

# North Somerset Council Children's Services Workforce Development 2021-2023



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## Introduction

This plan has been devised in the context of our improvement journey and newly launched vision for Children's Services. We want to thank all our practitioners and managers for their incredible work to date and set out our commitment to support their further development of knowledge and skills. Also supporting them to grow as individuals and empower them to achieve their desired career pathways.

Our focused learning and development opportunities are aimed to support and empower the workforce to achieve our shared vision to provide a consistently excellent and sustained service while delivering positive outcomes for children and families in North Somerset.

This three-year learning and development plan will continue to be informed by our learning needs analysis (LNA), practice reviews, observations, sampling, themed audits, learning from complaints and child safeguarding practice reviews. The transfer of learning will be captured in quality assurance checks and training evaluations enabling the learning and development plan to evolve to the needs of the workforce and focus on the right skills and knowledge needs as they evolve to deliver our Vision.

Children's Services Leadership Team will carefully select practitioners and managers to engage in these learning and development opportunities so that children and families benefit from having a skilled, confident workforce. Staff will be able to identify 'How best to support' and 'When to support so, that we offer the 'Right Help' at the 'Right Time'. Managers will target a range of learning and development opportunities based on individual learning needs so that all practitioners have the skills to create meaningful and sustained change. A flexible learning and development offer will promote a variety of different learning and development formats including self-directed learning, short bite sized sessions and more formal sessions by Internal and external facilitators. As well as our Research in Practice (RIP) membership.

Managers and supervisors will continue to be supported to develop supervision skills using various tools and models to suit the experience of the Supervisee. Including models that are informed by the Key Skills and Knowledge (KSS) and the PSDP programme. In line with our supervision policy which sets out frequency, duration and expectation guidelines. At North Somerset we recognise how important good quality supervision is and the impact it has for an individual's development and the contribution it makes to building the emotional resilience of practitioners by continuing to promote strengths-based, relational approaches, professional curiosity, challenge and critical reflection to child and family social work. This gives the supervisors and manager the ability to model behaviours that respect, promote and value equality and diversity. As well as non-oppressive practice. While ensuring children's plans are robustly progressed in a timely way to secure positive sustained outcomes. This also aimed to improve staff retention going forward.

Finally learning and development opportunities will drive our strength-based solution focused model of practice and offer a toolbox to ensure effective and outstanding practice in our work with children and families throughout their continuum of need. Our practice model, Signs of Safety will continue to be embedded, further supported by our 'Signs of Safety practice lead model' represented across Children Services. Practice leads will support the application of our model within their teams. We will continue to invest in and develop additional practice leads and look to broaden our multi-agency offer of training to support the children's partnerships understanding and application.

Our launched Learning and Development Plan will bring children's service training together in our united mission of 'one offer' to ensure we have the knowledge and skills and consistent messages to the workforce and our partners to meet the goals set out in our improvement plan and deliver our vision for children's services.

We hope that this plan excites you but also provides clarity of our responsibilities to ensure we all access the right learning and development and assure ourselves as professionals, that we have the right knowledge and skills to provide excellent services to children and families.

## **The goals we want to achieve from this plan during 2021-2023**

### **Skilled and Knowledgeable Workforce**

We will continue to promote and support our culture of continuous learning and development, supporting our staff with the tools to be professionally curious and innovative in their practice.

We will provide an environment and culture that enables our staff to develop their practice and careers. We want to empower the workforce enabling them to identify where they can take responsibility for their own learning and development, ensuring practice remains of a high standard and continues to meet the needs of the children, young people, and families we support.

### **Creating a secure base for good Social Work to thrive**

We will continue to build an organisational culture to be able to do social work well, where practitioners are enabled to focus on direct work with families and practice effectively and safely.

We will continue to develop our approach as a learning organisation, who encourage practitioners to reflect on their practice and be curious regarding 'what difference are you making to the Children and their families?' Listening and responding to feedback from children, families, partners, and our staff about what is working well and where

we need to do things differently. Through effective support, reflection, curiosity, and peer challenge we will drive practice improvement for all.

