

Leeds adult social care

Case studies and resources to illustrate the implementation of continuing professional development in social work



The Leeds case study illustrates how a CPD programme can be developed that considers how the learning and progression from the ASYE for social workers can be maximised. It demonstrates how a combination of approaches to CPD, internally managed and delivered as well as jointly with a university, provides a flexible programme that can accommodate organisational and individual learning needs. The emphasis on work-based assessment and the pivotal role of the manager in linking holistic assessment to supervision and appraisal is central to the approach. The project is beginning to explore how impact assessment can be used as an assessment and organisational developmental tool.

CPD approach

Leeds Adult Social Care (ASC) in partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Adult Social Care– Access and Inclusion, and Leeds & York Partnership Foundation Trust (mental health and learning disability social work), developed an in-house programme that covered all three topics identified for this project, namely interpersonal skills development, community development skills and the assessment of safeguarding and risk.

This was seen as an opportunity to:

- ensure our organisation and workers were meeting the needs highlighted in the White Paper, “Caring for our future: reforming care and support” (DH 2012), in order that people accessing our services would have their needs met in a professional, personalised way
- develop a new professional development pathway introducing different learning methods that were individually focused with assessment by the manager and based on practice
- support the development of the next stage of a professional development pathway from ASYE to social work level

- ensure that the CPD programme could be used as part of a social worker’s evidence for HCPC re-registration
- develop a programme that would be recognised internally and externally by mapping to the PCF, and providing certification
- enable Leeds ASC to be at the forefront of the professional development for social workers.

The programme structure was devised with partners taking into account the service development requirements for the future workforce, the existing pressures team managers and social workers were under, the new PCF requirements, new holistic assessment processes, learning outcomes and evidence of how learning was put into practice. Other elements to the programme were enhanced supervision and an observation of practice. Leeds wanted to make the approach meaningful to the social worker and include real work scenarios to embed learning in practice. The structure of the programme recognises the importance of learning from “real work” in the development of reflective practice, and in supporting the

development of teams and services through the dissemination of this learning.

The agreed outcomes for the programme were:

- demonstration of enhanced interpersonal skills through effective engagement with people being supported, **professionals and carers**
- consolidation of interpersonal skills through critical reflection on practice
- evidence of an increased knowledge of community development and enterprise and the ability to disseminate this information to others
- understanding of how combining personalisation with community empowerment relates to the social worker role
- advanced knowledge of the serious case review process, the national implications and legal status
- identification of key themes within the Leeds serious case reviews and demonstration of application to practice
- impact measured in practice on interactions and service delivery with people in need of care and support and other professionals.

Measuring impact

In developing the in-house programme we wanted to ensure that innovative models of delivery and assessment were trialled that could be used as learning tools and as impact assessment tools. These included including people in need of support in the training and assessment of candidates (interpersonal skills), and by providing senior practitioners to coach candidates ensuring that learning from serious case reviews was embedded in practice (assessment of risk and safeguarding). Further details of the programme, the outcomes, the links to the PCF and the assessment are available. Go to <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?IID=16377&sID=4548> to access the Programme information.

Interpersonal skills

An Interpersonal skills self-assessment tool was developed and a [communication skills preparatory task](#) was completed by the social worker in discussion with their team manager. An [outcome measurement framework impact assessment](#) was provided for the social worker and the team manager to complete at the end

of the programme. The areas that were identified in the self-assessment as requiring development were the focus for skills development and assessment. The individual worker was able to reflect on their development with the team manager using a DVD produced as part of the skills development and provided by Leeds Metropolitan University. The skills development session had two parts: the first focused on theory while in the second half the social workers were filmed conducting an assessment with a person they were supporting.

“As a consequence of seeing the film one wants to look at their practice in how they balance questioning with the forming of the relationship.” (Comment from manager.)

Community development skills

Social workers attended a briefing session delivered by the Head of Commissioning on “Better lives through enterprise – community development”. Following this they visited a community organisation and gathered a list of objectives that had to be met as information to cascade back to their team. The social worker received feedback on the presentation.

Assessment of risk and safeguarding

Following on from a formal input delivered by senior practitioners on serious case reviews, social workers received individual coaching on one of their cases over a six week period. A further impact assessment will be taking place after three months.

Work-based assessment

We wanted to ensure that team managers were integral to the process but we recognised that they needed support and that they would not be able at this stage to offer the enhanced supervision or the observation of practice. For this reason an external professional was commissioned to provide these elements. The team managers, however, were responsible for collating all the assessment evidence, including coordinating the assessment of impact and making the final holistic assessment of the programme. To ensure their involvement we held an induction briefing for the social workers and their team managers where they were able to discuss their respective roles. They identified potential issues and offered ideas.

Using this feedback, documentation was developed which included [team manager assessment forms](#), feedback sheets on the community development presentation and impact assessment forms. The “golden thread“ throughout the programme has been the assessment of the individual. The team managers’ role has been crucial to the overall “holistic” assessment, using the support documentation to gather information from all the separate parts of the programme, liaising with the senior practitioners and an independent supervisor, discussing development areas with the social workers and taking them forward in their appraisal.

Next steps

Following a final feedback session, which the Head of Service also attended, the following steps were identified for revision or development.

- The interpersonal skills module delivered by Leeds Metropolitan University will be used as part of enhanced skills for the social work level after the ASYE. This will build on the two modules that social workers are required to complete in their ASYE year and will lead to them being awarded 20 Masters-level credits on completion of a reflective piece of work. The sessions will be expanded to two days and people being supported will be assisted and trained for their part in the delivery and assessment.

- All three modules will be available as part of a corporate development plan in which social workers can chose a “pick & mix” option to support their individual needs. The modules will be developed to stand alone but within a structure to promote a learning and development route. This will fit into the annual planning cycle and be part of the CPD route from ASYE to social worker.
- Development of modules to meet different styles of learning and individual needs, e.g. a community development visit could be arranged and managed by the social worker.
- The question is raised as to whether there needs to be a study time element in CPD to allow for research, etc.
- Senior practitioners are to continue to be included and their role developed.

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