile phone to the RTSW candidate at the start of their employment.

### Contract and terms and conditions

Calderdale's standard terms and conditions of employment would apply, including the probationary period of 6 months.

### Post registration

The candidate will complete an application setting out their previous social work or relevant experience. Based on the application and their interview, a provisional progression plan, post-registration, will be identified. There are two routes:

- For candidates who have no prior social work experience, they would be offered a 12 month newly qualified social work role, post registration. This would involve a protected caseload and follow the Skills for Care Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme.
- For candidates with previous or transferrable experience, they would be offered a Level 2 social work role, with the offer of a career progression meeting after a further 6 months, to review their progress and consider further progression options.

### What happens if things go wrong?

Although rare, things can sometimes go wrong. It is important for the RTSW candidate or the Mentor to raise and seek to resolve any difficulties as soon as possible.

If things are going wrong between the Return to Social Work candidate and Mentor, then initially they should discuss and resolve issues through supervision. However, if issues cannot be resolved the Practice Educator Consultant would hold a meeting with the RTSW candidate and their Mentor to address the issues and move the matter positively forward.

Should concerns arise regarding the conduct or practice of the Return to Social Work candidate, a meeting with the RTSW candidate and their Mentor, chaired by a Practice Educator Consultant, would be called to discuss issues, and find resolutions. If needed, an Action Plan will be formulated to support the RTSW candidate to address concerns. The RTSW candidate, their Mentor, and the Practice Educator Consultant will review the Action Plan weekly. Should concerns continue to be an issue after implementation of the Action Plan, then advice will be sought from Human Resources (HR) to consider what further action is needed. Any action plan or subsequent steps would be informed by the [Calderdale HR policies and procedures](#).

If the decision is taken to terminate the Return to Social Work contract, the candidate will be excluded from council premises and must return all council property immediately. This

includes ID cards, keys, computer and other equipment, and anything else which belongs to or relates to the business of the council.

Depending on the reason the placement has been terminated, Social Work England may be informed, to which the Return to Social Work candidate will be informed of.

If the Return to Social Work candidate chooses to terminate their employment, they would need to give the Local Authority one month's notice, as specified in their contract.