### **Strong and Stable Workforce**

We want to retain and attract high calibre practitioners at all levels, maintaining our culture for developing and preserving relationships, which are at the centre of effective practice to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

We know a strong and stable workforce is essential to ensuring high quality, effective and consistent practice. We want to ensure we have an exciting learning and development plan, which appeals to staff and retains high quality and experienced practitioners. Investing in our workforce by providing career pathway opportunities.

### **Encouraging, Empowering and Effective Leadership and Management**

Ensure we recognise the talent within our workforce and empower and support practitioners to progress to be confident and capable leaders who create the right conditions for effective practice.

We want to empower our existing and future leaders, to develop/acquire the skills they need to enhance their own practice as well as develop the skills of colleagues. increasing opportunities to develop future leaders and supporting existing leaders to fulfil their potential.

### **Learning and Development Priorities for the 2021 - 2023**

1. **Analysis and Critical Thinking with Families** - to respond effectively to need, we need strong analysis in our assessments, plans and reviews at all levels of the continuum of need, effectively using chronologies and supervision assist our ability to formulate impact analysis.
2. **Communicating with Children** - to ensure timeliness and effectiveness of our interventions, we need confidence in communicating with, understanding their development, and translating their worlds, wishes and feelings into our assessments and plans of support and care.
3. **Contextualised Safeguarding** - to identify and respond to risks from extra familiar harm, we need tools, knowledge, and skills in working with adolescence and across a wider range of professional agencies.
4. **Neglect** - Relationship based practice that understands the impact of neglect, can swiftly identify, and respond effectively to neglect indicators to include poverty aware practice.
5. **Supervision** to ensure managers and supervisors support and develop reflective practice and emotional resilience while also ensuring children's

plans are robustly progressed in a timely way to secure positive sustained outcomes.

6. **Signs of Safety/Wellbeing** Continuing to embed our strength-based approach, clear, concise language that children and families can understand. Providing clear danger statements and safety goals empowering families to led the safety planning process with practitioner support.
7. **Planning including Planning for Permanence** - To ensure care planning for children is progressed swiftly to meet their need for permanence and stability, understand their relationships and the importance of attachment in early child development.

*"To make North Somerset a truly great place for children and young people to thrive; where all have the best possible life and opportunities, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and/or have special educational or additional needs"*

### Signs of Safety Practice Model

Signs of Safety has been embraced by North Somerset Children's Services as the overarching practice approach for all its work with children and families. Signs of Safety's strength based and collaborative approach for working with families compliments our vision. Enabling us to capture what children, young people, families, and carers want and need. Formal training by Signs of Safety accredited trainers on the approach will continue to be available for the workforce throughout this three-year plan. With the aim of developing staff that have not yet received the training and developing further those that now require five-day Signs of Safety training leading to 'Practice lead' status across our service areas. In additional to this and aligned with our practice standards team managers will promote monthly Signs of Safety Group supervision, case mapping, case trajectory, harm matrix and family networks to build strong practice of analysis and judgement to foster more agile and confident decision-making and practice. Our reflective development group supervision is offered to NQSW's as part of the ASYE offer and is encouraged as 'good practice' within social work teams for developing workers resilience, shared learning and practice improvement. Practitioners are expected to promote family ownership for the safety and wellbeing of children from the first visit by mapping the situation with parents to identify parenting strengths and their worries. Practitioners will work with, guide, and empower families using strength-based questions and answer questions they may have as openly and honestly as possible. To support practitioners in this area and other areas such as family networks, harm matrix, trajectories, professional

curiosity, and appreciative inquiry. Regular short workshops will be made available so that staff can practice this approach in a safe learning environment with peers and colleagues. At times these sessions will take place with other local authorities. To support this further practice leads will have access to the Signs of Safety knowledge bank where further resources are available, such as webinars, recorded events and podcasts. Our quality assurance measures will be used to identify gaps in knowledge as well as provide an independent review of assessments, keeping the focus on the child's needs and the adequacy of parenting over time.

Practice principles for Signs of Safety ensure that all our practitioners across our service areas are strength based and solution focused in their communications with, children, young people, families and carers. This practice also extends to all our communication with partners. Encouraging a shared clear language with our families and partner agencies. Our inter agency Signs of Safety training is made available to partners so that they are familiar with areas of the approach and can recognise when it is being used. As well as acquiring the skills to share their understanding of the child's, successes, worries and wishes. This is with the aim of inspiring a more joined up approach and service within our communities. The learning and development opportunities that we offer will be focused on the following areas of the framework.

