

**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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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).

Reflecting on my first year in practice, using Driscoll's (2007) "What" reflective model, which I found simple to follow. The three parts: What? So What? and Now What? I will be applying these to three learning outcomes: analysis in assessment, collaborative working, and professional judgment.

Reflecting on my first year in practice using What? I recognise how challenging it has been to transition into a new team while collaborating under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Much of my role involves initial contact with individuals referred, often in crisis situations. Despite my experience working in statutory services, I found myself in unfamiliar

territory. Reflecting that I was not used to dealing with adults in crisis or assessing the urgency of referrals. To facilitate this process, I adopted a strengths-based approach (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2022), focusing on the individual's capabilities, networks, and attentive listening not just to their words but also to their manner of expression.

So What? Adopting a strengths-based approach enhanced my analysis skills by focusing on the individual, highlighting their capabilities rather than limitations. Applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Guy-Evans, 2025) helped me understand how health, environment, and social networks interact, showing how changes in one area can affect others. This broadened my perspective when assessing whether someone is in crisis or can wait for further evaluation.

Now What? In supervision, I shared my aim to deepen my understanding and use a wider range of theories in practice, as I often rely on familiar models. I am interested in the Crisis Intervention Model (Psychology, n.d.), as its structured stages could improve my ability to build trust and manage high-pressure situations. Conflict management is another area for development, particularly when carers request assessments that the cared-for may refuse. I need to handle these situations effectively, respecting rights such as privacy under Article 8 (HRA, 1998) and working towards resolution (Social Care Wales, 2017; Social Work Institute, 2024). I plan to use supervision to reflect, seek feedback, and pursue training in conflict resolution and difficult conversations, enhancing my analytical skills while keeping practice person-centred, respectful, and outcome focused.

Collaborative working, What? I found managing conflicts between the carer and the cared-for over the phone difficult, as I depended on their shared information and trusted it to be accurate. I understand that communication involves more than just spoken words; body language often reveals more. This frequently placed me amid family disagreements, requiring me to balance professional judgment with respect for individual autonomy, while also considering the rights of the carer versus the cared-for (HRA1998). Additionally, I observed that these situations often created a conflict between my personal values and professional ethics (BASWA, Code of Ethics 2022), a common experience among social workers.

So What? In my second year of practice, I have recognised the importance of effective communication and managing difficult conversations. I feel I am developing these skills and will continue to do so, as there is always room to improve (Silverman, Kurtz & Draper, 2013).

Now What? I aim to explore the resources available to informal carers when the person they care for refuses support. The Carers Trust notes that 1 in 8 people in Wales provide unpaid care to family members (Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales, 2025). It is essential that carers receive appropriate support, and I plan to have open, honest discussions with them about how caring affects their wellbeing, in line with the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care (Social Care Wales, 2023).

Looking at my own professional judgement using What? Making decisions about mental capacity over the phone is particularly difficult and sensitive. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA, 2005) highlights important principles. Since capacity varies by decision, assessing remotely is challenging, and forming a dependable professional opinion based solely on one conversation and information from the individual, their family, and other professionals is tough. In face-to-face community assessments, I feel more assured in my professional judgment because I can observe both verbal and non-verbal cues to inform my decisions.

So What? Continuing in my professional journey, I recognise the need to build confidence in determining a person's capacity to consent to referrals and assessments. I have studied the MCA2005 in more depth and understand that, while it sets out clear principles for professionals, it does not prescribe specific assessment methods. As practitioners, we are required to give individuals the best possible opportunity to participate in capacity assessments, which I find particularly challenging to achieve over the telephone. Reflecting on this, I aim to continue

developing my professional judgement and to explore best-practice approaches to ensure fairness and accuracy in remote capacity assessments.

Now What? Going forward, I plan to research case studies related to professional judgement and capacity to broaden my knowledge, while discussing issues in supervision and seeking advice from those more experienced in undertaking MCAs.

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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).

