



Handbook for employers and social workers

Early Professional Development
2011-13 edition

Foreword

Social workers make a vital contribution to improving outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people. The Munro Review published in May 2011 affirmed that social workers should be supported in their careers and be clear about what they need to achieve. It acknowledged that social workers and their employers should be supported to do this.

We developed the Early Professional Development programme with employers in the first half of 2009. They told us they wanted a common framework to support the development of social workers after their NQSW year. It was important to them that this was flexible enough to be used within their existing organisational policies and procedures.

What we learnt from working with employers and listening to your experiences of EPD has contributed to the Social Work Reform Board's development of the Professional Capabilities Framework and other key reforms.

We are delighted that you have chosen to work with us to support your social workers through the EPD programme. By April 2012, our social work programme will move into the Department for Education (DfE). We continue to welcome your feedback as we discuss with DfE how the sector should best be supported in future.



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Introduction

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has developed the Early Professional Development (EPD) programme for social workers who have completed the Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) programme and are entering years two and three of employment.

The Social Work Reform Board is working towards the development of a nationally recognised career structure that makes clear the expectations that apply to social workers throughout their career. This will be supported by the Professional Capabilities Framework and a coherent and effective national framework for the continuing professional development of social workers.

This Early Professional Development programme is part of CWDC's work with employers to support social workers as they progress in their career. It recognises that a social worker's learning and development cannot end with initial qualification or with the successful completion of an induction year. It provides a framework that helps social workers to operate with greater confidence and autonomy as they move into their second and third years in employment and deal with increasingly complex workloads. Its aims are to:

- Improve the recruitment and retention of children's social workers.
- Improve training and development opportunities for social workers working with children and families during their second and third year of employment.
- Improve the practice of social workers.
- Promote and improve effective supervision.

Building on the NQSW programme

The programme builds on the NQSW programme, so the overall structure should be familiar to employers. The content of the EPD outcome statements and the more streamlined programme requirements reflect the fact that social workers in their second and third years in employment have different needs from NQSWs. Reflective practice and an increase of ownership of their own professional development should become a part of these social workers' normal ways of working.

A flexible work-based programme

The programme has been designed to support all employers who have participated in the NQSW programme.

The programme is based on a set of six EPD outcome statements that can be found in the EPD outcome statements and guidance (CWDC, 2011).

These EPD outcome statements build on the skills and expertise already developed during the NQSW programme. They will help social workers in their second and third years of practice continue to develop their professional behaviours, expertise and skills.

The EPD programme offers social workers two hours a month protected supervision focused on professional development, and 15 days learning and development opportunities, spread over the two years, to help them achieve the EPD outcome statements.

The programme is flexible. It is designed to fit into organisations' existing policies and procedures on supervision, assessment and appraisal. The EPD programme is not designed to confer a qualification or a status, but so that employers can implement it flexibly, in line with their local arrangements for training and development, and the needs of the social workers they employ. Employers may choose to use the EPD programme in combination with, or as an alternative to, awards in the Post Qualifying framework. They will want to consider a wide range of options to support their social workers' development, including co-working, shadowing or short courses. Taking part in EPD will contribute significantly to the General Social Care Council's (GSCC¹) Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) requirements.

¹ At time of writing the GSCC's responsibilities for registering social workers are due to pass to the Health Professions Council (HPC) from July 2012

Guidance for employers and managers

In developing the programme, employers told us that they wanted a common framework for professional development across the different roles social workers carry out. They wanted a programme that is the same across the country and is flexible enough to meet local organisational objectives, and at the same time fit with existing policies and procedures. They told us the programme should help develop confident, highly skilled and motivated social workers able to work autonomously with less supervision. It should also help employers recruit and retain highly skilled and motivated individuals.

Our aim is for the EPD programme to help deliver those benefits to you and your staff.

Choosing participants for the programme

The EPD programme is designed to flow naturally from the NQSW programme. When you decide which social workers entering year two of their employment should be registered with CWDC to take part in EPD you will need to take account of the work that each is likely to undertake during the year. In all cases, social workers should be employed in England and:

- Can demonstrate achievement of the NQSW outcome statements and work full or part time in a role as a registered social worker.
- Work in a role specifically focused on working with children, young people, their families and carers.
- Work predominantly with 'children in need' (including in need of protection as defined by the Children Act 1989), in the youth justice system or, in terms of the Common Assessment Framework continuum, on the cusp between having additional and complex needs.