### **Relationships and relational practice**

Strong relationships enable honest, transparent, and respectful discussions of concerns and worries, draw on and honour everything positive and consider multiple perspectives. Collaboration and partnership set out a shared understanding of what needs to change and seeks agreement on goals and families understand at what point services will conclude.

### **Focusing on strengths and being hopeful**

Acknowledging strengths and finding the positives that value children and families, allows us to honour the family and build positive relationships. This is done by using strengths-based language and thoughtful questioning that aims to highlight the strengths within the family, support network and change process and possibilities.

### **Slow and critical thinking and purposeful interventions using a questioning approach**

Thoughtful questioning promotes a practice culture of reflective practice and slow thinking. In this sense Signs of Safety is an approach that supports and develops our learning culture and openness to improvement, so we provide the very best services to children and families.

### **Having the well-being of children at the heart of all that we do**

Assessments and safety planning are always focused on the everyday lived experience of the child. Capturing 'What the daily life of the Child is like' what makes them feel unsafe and identifying what they like and who offers them safety.

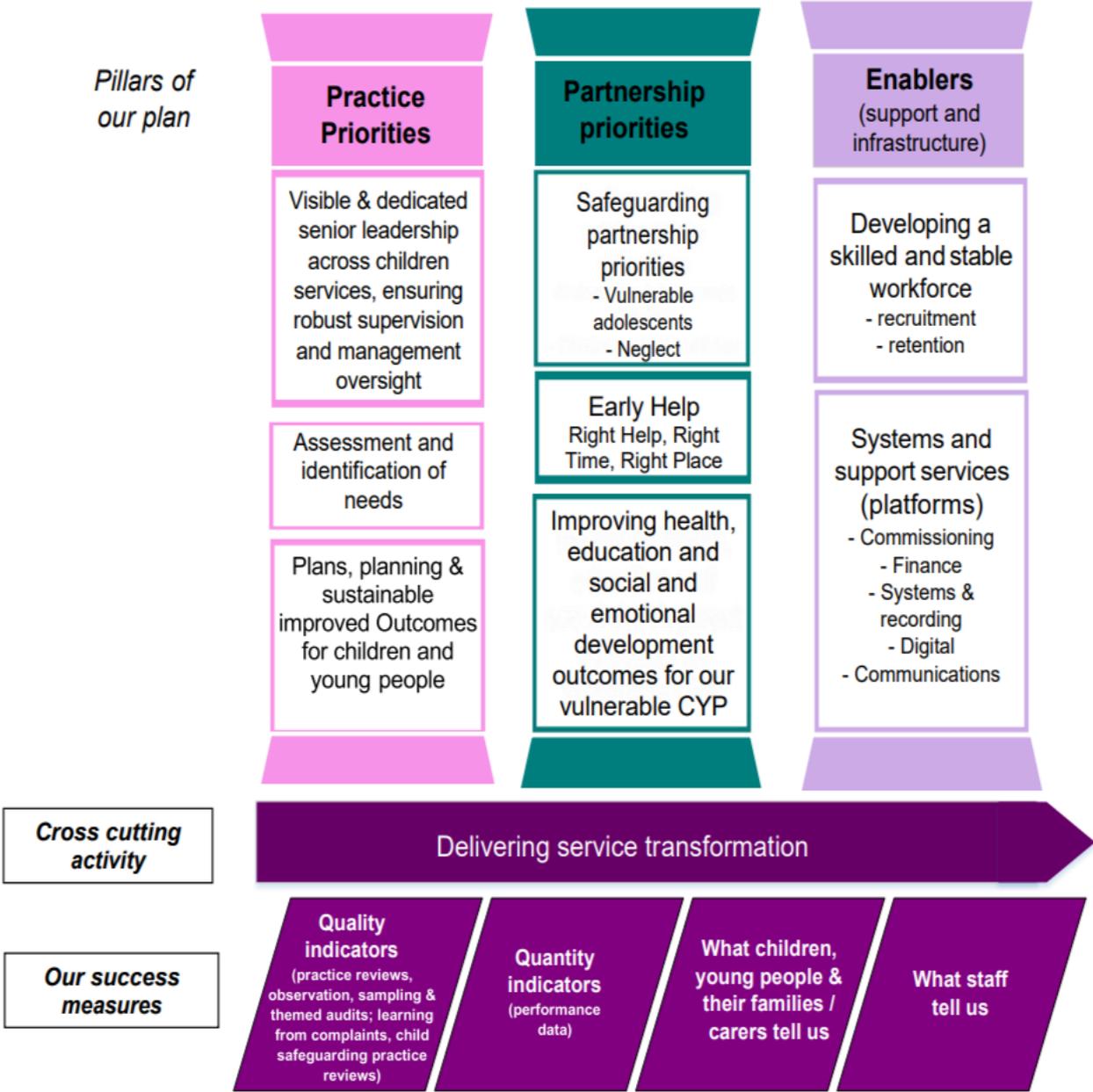
### Continuing to embed signs of safety with staff and partners

