



**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in
Consolidation of Social Work Practice
LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits
BMPF6044**

**LEARNER PORTFOLIO
(PORTH AGORED and UNIVERSITY OF
WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID)**

Learner's name: Liam Phillips

Email address: liamphillips@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Learner's University Registration Number: 2419615

Cohort: 21 onwards

Task 1

Part a

Developmental review

Guidance:

Task 1 part a asks you to use a model of reflection to reflect on your past practice and future developmental needs. It should be completed by taking into account the work you have undertaken since qualifying. In discussions with your mentor and/or supervisor/line manager identify your future developmental needs as part of your First Three Years of Practice Individual Plan under each of the 3 learning outcomes below.

You must meet the Learning Outcomes for this task (see appendix 4 of the handbook).

Please answer all elements of the question below.

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your professional development since qualifying as a social worker. Based on this and in discussion with your mentor/supervisor/line manager go on to identify and justify your future developmental needs over the coming 12 months under **each** of the 3 Social Care Wales (SCW) learning outcomes listed below providing at least one developmental need for each of the learning outcome below:

1. Applying analysis in assessment to inform interventions.
2. Working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers and other professionals.
3. Intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations.

This task must make reference to how the supervision, training, learning and research has and will inform your practice.

750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

The first part of this task will critically reflect on my professional development since qualifying as a social worker. Following this, I will identify my learning needs and justify my future development by exploring three learning outcomes. Throughout the task, I will use Kolb's model of experiential adult learning as a means of reflection, which focuses on the following four-step cycle: Experiencing – Reflecting – Thinking – Acting, *Kolb (1984)*. There are likely to be more concise reflective models that I could use, however, I've chosen this model because I find it to be a useful way of discovering areas of my work that need improving, as well as being an effective way of generating new ideas to implement into my practice.

I began my first year of practice working in the Children and families team. I mainly worked with families with children on the child protection register, as well as children open on care and support packages. After five months, I then moved onto the 16+ Team, where I remain today, mainly working with young people in care, as well as asylum seekers and young people open on care and support packages.

My first year of practice has been challenging yet stimulating at the same time. Initially, I was confident I had plenty of transferable skills and experiences, which I felt I could embed into the work to help with the transition from student to professional. This involved skills and knowledge I had already acquired, such as active listening, empathy, person centred approach and anti-oppressive practice. However, overtime I was introduced to new procedures, policies, legislation, challenges, terminology, barriers etc., which has ordered me to reflect on the gaps in my skills and knowledge and helped to identify my learning needs.

My first identified learning need is to ensure I have a fundamental understanding of the legislative framework prior to a particular intervention. For example, service user **1** voluntarily chose to come into local authority care, following a breakdown in his relationship with his adopted parents. When completing the relevant paperwork with the service user and adopted parents, I struggled during the section titled 'delegated consent'. On reflection, I feel that my lack of analysis of the legislation impacted negatively on the intervention, and I came across as quite frankly, underprepared. Going forward, I will ensure I familiarise myself with Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children), *Welsh Government (2014)*, and use my supervision as a way of reinforcing my understanding of the legislation.

My second identified learning need is to be mindful of not falling into conversational traps such as problem-solving or the "expert trap", *Social Care Wales (2025)*. When working collaboratively with service users and their families, I've noticed that I sometimes feel the need to offer solutions to problems and will forget that the service user will often be an expert in their own affairs. As *Statham et al., cited in Lishman (2007)* point out, social workers have a strong tendency to underestimate the strengths of a service users' situation, which can sometimes lead to a deficit model of assessment. Therefore, going forward, I feel it's important to attend a course in Collaborative working, which I hope will promote a more strengths-based approach to my work.

My last identified learning need is to improve my skills in applying authority, or what Ferguson (2011) refers to as *good authority*. There have been several occasions where I have felt insecure and uncertain when applying professional judgement in complex situations. For example, service user **2's** needs were no longer being met by his foster carer, so a decision was made to move him into a residential home so he could receive specialised support. There was a period where service user **2** and the foster carer were quite resistant to the decision, and they challenged my judgement.

On reflection, I feel that it's completely reasonable to be challenged about my decisions, and I've learnt that I will need to embrace this going forward. I feel that this outlook demonstrates a

level of maturity and emotional intelligence that I didn't have prior to qualifying. Also, what has become apparent during my first year of practice is that decisions are rarely made alone, and that using my professional judgement in complex situations, is a portion of the wider multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, going forward, I will promote the use of multidisciplinary team meetings and have more conversations with other professionals, in the hope it will broaden my professional judgement and justify my use of authority in complex situations.

Word count: 755

References

Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Welsh Government (2014) *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children)*

Social Care Wales (2025), 'Hints and tips for having good conversations and understanding what matters to people' (Online) Available at: <https://socialcare.wales/cms-assets/documents/Hints-and-tips-ENG-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed: 18/07/25).

Statham, D. and Kearney, P., in Lishman, J. (ed.) (2007) *Handbook for Practice Learning in Social Work and Social Care: Knowledge and Theory*, 2nd edn, London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers. (Online) Available at: <http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/35035/1/37.pdf.pdf> (Accessed: 18/07/25).

Ferguson, H. 2011 'Using good authority: working with resistance and involuntary clients' in *The Open University (2016) K315 Readings*, Milton Keynes, The Open University, pp. 72-85

Task 1

Part b

Developmental Review

Guidance:

Task 1 part b is a 2-part question and a continuation of task 1 part a and you **must** refer to a reflective model in this task.

Please ensure that you meet the required learning outcomes for this task (See appendix 4 of the handbook) and that you answer both parts of the question.

Please answer all elements of the question below.

Question

Use a reflective model to critically reflect on the learning needs you identified in task 1 part a under each of the 3 SCW learning outcomes.

