



**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: 18 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: __ __ 26th May 2021 __ __

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).

An observation for social work practice was undertaken in the afternoon. I had organised the visit by attending in person to ask Mrs 1 whether she was happy for me to visit and to gain consent for it to be observed by my manager and explained the purpose of the observation. The observation took place in a care home, where she had moved in to a few months prior, in a market town in a county in Wales. Therefore, the purpose of the visit was to review her care under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 and to gain her views on the care and support she was receiving. Mrs 1 identifies as being Welsh and her first language is Welsh. Mrs 1 has lived in the area all her life which is a small market town with a farming community. When we first started to look at care homes she had expressed that remaining in the area was important to her as part of her cultural identity. When Mrs 1 first made contact with social services she was provided with the 'Active Offer' of a Welsh language service and I was able to provide Mrs 1 with a Welsh language service as my first language is Welsh. I had chosen my visit with Mrs 1 as an observed practice as I knew she had capacity and she was very eager for me to visit again to discuss her views. I believe that the impact of the observation on the individual was positive as Mrs 1 had a few issues she wanted to discuss and for me to support her to address these issues with the care home to improve the quality of the care she was receiving on a daily basis.

Word count – 294

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).

I prepared for the visit by reading through the file and familiarised myself with Mrs 1 history and care and support needs. As I had undertaken the first assessment I was aware that Mrs 1 had capacity to make decisions about her care and support needs as assessed under the statutory principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (Mind, 2023). Mrs 1 is able to communicate verbally and to decide whether she wanted family present at any visits. I was aware that Mrs had a hearing impairment and wore hearing aids. Therefore, I needed to be mindful of where we would be sitting and whether there would be any background noise, to make sure she was able to engage fully in the conversation. Preparing for social work involvement is important as it demonstrates to the individual that I am competent and professional while showing respect (SCW, 2017).

When attending at the visit I greeted Mrs 1 and introductions were made. We discussed the best place to conduct the visit and Mrs 1 choose the garden providing us with privacy and a quieter setting. Having this discussion meant working in line with the section 1 of the code of professional practice in supporting individuals to maximise their decision making and control over their lives (SCW, 2017). Taking into account her communication needs as Mrs 1 has a hearing impairment and knowing what method of communication I would need to use whether that would be writing information down for Mrs 1 or using sign language (Higham, 2020). I had also had to think about my own practice as I am aware, having received feedback, that at times I can speak quietly therefore I needed to be mindful of this during the conversation. All information regarding the communication requirements of individuals is to be recorded securely on the social services system in line with the data protection laws The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 (gov.wales, 2018).

As Mrs 1 is a Welsh speaker and my manager and I are also Welsh speaking the visit was conducted in Welsh. The More than Just words which is a framework for Welsh language services in health and social services (Welsh Government, 2021) promotes and supports how it should be implemented in services, such as having the ‘Active offer’. As I am a Welsh first language speaker therefore, I was able to offer this service in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measures 2011. A report which evaluated the effectiveness of The More than Just Words framework collated feedback from service users across Wales of their experience using the health and social care services. In Harris and Bryer’s (2021) report they took feedback from service users and reported that *“some service users, including those who spoke Welsh and English fluently noted that receiving services in Welsh had a positive impact both on their overall experiences and in many cases on their health and wellbeing outcomes”*. Mrs 1 had

expressed that as well as being able to speak in Welsh remaining in the area was important to her as part of her cultural identity to be able to converse with the other residents and staff in Welsh, to be able watch S4C the Welsh language channel and to read the local community newspaper. By being able to have these continue to be a part of her life was important to being able to maintain her health and wellbeing and to continue take an active part of the community. One of the barriers could be if there was no availability for a Welsh speaker and if the individual did not want or was unable to wait for a Welsh language service. The importance of providing an individual with a service in their first language is discussed by Martin, Woods and Williams (2018) especially for people living with dementia as some evidence suggests that individuals who are bilingual can revert back to their first language. Therefore the risks is that individuals may not be able to express their views clearly about how they feel and in health and social care services this may cause their cognitive function to decline further if they are not receiving the correct support. The risk of not exercising anti-oppressive practice and discriminating further in terms of Welsh identity and the history of the Welsh language as having been oppressed (Roberts and Burton, 2013).

