



**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in Consolidation
of Social Work Practice
LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits
BMPPF6044**

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

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Cohort: 21 onwards

Task 2

Observation of Practice

Guidance:

*A learner must choose an observation of **direct social work practice** with people in need of care and support and/or their carers. The observation cannot be from giving evidence in court, contributing to strategy group meetings, case conferences or tribunals or any other indirect activity. The consent of the individual/s in need of care and support and/or their carers must be sought before the observation is undertaken. The observation must be undertaken by an observer who is social work qualified and has at least 3 years' experience (criteria set out in the Programme Handbook). The observation must be for a minimum of 30 minutes. The observer will gain feedback from the individual/s in need of care and support and/or their carers using either the pro forma below or one of the learner's own design at the end of the visit.*

The learner is responsible for providing a method of gathering feedback for the observer to use. This can be of their own design, and/or adapted to meet the needs of the individual. The provided pro forma can be used where appropriate. The method used will depend on age, ability and language/communication needs of the individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers.

This section will include examples of the ways in which effective communication impacts on practice in relation to language use, language needs and cultural sensitivity. You must demonstrate the principles of the "Active Offer" and make reference to "More than Just Words" (Welsh Government, 2012).

Please ensure you meet the Learning Outcomes for this task (See appendix 5 of the handbook).

Please answer the questions below.

Observation Summary

Please include name of the expert witness observing in learner's details section of the portfolio.

Date of observation: __04/07/2024__

To be completed by learner.

Question:

Context

Set out the social work objectives and give a brief description of the situation including geographical and legislative contexts and any relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues, including how consent was gained and how you have considered the impact of the observation on the individual in need of care and support and/or their carers.

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

My chosen observation is a home visit to go through and sign a written agreement with a Grandparent (who I will refer to as 1) who has care of her Grandchild (who I will refer to as 2). 1 has agreed with her daughter to care for 2 as her location is closer to 2's desired school, town and friends. 2's mother lives in a very rural area of Wales and this was having a significant impact on 2's ability to attend school on time, socialise with friends and attend community activities. 2 had access to public transport, but due to public transport being very limited in rural areas of Wales, this did not promote 2 being able to independently access the community.

I am completing a comprehensive assessment under part3 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, 2014: to assess and identify any needs or safeguarding concerns and whether 2 needs a care and support, or child protection plan. The concerns that led to a multi-agency referral form being completed by 2's school was that 2 may be exposed and spending time with a known adult who is of significant risk to children. Should 2 continue to spend time with this known male, 2 is at risk of being exposed to a male who is identified as a significant risk due to their association with gangs, drugs, and violent behaviour.

This was not my first visit, I have had the opportunity to go through the observation with 1, gather consent and provide the active offer and identify their first language spoken is English. Whilst preparing for the observation, I was mindful that 2 is not placed with 1 under any order from the courts, therefore does not hold parental responsibility, whilst 2 was not present during the observation, I discussed and gained consent from 2 mother to be open and transparent in my working with the family: in line with the Codes of Professional Practice (Social Care Wales).

(Word count 330)

Question:

Critically reflect on your communication methods and skills during the observation; including how you identified whether you had the necessary communication skills to work with the individual in need of care and support and/or their carers.

You must use a person-centred approach to demonstrate the integration of social work ethics, values and the Code of Professional Practice. This must include culturally and linguistically sensitive practice and the principles of the “Active Offer” and make reference to “More than Just Words” (Welsh Government, 2012).

1300 (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Reflecting on my observation on communication methods and skills, I have been able to identify strengths and areas of learning for my future practice.

Before the observation, I ensured that I contacted 1 to remind her of my planned visit, to remind 1 of the visit being observed and to ensure she still consented. This was to ensure 1 felt centre to the planning and involved keeping a person centred approach; as set out within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. I am able to reflect and recognise that whilst I strived to have a person-centred approach; some of the goals and expectations of the visit were also for from my own agenda, I was very eager to complete the direct observation to enable me to further complete my tasks set out within my course. I am mindful that a barrier to being person centred is a professional having their own goals from a visit and how this can sometimes impact the delivery of a person-centred approach. Another factor that impacted the visit being person centred was my observer being 10minutes late. Whilst this could not be helped and there are times within practice where situations change without notice, I was worried this would make 1 feel that the visit wasn't important, effectively meaning she wasn't important and how this may impact her engagement with me.

My approach was to be as open and honest with 1 as I could be through effective communication. Section 2 of the Codes of Professional Practice (Social Care Wales) sets out ways professionals can strive to establish and maintain trust. I communicated verbally in a straightforward way explaining why my observer was late and apologised several times. 1 was given the option to reschedule the visit should she wish also; empowering her to make informed decisions. Whilst we waited for my observer to arrive, the extra time gave me an opportunity to remember to ensure that 1 did not have any communicational needs or barriers. In reflection this could have been done prior to the visit and emphasises the importance of preparation before a visit. 1 did not have any additional needs nor communication needs that required any aids to communication, therefore I assessed the visit could continue.

