



The professional association for  
social work and social workers

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

## PRACTICE EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This refreshed guidance has been developed in collaboration with learners, people with lived experience of social work, employers, and learning providers for those delivering practice education in England. The purpose of this document is to promote the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) and lead to a wider understanding of the various roles in practice education for all those who might be involved in the process, directly or indirectly, to ultimately benefit those who receive social work services. This document should be read alongside the Social Work England guidance on practice placements (SWE, 2020).

The current social context cannot be ignored and this guidance needs to be understood and implemented in recognition of the impact of poverty that individuals and communities will be experiencing given the 12 years of austerity we have endured as a nation. The effect this has had on learners, providers and those directly accessing services needs to be understood in the context of practice education.

Being able to act morally and ethically is an essential aspect of social work and the heart of this document is a set of core values and standards, which should guide all parties involved in practice education. This PEPS guidance is informed by a commitment to promoting and embedding principles of equality, diversity and inclusion across practice education. Furthermore, there is a clear position in this guidance on anti-racist practice for both learners and those supporting them.

Significant work has been carried out to support the quality assurance of practice learning (BASW 2021) and this guidance needs to be implemented alongside that.

This guidance sets out the context of practice learning and outlines how practice education courses might be implemented. Those supporting social work learners play an important and vital role and so this document promotes a setting for practice educators to be valued with the appropriate and necessary resources to enhance provision of an effective learning and assessment environment.

**“We fully support the refresh of the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS), it is important that as a profession we set high standards of practice education and support future generations of social workers in their education and career pathways. We would like to thank BASW and stakeholders for producing these important revised standards.”**

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# 1. GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

## **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL)**

This is where acknowledgement is made of prior learning on acceptance to a course either at commencement or partway through.

## **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)**

The first assessed year in employment for a newly qualified social worker.

## **Blended Learning**

Is a method of delivering learning with provided content for learners to engage with asynchronously, supported by some opportunity for synchronous learning too (face to face or online).

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Ongoing learning activities to ensure social workers are up to date. There is a requirement to register this activity with the social work regulator Social Work England.

## **Higher Education Institution (HEI)**

Provider of higher, tertiary education.

## **Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS)**

Set out what social workers, supervisors and practice leaders should know and be able to do within the context of their role in different settings.

## **Learner**

Person undertaking pre-qualification award (e.g. social work) or post-qualification learning e.g. ASYE, Best Interests Assessor (BIA), Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP). This does not refer to the person undertaking the PEPS course. They will be referred to as a **Trainee Practice Educator**.

## **Line manager**

Usually the person responsible for supervising and allocating workload to a qualified social worker.

## **Learning provider**

This will be the organisation that delivers the teaching and assessment of a PEPS course. This might be an HEI, an employer or an independent organisation.

## **Practice Educator Mentor\***

A registered social worker qualified to PEPS 2 who will develop skills and knowledge of the Trainee Practice Educator during the process of undertaking the Practice Educator Professional Standards. The Practice Educator Assessor may also fulfil this role. It is expected that a Practice Educator Mentor should provide at least six supervision sessions to the Trainee Practice Educator during PEPS 1 and 2. If this is a separate role to the Practice Educator Assessor, it is expected there will be close working and sharing of feedback about the progress of the Trainee Practice Educator. The mentor will not be making a final assessment on the Trainee Practice Educator.

## **Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSWS)**

Usually undertaking the ASYE.

## **On-site Supervisor**

Is responsible for the day-to-day support for the learner and will work closely with the Practice Educator (see section 4.11) in their overall assessment of that learner. They might be called 'work-based supervisors' in some practice learning settings.

## **Off-site Practice Educator**

A registered social worker qualified to PEPS 2 who is physically located away from the learners' practice area and contracted by the programme provider or employer to undertake the role of Practice Educator. They will work closely with the On-site Supervisor.

## **People with Lived Experience (PLE)**

People who will have had direct or indirect experience of social work services. For the purposes of this review PLE have contributed to the development of the refreshed guidance through their roles in social work practice education.

## **Practice Educator Assessor\***

A registered social worker qualified to PEPS 2 who will be responsible for assessing the Trainee Practice Educator against the Values Statements and PEPS Domains; this includes undertaking the direct observations of the Trainee Practice Educator and writing assessments for their

progression on the PEPS course. This person will also need to feedback and counter-sign the Trainee Practice Educators assessment of a learner in Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the PEPS. If this is carried out in a separate role to the Practice Educator Mentor, it is expected there will be close working and sharing of feedback about the progress of the Trainee Practice Educator.

### **Practice Educator (PE)**

A registered social worker qualified to PEPS 2 who takes overall responsibility for assessing learners in practice education against relevant frameworks including the Professional Capability Framework. These may be located on the same site as the learner but may also be '**off site practice educator**' and also referred to as a 'long arm' provider or 'independent' depending on their employment status.

### **Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS)**

Are the standards categorised into Domains that those delivering practice education are expected to demonstrate.

### **Practice Placements**

Refer specifically to those undertaking the required days in a practice setting as part of a pre-qualifying programme (so 200 days across the duration of the programme), often broken down into 30 skills days, 70 days (first placement) and 100 days (final placement).

### **Professional Capability Framework (PCF)**

'The framework for practice teaching and learning in England. It sets out nine common domains of capability that we expect to develop as social workers, and which others can expect of us. It promotes and underpins social work as 'one profession' across all specialisms and roles' (BASW 2018).

### **Trainee Practice Educator**

Is the person undergoing training to be qualified to be a Practice Educator.

### **Values Statements**

Are the expectations of those in the practice learning setting and are linked closely to the PCF (2018), KSS (2014, 2015) and Social Work Ethics (BASW 2021).