Our staff will continue to receive signs of safety training by accredited trainers embedding safety/wellbeing strength-based practice for our staff across all of children as well as supporting practitioners through case consultation and group supervision. Partners will continue to be able to access North Somersets inter-agency signs of safety training designed to support them in understanding and utilising the signs of safety framework.



*Our Children services improvement plan is built around three pillars. These pillars reflect the importance of improving our practice and ensuring consistency across practitioners of building much stronger relationships with partners to achieve this consistency*

Our plan for continuous improvement -overview



## Children Services Vision

 <p><b>Passion</b></p>	<p>To make North Somerset a truly great place for children and young people to thrive; where all have the best possible life and opportunities, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and/or have special educational or additional needs</p>
 <p><b>Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy, happy, resilient children living with families</li> <li>• Families able to make positive and sustainable change</li> <li>• Children able to attend, learn and achieve at school/college</li> <li>• Young people ready for and contributing to adult life, society and the world of work</li> <li>• Children and young people safe from harm</li> <li>• Delivering best value for money on the things that get the best sustainable outcomes for children and families in North Somerset</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Pledges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will Intervene at the earliest opportunity with evidence-based family focussed services</li> <li>• We will work in partnership to keep our children in school/college</li> <li>• We will keep children and young people safe at home, healthy and connected to their local communities</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Principles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work to give families the Right Help at the Right Time</li> <li>• We will work with families only for as long as is necessary</li> <li>• We will work openly, honestly and respectfully</li> <li>• We will work to build strong relationships with all those we work with</li> <li>• We will work in a trauma informed, strength-based way with the whole family and their network to bring about sustainable positive change</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Practice Standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children will be listened to and we will act on what they tell us</li> <li>• Children will have people important to them involved in helping to meet their needs</li> <li>• Children will have their needs clearly understood</li> <li>• Children will have a plan which will tell those that need to know how to meet their needs, build on their strengths and keep them safe</li> <li>• Children will only have help for as long as they need it – so that they can get on with their own lives</li> <li>• Children will be able to understand the things written about them</li> <li>• Children will have help from workers who get the advice and support they need to do a good job</li> </ul>

## Continuing Professional development

Social Work England regulates continuing professional development (CPD) for social workers. Social Work England sets the standards needed for continued registration. The Social Work England Professional Standards are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice and apply to all registered social workers in all roles and settings. The CPD framework recognises that learning takes place in a variety of ways and circumstances. There is not a requirement for specific number of hours or days of CPD nor a specific type of learning.



## Professional Capabilities Framework

The Professional Capabilities Framework and Knowledge and Skills Statement act as a framework to inform CPD requirements for individual social workers. The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is the profession-owned backbone of social work education and professional development in England and is delivered by The British Association for Social Work (BASW). It sets out nine common domains of capability that we expect to develop as social workers, and which others can expect of social workers.