I had a copy of the care and support plan which the care home also had on file, but I didn't want to go through each section in turn as I wanted the conversation to feel more natural and fluid. I did this to ensure the individual did not feel like they are a number on a case load but rather a person where we are discussing their life which is important to promote anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 2009). As a social worker I understand the need and importance of working in partnership with the individual and prompting person centre practice to achieve best practice (Maclen & Harrison, 2015). During the conversation with Mrs 1 I would ask questions and would then listen to her answer. When active listening I was mindful of how I was sitting, to demonstrate my non-verbal method of communication, I would sit forward in the chair with arms uncrossed and would nod and smile to demonstrate I was listening. I would then paraphrase what I had heard back to Mrs 1 to again show I was listening and had understood what she had said (Lindsay et al., 2013).

When working with individuals I am mindful of the power imbalance that could be present. Therefore a person centre approach is important to demonstrate social work ethics, values and the code of practice when putting into practice. When communicating with Mrs 1 I was able to listen to her experience and what was important to her and understand that she had been through a significant change in her life as she had moved from supported living setting to a residential setting. Mrs 1 expressed that she was still struggling to come to terms with the change, even though it had been her own decision. What I understood from was that Mrs 1 was saying was that she was grieving for her former life and was therefore going through the process of grief. In practice it is important that as a social worker I do not fail to recognise grief and loss and Goldsworthy (2005) states the importance of this being a core skill of social work practice to understand that grief and loss is not just about 'death' but can be the loss of independence or the loss of identity. Having an understanding on the grief model is important for social workers in order to support an individual, whether that is providing emotional or practical support. I used my communication skills of listening and discussing with Mrs 1 how she felt emotionally, by doing this it helped her recognise her feelings of how she felt about the changes in her life and making her feel that how she felt was important, and in order not to cause further distress (Thompson, 2018).

During the conversation the strengths based theory in social work practice was used by looking at Mrs 1 strengths rather than the weakness. I did this by preparing a holistic assessment which encompassed all of Mrs 1 strengths and weakness, but what was important is to discuss with Mrs 1 what she identified as her own internal and external resources of strength (Loue, 2017). Mr 1 was able to reflect on this and voice her views and identify what worked well and what she felt required further improvement in terms of her care plan and these were communicated to the care home manager to make the necessary improvements. However, Maclean and Harrison (2015) warns of social workers using words such as 'strengths based and empowerment' as 'lip service' when talking about their practice and the risk of not implementing into practice when working with individuals.

Reflecting on back on my own practice and my communication skills I would say that this is where getting feedback from individuals and other professionals is important as well as accessing supervision to reflect on my social work practice and to continue to work inline the codes of professionals practice.

Word count – 1,379

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

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?	She was on time 'roedd hi ar amser'
Did the social worker get your permission in advance for the observer to be present? Did they explain why they were being observed?	Yes, she phoned to arrange and said someone would be here with her, to make sure Gwenan is doing her work 'do roedd hi wedi ffonio i drefnu' 'i wneud yn siwr fod Gwenan yn gwneud ei gwaith yn iawn'
Were you clear why the social worker met with you today?	Yes 'oeddwn'
How well prepared do you think the social worker was for his or her meeting with you?	She knows me well and had prepared 'mae hi'n nabod fi'n dda a wedi paratoi'
How has the social worker listened to you and respected your views and wishes?	Yes, she listens to me 'yndi, mae hi'n gwrando arna fi'
Did the social worker talk to you in a way that you understood? Did the social worker consider your language needs?	Gwenan is very good at explaining things and speaks to me in Welsh 'mae Gwenan yn dda iawn am egluro petha a mae hi'n siarad Cymraeg'
How has the social worker's involvement met your expectations for this visit?	She is very good 'mae hi'n dda iawn'
Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make?	Gwenan has been very kind from the beginning 'mae Gwenan wedi bod yn ffeind iawn o'r dechrau'