\* Practice Educator Assessors and/or Practice Educator Mentors will normally have supervised five learners (post and pre-qualifying), and have experience of managing complexity in practice education prior to taking on that role. The proposed number of approximately five learners includes those they supervised during their own PEPS 1 and 2 training.

## 2. CONTEXT OF PRACTICE EDUCATION

- 2.1** This revised edition of the PEPS has been co-produced by the British Association of Social Workers and stakeholders in social work education. It refreshes both the original document from the College of Social Work (2013) and the PEPS refresh undertaken in 2019. This document retains the principles and structures developed by the Social Work Reform Board and the College of Social Work but updates content and an on-going commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Research highlights issues of racism within practice learning (Cane and Tadam 2022) and this document takes a firm position on promoting and championing anti-racist practice. Furthermore, this guidance responds to the expectations within social work practice learning as guided by the regulator in their Education and Training Standards and Practice Placement Guidance (SWE 2021). The impact of austerity needs to be acknowledged and understood in the application of this guidance given issues which will be directly affecting learners, providers and those receiving services, such as poverty and food insecurity.
- 2.2** The PEP Standards are closely aligned to the refresh of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and post-qualifying standards (see appendix 1). The PEP Standards provide guidance for all parties involved in the process of practice education including practice educators; mentors, on-site supervisors; social work learners; trainee practice educators, providers of practice education (including HEI's); employers of social work staff and people with lived experience who are supported to take an active role in social work practice learning environments.
- 2.3** BASW's Code of Ethics for Social Work (2021) incorporates statements of principles drawn up by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASW). This Code should underlie all social work practice.
- 2.4** BASW will continue the role of promoting, supporting and updating the Practice Educator Professional Standards while seeking to provide support and professional development opportunities for Practice Educators.
- 2.5** The Local Government Association Standards for employers of social workers in England, set out the eight standards for the support of social workers recommended by the Social Work Task Force that social work employers should strive to meet in supporting and delivering this guidance, particularly in relation to Standard 5, Effective and Appropriate Supervision, and Standard 6, Continuing Professional Development (LGA, 2014).
- 2.6** Social Work England set out clear expectations for social workers to undertake CPD, which includes their contribution to practice learning (Professional Standard 4, SWE, 2019).

## 3. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE EDUCATION (PRACTICE EDUCATOR VALUES STATEMENTS AND PEPS DOMAINS)

- 3.1** It is expected that those undertaking a role in practice education as a Trainee, Practice Educator Assessor or Practice Educator Mentor will demonstrate the Values Statements which have been adapted from the Social Work Reform Board (2010). The Values Statements also closely reflect the BASW Code of Ethics (2021), position on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (BASW, 2021) and Anti-Racist Practice (BASW, 2021). Furthermore, the Practice Educator Values Statements are underpinned by the Professional Capability Framework (2018), particularly the 'Purpose' Super Domain that refers to how social work practitioners approach their work. Trainee Practice Educators will be required to demonstrate these Values Statements as part of the assessment process and in their ongoing role in practice education once qualified. A commitment to the values of the profession is also upheld by the Professional Standards of the social work regulator to promote rights, strengths and the wellbeing of people, families and communities (Professional Standard 1, SWE, 2019).
- 3.2** In order to promote anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practices, all those involved in the delivery of practice education will demonstrate the following:

### Values Statements of Practice Education

1. Advise learners of their rights and actively lead on challenging oppression, discrimination and racist practices that may be experienced by learners. This may include overt expressions of racism, or more covert unconscious bias and micro-aggressions. Learners must be supported throughout the process by the learning provider and (Trainee) Practice Educator in the reporting and responding to such concerns. Where appropriate this will require the implementation of whistleblowing policies (BASW, 2014) to ensure an effective working environment for social work (BASW/IFSW, 2013).
2. Manage professional and personal boundaries, appropriately using authority and power within the assessment relationship and recognising and acting upon the implications for assessment of practice. Fundamental to this relationship is an underpinning of the common principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in appropriately supporting learners by acknowledging and responding to their needs and in anti-discriminatory manner.
3. Update on best practice in assessment and research on adult learning and apply this knowledge in promoting the rights and choices of a diverse group of learners. Managing the assessment process whilst actively challenging oppressive practice which does not support learners to reach their potential.
4. Commit to the needs and interests of people with lived experience of social work when assessing the capability and skills of learners at all stages of the assessment process. As appropriate, those with lived experience should play an active part in assessing those being accepted onto and undertaking training in practice education.
5. Identify and question their own values and prejudices and respect, value and celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of learners such as those from different entry routes and with different personal and professional experiences. Actively challenge when oppressive practice is observed or reported. This is in line with the Professional Capability Framework (BASW 2018, PCF Domain 3).

6. Accept and respect learners' circumstances, understand how these impact on the learning and assessment process and make reasonable adjustments as required. Those involved in practice education should recognise and build on learners' strengths and consider individual learning styles and use a range of assessment methods (including those preferred by the learner).
7. Implement an holistic approach to assess in a manner that does not stigmatise or disadvantage learners and ensures equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010. Ensure that the views of those who have lived experiences of social work are central to this assessment process. Show applied knowledge and understanding of the significance of lived experience, poverty, racism, ill health, disability, sex, social class, age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, religion or belief and sexual orientation in managing the assessment process. Recognise and work to prevent and counter unjustifiable oppression, discrimination and disadvantage in all aspects of the assessment process. Be aware of the impact of poverty and associated issues such as food insecurity and how this might affect the experiences of learners and those accessing social work services.
8. Take responsibility for the quality of their work and ensure that it is monitored and appraised; critically reflect on their own practice and identify development needs in order to improve their own performance, raise standards, and contribute to the learning and development of others.