The programme is designed and funded as a two-year programme. Part-time staff who meet the above criteria may be included in the programme. In these circumstances, individuals may need longer to demonstrate the EPD outcome statements. However, funding is provided for two years only.

By April 2012 CWDC's social work programme will move into DfE and CWDC's existing commitments, including EPD, will fall to the Department. More information will be published about this transition as we receive it.

Structure of the programme

The programme is designed to be flexible and fit in with your existing work arrangements, like supervision arrangements, performance management systems, appraisal and review, and learning and development. It sets a framework for the professional development of social workers in the early years of practice, and helps you make reflective practice the norm in your organisation.

You will receive funding from CWDC for each eligible social worker and funding to support the implementation of the programme. In return, CWDC is expecting you to:

- Nominate a programme co-ordinator to oversee the programme.
- Provide two hours per month additional protected supervision for each social worker on the programme.
- Support individual social workers and supervisors in developing and reviewing training and development plans every three months.
- Support social workers in meeting their training and development needs through learning and development opportunities amounting to 15 days over two years.
- Support supervisors in continuing to improve their supervision practice.

EPD does not require social workers to have a protected caseload but you are encouraged to increase gradually the number and complexity of cases they deal with over the two years of the programme. This will give EPD social workers the necessary time to reflect on their practice while increasing their autonomy over the duration of the programme. Appendix 1 sets out the roles and responsibilities of the employing organisation, the programme co-ordinator, the supervisor, the line manager and the EPD social worker.

Evaluation of the programme

CWDC commissioned an independent evaluation of the first cohort of EPD social workers (2009-2011). The evaluation will establish the impact of the programme on EPD social workers, their supervisors and other stakeholders and the extent to which the programme achieves its outcomes. Programme co-ordinators and supervisors of this cohort will be asked for your ongoing participation in the evaluation by completing questionnaires, participating in interviews and focus groups.

EPD outcome statements

EPD is based on a set of six outcome statements. These reflect the skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers and managers informed us to be most important for social workers in their first few years after qualifying.

The EPD outcome statements cover:

- Information gathering.
- Analysing information and making recommendations.
- Planning, implementation and review.
- Working directly with children, young people and their families and carers.
- Safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- Professional development.

The EPD outcome statements complement the final report of the Munro review that was published in May 2011. In its response to Munro, the government set a goal for a system which, among other things, places greater trust in professional judgment; where risk and uncertainty are managed more smartly; where continuous learning and improvement are the norm; and where children and young people's wishes, feelings and experiences are placed at the centre. The EPD outcome statements very much support this desire for a system characterised by:

- children and young people's wishes, feelings and experiences placed at the centre;
- a relentless focus on the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of help given to children, young people and their families;
- the availability of a range of help and services to match the variety of needs of children, young people and their families;
- recognising that risk and uncertainty are features of the system where risk can never be eliminated but where it can be managed more smartly;
- trusting professionals and giving them the scope to exercise their professional judgment in deciding how to help children, young people and their families;
- the development of professional expertise to work effectively with children, young people and their families;
- truly valuing and acting on feedback from children, young people and families; and
- continuous learning and improvement, by reflecting critically on practice to identify problems and opportunities for a more effective system.

Managers of social workers on EPD should be familiar with the EPD outcome statements and the approach that underpins them. Supervisors of social workers on EPD will work with them to review how far their practice and behaviours are meeting the EPD outcome statements. This will be recorded in the EPD outcome statements evidence form (see Appendix 6).

Supporting and improving supervision

The additional protected time for professional development supervision is key to ensuring that both the social workers on EPD and you as their employer get the most out of the programme. The supervision should be carried out by someone with suitable skills and experience who may or may not be the social worker's line manager.

