



**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: Samantha Ashbrooke Robertson

Email address: Samblackcrow@gmail.com

**Learner's University Registration Number:
2127092**

Cohort: 18 onwards

Reference List

Information about referencing in written assignments and how to avoid plagiarism can be found on Moodle. It is important that you are aware of the importance of ensuring that the work submitted is your original work.

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Smale, G, Tuson, G, and Biehal, N (1993) *Empowerment, Assessment, Care Management and the Skilled Worker*, London, The Stationery Office

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Detail of Workshops Attended

Please record in the table below the dates of each consolidation programme workshop you attended.

Consolidation workshop	Date Attended
1	16/3/22
2	13/6/22 & 14/6/22
3	11/7/22 & 12/7/22
4	31/1/23

Notes

Mentor's report

With reference to the 3 learning outcomes please comment fully on the learner's development over the duration of the whole programme. Reflect on information provided by the learner at the outset of the programme in Task 1 (Part a) and the later perspective given in Task 1 (Part b). Where you have seen or discussed feedback from individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers with whom the learner has worked, you are encouraged to comment on this with regard to the learner's development and their future development.

Mentor's Report on Direct Observation:

Throughout the session SW presented themselves sensitively in an open, and respectful manner. SW ensured that my presence was explained and showed an awareness of the concept of power and AOP by checking out the person's language preference, form of address and where they would like us to sit in their room. SW followed the care home and councils covid protocol and was aware of the potential for face masks to impede communication for some people.

SW sat opposite the person with an open, non-intrusive body posture. SW began the session well by building a rapport with the service-user; SW took their time to ensure that both they and the service-user had time to think and consider their own questions and answers in a way that was not rushed or pressured. Several times SW checked out with the person that they had understood the meaning of certain words e.g. They repeatedly said, "my son has told me that I don't have to work anymore". With open questions SW ascertained that for this person "work" was household chores as opposed to paid employment.

During the session SW would reflect back to the person and summarise after each "topic" had been discussed to clarify that they had understood. SW did this in a friendly manner which aided to relax the service-user who at times struggled to explain their meaning. SW did pick up on what the person was alluding to, and this demonstrated to the person that their voice was being heard e.g. "It sounds like you are having a bit of a hard time here."

SW also stated several times "this is your choice" and that all decisions were theirs to make. The service-user questioned whether decisions were based on age, SW reassured them that decisions were based on their needs as opposed to age. This demonstrated an awareness of ADP and the potential for agism.

SW did not shy away from potentially difficult conversations such as family relationship dynamics, family concerns, finances, and the availability of resources. SW managed these in a professional non-judgemental and unbiased manner. SW gave the person time to think about the statements and respond. SW also acknowledged that the conversation was around major life choices and as such could not reasonably be made immediately without further consideration and information.

Open strength-based questions were utilised by SW to engage the person.

“In a perfect world what would you like to see happen after you leave here?”

“Can you talk to me a little bit about how things were for you at home?”

SW also developed the discussions and looked to gain a depth of knowledge e.g.,

“Can you explain a bit more? “ , “ You mentioned pressure , where do you think the pressure is coming from?” And “How do you think we could improve things at home?”.

SW demonstrated a good ability to actively listen and engage a person who did struggle with verbally expressing themselves. SW also demonstrated respect for confidentiality by seeking permission to speak to family members.

SW’s intervention links to the key principles within the Social Services (Wales) Wellbeing Act 2014, the Active Offer, and the Welsh Context. SW and the person talked about why certain care home settings would be more favourable, e.g. that people from their home village would also be present in them and there would be a sense of continued community.

The intervention observed was well managed throughout and appropriate for this case. At the end of the session SW had developed their understanding of the person and what is important to them once they leave respite, and the person had a sense that they had been listened to and respected.

I spoke alone with the service -user immediately after the observed practice. I offered to revisit or phone later if they would prefer. They however were keen to tell me that they find SW to be “very good, excellent”. I asked if they could expand in this a little and they continue by stating that they find SW to be approachable, open, very friendly, and easy to talk to. They found that they could open up to them more than they felt able to do with some of the other professionals that have recently visited. The person also said that SW did not rush them or finish their sentences which other people tend to do if they cannot find the words they want to use straight away. They also felt SW listened to their wishes and would respect

their decision that they did not want their son and his wife to be making decisions on their behalf even if their son thought he was making a kindly decision for them.