This must include reference to training, learning, research and supervision and reflection with your mentor/supervisor/line manager on the extent to which your learning outcomes has been achieved.

Identify your learning needs to support your development in the transition to becoming an experienced practitioner in your future career following the completion of this programme.

650 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

To conserve clarity and synchronise with part A of this task, I will continue to use Kolb's model of experiential adult learning as a way of critically reflecting on my learning needs.

My first identified learning need was to ensure I understood specific legislation, as a way of applying analysis in assessment to inform intervention. I identified my supervision as a way of strengthening my understanding of legislation. I've been fortunate that my manager promotes critical reflection by using what Rankine (2019) refers to as a *think aloud* process. This has meant examining parts of legislation with my manager and simultaneously vocalising my thought processes as a way of gaining a better understanding. On reflection, supervision has become an extremely important place to critically reflect on how knowledge impacts on my practice. However, due to an increasing caseload, and an organisational - task-focused agenda to traverse through, there is only a brief amount of time which enables critical reflection. In the future, the use of group supervision with colleagues can offer an alternative means of critical reflection and according to a study by Arvidsson et al. (2008) cited in Grant & Kinman (2015), can be a way of enhancing motivation to learn.

My second identified learning need was to be mindful of not falling into conversational traps when working in collaboration with service users and their families. I identified this as a training need and thereafter attended a Collaborative communication course. The course partly looked at how to encourage outcome-focused conversations and how to connect with internal motivators. On reflection, the course was extremely pertinent to my professional development, and I discovered new ways of avoiding problem-solving and being an expert during conversations. The training was mostly influenced by the theories and methodologies of Motivational Interviewing, which put simply, is about having effective conversations with people, with the aim of implementing change, Miller & Rollnick (2013). However, Forsberg et al. (2025) advises that motivational interviewing skills are best acquired by regularly practising with reliable feedback. On reflection, this might be difficult to maintain due to lack of opportunities to gain

feedback. However, Wise (2019) suggests we actively engage in feedback to verify the usefulness of what we do, and to also check whether it's in line with what is needed for service users.

My third identified learning need was the use of authority when applying professional judgement in complex situations. Before I begin, I'd like to rectify the wording I chose when previously identifying my learning needs. After much deliberation, I feel the word "power" doesn't accurately and appropriately encapsulate what I attempted to categorise as a learning need. I would prefer to use: "to develop *confidence* in applying professional judgement in complex situations". I've continued to identify multi-disciplinary working as a way of developing confidence in applying professional judgement in complex situations.

Implementing integrative working into my practice has meant that I've started to work closer with other agencies and teams. According to the Social Care Institute for Excellence (2025), multi-disciplinary working can help professionals feel more positive and supported about their work. Organising and participating in MDT meetings has been a way of helping me gain a holistic perspective on the situation, which in turn has informed my decision-making. Studies show that to achieve confidence in integrated working, timely and optimal contribution is needed, Barber et al. (2023). On reflection, I feel I've been more proactive in liaising with other agencies, such as CAMHS, the police, service providers etc. This has not only helped improve communication and coordination, but has ensured that I can make more informed, confident judgements. With all that said, despite the importance of being confident in making judgements, I still feel it's important to embrace uncertainty, as a way of remaining open-minded and adaptable in practice. Schunn (2010) cited in Paletz et al. (2016) describes uncertainty as a recognition or feeling of incomplete information. I believe uncertainty can be a way of promoting critical thinking and reflection to deepen my understanding of complex situations.

Word count: 670

Reference

Barber. S, Otis. M, Greenfield. G, Razzaq. N, Solanki. D, Norton. J, Richardson. S, Hayhoe. B. (2023) 'Improving Multidisciplinary Team Working to Support Integrated Care for People with Frailty Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic' (Online) Available at: [Improving Multidisciplinary Team Working to Support.pdf](#) (Accessed: 07/10/2025).

Grant, L., & Kinman, G. (2014) 'Emotional Resilience in the Helping Professions and how it can be Enhanced' (Online) Available at: [Full article: Emotional Resilience in the Helping Professions and how it can be Enhanced](#) (Accessed: 06/10/2025).

Miller. W.R., Rollnick. S. (2013) 'Motivational Interviewing' Third Edition. The Guilford Press.

Paletz. S, Chan. J, Schunn. C. (2016) 'Uncovering Uncertainty through Disagreement' (Online) Available at: [Uncovering Uncertainty through Disagreement](#) (Accessed:07/10/2025).

Rankine. M. (2019) 'The 'thinking aloud' process: a way forward in social work supervision' (Online) Available at: [Thethinkingaloudprocessawayforwardinsocialworksupervision.pdf](#) (Accessed:06/10/2025).

Social Care Institute for Excellence (2025) 'Multidisciplinary teams working for integrated care' (Online) Available at: [Multidisciplinary teams working for integrated care - SCIE](#) (Accessed:06/10/2025).

Wise. R (2019) 'A key part of being a social work student is service user feedback – why does this stop after qualifying?' (Online) Available at: [A key part of being a social work student is service user feedback - why does this stop after qualification?](#) (Accessed;06/10/2025).

Question

Reflect on feedback that you have received from individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers and explain how this information has helped shape your practice and future professional development.

100 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Total task 1 part b 750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Following the observation in task 2, I discovered that **3** wished I knew more about him. On reflection, I feel that this was fair and constructive criticism, although in my defence, **3** was still relatively new to my caseload. However, in hindsight, I recognise that there were gaps in my understanding of his birth family, arising from a lack of preparation.

In future, I'll be more mindful of the preparation I do prior to visits. This will involve reading the files more thoroughly and being proactive in speaking with the previous social workers. I feel that this demonstrates responsibility for my practice and development.

Word count: 104