The supervisor should also have received training on supervising staff. Supervision does not have to take place on a one-to-one basis; it may include, for example, group supervision. This supervision should build on existing practice in your organisation, and it may even involve some new thinking about how to supervise continuing professional development.

The supervisor role is key in this programme. They should regularly discuss and review the social worker's progress against the outcome statements throughout the programme through supervision meetings, and by reviewing and agreeing the training and development plan. It is their responsibility to assess whether or not the social worker has achieved the outcome statements at the end of the EPD programme.

CWDC support for the programme

As already mentioned, we will provide funding for each social worker on the programme to assist you in providing EPD social workers with the protected time for professional development supervision and the 15 days learning and development opportunities over the two years of the programme. We will also provide funding to support the implementation of the programme in your organisation.

Assistance is also available to all EPD programme coordinators from a team of peer support advisors. Peer support advisors are individuals from participating employers that have extensive experience of delivering or managing the NQSW and/or EPD programmes. They will provide support to other employers through the sharing of knowledge, good practice and the practical approaches to overcoming common challenges. This support will be provided through visits, phone calls and group sessions.

Supervisors of EPD social workers are also supported by CWDC through the provision of free supervision training and supporting guidance materials.

Guidance for social workers

Structure of the programme

The structure of the programme is designed to be flexible, suitable for the range of social work settings in which you work and to fit in with your employer's existing procedures for supervision, appraisal, learning and development. The main source of learning and development for you over the two years will be the cases on which you work. Your caseload will not be protected as it was on NQSW and you are likely to find that the number and complexity of the cases increase over the next two years. This will help you broaden and deepen your skills and expertise. The EPD outcome statements are designed to support this development of skills, expertise and appropriate professional behaviour.

To help you develop these skills and expertise, the EPD programme offers you two hours a month of protected time for supervision, on top of the normal arrangements your employer makes for case supervision.

You will also have 15 learning and development days over the two-year EPD period. You will need to plan and agree how to use them with your employer. As a developing social worker you are expected to take the lead in identifying your training needs and discussing these with your supervisor and employer. We encourage you to think quite broadly about how you can meet your learning and development needs. They may be met through for example training courses, joint visits, co-working, shadowing a more experienced social worker, attending group discussions and briefings on cases. You and your employer may decide that undertaking aspects of the Post Qualifying (PQ) Award framework will be part of your professional development activities. In that case, you will be able to use elements of your PQ portfolio as evidence of your achievement of the EPD outcome statements.

The EPD programme is based on a set of six EPD outcome statements which set out what you should achieve by the end of the two years (this may take a little longer if you work part-time). The EPD outcome statements are designed to take into account of where and how you work. They describe the behaviours, expertise and skills that are expected of you in each of the outcome areas, as well as the evidence you need in order to show that you have achieved the outcome.

You are expected to demonstrate your achievement of all six EPD outcome statements covering:

- Information gathering.
- Analysing information and making recommendations.
- Planning, implementation and review.
- Working directly with children, young people and their families and carers.
- Safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- Professional development.

Personal development supervision and reflective practice

This supervision will be carried out by someone with suitable skills and experience, who may not be your line manager. It will not necessarily be one-to-one supervision, but it may include, for example, group supervision. Your employer will discuss these arrangements with you.

The aim of the EPD programme is that social workers increasingly take responsibility for their own development and incorporate reflective practice into all their work. As a developing practitioner you will be expected to use supervision sessions to demonstrate the behaviours described in the EPD outcome statements and to evaluate your own work in a critical way. This means that the relationship between you and your supervisor will gradually change as you transfer from NQSW to EPD during the lifetime of the programme. Your supervisor can access training from CWDC to support this transition.

Your supervisor is asked to:

- Agree a supervision 'contract' with you that sets out the expectations and responsibilities for the supervisory relationship.
- Help you set objectives to achieve the EPD outcome statements.
- Help you monitor and review how close you are to achieving the EPD outcome statements, by using the EPD outcome statements evidence form.
- Review how well you are doing with regards to the EPD outcome statements throughout the programme.
- Help you better understand your learning and development needs.
- Create a safe environment for you to look at your work, its impact upon you as a person and the effects this has on your practice.
- At the end of the programme, assess whether or not you have achieved the outcome statements.