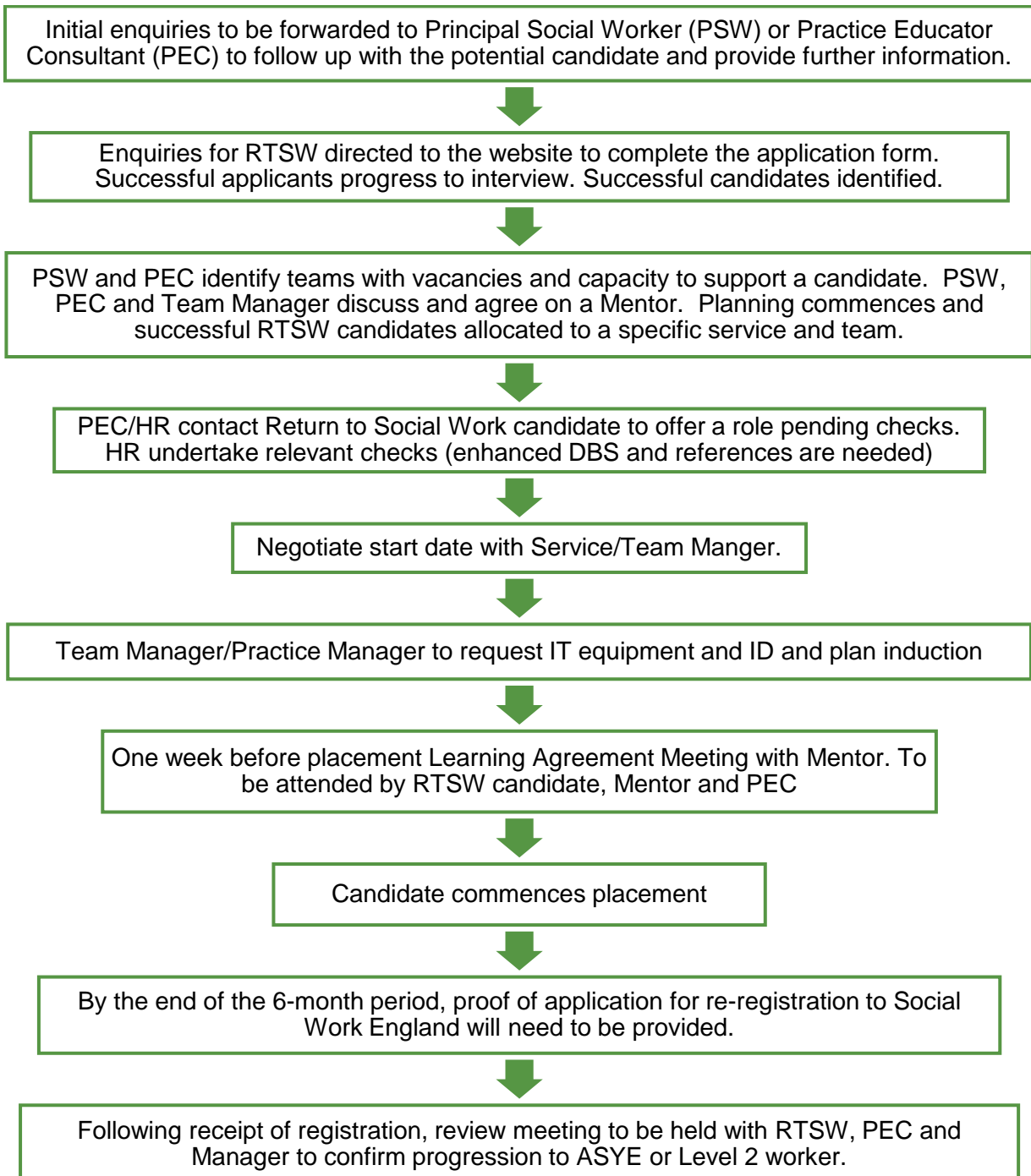
### **Whistleblowing**

You, as a Return to Social Work Candidate may notice if there is something seriously wrong within your work base. Sometimes it may seem difficult to speak up because of feelings of disloyalty, or because of a fear of harassment or victimisation.

We expect the highest standards of behaviour, and all employees/volunteers have a responsibility to voice any concerns they have, normally with their manager or via a [Contact Officer](#) or through the [Whistleblowing process](#).

The council's Whistleblowing procedure is independent and confidential. It can be anonymous if you wish. We will make sure that you will not be victimised or suffer disadvantage if you report your genuine concerns.

## **Return to Social Work Process Flowchart**



## **Contact Information**

If you would like further information on the Calderdale Return to Social Work Programme, please contact our Practice Educator Consultants:

Carly Johnson [Carly.johnson@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:Carly.johnson@calderdale.gov.uk)

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## APPENDIX A

### Example of a 30-Day Placement

The Return to Social Work candidate would complete the timetable below, so to evidence how they have updated their skills, knowledge, and experience.

<b>Week 1</b>	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction
<b>Week 2</b>	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Week 3</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 4</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Week 5</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 6</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Additional Days</b>	30 DAYS				

## Example of a 60 Day Placement

The Return to Social Work candidate would complete the timetable below, so to evidence how they have updated their skills, knowledge, and experience.

<b>Week 1</b>	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction
<b>Week 2</b>	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Supervised Practice or Private Study Induction	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Week 3</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 4</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Week 5</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 6</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Week 7</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 8</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)

<b>Week 9</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 10</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Week 11</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day
<b>Week 12</b>	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Supervised Practice Day	Private Study Day (Reflective Journal, Training Courses, Websites, Webinars etc)
<b>Additional Days</b>	60 DAYS				

# **APPENDIX B**

## **DIRECT OBSERVATION OF RTSW PRACTICE**

### **Planning Sheet**

**To be completed by the RTSW candidate**

What is the purpose of the session? What social work theory and knowledge will inform your practice?

What are the aims and intended outcomes of the session? Please identify outcomes for the service user as well as demonstrating your own skills / knowledge and how they link to the PCF (Professional Capabilities Framework) and PQS (Post Qualifying Standards)?

# **DIRECT OBSERVATION OF RTSW'S PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

## **Observation Sheet**

### **To be completed by the observer**

Whilst on placement, RTSW candidates are asked to demonstrate a wide range of skills, knowledge, and competences. The table below outlines key areas, which can be assessed in face-to-face work with service users and other colleagues.

Please use these areas as a guide to what to look for when observing the RTSW candidate's practice, (briefly) noting relevant examples of how a RTSW candidate does/does not demonstrate her/his skills in the required areas.

All these areas may not be covered or evidenced in any one observed situation, so don't worry if there are gaps in the form!

Name of RTSW candidate:

Brief description of situation observed:

Name of Observer:

Role in Organisation:

Date:

### **KEY AREAS FOR OBSERVED PRACTICE**

Please give examples of how the student is meeting the following areas of practice.

<b><u>Professionalism</u></b>	
<b><u>Values and Ethics</u></b>	
<b><u>Diversity and Equality</u></b>	
<b><u>Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing</u></b>	
<b><u>Knowledge</u></b>	
<b><u>Skills and Interventions</u></b>	

<p><b><u>Understanding of Context and Organisations</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Professional Leadership</u></b></p>	
<p><b><u>Evidence of PQS Knowledge and Skills Statements:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships and effective direct work</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Child development</li> <li>• Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability</li> <li>• Abuse and neglect of children</li> <li>• Child and family assessment</li> <li>• Analysis, decision-making, planning and review</li> <li>• The law and the family and youth justice systems</li> <li>• The role of supervision</li> <li>• Organisational context</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Feedback from Service Users if appropriate.</u></b> (e.g., did the service user feel as if the RTSW candidate worked in partnership with them, did they feel listened to, understood, accepted, respected?)</p>	
<p><b><u>Any other comments arising from this observation?</u></b></p>	

**DIRECT OBSERVATION OF RTSW CANDIDATES PRACTICE**

**Reflection Sheet**

To be completed by the RTSW candidate

<b>Description</b>
<b>Feelings</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>
<b>Actions</b>