1. Professionalism
2. Values and Ethics
3. Diversity and Equality
4. Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing
5. Knowledge
6. Critical Reflection and Analysis
7. Skills and Interventions
8. Contexts and Organisations
9. Professional Leadership

## Professional Capabilities Framework



[www.basw.co.uk/pcf](http://www.basw.co.uk/pcf)

Within these nine domains, specific areas of practice knowledge and skill can be built. As social workers progress through their careers, they are expected to meet the following capabilities at increasingly complex levels:

Identify which level you are at and learn more about what social workers should demonstrate at each stage of their career on the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework

### **One training offer across children services**

North Somerset devises a strong yearly training offer for our Children Services Workforce, to ensure and develop a consistency in practice to achieve a clear shared vision with our workforce. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to grow, develop and progress at every stage of their career. We offer a comprehensive range of training and professional development opportunities, using a variety of formats and media which is further complemented with access to Research in Practice, Signs of Safety knowledge bank, learning pool e-learning, coaching and group supervision.

The training offer is varied and is made up of formal training, continuous professional development, and self-directed training. North Somerset have created further career opportunities for our non-social work staff and alternatively qualified practitioners by enrolling them on the CYP-IAPT accredited courses. This has helped create other additional pathways of specialist knowledge and provide an alternative career pathway for those who do not want to become Social Workers. When learning opportunities are recognised but outside of the current learning and development offer, they are referred the Children Service Senior Leadership Team so that they can be considered against our shared vision and our Improvement Plan. Staff are encouraged to keep learning and this development is central to their supervision discussions.

The yearly learning and development offer includes access to training covering Safeguarding and other Multi agency training, mandatory learning from initial; appointment to a role and courses that the workforce is required to be refreshed during their careers. As well as effectively use grants to enhance learning and development opportunities that are offered and funded through our Trusted Relationship grant. Its overall aim is to tackle child exploitation. The North Somerset Trusted Relationships programme is a multi-agency, early intervention/prevention approach to increase the opportunities for children and young people who have a trusted, safe, emotionally available adult to whom they can turn.

## Learning and Development - methods of learning

Learning and development does not solely take place when you are attending training but includes reading, coaching, supporting others, being a panel member, learning about a new area of practice, and individual or group supervision. Every NSC staff member has access to research in practice via our regional membership and are encouraged to explore the resources that we also link when providing follow up resources for formal training events. We encourage the use of a variety of learning and development methods to achieve identified learning outcomes. The selection of which method of learning will be based on the following principle:

- 70% of learning takes place in the working environment, for example, on the job through sharing knowledge and skills with colleagues, delegation by managers, learning by doing and observations.
- 20% of learning takes place through feedback mechanisms such as informal mentoring, coaching, appraisal, one to ones/supervision, action learning sets or networks.
- 10% of learning takes place through face-to-face training and e-learning.

The 70:20:10 Framework (Jennings) is a learning and development reference model which captures the three types of learning – experiential, social and formal – and explains their relationship to one another.

### Coaching What is coaching?

Coaching is a process that aims to improve performance and focuses on the ‘here and now’ rather than on the distant past or future. Coaching can help unlock potential and maximise performance. At times when work is hectic and busy, coaching provides a protected space to think and reflect in more depth, on issues or dilemmas. Coaching and mentoring is an effective intervention to support career development/ progression, job satisfaction and high performance. It is also an ideal follow up tool to help embed practice learning; formal and informal training; e-learning and other self-directed learning activities by providing space for reflection.

### Who can access coaching?

Anyone and everyone! Coaching is open to colleagues across the service who would like support to think about a dilemma and find a way forward.

### What can you expect from coaching?

Coaching is not about teaching you or telling you how to solve difficulties or issues. Instead, a coach will ask questions and support you to reflect, in order to facilitate

your learning and support you to work through the specific challenges you bring to coaching

our commitment to support the workforce's further development of knowledge and skills, supporting them to grow as individuals and empower them to achieve their desired career pathways.