This was a very good piece of work. The conversation was fluid, its content was relevant, clear and focused. I am aware that SW is interested in CPD and this was demonstrated throughout the observed session. SW acknowledged that the session was over 90 minutes and that the person's ability to concentrate and retain information was starting to wane and the session naturally came to an end. One consideration for future work maybe to consider duration of visits and the possible need for follow up sessions.

Final Mentor's Report

Having reflected upon Task 1 (a), Task 1 (b) and the Direct Observations that I undertook with the Social Worker (SW), I feel that positive noticeable developments have and continue to be achieved. Having worked with The SW I find they tend towards detailed self-reflection, which has acted in part as a motivator in their continued professional development. I believe that having reflective opportunities with others will support them to promote positive action from their reflective learning.

The SW has worked with CHC and DST cases, these are complex areas of work where attention to detail is crucial. The SW has developed in this work and moved towards a more person-centred approach. To do this the SW is now analysing key indicators in terms of Nature, Intensity, Complexity and Unpredictability to better evidence an individual's primary need. To undertake this there are many competing factors- and it expected that the SW will continue to gain experience, knowledge, and confidence as they continue in this work.

In all social work areas, the SW will be practicing difficult conversations. This will be against a backdrop of their awareness of the concept of professional power. The SWs knowledge and skills will continue to develop through

in/formal training, actions, and reflection. Reflecting on Task 1 (a + b) in terms of the learning outcomes it would be beneficial for the SW to develop their knowledge around understanding the different protocols between health, police, and social services. Through discussion with the SW, I am comfortable that they understand that we work in the messy world of humans and being mindful of other people's personal, professional, and organisational values and protocol may well be different. Continued case discussions around being mindful of differing values, protocols and objectives may aid effective communication and understanding of each other's roles between parties. I am aware that during the pandemic the SW like all other professionals and individuals have had many ethical dilemmas to grapple with. I have consistently found the SW to be very interested in discussing ethical issues and will research information to use and consider when developing their debates. Also, for continued reflection on how best to utilise the role of advocacy and hold difficult conversations when we feel discrimination is occurring. During one of our direct observations the SW aimed to be "neutral" when talking to both husband and wife when they were talking in a negative way about each other. The SW tried to be balanced and offer the other's perspective without being drawn into one person's opinion which was not easy in this situation. The SW was able to ask the person to tell them and think about the professional advice that had been offered and how they could translate this into practice to keep themselves safe, e.g., wait for the carer to pick things up off the floor for them or use the grabber stick rather than bending forward.

The SW is aware that the impact of technology for their assessments is not straightforward, and one size certainly does not fit all. The SW is very capable of considering the use of technology and its impact on an individual and whether it is appropriate to use. A positive consequence is that the SW is now able to use technology more creatively to support their role.

Out of covid regulations necessity the SW has heightened recognition that extensive collaboration with other professionals, families and networks was significantly beneficial to collating information. This is good practice that the SW can be continued with now that the regulations have been lifted.

The SW is an insightful social worker and alongside this the continued development of self-awareness is crucial to their wellbeing throughout their career. This is not an area to side-line when work gets busy. Home/flexible working has forced our attention to social work resilience. I would suggest that the SW continues to routinely consider “self-care needs” and what that looks like to them. I am aware that there have been numerous changes within the formal support structure of the SW team. I am heartened to hear that the SW now considers the “checks” by their current line manager as supportive and simply a different approach to management rather than something to undermine trust. The SW, as do all Social Workers, needs to ensure that they both utilise and know where they can access support that suits their needs. Interestingly this links to the area of defensiveness that the SW mentions. Whilst our knowledge and skills develop it can be difficult to not take professional challenges personally. It is self-aware, open, and honest of the SW to be able to note this of themselves. I would suggest that if/when this arises for the SW that they can access supported reflection and in/formal discussions with peers/line managers so it does not negatively impact on them, and this will support them to continue to develop strategies to manage.