Your supervisor, if a different person than your line manager, will be responsible for the allocation of appropriate cases, taking into account your experience and professional development needs. Similarly, your supervisor will arrange or negotiate with your line manager a range of opportunities where skills and techniques are modelled by more experienced colleagues as part of shadowing or co-working arrangements.

Training and development plan

You are not required to complete a portfolio though you may choose to do so. You will have agreed a training and development plan (TDP) at the end of the NQSW programme. This is the starting point for planning your development during EPD. It should make reference to the GSCC's PRTL requirements and make specific links with organisational policies and procedures for maintaining your social work registration.

During the EPD programme, your TDP should be reviewed every three months. At the end of the first year, you, your line manager and supervisor (if this person is not also your line manager) will agree an end of year TDP that identifies progress to date and areas for further development. At the end of the EPD programme, the three of you will complete an 'end of programme' TDP.

Development towards the EPD outcome statements

The EPD outcome statements help to clarify what is expected of you on the EPD programme. They let you clearly see how well you are developing the appropriate behaviours, expertise and skills.

You will chart your progress primarily through work-based activities and through evidence of reflective practice. You can use information collected from cases, reports and assessments, as each of these provides evidence of work towards the EPD outcome statements. Direct observations of your work by your supervisor or more experienced colleagues will also be rich sources of evidence. These observations might occur as part of co-working arrangements or as part of everyday work. You can also use feedback from children and young people, parents, carers and colleagues.

As you progress from NQSW to EPD, you will be expected to take more responsibility for your own professional development, like doing more reading and research to help your skills develop.

Monitoring your progress

Your progress will be reviewed throughout the programme, mainly through your supervision sessions, your own reflective practice and the development and agreement of your TDP. Your supervisor will assess whether you have achieved the outcome statements at the end of the EPD programme.

Further information regarding the EPD outcome statements and how to record your progress can be found in the EPD outcome statements and guidance (2011) handbook.

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What happens on the EPD programme?

Month	Action	Supervision	Training and Development Plan (TDP)
<p>Month 1 - 24</p>	<p>Month 1 Agree supervision contract</p>	<p>Months 1 - 24</p> <p>Minimum 2 hours of supervision per months.</p> <p>The EPD meets every month with their supervisor to review their objectives and the progress made against the EPD outcome statements.</p> <p>Formal review of achievement against their objectives should be completed at six and twelve months as a minimum.</p>	<p>Month 1 Initial training and development review Guidance questions are available on page 16 of the handbook for employers and social workers.</p> <p>Month 3 - 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TDP every 3 months. • Highlight your achievements to date, identify strengths on which you might build, and needs that may have emerged. • Revisit your training and development plan and review your objectives taking account of the progress you have made and any shortfalls, including the reasons. • Focus on areas you need to develop further and note any new priorities. • Review the support provided for you and identify any perceived shortfalls so action can be taken to rectify them. • Copies of the formal 6, 12 and 18 month review should be shared with the programme coordinator as a minimum. <p>By the end of the supervision session at which this review takes place, you should have agreed with your supervisor on the progress you have made and any revisions to your training and development plan.</p> <p>Month 24 Final TDP review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on your professional development so far. • Have you identified evidence against all the outcome statements? • Look ahead and identify future achievements.

Appendix 1

Roles and responsibilities

This appendix is designed to clarify the different roles and responsibilities of the employing organisation, the programme co-ordinator, the supervisor, the line manager and the EPD social worker.

The employing organisation

The role and responsibilities of the employing organisation are as follows:

- Appoint a programme co-ordinator.
- Select eligible EPD social workers.
- Ensure that each EPD social worker has a suitable, well-supported supervisor.
- Access the funds available from CWDC for additional learning and development opportunities for the EPD social worker.
- Take part in the evaluation process.

If a supervisor is absent for more than one month, the organisation should provide cover arrangements so that there are no gaps in supervision and support for the EPD social worker.

Organisations need to make sure that they allow enough time for the EPD social worker to reflect upon their learning and development needs throughout the programme.