### 3.3 The Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) are split into four PEPS Domains (table 1 and appendix 1)

**Table 1: The PEPS Domains**

DOMAIN 1	DOMAIN 2	DOMAIN 3	DOMAIN 4
Working with others to organise an effective learning environment.	Teaching, facilitating and supporting learning and professional development in practice.	Managing the fair and transparent assessment of students in practice.	Developing knowledge and continuing performance as a practice educator.

These Domains set out standards expected of those responsible for facilitating, supporting and assessing the learning of social work practice and ensuring their own professional development (Full descriptors in Appendix 1). This set of PEP Standards have been aligned to the Professional Capability Framework (BASW 2018) and post qualifying standards in social work (DoH 2015, DfE 2014, DHSC 2018) and are mapped against the Values Statements (appendix 1). The principles of the PEP Standards is to ensure those involved in the teaching, supervising and assessing of learners are experienced social workers (against the PCF level 7) with an interest in promoting social work education and committed to delivering this in a supportive, anti-oppressive manner.

**3.4** It is noted that not all practice learning opportunities will be primarily social work employers or providers but the important contribution of those involved in allied professions to social work is acknowledged in this guidance. Where an On-site Supervisor has significant experience in their role, but is not social work or PEPS 2 qualified, the learner must be allocated an experienced and qualified Off-site Practice Educator during the placement.

**3.5** Trainee Practice Educators should be experienced and skilled social workers demonstrating the values of the profession (SWE 2019, BASW 2021) with at least two full years' post qualifying experience at the start of the practice education training course. This timeframe of two years will include one year of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment. Below is an overview of the requirements:

- i. All Trainee Practice Educators must be registered social workers.
- ii. All Trainee Practice Educators should be able to demonstrate that they are practising at PCF Experienced Social Worker level (level 7, BASW 2018) in their practitioner role before enrolling on a practice educator training course. This is to ensure that Trainee Practice Educators have the appropriate experience and capability to support and guide learners through case work complex enough that they are fully prepared for practice on qualification and sufficiently experienced to meet the requirements of PCF depending on their stage of study.
- iii. Practice education courses may be delivered in one or two 'stages' (PEPS 1 and PEPS 2) or combined, but irrespective of mode of delivery Trainee Practice Educators need to have had responsibility for supporting, supervising and assessing at least two learners before full qualification as a Practice Educator can be achieved.
- iv. It is not required that both these '2 learners' are overseen by the Trainee Practice Educator from beginning to end of a practice learning placement. It is acknowledged that some learners do not complete their course of study and so it is important these curtailed experiences of Trainee Practice Educators are available as evidence to demonstrate meeting the required Values Statements and PEPS Domains if there is sufficient evidence to do so. This might be possible for a learner who ends their placement after mid-point for example.
- v. However, for those learners ending their placement earlier e.g. prior to mid-point, a further learner/additional practice education tasks will need to be allocated to enable the Trainee Practice Educator to meaningfully gather evidence against the Values Statements and PEPS Domains. It is recommended that this additional allocation is discussed with the employer and, where appropriate, learning provider to ensure it supports the Trainee Practice Educator to demonstrate the Values Statements and PEPS Domains.
- vi. As a minimum, Trainee Practice Educators must be allocated and work with at least one learner from 'beginning to end' of their pre-qualifying placement or relevant post-qualifying course (e.g. ASYE, BIA or AMHP\*) in addition to the second learner who may finish their placement early.
- vii. The two learners can be from the same or different stages of learning (e.g. two 70 day placements, or two 100 day placements, or one pre-qualifying placement and one post qualifying course) but at least one of them needs to be at pre-qualification level.
- viii. Trainee Practice Educators should aim to meet all Values Statements and PEPS Domains (and associated descriptors) in Sections A, B, C and D in Stages 1 and 2 of the course. However, if a small number of Domain descriptors have not been met in Stage 1 of the course (particularly in Domain D), they must be met by the learner in Stage 2 of the course. It is for the learning provider of the PEPS course to ensure this is evidenced.
- ix. For those undertaking PEPS 1 and PEPS 2 through two different providers, the final assessment for Stage 1 needs to be shared with the provider of Stage 2 in order to ensure all the Values Statements, PEPS Domains (and descriptors) are met across the two stages. This would be supported by those providing Stage 1 of PEPS issuing certificates of successful completion to trainees.

\* It is for the employer to assess if the Trainee Practice Educator has the required skills and knowledge to support a learner undertaking the BIA or AMPH training.

# 4. GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

## 4.1 Eligibility criteria and pre-requisites for enrolment on a practice education course

- i. Those enrolling as a Trainee Practice Educator must have practised for at least two years following qualification (including ASYE) and should demonstrate ability to practice at level 7 PCF Experienced Social Work level (BASW 2018). It is for the employer and/or provider of the PEPS course to determine if the applicant is at the right stage in their career to enter onto the course. The applicant should be informed of the course structure and time/commitment required before commencement.
- ii. During this minimum two-year period, social workers interested in qualifying as a practice educator should demonstrate their interest and commitment to practice learning through activities such as supporting learners and other new staff. For example, this might be an activity the applicant has undertaken and used as evidence as their continued professional development (CPD) for registration as a social worker with the regulator (SWE 2019, Professional Standard 4).
- iii. Applicants for a practice education course will participate in a selection process undertaken by those providing the course and, if applicable, employers of the applicant and those with lived experience.

## 4.2 Stages of practice education qualification

- 4.2.1 Practice education course providers will normally deliver PEPS in two 'stages' for the trainee practice educator to develop expertise, confidence and experience in the role.