When reflecting on my practice, I have found that consistently using Driscoll's model (2007) has supported my learning because it provides a clear and familiar structure to follow. By repeatedly working through "What? So What? Now What?", I have become more confident in organising my thoughts and exploring situations in greater depth (Driscoll, 2007). Over time, this consistency has helped me recognise patterns in my practice such as recurring challenges or emotional reactions strengthening my understanding of why certain situations unfold the way they do (Schön, 1983;

Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985). Reflective models also encourage critical questioning and deeper analysis, which are essential for developing professional judgement and strengthening analysis in assessment (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

Looking back at the “What?” stage, I can see that starting in a new team while working with individuals in acute crisis was extremely challenging, particularly where there were conflicts between carers and the cared-for person when an assessment was declined. At the time, I felt overwhelmed and questioned my ability to respond effectively in high-pressure situations. On reflection, part of this difficulty stemmed from the way my personal beliefs initially clashed with the professional values I am expected to uphold as a social worker (BASW, 2021). This internal conflict made it harder to remain objective and confident in my decision-making, highlighting how personal values can shape professional responses (Schön, 1983; BASW, 2021). It also demonstrated how essential analysis in assessment is: separating emotional reactions from evidence-based reasoning forms a critical foundation for sound professional judgement, particularly when handling complex or crisis-driven referrals.

Further reflection helped me understand why I felt overwhelmed and how this affected my responses when navigating crises, declined assessments, and tensions between carers and the cared-for. I realised that my personal values particularly around safety, autonomy, and wanting to “do the right thing” sometimes conflicted with professional duties such as respecting self-determination within legal frameworks (BASW, 2021). Developing professional judgement requires recognising this tension and applying legislation analytically and proportionately, ensuring decisions are grounded in the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA, 2005). This became especially clear when an individual exercised their right to decline an assessment despite carers disagreeing. It prompted me to consider whether the person had capacity, whether the decision was unwise, and how best to balance autonomy with safeguarding responsibilities (MCA, 2005; NICE, 2018).

I also recognised that carers bring vital knowledge and emotional investment, and that conflict often arises from differing understandings of risk, capacity, or urgency. This strengthened my awareness of the importance of collaborative working listening to carers, acknowledging their stress, sharing information transparently, and building a shared understanding of risk even when perspectives differ. This aligns with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which views carers as equal partners in care and entitles them to a Carer’s Needs Assessment while emphasising “voice and control” for the cared-for person (SSWB(W)A, 2014). Balancing these perspectives requires strong analytical skills, effective communication, and confident professional judgement.

These experiences also highlighted the critical role of supervision in helping me manage emotional pressure, challenge assumptions, and apply legislation proportionately. Supervision has enabled me to separate personal beliefs from professional judgement, and plan actions that are both proportionate and empowering (Carpenter et al., 2013; Morrison, 2005) for those I support.

The “So What?” for me is recognising I need to strengthen my application of theory to practice, particularly during referral screening, as theoretical frameworks are essential for evidence-based assessment (Thompson, 2017; Payne, 2020). I have grown more confident in managing conflict between the cared-for person and carers, and in assessing mental capacity over the phone using structured questioning and MCA 2005 principles. I can also see how further theoretical development will enhance my future practice (Lishman, 2018).

Moving into “Now What?”, I have begun using supervision more deliberately to explore uncertainty, strengthen confidence, and clarify proportionate next steps (Carpenter et al., 2013). Peer discussions have also been invaluable in normalising emotional responses and broadening my perspectives (Moon, 2013). Recognising that communication under pressure contributed to my difficulties, I have applied for training in managing difficult conversations to develop skills in de-escalation and boundary setting. These steps demonstrate my commitment to continuous professional development and to strengthening practice in line with Welsh legislation, professional standards, and values (BASW, 2021; SSWB(W)A, 2014).
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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).

Reflecting on the feedback, I feel more confident in my ability to build positive relationships with both the cared-for individual and their carer. They shared that I understood their concerns and helped them feel at ease, which strengthened their trust in me. This highlighted the importance of creating a safe, calm space where people feel comfortable expressing difficult experiences, especially when they have felt mistreated. The feedback reinforced how person-centred communication can empower individuals to have a voice. This experience has helped me recognise the impact of my approach, and I am committed to continuing this throughout my career so that carers and those they support feel valued and respected.

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