The programme co-ordinator

The organisation should select a staff member to undertake this role, taking account of the expectations of the programme. The person selected must be in a position to take overall responsibility for co-ordinating and reviewing the programme.

The programme co-ordinator has specific responsibilities to:

- Be the formal link and main point of contact between their organisation and CWDC.
- Receive a copy of the initial training and development plan for each EPD social worker, the 12-month review of the plan, plus any changes to individual plans that could affect the overall organisational training and development plan.
- Collate the training and development needs identified in the individual training and development plans.
- Develop an organisational training plan which will meet all of the social workers' individual needs.
- Monitor how the training and development plans are going, using the 12-month reviews.
- Liaise with colleagues on the EPD social worker's progress.

The programme co-ordinator will also want to see a copy of the EPD outcome statements evidence and sign off forms (which the EPD social worker should complete alongside the TDPs) so that they can let the operational managers know about the progress.

Supervisor

The supervisor is responsible for the professional support and development of the EPD social worker as well as monitoring their performance and should:

- Be an experienced registered social worker who has in-depth knowledge of current social work practice in children's services.
- Have received training from their current or previous organisation on supervising staff.
- Meet the requirements within their organisation's supervision policies and procedures.
- Meet the standards outlined in the CWDC Guide for the Supervision of Social Workers in Children's Services (CWDC, 2011).
- Be able to provide regular protected supervision for two hours per month.
- Agree the supervision contract and objectives for the EPD social worker to achieve as part of the initial training and development plan.
- Have arrangements to provide feedback on the EPD social worker's progress, and their capacity and capability to undertake further work (if the supervisor is not the line manager).
- Provide high-quality supervision focused on discussing individual pieces of work, identifying relevant legislation, policies and procedures and how these should be applied in practice to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.
- Identify how the EPD social worker will monitor progress towards achieving the EPD outcome statements and carry out formal reviews of achievement of the objectives in their plan at six and twelve months as a minimum.
- Agree what activities and development opportunities will contribute to the evidence of achievement, and then arrange for work to be allocated accordingly.
- Ensure that supervision and review records are completed.
- Send copies of records to the line manager (if different from the supervisor) and the programme co-ordinator as required. This will include at least the initial TDP and the 12-month review.
- Assess whether or not the social worker has met the EPD outcome statements at the end of the programme.
- Contribute to the EPD programme evaluation through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups.

The line manager

Where the line manager is not the supervisor, she or he will have ultimate responsibility for the quality of an EPD social worker's performance.

Line managers will:

- Agree allocation of work with the supervisor.
- Monitor the overall progress and development of the EPD social worker and manage any performance issues by talking with the supervisor.

The EPD social worker

The EPD social worker is responsible for their own professional development. Within this programme, their tasks are to:

- Understand the expectations of the programme using the EPD outcome statements and guidance document (CWDC, 2011).
- Complete the process of professional development, record the required evidence and complete the relevant forms.
- Analyse their training needs and prepare a training and development plan (with the support of the supervisor) that includes clear objectives.
- Complete the EPD outcome statements matrix to show how they meet the EPD outcome statements.
- Agree a supervision contract and attend regular supervision sessions.
- Critically evaluate their progress towards meeting the EPD outcome statements.
- Use the opportunities for learning and development activities and training (over and above the normal training requirements of their organisation).
- Take part in the reviews of achievement every three months, based on the training and development plan (involving their line manager if different from their supervisor).
- Take opportunities for learning other than those directly related to their caseload.
- Ensure each activity, supervision session and review is recorded using the forms provided or using their own organisation's formats.
- Contribute to the EPD programme evaluation through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups.

Appendix 2

Guidance questions at the beginning of the EPD programme

The following guidance questions are designed to help social workers make the transition from their first year of practice as a newly qualified social worker to the EPD programme.

1. As you begin the EPD programme, what do you consider to be the most important professional development priorities for the next two years? Why are these issues the most important for you now? In thinking about this, please consider:

- Your strengths and challenges from your experience as an NQSW.
- The post in which you are starting your second year of employment.
- Any feedback you already have from your supervisor, line manager or other colleagues.
- Your self-review against the EPD outcome statements and evidence requirements.