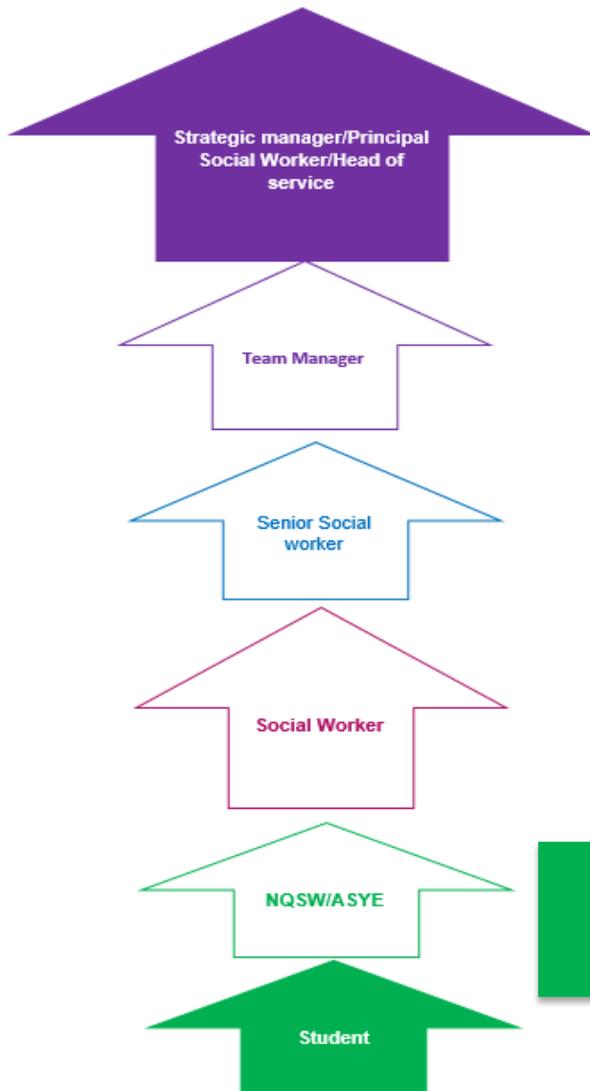
### North Somerset Council Children's Social work career progression

The following career progression has been summarised below, full details can be found within the appendix document **North Somerset Councils Social work career progression policy**.

Pre-Social work qualifications students' placements are offered via the Step up to Social work and frontline courses. Post qualification and once their social work registration has been received the newly qualified social workers have their initial learning agreement meeting initiating the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). This is time limited (for a period of 12 months) and may only be extended in extenuating circumstances, which must be formally agreed. The assessment and evidence of the NQSW's capability will contribute to their probationary period as per HR guidance. Once NQSWs have successfully completed the ASYE programme and probationary period they will transfer onto the Children's Social Worker salary scale, NQSWs must evidence they meet the requirements of the PCF and KSS at the Newly Qualified Social Worker/Child and Family Practitioners levels. Social Workers who successfully complete the ASYE progress to Social Worker (JM1) following ratification of their appointment by a moderation panel. Further quality assurance is obtained by a proportion of our ASYE portfolios being submitted to the south west regional moderation panel. The skills for care 360 questionnaire will be shared annually so that the experiences of ASYEs can be captured to inform future programme, core training and training for Mentors and assessors who support NQSW's via the programme. By improving and providing the right support at this early stage of a Social workers career it is an aim that Social workers will be retained by North Somerset Council after the first three years

Good supervisors, providing good supervision are especially important in the retention and development of newly qualified social workers

## ASYE programme



### NQSW support on the ASYE programme

- You will receive an Induction into your team.
- You will be recruited within a cohort of NQSW's on the ASYE programme to encourage peer learning.
- You are supported by your assessor, Mentor and ASYE Co-ordinator
- You receive an Initial Learning agreement meeting and reviews at the 0-3-3-6 and 6-12 month throughout your ASYE year.
- You receive a bespoke core training programme of 10 months.
- In addition to your core training, you have access to the Children Services Training.
- You have Research in Practice membership
- You are encouraged to participate in our 360 Feedback processes to inform and shape our current and future ASYE programme.
- You will receive Action Learning groups.
- You receive one day a month protected Portfolio / Study time.

### Social Worker

A social worker at this stage will have successfully completed their ASYE and will be in their consolidation years. There are no set criteria for length of time in post to progress to the next level – social workers will remain in this role until they evidence readiness for progression to Senior Social worker. As a Social Worker who is ready to progress to the role of Senior Social Worker you will be able to evidence eligibility against the required criteria and demonstrate the impact you are making in your work with children and their families. The eligibility criteria are clearly set in the North Somerset Council Social work Career Progression Policy included in the appendices

at the end of this document, and you are encouraged to use the competency set as detailed in the Knowledge and Skills Statement. Social workers at this level are encouraged to take part in the Practice Educator opportunities (PE) building their skills in supporting colleagues who are an earlier stage of their career.