A Trainee Practice Educator may therefore be at 'stage 1' or 'stage 2' as follows:

### **Stage 1**

This is where the Trainee Practice Educator will have their first learner. Trainee Practice Educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work learners up to, but not being solely responsible for, the final placement prior to qualification. Stage 1 Trainee Practice Educators will need to have their assessment decisions overseen and confirmed/ endorsed (signed off) by a PEPS 2 Practice Educator Assessor to ensure that it is justified (see Table 2). Some Trainee Practice Educators may just undertake this element of the course and remain able to only support, teach and assess 'first placement' pre-qualification learners once this has been completed.

### **Stage 2**

This is where the Trainee Practice Educator will have their second learner and be able to take responsibility as detailed below (Table 2). Trainee Practice Educators at this stage will be able to supervise, and teach social work learners up to and including the last placement. These Trainee Practice Educators will have the authority to recommend, based on appropriate evidence, that social work learners are fit to practise at the point of qualification, but this decision still needs to be agreed with the Practice Educator Assessor and be 'signed off' by them.

- 4.2.2 Therefore, in order to be fully Practice Educator qualified to undertake responsibility for the teaching, supervising and assessing of a final year social work learner, a social worker will be registered, will have a minimum of at least three years relevant social work experience (depending on the length of their PEPS course), completed PEPS 1&2 and therefore undertaken a considerable amount of tuition, self-study and assessment.

It is important that the learner is made aware of who will be supporting, supervising and assessing them in their practice learning and is provided with the names of key people and their roles and responsibilities.

**Table 2: Outline of assessment responsibilities at PEPS1 and PEPS 2**

	<b>STAGE 1 UNDERTAKING</b>	<b>AFTER STAGE 1 QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>STAGE 2 UNDERTAKING</b>	<b>AFTER STAGE 2 QUALIFICATION</b>
<b>FIRST PLACEMENT</b>	Can undertake learner support and supervision but formal assessment documents such as mid-point review, Direct Observations and final report must be agreed and signed off by Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support, supervision and final assessment independently.	Can undertake learner support, supervision and final assessment independently but use the mentoring/ guidance of Practice Educator Assessor/ Practice Educator Mentor to develop skills.	Can undertake learner support, supervision and assessment independently without Practice Assessor oversight or mentoring.
<b>LAST PLACEMENT</b>	Can undertake learner support and supervision but formal assessment documents such as mid-point review, Direct Observations and Final report must be agreed and signed-off by Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support and supervision but formal assessment documents such as mid-point review, Direct Observations and Final report must be agreed and signed off by Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support and supervision and sign off mid-point review, Direct Observations. The final report needs to be agreed and signed off by the Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support, supervision and assessment independently without Practice Assessor oversight or mentoring.
<b>POST-QUALIFYING E.G. ASYE, BIA OR AMHP</b>	Can undertake learner support and supervision but formal assessment documents such as mid-point review, Direct Observations and final report must be agreed and signed off by Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support and supervision but formal assessment documents such as mid-point review, Direct Observations and final report must be agreed and signed off by Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support and supervision and sign off mid-point review, Direct Observations. The final report needs to be agreed and signed off by the Practice Educator Assessor.	Can undertake learner support, supervision and assessment independently without Practice Assessor oversight or mentoring.

4.2.3 Practice Educator Assessors and Mentors must be PEPS 2 (or equivalent see 4.7.1) qualified Practice Educators and have an appropriate level of experience and capability to support Trainee Practice Educators through complex decision-making. It is expected that prior to taking on both a Practice Educator Assessor and/or Mentoring role, Practice Educators should have had experience of supervising approximately 5 learners in the practice learning context (pre and post qualifying) and for a significant period (not one-off supervision sessions, but also not necessarily a 'beginning to end' placement) and have dealt with managing complexity in practice education in order to support Trainee Practice Educators with their own development in the role. The proposed number of approximately five learners includes those they supervised during PEPS 1 and 2. It is for the employer and learning provider to assess if the allocated Practice Educator Assessor meets the requirements regarding experience for the role and if the threshold of 'five learners' has been met.

4.2.4 As registered social workers, Practice Educators, regardless of their role as Trainee, Assessor or Mentor, need to apply their professional value base to practice education as they do in other contexts. They will need to demonstrate a commitment to anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice in their approach as required by the social work regulator (SWE 2019, Professional Standard 6).

### 4.3 Developing pathways or courses to meet the standards

4.3.1 It is for the learning providers and employers to develop suitable ways of enabling Trainee Practice Educators to meet and demonstrate the Values Statements and PEPS Domains in an integrated way.

4.3.2 Given that all qualified social workers will have at least an undergraduate degree, it is expected that PEPS courses will build on this learning and encourage the critical reflection and analysis associated with post-graduate learning but this does not necessarily need to be formally accredited.

4.3.3 The curriculum may be delivered by a HEI or any other learning provider such as an employer of social workers but must provide the following:

- i. Flexible delivery methods such as blended learning and access to appropriate literature to support depth of learning. Where Trainee Practice Educators are not enrolled with a learning provider, there must be the opportunity for sharing research and literature in relation to practice education with them. This might be through arrangements with learning providers or in-house library access.
- ii. Trainee Practice Educators should develop a self-managed portfolio of 'evidence' in stages 1 and 2.
- iii. By completion of PEPS 2 Trainee Practice Educators will have been supported to undertake 70 hours of learning (which may include direct teaching, supervision and self-directed learning associated with the course).
- iv. Trainee Practice Educators must be supported to complete their assessment tasks outside of these 70 hours.
- v. If the course is being accredited by an HEI, for every 10 credits achieved there is an expectation of 100 hours study, for example a 30-credit course requires 300 hours' study in total. This is in line with any other HEI delivered courses and includes the time spent supporting and supervising the learner(s).
- vi. Learning providers may wish to combine the delivery of stage 1 and stage 2 teaching and assessment of the Values Statements and PEPS Domains into an integrated course to maximise flexibility. However, the requirement remains that at stage 2 they should have completed a minimum of 70 hours of blended learning as above and worked with at least 2 learners (at least one pre-qualification), and at least one for the duration of their relevant placement/course as detailed in 4.2.1.

