

Assessment of direct observation

To be completed by the NQSW and assessor



Guidance on using the direct observation assessment criteria

The criteria is based on the Knowledge and Skills Statement (Adult) 2015¹ and the professional capabilities framework (PCF) – ASYE level descriptor

NB: The direct observation criteria are designed for interventions with service users/ carers.

The assessment of the direct observation of newly qualified social worker (NQSWs) is a six stage process and templates are provided. The direct observation template includes elements as follows:

Part 1 (to be completed by the NQSW)

Part 1a – preparation and planning for the observation

Part 1b – post -observation structured written reflection template

Part 1c – NQSW response to the assessment of the direct observation- (optional)

Part 2 (to be completed by the assessor)

Part 2a – the direct observation standardised assessment criteria template

Part 2b – standardised assessment criteria for structured written reflection

Part 2c – overarching holistic assessment of the observation and written reflection

(Note, parts 2a and 2b inform the assessors overall assessment in 2c. As a result of the post observation reflective discussion further comments may be included in 2c)

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411957/KSS.pdf

The process is as follows:

1. Preparation and planning for the observation – NQSW to complete. (See part 1a of the direct observation template and pre-observation guidance).
2. The direct observation – There are two elements to the assessment of the direct observation
 - a. An **observation** by the assessor of the behaviour, skills and knowledge that the NQSW is demonstrating in the practice situation (**assessment of skills, behaviour and knowledge**). During the observation, the assessor should use the direct observation standardised assessment criteria template as a prompt see part 2a.
 - b. A **post observation structured written reflection** completed by the NQSW as soon as possible after the observation, (it's expected that this will be completed within one working day). (See part 1b). Although the Assessor should offer general encouragement and comment on the direct observation that has taken place it's good practice that no detail is discussed prior to the structured reflection being completed.
3. Obtaining feedback from the service user / carer – the assessor will pursue this immediately following the observation
4. The written review will be read and commented on by the assessor and used to identify how far the NQSW is able to conceptualise the actions they took, the assessments they made, their use of self and the application of theory, methods, legislation and research (**assessment of meta-competency**².) The assessor should use the standardised assessment criteria for structured written reflection template – see part 2b. This together with 2a will form the basis for the assessor's holistic assessment of the observation and the post observation reflective discussion.
5. The post observation reflective discussion. Following the completion of the observation; the written review and the assessor's assessment, it's expected that a post observation reflective discussion (undertaken as part of a regular supervision session) will take place as soon as possible between the NQSW and the observer. During this discussion the observation and the written reflection will be discussed the learning identified and future learning objectives considered. On the basis of this, the assessor may add further comments to 2a and list the future learning needs.

²Meta competency - Higher order, overarching qualities and abilities of a conceptual , interpersonal and professional nature .This includes cognitive, critical and self-reflective capacities.

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6. Based on these two assessments and the reflective discussion the NQSW will summarise the learning from the assessments within the critical reflection log (CRL) and the agreed identification of future learning needs will inform their professional development plan (PDP).³

The KSS sets out an expectation that, three direct observations will be undertaken. These will be formative in nature with learning and identification of further learning needs creating an iterative cycle. The skills observed and the ability of the NQSW to conceptualise their practice will need to meet the requirements of the KSS and as described in the PCF, the ASYE level descriptor.

³ Identification of Learning needs will be assisted by reference to the PCF – ASYE level.

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Guidance: Preparing for the direct observation.

Preparation and planning should be regarded as integral to the direct observation. It's a crucial first stage that will impact on the assessment and should be recorded on the direct observation template.

The guidance below will help the NQSW and the assessor to identify the factors that need to be taken into account at the preparation stage.

Deciding on appropriate direct observations

In making the decision about which intervention would serve as an appropriate direct observation, you should consider the following:

- The reasons for selecting a particular intervention and what it will contribute to the progressive development and holistic assessment process for the NQSW. Good practice suggests that the Assessor and the social worker should discuss and agree practice situations that are appropriate for testing the range of knowledge and skills to be assessed.
- The nature of the direct observation - do not manufacture the intervention, it should be something that is integrated within usual practice
- Where the service user lacks capacity to give informed consent a decision, on whether the direct observation would be detrimental to the service user, should be undertaken as part of the mental capacity assessment and the reasoning recorded. In addition to the above, it's important to consider the following practicalities:
- The available time to undertake the observation and the post observation structured written reflection which should take place as soon as possible afterwards – ideally soon after and certainly within one working day.

The post observation reflective discussion will provide the opportunity for the NQSW to critically reflect on the learning that has taken place. This can happen as part of usual supervision arrangements but ideally should happen as soon as possible after the direct observation.

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Roles and responsibilities in the observation

The NQSW and the assessor should agree and clarify:

- the role of the observer during the intervention – how they will be introduced and under what circumstances, if any, they will intervene
- that the assessor will be responsible for seeking service user feedback after the observation
- if other professionals are involved in the observed intervention, it may be appropriate to ask them to provide feedback. In this case they should be approached in advance and provided with a copy of the CRL evidence template

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Part 1a – NQSW to complete pre-observation

Refer to separate guidance: preparing for the videoed direct observation. Complete boxes 1 and 2 in advance of the direct observation.