### Senior Social Worker

Senior Social Workers are lead social work professionals who are experienced and more autonomous in the performance of their role. They demonstrate expert and effective practice in complex situations, assessing and managing higher levels of risk, striking a balance between support and challenge, liaising with a wide range of professionals, including those at more senior levels. Specifically, they:

- Hold complex caseloads and offer expert opinion within the organisation and to others, including those at more senior levels.
- Chair a range of meetings, offer expert support to case conferences, and produce high quality assessments and reports for a range of functions.
- Model good practice, setting expectations for others and demonstrate successful outcomes for children and families that are directly linked to their practice.
- Take responsibility and are accountable for the practice of others, mentoring newly qualified and lesser experienced Social Workers, Student Social Workers and (where appropriate) supervising the work of other social care practitioners. Senior Social workers who wish to develop further are supported in expertise in a specialism (Practice specialist) or aspirant Team manager.

North Somerset council Children Services are active members of the Research in Practice (RIP) Practice Supervisor Development Programme (PSDP).

**Practice Specialist** act as an expert resource to the team and department. They develop practice, engage in research and evaluation of practice, collaborating with the Principal Social Worker and will undertake advanced training such as a postgraduate or specialist qualification.

**Aspirant Managers** This is an opportunity to develop capacity for supervision, mentoring and coaching in the team. Training and development to support this preferred area of specialism are available.

### Development opportunities for non-social working staff

North Somerset have been keen to create new pathways for practitioner within Children services that work in roles that are non-social working roles. Working with CYP-IAPT we have in the last year given staff learning and development opportunities by enrolling on the following course :

<u>Type of course</u>	<u>Course overview</u>
<u>Parenting 5-10 Years</u>	<a href="https://swcypiapt.com/courses/cyp-iapt-courses/parent-training-for-conduct-problems/">https://swcypiapt.com/courses/cyp-iapt-courses/parent-training-for-conduct-problems/</a>
<u>0-5 years</u>	<a href="https://swcypiapt.com/courses/cyp-iapt-courses/0-5-infant-mental-health/">https://swcypiapt.com/courses/cyp-iapt-courses/0-5-infant-mental-health/</a>
<u>Supervisors</u>	<p>Within mental health and social care settings it is becoming increasingly recognised that clinical supervision plays a fundamental role in improving clinical outcomes, supporting practitioners and ensuring safe and efficient practice. In this programme you will develop an advanced and critical knowledge of the theory surrounding clinical supervision and mastery of the competencies associated with clinical skills and/or case management supervision. Considerable opportunity for supervision and reflection on your supervisory practice will be afforded to enhance learning and ongoing action planning. The programme is delivered over a single year.</p>

### Benefits of the CYPIAPT Programme

- Staff now have a progression pathway outside of the limited managerial opportunities.
- Feedback within supervision evidence stronger competencies from those staff that have taken part in the programme. Staff present in supervision to be able to introduce interventions earlier by collaboratively working with the whole family with greater outcomes for families that are captured using outcome measures. Such as strengths and difficulty questionnaire and goal-based outcomes.
- Staff who participated now have access to the CYPIAPT via the resources on Alumni and the free CPD courses available via Exeter university and the CYPIAPT Southwest collaborative. This also giving better network support with partners and peers.
- The aim is that such investment in staff will provide opportunity to develop and be retained as employees in North Somerset Council.
- Those staff who have enrolled and completed the training have become advocates for the programme sharing best practice with colleagues and peers including being able to provide in house training to the wider workforce reducing external facilitators costs.

- Clinical supervision provided to FSW on more complex cases
- The completion of this course has given those staff that have attended the ability to gain core profession and a membership to a governing body. Which they only retain by providing annual CPD evidence. Raising their professional and specialist practice.

### Who are Learning and Development?

The following learning and development officers cover the following areas. The scheduled training is available to view via the CPD system, stream or the learning pool when accessing e-learning.

Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Training	Paul Cox and Joanne Bocko
Children Services Workforce Development and ASYE Co-ordinator	Kate Blackburn
Practice Educator and Student Placement Co-ordinator	Belinda Wilson
Early Years	Rhianon Richards
Fostering and Adoption	Susannah Weeks
Safeguarding in Education	Joanne Bocko
E- Learning	Via Learning Pool