



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

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

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**Learner's University Registration Number:
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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: 27th June 2023

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).

Child 1 and Child 2 have been on the Child Protection Register for over 12 months. Section 37 (1) of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 stipulates a local authority must meet a child's needs for care and support if the local authority considers it necessary to meet these needs in order to protect the children from abuse or neglect. The objective of this observation was for me to chair a core group meeting where a care and support protection plan could be reviewed, in line with guidance set out in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (Section 3, part 2) – “the social worker in their role as care and support protection plan co-ordinator must ensure that the co-ordinate the preparation, completion, review, delivery and revision of the plan”. **(129)**

I was able to gain consent for this observation during statutory child protection visits to their homes. I was able to speak to them both face to face and explain the requirements for my practice to be observed. I offered them assurances that this was not an observation of them and I advised that if they agreed to give feedback, they could be critical and advised this would have no bearing on decision making in respect of their children. I asked for consent approx. 2 weeks before the observation, I did this to allow them time to consider my request and to withdraw consent if they wished. Due to the length of time their children have been on the Child Protection register the parents are familiar with core group meetings. As a result. I considered the impact of this observation to be negligible for them, especially as the meeting was being held virtually and the observer had explained she would keep her camera off. I felt this meant there was limited additional stress for the parents for this observation to go ahead. **(182)**

Word count – 311



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).

I will use Gibbs’s Reflective Model (1988) to reflect on my communication skills during this observation.

Description: what happened?

During the core group meeting it became apparent that Parent 1 was in town collecting a prescription while the meeting was taking place. At times there was background noise which was off putting and was interfering in the flow of the meeting. At other times, we could hear Parent 1 speaking to other people. This was even more off putting and made me worry about the discretion and confidentiality of the meeting as well as question the effectiveness of Parent 1s participation. **(82)**

Despite the difficulties posed by Parent 1s location, Parent 2 and Core Group Members were able to share information, consider what is working well and what the worries are (in line with the primary approach this Local Authority adopts) and check the progress of the child protection plan. **(48)**

Feelings: what were you thinking and feeling?

This was the first core group since a significant change in the family’s dynamics. Child 1 has until recently been living with Parent 1 and Child 2. For over 6 months, Parent 2 has largely

been absent from meetings, has not kept appointments and has not engaged in efforts to communicate with him. A few weeks before this meeting Child 1 made the decision to live with Parent 2. In addition, this core group was the last one before the next Review Child Protection Case Conference. Both factors, for my agenda, meant it was very important to have an effective meeting, where everyone was able to make contributions and as a group review the progress of the Child Protection plan. (120)

When I realised Parent 1 was out shopping I felt shocked and annoyed with her; I wondered why she was not taking the meeting seriously. I was also confused. Parent 1 has been to many core groups before and this had never happened; I wondered if she was feeling anxious because of Parent 2s attendance and the recent, significant change within her family dynamic. (64)

Evaluation: what was good and bad about the experience?

I feel I dealt with the situation professionally and explained the difficulties we were having in hearing her, I remained calm and clear, I reminded her of the need for confidentiality. By dealing with it in this manner I upheld several of the Codes of Professional Practice for Social Care (2017) e.g. I maintained trust and confidence², respected the rights of Parent 1⁴ and acted with integrity and upheld public trust and confidence⁵ in front of core group members and Parent 2. (81)

On reflection of my practice during this observation I realise I did not give due attention to the Welsh Language. Having worked with both parents for over 12 months I was aware they are not Welsh speakers. However, I was not sure which language my colleagues from partner agencies would prefer to use. Although when invites for these meetings are sent out there is a message (in English and Welsh) advising we could provide a translation service, I did not clarify if anyone wished to take advantage of this. My own Welsh language skills are very basic and I worry that my pronunciation is poor and so I did not even use basic Welsh salutations during the meeting. Even for non-Welsh speakers like me attempts should be made to use Welsh language when practicing in Wales, this is something that should be embedded in social

work practice not only due to legislation (e.g. Welsh Language Act 1993) but also because “language is at the heart of effective assessment and safe care. Making an “Active Offer” recognises that effective communication is key to meeting the needs of Welsh-speaking service users/residents”. (Social Care Wales, 2015) **(193)**