2. How have your priorities changed since your NQSW year? You may have new needs, challenges and areas for development related to:

- The children, young people and families you will be supporting.
- The context of the agency or organisation in which you are working.
- The changing policy and legislative framework in which you are working.
- The resources to support the children, young people and their families.
- Taking on new responsibilities.

3. How would you prioritise your needs across your first 12 months using the EPD outcome statements?

- What do you feel should be the short, medium or long-term priorities for your professional development?
- What is your reasoning for prioritising in this way?

4. What preparation, support or development opportunities do you feel would help you achieve these?

5. Having looked at the EPD outcome statements, is there anything you would like to add to the content of your initial EPD Training and Development Plan?

Appendix 3

Reviewing progress during the EPD programme

This appendix is designed to help social workers prepare for their review meetings.

In preparation for your review meetings, you may find it helpful to think about each of the objectives in your TDP and check the progress you have made. Some of your objectives may be partially met, some completely. The EPD outcome statements evidence and sign off forms will also help you identify this. Remember that this is a process through which you are aiming to show the progress you have made.

It is also important for you and your supervisor to evaluate the support that has been provided.

You should also make a note of any helpful development opportunities for future reference. Any perceived shortfalls should be discussed and recorded at review meetings so that your organisation can take steps to ensure that full support is put in place.

The following questions are intended to get you thinking.

1. Think about the progress you have made towards achieving your professional development objectives. How do you know you have progressed? How have you been able to make this progress?
2. Which of your professional development opportunities have had the most impact on you and your work? Why were they so helpful? Have any of your support activities been less helpful? Why do you think that was?
3. Are there any of your objectives, or aspects of your objectives, where you have made less progress than you expected? How do you know? Why do you feel this has happened?
4. What further support would you find valuable? What would help you to build on your achievements and improve progress towards your objectives?
5. What new objectives should be set for the next stage? For example, these might relate to:
 - Priorities you identified earlier in your first year of EPD, but which have not yet been addressed.
 - New or unexpected priorities.
 - Objectives that have been adapted and carried over from an earlier action plan.
6. Why are these important for you now?

Appendix 4

Guidance questions at the end of the EPD programme

This appendix is designed to help social workers prepare for their final review meeting at the end of the EPD programme.

1. Thinking back over your first three years post qualification, what do you feel have been your most significant achievements as a social worker?

- What have been your key learning moments?
- What prompted your learning on these occasions?
- Which aspects of your learning and development programme have you particularly valued and why?

2. How have you built on the strengths you identified at the end of your social work undergraduate study? What evidence is there of your progress in these areas?

3. When you look back over your training and development plans, EPD outcome statements evidence form and records of review meetings over the last two years, which objectives do you feel have been achieved and why?

- Are there any areas where you are less satisfied with your progress? If so, why?
- What further actions will you take in these areas?
- What further preparation or support do you feel you will need?

4. What have been the most challenging EPD outcome statements to achieve during the last two years?

- Have any of the objectives, aspirations and goals that you outlined at the start of the EPD programme not been tackled?
- How could you take these forward into the next stage of your career?

5. Thinking ahead to the children, young people and families with whom you will be working, and the responsibilities you will be taking on in the future, what do you feel are the priorities for your professional development?

6. What options are you currently considering for professional progression?

- Why are you interested in extending your expertise in this way?
- What could you do to move towards achieving these ambitions?

Check - how well you have:

- Reflected on your professional development so far.
- Considered how your degree, NQSW and the EPD programmes helped you to arrive at this point in your professional development.
- Identified the evidence of your successes using the EPD outcome statements.
- Taken a balanced view of your progress during the last two years.
- Looked ahead and identified what you want to achieve in the future.
- Researched and used the continuing professional development support systems available to you.

The Children's Workforce Development Council leads change so that the thousands of people and volunteers working with children and young people across England are able to do the best job they possibly can.

We want England's children and young people's workforce to be respected by peers and valued for the positive difference it makes to children, young people and their families.

We advise and work in partnership with lots of different organisations and people who want the lives of all children and young people to be healthy, happy and fulfilling.



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