Name of the NQSW	
Name and role of the observer	
Date and setting of the observation	
Date and setting of the post observation written assessment	This should take place ideally within the same working day as the observation.
Date and setting of the post observation reflective discussion	Plan for this to take place within a week of the observation
Description of the intervention to be observed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The reasons for selecting a particular intervention and what it will contribute to your progressive development and the holistic assessment process▪ The nature of the direct observation - do not manufacture the intervention, it should be something that is integrated within usual practice	

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- The ability of the service user to give informed consent or information on the assessment that details the evidence that this process will not be detrimental to the person who accesses care and support

Planning for the intervention – practical arrangements

This section should be completed after discussion with the assessor

- The role of the observer during the intervention – how they will be introduced and under what circumstances, if any, they will intervene
- The logistics involved in the first two aspects of the observation assessment process (timing and location of the post observation structured written review. Arrangements for the post observation reflective discussion)

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Planning for the intervention – thinking through your professional approach

This section is designed to help you to prepare for the written review that you will complete after the observation. It may be helpful for you to consider the following:

- the objectives of the intervention and the relevant identified areas for development detailed in the CRL and the PDP
- any particular areas of KSS / PCF you hope to demonstrate during the intervention (e.g holistic and person centred assessment and decision making skills, understanding of the impact of key factors such as trauma, loss, etc.)
- previous experience / learning that may be transferable to this situation
- use of legislation, policy, theory, social work methods, research
- you'll find it helpful in planning for the intervention to consider the assessment criteria for the observation and for the structured written review - see part 2

Part 1b - NQSW to complete post-observation

This section should be completed as soon as possible after the intervention and certainly within one working day. As a guideline it's expected that this will take no longer than 45 minutes. The assessment criteria for this exercise can be found in Part 2b.

Post observation structured reflection

The following are prompts to help you construct your reflection

Reflect on your performance in the observation – what did you do well and what would you seek to develop?

- What were your emotions during the observation and how did they affect your practice?
- Critically reflect on your application of social work theory, methods, legislation and research
- Identify and critically reflect upon areas of challenge and complexity in the observation in relation to KSS/PCF

Part 1c - NQSW to complete after reading the two parts of the observers assessment

While you should summarise your learning from the assessment within the CRL and record your identified learning needs within the PDP, this section is for you to make any other comment on the process or outcome of the assessment.

NQSW signature	
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Part 2 – assessor to complete

PART 2a - direct observation standardised assessment criteria

Assessment of observed behaviour, skills and knowledge

This section is to be used in the direct observation to record the skills and capabilities of the NQSW **as observed**. It will be necessary for the Assessor to familiarise themselves with these criteria in advance of the observation. It's expected that all the requirements in Communication skills and Professional elements will be demonstrated. The second section provides prompts for the Assessor, it's not expected that all of these elements will be demonstrated and it's likely that other evidence will be generated outside of those listed. All of the criteria is based on the requirements of the KSS (adult) and the PCF

Evidence of:	It's expected that all of these elements will be demonstrated	Comment
Application of Communication skills.	Active listening	
	Appropriate Questioning	
	Demonstration of empathy	

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	Clarifying and summarising	
	Using communication techniques appropriate to the person who accesses care and support	
	Appropriate use of nonverbal messages	
Professionalism	Use of self and appropriate professional authority	
	Professionalism and accountability	
	Values and ethics underpinning social worker behaviour and conduct	

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Evidence of:

(Prompts in blue - depending on the observation not all of these may be demonstrated)

Assessment skills

- focusing the interview, employing holistic assessment skills
- responding flexibly to user or carer's needs and concerns
- adaptability (regarding use of methods, theories and responsiveness to unpredicted situations)
- assessment of capacity
- co-production or exchange approach, including the user's rights to choice and control
- employing preventative approaches
- identification of service user strengths and capabilities

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<p>Identification of risk indicators and appropriate response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ identification of risk indicators current or potential, including adopting a positive risk approach▪ outcomes-focused, personalised approach to safeguarding practice▪ supporting individual to make their own decisions, especially where they may lack capacity	
<p>Other agreed identified learning aims and objectives</p> <p>Add here</p>	
<p>Additional comments</p>	

Part 2b standardised assessment criteria for structured written reflection - (assessment of accuracy of recall and meta-competency⁴)

This should be completed by the assessor and returned together with 2a and 2c to the NQSW as soon as possible, and in advance of the post observation reflective discussion. As a result of the post observation reflective discussion, the assessor may wish to include further comments in 2c.

Evidence of	Comment
Accuracy of the NQSWs recall of the intervention - have significant discussions/ incidents been misrepresented or omitted?	
Ability to recognise personal reactions, reflect on ways to manage these if necessary and make use of self	
Knowledge and application of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Code of Practice, Care Act or other relevant legislation	

⁴ Meta competency - Higher order, overarching qualities and abilities of a conceptual, interpersonal and professional nature .This includes cognitive, critical and self-reflective capacities.

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Application of social work method/s and theories	
Ability to recognise person-centred solutions to risk and harm	
Demonstrates a holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks.	
Ability to recognise complexity and articulate reasoned assessment and decision making	
Demonstrates understanding of impact of trauma, loss etc on physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.	
Ability to reflect on strengths and areas for further learning	

PART 2c - Overarching holistic assessment of the observation and written reflection

Overarching assessment of the observation and the structured written reflection
Take into account the NQSW's preparation for the observation in part 1 and your assessment in parts 2a and 2b Your assessment of the DO will contribute to the overall holistic progressive assessment of the NQSW in the record of support and progressive assessment (RSPA), please ensure that the DO is evidenced as part of this.
Record any comments that also inform the assessment following the post observation reflective discussion
(Complete these sections after post observation reflective discussion)
Identified learning needs (to inform the next stage of the PDP)

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Assessor's signature	Date
NQSW's signature	Date