Duration and number of visits is an interesting theme that the SW has both noted themselves and was noted for reflection in our direct observations. Positively the SW was able to acknowledge that in one instance the person’s ability to concentrate and retain information was starting to wane. This is something that the SW will need to continue to consider in our person-centred work. A second point from one of the direct observations was the use of the word “love” and its potential impact on the person. The SW acknowledged that they had not realised that they had said it and in discussion was readily able to

recognise the importance of the words that we use with people. During both direct observations I witnessed skilled communication, and an ability to maintain professionalism whilst managing the competing demands of a service-user and their partner. These are part of the SW's repertoire of transferable skills which will assist them with future difficult conversations. The SW has an enquiring mind and is a very capable adult learner. The SW can be self-directed and source relevant information pertaining to their case work. The SW has noticed that a variety of training formats serve them well- from bite sized webinars to articles and books. I am also aware that the SW is a keen participant of any group reflective practise sessions that run in their bid to continue learning. During discussions it is evident that the SW realises that they are on a learning curve and that they do "not know everything" which is positive. The SW has said that over time they have come to understand more fully the level of responsibility that social workers have within their role. I feel that the SW has grown as a professional since qualifying, I see no reason as to why this growth will not continue throughout their career.	
Note for Mentor – Please ensure that you provide a signature of verification of this report in the section titled 'Signatures and Line Manager Verification'	

Learner Details

Learner details, Signatures and Line manager verification.

It is the learner's responsibility to ensure that their university learner number is correctly inserted wherever requested within the portfolio.

Learner Details

(NB it is essential that you inform your Workforce Development/Training Unit **and** the University of Wales Trinity Saint David if your name or your address for correspondence changes).

1. Name of Learner: Samantha Ashbrooke Robertson

2. Learner's University Number: 2127092

Address for Correspondence:

**Brynhafren
Longbridge St
Newtown
Powys
SY16 2BJ**

Telephone Number: 07495 941126

E-mail address: samblackcrow@gmail.com

Date of Professional Qualification: 31/10/2020

Date of registration with Social Care Wales: 11/11/2022

3. Name of Learner's Agency

Older People Team, North

Agency Contact details:

Name: Claire Williams

**Address:
C/O The Park Offices
Newtown
Powys
SY162PL**

Telephone Number: 01686 614043

4. The evidence I have provided within this portfolio is in:

Welsh only ☐

Welsh and English ☐

English only ☒

5. Mentor's details

Name: Linda Green

**Address: c/o Park Offices
Newtown
Powys
SY162PL**

Telephone Number: 01938 551836

E-Mail address: linda.green@powys.gov.uk

6. Observer details as Mentor

Name: Linda Green

**Address: c/o Park Offices
Newtown
Powys
SY162PL**

Professional Qualification and date of qualification: post graduate diploma in social work 1995.

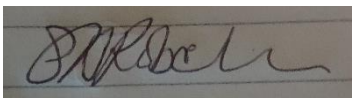
Telephone number: 01938 551836

Email address: linda.green@powys.gov.uk

Signatures and Line Manager Verification

CONFIDENTIALITY and PLAGIARISM – to be completed by the learner.

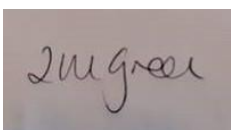
All information provided in this portfolio complies with guidance on confidentiality. I confirm that all work apart from comments by others (e.g. mentor, individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers) is all my original work and has not been copied. I understand that plagiarism is taken very seriously by the University and the programme.

Signed:  (Learner)

Date: _ 1/2/2023 _

Feedback and comments from an individual using services, their family and/or carers (Task 2) - to be completed by the Observer.

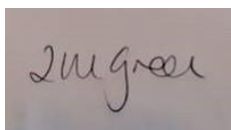
I confirm that I am a registered social worker with knowledge of the learner's area of practice and that the observation summary and the comments above from the individual in need of care and support and/or their carers are about the same piece of practice that I observed on the date given.