## 4.4 The practice education curriculum

4.4.1 An indicative practice education curriculum should include the following.

- i. Models and theories of supervision/how to be a reflective supervisor/building a learning relationship whilst acknowledging different preferred methods and styles of supervision to meet individual preferences.
- ii. Developing learner capacity to be critically reflective/helping learners to understand and manage the emotional demand of social work and providing challenging and positive constructive feedback. This needs to be done in line with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and in an anti-oppressive manner.
- iii. Varied theories of adult learning, and how these can be applied in the Trainee Practice Educators' own practice and in work with learners to critically reflect on the applicability of models within a diverse learning community.
- iv. The concept of the learning organisation and community of practice and how these can be applied when working with the team and agency in the context of the contemporary framework of social work education. Ensuring that such learning communities do not reflect known structural inequalities within society. The curriculum must embed principles of anti-racist practice in relation to practice learning and how individuals and organisations can champion those principles.
- v. Research mindedness and developing the learners' capacity to make good use of knowledge in practice. Developing the Trainee Practice Educators ability to use research to inform practice, contribute to the knowledge base of practice education and ensure the diverse needs of learners are accounted for.
- vi. Making fair and transparent assessments of learners seeking input from all those involved in practice education, particularly those who have lived experience of social work.
- vii. Knowledge of social work professional development frameworks for assessment of learners and ensuring that in the assessment process the voices of stakeholders are elicited and incorporated in a meaningful way.
- viii. Being mindful of, and actively promoting, the statements on anti-racist (BASW 2021) and anti-oppressive practice (BASW 2021) noting that learning is a two-way process and different approaches are needed to ensure good individual learning experiences. This requires responding to situations where learners are not meeting the PCF requirements and interrogating the causes of this, whether they be individual, systemic or structural.
- ix. Making and managing decisions about learners who are not meeting the assessment criteria for a variety of reasons.
- x. Enhancing the potential of all learners including those high achievers.
- xi. Understanding of, and critical engagement with, the experiences of people with lived experience of social work including issues of culture and discrimination and social justice using their own supervision to extend their reflection on these issues.
- xii. Developing practice as an educator. Demonstrating self-reflection and professional development as practice educators in the organisation leading on issues of race, culture and social justice in practice education.

## 4.5 Assessment of trainee practice educators

4.5.1 This will always include:

- Evidence of having met the Values Statements and PEPS Domains in an integrated way (all the descriptors in Stage 1 and again in Stage 2 – allowing for some flexibility as per section 3.5 x.).
- Assessment methods may include; a portfolio of evidence completed with the learner, the Trainee's reflective logs and formal essays.
- Evidence of learner feedback on the Trainee Practice Educator.
- A formal assessment of meeting the Values Statements and PEPS Domains by a Practice Educator Assessor.

- Over PEPS 1 and 2 a minimum of three direct observations of the Trainee Practice Educator by the Practice Educator Assessor, at least two of these must be face to face. Many choose to do two in PEPS 1 and one in PEPS 2 but there is flexibility in when they are undertaken as long as the minimum (of three) is completed before qualification as a PE.
- Two of these observations must be of supervising at least two different social work learners (so one in PEPS 1 and one in PEPS 2 to account for the two different learners required).
- The third observation can be undertaken by a peer (not the Practice Educator Assessor) i.e. a qualified practice educator colleague (not necessarily having had 5 learners but confident enough in their PE role to be observed) observing another activity and can include;
  - i. Peer reviewed supervision.
  - ii. Leading a group supervision.
  - iii. Leading a teaching and development opportunity for learner (s).

4.5.2 Where possible it is encouraged that assessment against the Values Statements and PEPS Domains is undertaken by stakeholders such as learning providers, employers and people with lived experience. These stakeholders must have an understanding and appreciation of practice learning and there are mechanisms in place for meaningful contribution to the process.

#### 4.6 Organisational support for trainee and qualified practice educators

All those involved in practice education will require ongoing support while supervising and assessing social work learners. Both employers and learning providers should work together and consider a shared approach to supporting Trainee and qualified Practice Educators wherever possible. Providers of practice placements need to recognise that acceptance of a learner is a commitment for the whole team concerned and that managers need to ensure that, where possible, team members are involved in supporting the learner and Practice Educator. The following policies should be in place:

- i. Support for Practice Educators by providing supervision with line managers as per the Social Work England guidance (Professional Standards 3.2, 4.2, 4.7). This should be both in person as well as online.
- ii. Provision of Practice Educator Assessors and/or Practice Education Mentors for Trainee Practice Educators either by the employer or by the learning provider if the Trainee Practice Educator is studying independently.
- iii. Regular group meetings of those providing practice education where issues and challenges can be discussed in a collaborative way.
- iv. In line with the Look After Your Practice Educator guidance (BASW, 2020), it is proposed that consideration is given to workload relief for the Trainee or qualified Practice Educator while a learner is on placement, this can include;
  - a) honorarium
  - b) reduced caseload
  - c) no new work
  - d) agreed time off in lieu
  - e) protected time for completion of reports and other documentation
- v. The whole team in which the Trainee or qualified Practice Educator is located takes responsibility for the learner with social workers in the team providing cover where necessary. If this is to be for longer than a planned period of leave (e.g. 2-3 weeks) then cover needs to be undertaken by a qualified Practice Educator.
- vi. Employers and learning providers should ensure opportunities for the continuing professional development of Practice Educators are provided and be mindful that Practice Educators need to supervise a learner every two years to maintain currency. However, Practice Educators who do not have the opportunity to supervise a learner every two years may actively maintain currency through other means (see section 4.8).
- vii. Employers may consider offering remuneration for those involved in social work learner practice placements.