An overarching duty of the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is that anyone exercising functions under the Act must “in so far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain and have regard to the individual’s views, wishes and feelings” (sec 6, 2, a). Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) states that anyone exercising functions under the Act must also have regard to the importance of appropriate support to enable individuals to participate in decisions that affect them. In line with this legislation and guidance, Child 1 and Child 2 both have an Independent Professional Advocate who is invited to all core group meetings so that their views can be shared. Child 2 has often been asked if they would like to attend core group meetings, Child 1 is younger and so it has not felt appropriate to invite him. Child 2 has always declined but on reflection, with his significant change in circumstances which he had instigated, I should have asked him if he wanted to attend, rather than assuming he would say no again. **(174)**

Analysis: what sense can you make of the situation?

With reflection I think Parent 1 was anxious about the meeting. She has been to many core group meetings in the past and has given them her due attention, a situation like this had never arisen before. This meeting came days after the significant change in the family dynamics and was the first meeting in many months where Parent 2 was also present; she was likely feeling anxious and emotional. I think Parent 1 was protecting herself from this by being distracted whilst also doing what she thought was right i.e. attend the core group. **(95)**

Conclusion: what else could you have done?

At the outset of the meeting I could have reminded participants of the importance of these meetings and ensured there was privacy and confidentiality. Knowing of the significant change

in the family dynamics I could have spoken to Parent 1 before the meeting to check on her wellbeing, however, the reality of the situation was that I did not have time to do this due to the demands of my workload and time constraints. (74)

I did give brief consideration to ending the meeting because of these difficulties but I knew that reconvening within timescales would have been difficult and I also wanted to hear the information that Parent 2 and professionals had to share. (40)

I could have tried to delay the meeting for a short period of time, to give Parent 1 chance to find a quiet space, however, I was mindful of time constraints for myself as well as colleagues in partner agencies. Being familiar with the geography of the town, I also knew that Parent 1 would not be able to get home within a short amount of time so she would still have been participating in this meeting in a public space somewhere. (82)

Action plan: if it arose again, what would you do

In terms of the difficulties due to Parent 1s participation whilst in town, if this happened again I would explain to Parent 1 that she would need to exit the meeting - her lack of private space, the difficulty with telephone coverage, her preoccupation with the prescription were impacting on the efficient running of the core group. (57)

Welsh Government (2012) produced a series of short video clips to help people consider how they can strengthen Welsh language services in health a social care settings. Two of these video clips have given me food for thought. When discussing the experiences she had when her son was unwell in hospital, Gwenan Prysor said that people should try and use their own language skills (even if limited) because it “helps a lot” by making you feel at home. Similarly, Iona Gruffydd accepts that not everyone is able to speak fluent Welsh but she has respect for workers who recognise the importance of using Welsh and who make an effort. With comments from both of these ladies in mind I aim to use my Welsh skills in meetings and will check at the outset of meetings if anyone does want a translation service, rather than put the onus on them to ask. (151)

Before a core group meeting, whilst on a visit to the home, I will always remind Child 2 (and other young people) that there will soon be a core group meeting and I will ask if they want to attend (rather than assume they will say no because this was their previous answer). **53**

Word count - 1314

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?	Father – The meeting started on time.
Did the social worker get your permission in advance for the observer to be present? Did they explain why they were being observed?	Father – Yes, Zoe visited last week and she explained what the observer's role would be about that she would be watching her performance and asked if I was ok with this.

Were you clear why the social worker met with you today?	Father – Yes, Zoe talked through the purpose of the meeting to catch up before the next conference.
How well prepared do you think the social worker was for his or her meeting with you?	Father – She was prepared enough for the meeting.
How has the social worker listened to you and respected your views and wishes?	Father – Yes she has. There has been one or two times when I had not been told about a date for a meeting but Zoe thought she had told me but otherwise it's been fine.
Did the social worker talk to you in a way that you understood? Did the social worker consider your language needs?	Father – Yes, she does. I have only recently had more contact with Zoe as I have usually been at work and the children's mother dealt with it.
How has the social worker's involvement met your expectations for this visit?	Father – The meeting was absolutely fine.
Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make?	Father – no, nothing.