Signed:  (Observer)

Date: _ 28/04/2022 _

Mentors Report (to be completed by the mentor)

I can confirm that I am a registered social worker and that in my role as mentor I have provided a written report of the learner's progress over the duration of the programme.

Signed  (Mentor)

Date _ 28/04/2022 _

Line manager verification.

Guidance: This section must be completed and signed by the learner's line manager and/or senior practitioner. Where the line manager is not a registered social worker, verification must also be provided by a social work practitioner in a senior position (this could be the mentor) who is familiar with the learner's work and can verify that the learner has been involved with the safeguarding case evidenced in Task 3 of the portfolio and that the learner has met all the required criteria listed below.

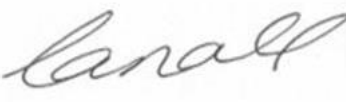
In this section, please confirm that you have seen sufficient evidence of the learner's work during the period they have been undertaking the Consolidation programme. If necessary, please consult with other managers who the learner has worked with. In signing this section, you are confirming that you are content with the:

- level of supervision and mentoring support received by the learner;
- learning and development undertaken;
- reading and personal research undertaken;
- level of knowledge and skills demonstrated;
- understanding shown of the Code of Professional Practice and National Occupational Standards;
- core values of the learner;
- work and commentary referred to within the portfolio, that it is the learner's own work and based on current practice;
- completion of accurate, cogent, coherent, and analytical recording skills;
- Line manager to verify the learner has been involved with safeguarding.
- Mentor's report, and that it provides evidence of observations of Professional Practice that has been undertaken over the duration of the Graduate Certificate in the Consolidation of Social Work practice pathway (work-based practice which is equivalent to 7,000 words).

I confirm that this learner has achieved an appropriate level of professional practice.

LINE MANAGER VERIFICATION:

NAME OF LINE MANAGER: _ LANA MASSEY _

SIGNATURE OF LINE MANAGER: _  _

DATE: 01/02/2023

REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER'S VERIFICATION (WHERE THE LINE MANAGER IS NOT A REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER, THIS CAN BE THE MENTOR).

NAME OF SOCIAL WORKER: _ LANA MASSEY _

SIGNATURE OF SOCIAL WORKER: _  _

POSITION: _ Senior Practitioner _

DATE: _ 01/02/2023

Learning Agreement

PORTH AGORED AND UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN CONSOLIDATION OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

LEARNER AND EMPLOYER'S LEARNING AGREEMENT

Name of Learner	Samantha Ashbrooke Robertson
Name of Team/Agency	Older People Team (North)
Name of Mentor	Linda Green (consultant SW)
Name of Line Manager	Lana Massey (Senior Practitioner)

Study Duty

The learner will undertake all elements of the Graduate Certificate programme diligently, including mandatory attendance at induction, four Consolidation Workshops, and participation in an evaluation survey or focus group on completion of the programme.

The learner's full and effective participation on the Graduate Certificate is mandatory given that Social Care Wales has made completion of the programme a requirement within the first (three-year) period of registration as a Social Worker. This applies to social workers who qualified after April 2016.

Study Leave

The employer undertakes to support the learner by providing time within their normal contract of employment to attend all agreed mandatory elements of the programme which include; induction day and four Consolidation Workshops. Additional time may be provided for programme evaluation meetings and any training agreed as a requirement of the programme.

Three further study days will be provided by the employer as a contribution towards the time involved in personal research and developing the portfolio for submission. The study days can be taken on any weekday (or combination of days) as long this is (i) appropriate to the stage of portfolio preparation at the time, and (ii) agreed with the Team Manager who will take into account team and service needs. Where the learner works less than 37 hours a week, mandatory days and study leave will be approved in accordance with the employer's local policies.

Resources

Learners are able to access learning and library materials from their employer's existing resources or as described in the Programme Handbook, from the University. The employer understands that the Graduate Certificate is to be completed by newly qualified Social Workers in their first period of registration and will support this timescale. There is also an expectation that as it is a professional development programme, learners will take responsibility for their own learning and will also use their own time for personal study and portfolio preparation.