## 4.7 Equivalent practice educator qualifications

- 4.7.1 Currently qualified and registered social workers who have been awarded the Practice Teacher Award (PTA) by the Central Council for Education (CCETSW) or those who have achieved a Higher Specialist Award in practice education within the former GSCC PQ framework, are accepted as having reached the standards for PEPS stage 2. PTA holders can therefore continue to be responsible for assessing and teaching at all placement levels. They may be able to act as Practice Educator Assessors/Mentors for Trainee Practice Educators, if employers and HEIs are satisfied that they have continued to regularly practise as a Practice Educator to maintain their currency (4.8).
- 4.7.2 In order to regularly practise as a Practice Educator, normally there will have been direct responsibility for at least one learner in the last two years or relevant experience in practice education (such as delivering teaching sessions or offering short shadowing placements) to demonstrate retention and development of the skills, knowledge and value base.
- 4.7.3 Learning providers should work with employers to ensure that Practice Educators are sufficiently skilled and experienced to maintain currency and effectively carry out the role of a Practice Educator as per the CPD requirements of the regulator (SWE 2020). Where the Practice Educator is independent from an employer, the responsibility for ensuring currency lies with the learning provider or HEI.
- 4.7.4 With regard to accreditation of prior learning (APEL), evidence may be generated that confirms the Values Statements and PEPS Domains without the need for learning provider oversight or HEI accreditation. Partnerships and networks may plan together formal Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) arrangements and credit ratings where these are considered appropriate if they have clear recording of how the evidence presented is mapped against the Values Statements and PEPS Domains.

## 4.8 Maintaining Currency

- 4.8.1 If a Practice Educator has not had a learner for two years, their PE qualification can be considered lapsed. However, a Practice Educator can maintain currency through other practice education activities, such as;
- i. Organising and supporting placements
  - ii. Providing teaching and learning opportunities e.g., supporting apprentices
  - iii. Observing other experienced practice educators
  - iv. Contribution to the writing of assessments and reports for a learner (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator). Supporting the assessment and learning of NQSW'S (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator)
  - v. Using these experiences of practice education as evidence to support ongoing registration as a social worker with the regulator.
  - vi. Engaging with BASW training sessions for practice educators through the Training/CPD section of the website.
  - vii. Undertaking the Practice Educator Mentoring role for a Trainee Practice Educator.
- 4.8.2 When placing a learner with an Off-site Practice Educator, it is the responsibility of the learning provider to ensure that the Off-Site Practice Educator has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to practice education. As part of this, the HEI has a responsibility for the development of Practice Educators as per the Social Work England Practice Placement Guidance (paragraph 2.6).
- 4.8.3 Where the employer is placing the learner with a Practice Educator, it is their responsibility to ensure this 'currency'.

4.8.4 Those Practice Educators who are considered to be 'lapsed' (so have not been involved in practice education for two years, see 4.8.1) may be able to refresh their qualification in a number of ways as outlined below. The volume of activity will reflect the amount of time 'out' of practice and 'upskilling' required to meet the requirements of the role. It is proposed that the activity required to become 'current' is discussed and negotiated with the 'lapsed' Practice Educator and learning provider (for Independent Practice Educators) or employer (for employed Practice Educators).

- i. Submission of short portfolios to employers or learning providers evidencing how they have kept currency in line with the Values Statements and Domains of PEPS.
- ii. Presenting practice learning examples to a quality assurance panel.
- iii. Undertaking a refresher course provided by employers or learning providers.
- iv. Involvement in decisions undertaken by local and/or regional practice assessment panels.
- v. Exploring opportunities to develop practice within a funded teaching partnership.
- vi. Other methods agreed in consultation with the learning provider and/or employer.

4.8.5 On completion of these tasks, it will be for the learning provider or employer to assess if the evidence provided ensures the Practice Educator has retained their 'currency' through these activities as outlined in 4.8.2. and 4.8.3.

## 4.9 Employer responsibilities for the development of practice educators

4.9.1 Employers should evidence that Practice Educators have relevant opportunities to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the regulator requirements (SWE, 2022) and are able to demonstrate continued proficiency and capability in their role. The Local Government Association also has standards to require employers to provide regular supervision and CPD opportunities (LGA 2014).

4.9.2 Employers should record numbers and relevant details of staff completing PEPS training to monitor the currency of Practice Educators. Learning providers have responsibility to record this information for Independent Practice Educators they recommend to employers (Standards of Education and Training, SWE 2021).

4.9.3 It is recommended that on a local level through partnership arrangements between employers and HEI's (funded or unfunded) that planning is undertaken to identify the forecasted number of Practice Educators required on a regular basis (annually ideally) and that this is responded to through negotiation of routes and timescales of PEPS 1 and 2 provision in order to meet local need in a timely manner.

4.9.4 On successful completion of both stages 1 and 2 of the PEPS course it is recommended that learning providers issue certificates to confirm that the Values Statements and PEP Standards have been met at that level.