During the observation, although I had previously asked if 1 wanted to communicate in Welsh and she had declined, I did this again. I was aware should 1 have changed her mind I was able to meet this need as a Welsh speaker, therefore avoiding delay in identifying a Welsh speaker and having to reschedule the visit. The Annual Population Survey for Welsh speaking

(Welsh Government 2023) identifies “29.7% of people aged three or older were able to speak Welsh. This figure equates to around 906,800 people”. I was aware the location of where 1 lived was of an area identified withing the local authority as speaking more Welsh than the rest of the local authority. I was aware that Welsh language and the use of it in communicating to service users is promoted within the More Than Just Words (2016) framework published by the Welsh Government. Therefore, it was important to ensure 1 felt she was able to request to have a service in Welsh and this decision not create barriers. As the only Welsh speaker in my team, I am mindful some service users may decline to speak Welsh through the fear this will delay receiving a service due to the lack of Welsh speaking professionals.

During the visit I was mindful of the location to where I sat; I wanted to be able to keep good eye contact with 1 but also allow her to have her own personal space. I positions myself in the position I felt was appropriate, in reflection I could have asked 1 where she felt most comfortable for me to sit to reduce any barriers to communication. I used verbal communication, written documents and was mindful of my body language. I allowed 1 time to red through the written agreement that we as a local authority were requesting 1 to sign. I also read through the written agreement to ensure it was understood. 1 was asked if she understood the agreement and happy to sign it. Upon reflection, reading the written agreement out loud after 1 had stated she understood the agreement was for my own benefit; to ensure 1 understood what she was signing. There were no signs that 1 wasn't capable of reading this herself and understanding it. 1 had full capacity (Mental Capacity Act 2005), so in reflection this response could have been perceived as insulting to 1. Something for me to be mindful of in my future practice.

During the visit it was explained to 1 that to share the exact conviction of the adult identified as a risk to 2, I would have to complete a multi-agency referral form requesting a joint disclosure from the Police, under Section3, part2 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. A strategy discussion would then take place where it would be decided if a disclosure would be in the best interest of the children to safeguard them, the child would have to be identified at significant risk of harm (Children Act 1989) to agree this. Under the Date Protection Act 2018, the adult at risk's personal information and data is protected until protocols are followed to identify lawful reasons for this information to be shared. 1 felt that this was not needed as she was informed of this by her daughter and felt she was informed enough to make decisions to ensure the safety of 1.

Following my observation and the feedback being obtained, I reflected on the visit with my observer, I felt that I was able to effectively communicate with 1 using different methods of communication; I used verbal, written and body language as ways to communicate. I was able to deliver a person-centred approach and strive for an open and honest exchange, I was able to consider her needs and wider cultural influences also. Whilst I feel I was able to deliver this during my visit, within reflection I have identified that there are areas in my practice to make positive changes to and improve. I feel I need to be mindful of my own goals and expectations when going into a home visit and be aware of how my own targets and agendas can influence my practice. Being focussed on my own targets could impact my ability to be person-centred, impact my communication and how much time I allocate to the visit; this can in turn impact an individual's engagement and what positive outcomes are achieved. Moving forward, I would

like to focus my practice on allowing the visit to be more flexible and fluid in the hope this will enable me to strive for better outcomes and a better experience for the families and in turn prioritising their care and support/child protection needs. Supervision and reflection has enabled me to identify my strengths as a practitioner and also areas in which I can improve for better practice as a qualified social worker. The role of a social work practitioner is significant and holds a lot of responsibility which I have come to understand more as I continue my career as a social worker.

(Word count; 1197)

Feedback and comments from individual in need of care and support and/or their carers

Information for the observer

This section of the Observation should not be completed in the presence of the learner.

No formal written feedback is required from the observer on the learner's practice. However verbal feedback should be provided to the learner as soon as possible after the observation. If the observer is not the mentor, then feedback should also be provided to the mentor.

Some or all of the questions below may be used by the observer who can rephrase and add explanations and prompts as required. The observer should record responses from the individual in need of care and support and/or their carers below, or by using an alternative method if required/provided.

Before asking the questions, the observer must explain to the individual comments will be shared with the learner. It may be useful to explain that it is used as a learning tool for the learner to develop their own practice.

If the observer is unable to gain feedback, they should briefly say why.

Was the social worker on time? Or, if delayed, did he or she contact you?	Has been good at contacting me.
Did the social worker get your permission in advance for the observer to be present?	Yes, she explained both.

Did they explain why they were being observed?	
Were you clear why the social worker met with you today?	Yes.
How well prepared do you think the social worker was for his or her meeting with you?	Very well prepared. Clearly liaised with me and others and knew all about the issues.
How has the social worker listened to you and respected your views and wishes?	Fine, gave me the opportunity to say things and listened well.
Did the social worker talk to you in a way that you understood? Did the social worker consider your language needs?	She spoke to me well.
How has the social worker's involvement met your expectations for this visit?	It has met expectations and involvement has been pertinent.
Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make?	None.