The employer's training department agrees to:

- arrange for eligible staff to join the programme;
- pay course fees directly to the University;
- pay Porth Agored partnership fees for each learner;
- provide additional guidance and support by:
 - a) facilitating access to existing learning materials or library resources;
 - b) providing appropriate training opportunities from existing internal training programmes as agreed with the learner and mentor;
 - c) providing programme induction and Consolidation Workshops;
 - d) providing learners with guidance and support about programme requirements and portfolio completion;
 - e) helping to resolve any programme difficulties encountered by the learner, mentor, or service managers.

The learner agrees to:

- work actively towards completing the qualification within the agreed timescale of 12 months from the date of registration on the programme;
- identify with manager/mentor appropriate internal training and arrange to attend these courses;
- identify with manager/mentor and Training Coordinator/Manager any special requirements e.g. dyslexia and contact the University's Student Services office directly about additional support that may be required;
- attend induction and four Consolidation Workshops. These are mandatory components of the programme;
- produce work and evidence appropriate to the portfolio and learning outcomes within agreed timescales;
- make and keep agreed appointments with mentor/line manager;
- ensure they are prepared adequately and obtain all necessary consent for observed practice;
- inform mentor/line manager and training department immediately of any problems or changes in circumstances while undertaking the programme, especially where this may affect completion of the programme by the agreed deadline or ability to attend a mandatory workshop;

- liaise with their line manager/mentor to confirm study days and use their own time in addition for self-directed study, research and portfolio preparation;
- take personal responsibility for preparing and completing all work necessary to submit their portfolio;
- act at all times in accordance with the Code of Professional Practice and the employer's and University's policies, procedures and processes;
- ensure that they understand the need to complete the programme within the first (three year) period of registration with Social Care Wales. (Qualifying after April 2016).

Line Manager/Mentor agrees to:

Line-manager/mentor can be one in the same person or the role can be undertaken by two separate people. The mentor must be a registered SW with a minimum of 3 years post qualifying experience.

- attend an induction meeting to become familiar with the requirements of the programme;
- provide or arrange to provide sufficient assessment opportunities in order for the learner to evidence competency and undertake required observations. Where opportunities may not be immediately available within the team arrange to provide these elsewhere within the Service;
- guide and support the learner for the duration of the programme;
- release the learner for the programme induction and the four Consolidation Workshops, and any internal training courses agreed as being appropriate to meet agreed learning needs;
- agree with the learner, use of up to 3 additional study days over the whole duration of the programme, as an employer contribution towards time needed for personal study, research, or portfolio development;
- ensure that regular formal supervision is provided to the learner by their line manager in line with organisational policy (line-manager);
- ensure that mentoring sessions are provided in line with Social Care Wales First 3 Three Years in Practice guidelines. Mentoring sessions, where possible, should be arranged as a separate event from supervision. A full record of when mentoring sessions are undertaken must be kept.

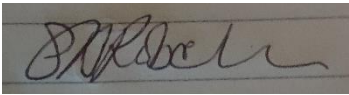
Completion and submission of portfolio

Learners are expected to complete the Graduate Certificate and will normally submit their portfolio within 12 months of attending induction to the programme. Any learner anticipating any difficulty in meeting this requirement should immediately discuss the matter with their Training Manager/Co-ordinator. It is the learner's responsibility to inform the university if they are not going to meet the submission deadlines.

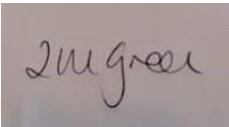
The portfolio submission process and dates for each programme cohort will be published on Moodle. Once registered on a programme, **learners CANNOT change the due submission date without gaining agreement from the employer and University.**

Pressure of work is not regarded as a reason for non-attendance at any Consolidation Workshop.

I understand and accept the terms and conditions of this learning agreement as stated above.

Signed . Print Name: Samantha Ashbrooke Robertson Date 1/2/2023
(Learner)

Signed:  Print Name Lana Massey Date: 01/02/2023
(Line Manager/Mentor)

Signed:...  Print Name: Linda Green Date: 22/02/2022
(Mentor, if different to above)

PLEASE PLACE THE SIGNED COPY OF THIS LEARNING AGREEMENT IN THE PORTFOLIO.