## 4.10 Learning provider responsibilities for independent practice educators

4.10.1 The requirements of Independent Practice Educators is the same as those 'on site' in that they are expected to be:

- Registered social workers
- Completed PEPS 2 or equivalent training as outlined in 4.7.1
- Be at experienced social worker level 7 of the Professional Capability Framework (BASW 2018)
- Have their own insurance
- Be able to provide enhanced DBS checks
- Ensure they continue to maintain currency in social work practice as required by continued registration with the regulator.

- 4.10.2 If the learning provider is recommending an Independent Practice Educator for a practice placement provider then it is their responsibility to undertake the checks required in 4.10.1. If the practice placement provider is contracting their own Independent Practice Educator, they will be required to undertake these checks.
- 4.10.3 BASW have a support forum for Independent Practice Educators and are running online peer group discussion meetings (contact [independents@basw.co.uk](mailto:independents@basw.co.uk)).

#### **4.11 On-site supervisors**

- 4.11.1 On-site supervisors supervise the day-to-day work of a learner and would not necessarily have to be registered social workers but would be experienced in a role related to social work. However, it is recommended that they should be guided in their practice by the Values Statements and PEPS Domains and be adequately supported and prepared for this role by the learning provider. It is for the line manager of the on-site supervisor to ensure they are competent to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work learners. Wherever possible, on-site supervisors should have minimum training from learning providers in relation to their role in addition to recent previous experience of supporting social worker learners in the team. Those 'mentoring' apprentices would be identified as on-site supervisors and ideally working towards evidencing their PEPS 1 Values Statements and PEPS Domains (providing the minimum requirements are met as outlined in 4.1).
- 4.11.2 The relationship between the on-site supervisor and Practice Educator is vital for supporting the learner and undertaking an holistic assessment of them. This should take the form of regular communication and ideally on-going three way reviews of progress with the learner (approx. every six weeks).

#### **4.12 Implementation monitoring and review**

The Practice Educator Professional Standards should be promoted widely. BASW will aim for the Practice Educator Professional Standards to be adopted on a national basis by the regulatory body Social Work England, local authorities, and teaching partnerships within six month of publication (September 2022). Furthermore it is proposed that the PEPS Domains are incorporated into any planned review of the Professional Capability Framework (PCF). Information, guidance and support will be developed for all practice educators and employers.

## 5. REFERENCES: POLICY AND GUIDANCE

BASW Code of Ethics for Social Work:  
[www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

BASW CPD/Training:  
Social work training | [www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

BASW/IFSW Policy on Effective and Ethical Working Environments for Social Work:  
Layout 1 ([basw.co.uk](http://basw.co.uk))

BASW Professional Capabilities Framework:  
[www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf](http://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf)

BASW Quality Assurance in Practice Learning:  
Layout 1 ([basw.co.uk](http://basw.co.uk))

BASW UK summary position statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | [www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

BASW UK Statement on Anti-Racism | [www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

BASW Whistleblowing Policy: [BASW Whistleblowing Policy | www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

Cane, T. & Tedam, P. (2022) 'We didn't learn enough about racism and anti-racist practice': newly qualified social workers' challenge in wrestling racism, *Social Work Education*, DOI: [10.1080/02615479.2022.2063271](https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2022.2063271)

Department for Education Knowledge and Skills Statements (Children):  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work)

Department of Health Knowledge and Skills Statements (Adults):  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-work-post-qualifying-standards-knowledge-and-skills-statement](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-work-post-qualifying-standards-knowledge-and-skills-statement)

DHSC Post Qualification Standards in Adult Social Work:

[Adult social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-work-post-qualifying-standards-knowledge-and-skills-statement)

Equality Act:  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance)

Human Rights Act 1989 Article 10 Freedom of Expression, Article 14 Prohibition of Discrimination:  
[Article 10: Freedom of expression | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/article-10-freedom-of-expression)

Local Government Association Standards for employers of social workers in England:  
[basw\\_33012-2\\_0.pdf](http://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2012-02/basw_33012-2_0.pdf)

Social Work England CPD requirements:  
[CPD - Social Work England](http://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/cpd)

Social Work England Practice Placements Guidance:  
[Practice placements guidance - Social Work England](http://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/practice-placements-guidance)

Social Work England Standards of Education and Training:  
[Education and training standards - Social Work England](http://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards-of-education-and-training)

Social Work England Professional Standards:  
[Professional standards - Social Work England](http://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/professional-standards)

## 6. APPENDIX 1: PEPS DOMAIN DESCRIPTORS AND MAPPING

DOMAIN A: WORK WITH OTHERS TO ORGANISE AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	VALUES STATEMENTS	PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK (PCF)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (CHILDRENS)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (ADULTS)
<b>[A1]</b> Establish an effective collaborative working relationship with learners and manage the power and authority in the educator/assessor role skillfully.	2, 3, 4, 5	2	KSS 2 KSS 4	KSS 1 KSS 2
<b>[A2]</b> Devise an induction programme that considers learners' needs and their previous experience.	3, 4, 6	9		
<b>[A3]</b> Create reflective spaces for learners' growth and development and provide regular reflective supervision.	2, 3, 4, 6	1, 6	KSS 3 KSS 7	
<b>[A4]</b> Ensure all those involved in supporting the student have clarity and understanding of each other's roles.	2	1, 9		KSS 2 KSS 3
<b>[A5]</b> Work openly and cooperatively with others in the planning of learning opportunities and key activities at all stages of learning and assessment.	2, 6	8		KSS 3
<b>[A6]</b> Consider student confidentiality and ensure all student information is maintained in a secure environment according to General Data Protection Regulations.	2, 6	2		
<b>[A7]</b> Contribute to the learning and development of the agency as a learning organisation. This may include encouraging the student to make links with others in the team by working alongside, making presentations and contributing to team resources. It may also include showing leadership by helping to review and improve the provision, policies and procedures of the learning organisation and identify barriers for learners.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	9	KSS 1 KSS 3	KSS 2 KSS 3

DOMAIN B: TEACHING, FACILITATING AND SUPPORTING LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE	VALUES STATEMENTS	PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK (PCF)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (CHILDRENS)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (ADULTS)
<b>[B1]</b> Demonstrate informed expertise in their practitioner role, e.g. an applied knowledge of contemporary issues in research and relevant policy, legislation and practice.	1, 3	5		KSS 4
<b>[B2]</b> Using a range of learning methods, including modelling good social work practice. Teach and support the learning of relevant social work knowledge and research, and the integration of theory and research in practice. Knowledge taught should include the powers and duties, and policy and procedures of the agency.	1, 3	5	KSS 1 KSS 8	KSS 8
<b>[B3]</b> Help students to understand their own learning processes and to develop different models and strategies for critical reflection and analysis.	1, 6	9		KSS 6
<b>[B4]</b> Discuss and plan with the student the learning and assessment programme, the student's particular needs and capabilities, and how best the learner can derive further support for learning.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	2		KSS 6
<b>[B5]</b> Make sound reasoned judgements about the level of work the student can be allocated, and the support required to achieve both learning and the work goals.	6	6		KSS 6 KSS 7
<b>[B6]</b> Demonstrate an understanding of, and critical engagement with, learning theories, to make professional educational judgments about students' needs and how to meet them.	4, 6	5	KSS 5	KSS 5

DOMAIN C: MANAGE THE FAIR AND TRANSPARENT ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS IN PRACTICE	VALUES STATEMENTS	PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK (PCF)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (CHILDRENS)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (ADULTS)
<b>(C1)</b> Ensure that holistic assessment decisions are the outcomes of informed, evidence-based judgments, drawing on evidence, which is relevant, valid, reliable and sufficient from a range of sources, including direct observation. Clearly explain the decisions to students.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7	7		KSS 4 KSS 5
<b>(C2)</b> Encourage students to self evaluate and seek service users, carers and work-based colleagues feedback to develop their performance.	1, 4, 6, 7	1		KSS 3
<b>(C3)</b> Provide timely, honest and constructive feedback on student performance in an appropriate format. Review student progress throughout the assessment process, identifying strengths and any areas requiring improvement, making clear to students how they may improve to meet the acceptable standard.	1, 2, 3, 6, 7	2		KSS 3 KSS 6
<b>(C4)</b> Ensure that all assessment decisions, and the supporting evidence, are documented and recorded according to the required standard. Provide holistic assessment reports which demonstrate clear evidence for decisions. Demonstrate ability to work well with others in the assessment process, particularly if learner's practice is marginal or failing.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 7, 9		KSS 5 KSS 7
<b>(C5)</b> Engage students in the design, planning and implementation of methods to assess students' performance against the appropriate standards.	1, 2, 6, 7	2		KSS 5
<b>(C6)</b> Extend the development of all students including those who already have strong skills or are experiencing difficulties. Ensure that disagreements about assessment judgements and complaints made about the assessment process are managed in accordance with agreed procedures.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	7, 9		

DOMAIN D: DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND CONTINUING PERFORMANCE AS A PRACTICE EDUCATOR	VALUES STATEMENTS	PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK (PCF)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (CHILDRENS)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (ADULTS)
<b>(D1)</b> Seek feedback from students on their experience of being assessed and the consequences of the assessment programme for them. Incorporate the feedback into future assessment activity.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2		KSS 2
<b>(D2)</b> Show understanding of, and the ability to apply, models and theories of supervision, knowledge and research on assessment, teaching and learning, and critical reflection.	2, 3, 8	5		KSS 3 KSS 6
<b>(D3)</b> Establish and maintain effective resources for their own support and supervision in respect of their role in workplace learning. Demonstrate the ability to consult and work with others in contentious and challenging contexts such as dealing with struggling students and formal appeals and complaints.	2, 4, 5, 7, 8	1		
<b>(D4)</b> Demonstrate critical reflection on their own development as practice educators, including the use of feedback from direct observations, colleagues and HEI tutors and other assessment sources.	2, 5, 7, 8	6		KSS 8
<b>(D5)</b> Apply learning to subsequent practice education experience using a range of methods.	5, 6, 7, 8	1, 6		
<b>(D6)</b> Contribute to the development of the agency as a learning organisation by providing information and advice from their experience on the quality and effectiveness of placement learning.	3, 4, 7, 8	5, 9		KSS 2

DOMAIN D: DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND CONTINUING PERFORMANCE AS A PRACTICE EDUCATOR	VALUES STATEMENTS	PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK (PCF)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (CHILDRENS)	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT (ADULTS)
<p><b>[D7]</b> Demonstrate an ability to deepen and extend their ability and expertise as a practice educator. This may also include the transfer of practice educator skills, knowledge and values to new roles in mentoring, supervision, teaching and/or assessment and show leadership in workplace learning.</p>	3, 6, 7, 8		1	
<p><b>[D8]</b> Show ability to; critique and apply models and theories of supervision, and knowledge and research on assessment, teaching and learning, critical reflection and other relevant knowledge. Contribute to the extension of that knowledge through their expertise and research. Promote the profile of the practice educator as playing a key role in the development of excellent early career practitioners.</p>	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	5	KSS 1 KSS 2	KSS 6

## 7. CONTRIBUTORS TO THE REVIEW

There have been a significant number of contributors to this review. I would like to thank everyone for their time and dedication to this task, particularly Polly Sykes, Michael Chapman, Peter Bradley and Nikita Somaiya who read a number of drafts in the development of this guidance.

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