



**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: 21 onwards

Expert witness Adam Davies

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: __17/09/2026__

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).

The primary social work objective of this direct observation was to assess an 8-year-old child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) regarding his lived experience, safety, and understanding of his home environment. The child lives in an urban area of South Wales in a working-class area. The child is currently on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect due to severely deteriorating home conditions. Specifically, on two separate occasions, he was found sleeping in a room with faeces and walking barefoot in hazardous, unsanitary surroundings. Although the parents acknowledge the poor physical condition of the property, they maintain that the children are not directly neglected. Meanwhile, school staff have raised ongoing concerns regarding an escalation in the child's disruptive behaviours.

Working within the local authority framework in Wales, statutory duties are governed by the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* and the safeguarding provisions under Section 47 of the *Children Act 1989*. While initial interventions were delivered on a voluntary care and support basis under Part 4 of the 2014 Act, the radical deterioration of the home environment-initiated escalation to formal child protection procedures.

In accordance with Welsh language standards, the child was provided with the 'Active Offer' and asked if he wished to speak Welsh (Welsh Government, 2016). Although he demonstrated basic Welsh vocabulary, he chose to communicate in English. While no specific ethnic or cultural barriers were identified, the child's Autism diagnosis required a tailored, child-centred communication approach.

Parental consent was obtained prior to undertaking the direct work session. Consent was sought from the child by explaining the drawing activity in an accessible, age-appropriate, and non-threatening manner. To minimise emotional distress, questioning regarding distressing bedroom conditions (such as the presence of faeces or urine) was carefully paced. The social

worker prioritised the child's psychological safety and maintained a supportive, non-judgmental approach to avoid the child feeling guilt or creating a conflict of loyalty regarding his parents.

Word Count 325

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).

This essay examines a social work observation of an eight-year-old child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who is registered on the child protection register (CPR) under neglect due to poor home conditions in South Wales. Undertaken in a school setting to ensure a familiar and safe environment, the observation allowed the social worker to explore sensitive topics regarding the child's home circumstances using open, age-appropriate communication. In Wales, safeguarding decisions regarding neglect and unsanitary home conditions are governed by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, which ensures local authorities undertake multi-agency enquiries when there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm. When concerns are verified, the next stage is to progress to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) to establish a protection plan. Throughout the observation, the social worker adhered to the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care Workers (Social Care Wales [SCW], 2026), applying a person-centred approach to accommodate neurodivergent needs (Section 1.1), maintaining professional trust during statutory procedures (Sections 2.2, 4.2), and remaining objective to ensure the child's voice directly informs multi-agency decision-making (Sections 3.4, 6.3).

At the beginning of the observation, I delivered the 'Active Offer' in accordance with the 'More than Just Words' strategic framework for Welsh language services in health and social care (Welsh Government, 2012). The child was offered for the direct work to be undertaken in Welsh, and he was able to demonstrate that he knew and understood basic Welsh Language, however he chose to use his strongest language which is English. Applying Lena Dominelli's framework for anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 2002) to this case observation, requires a

critical examination of institutional power dynamics, structural inequalities, and professional reflexivity within an urban, working-class Welsh context. Undertaking the assessment in a familiar school setting helped to remove personal and structural power imbalances between me working under S47 of the Children Act 1989 (1989), the SSWBA 2014 and the child, creating an equal environment between adult and child enabling a two way communication. This allows the child's voice to be heard and be at the centre of the practice. Evaluating physical neglect within a socio-economically deprived community demands the practitioner to reflect and question their own biases, ensuring that the material realities and structural constraints of poverty are not conflated with wilful neglect or parental failure (Dominelli, 2002). Integrating Dominelli's focus on identity and agency, I respected the child's cultural and linguistic rights by making the Welsh language 'Active Offer' (Welsh Government, 2016) while accepting his preference to communicate in English, delivering an anti-oppressive intervention tailored to his neurodivergent needs. I used drawing tasks as a tool to communicate with the child about his lived experiences, which is supported by Autism Wales (2012) and Maclean (2022). Lundy (2007) and Forester et al (2019) which states that a child should be able to access a safe and accessible environment to be able to express their views with any reasonable adjustments made. I demonstrated this by ensuring the child's environment was familiar and safe. Knowing the child enjoyed drawing, I asked specific questions about home conditions while he drew his bedroom. This approach ensured the child did not feel a conflict of loyalty towards his parents and protected his psychological safety.

Schon (1983) suggests that the practitioner is required to think while action which means to be able to change and adapt while it is happening in real time. Delivering the Welsh 'Active Offer' (Welsh Government 2016) demonstrated that the practitioner was following the policy however when the child acknowledged basic Welsh but chose English to do the direct work, the practitioner was required to reflect in real time to avoid any language barriers the child may have. I was able to recognise the policy but ensured the child was happy to participate with the language he was comfortable to use.

I showed that there is a need to balance parental rights and statutory child protection whilst managing the risk between respecting family life and safeguarding duties. I gained consent from the family to undertake the direct work with the child and being aware that the child may disclose further information, as we have built up a relationship for over a year. There was a

moment when the child begun speaking about his parents' conversation from the prior evening, he paused for 5 seconds and then returned to talk about his devices. I allowed time and space for the child to speak and did not interrupt to ensure that the child was not led with his answers. Allowing natural pauses provides essential processing time, ensuring communication is non-directive and answers are not led or rushed (Forester *et al.*, 2019). I was able to question the child whilst demonstrating that they were using anti-oppressive practice due to neglect status ensuring I took into consideration the difference between structural poverty and wilful neglect. Even though Section 6 of the SSWBA (2014) requires a social worker to take into consideration parental views, the child's best interest and psychological safety is prioritised. Establishing psychological safety is critical when exploring sensitive issues like neglect; conducting observations in familiar settings (e.g., a school) minimises anxiety and power imbalances (Trevithick, 2012; Dominelli, 2002). This suggests that even though the parents have parental reasonability and their views need to be taken into consideration, the child's safety and best interest are put first. I am required to use age-appropriate tools and language for communication to ensure that the child understands the questions fully to be able to answer in their own words. Section 2.2.4.2 states that social workers must be open and honest with parents regarding statutory powers and risk management to help build trust with parents whilst ensuring the safety of the children. According to Maclean (2022); Social Care Wales [SCW] (2026), whilst undertaking direct work with a child who has ASD can be enhanced by using visual tools and non-threatening tasks, such as drawing, and will allow the child to express lived experiences at their own pace. This means that the use of the drawing in the direct work allowed the child to feel at ease and able to draw his lived experience whilst speaking about them with me in a safe way.

Effective continuing professional development in statutory child protection requires bringing together legal mandates, anti-oppressive practice, and genuine rights-based participation. When working with neurodivergent children, social workers need to look closely at their statutory duties under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Without a neurodiversity-affirming lens, it is far too easy to misinterpret natural neurodivergent traits, like stimming, processing delays, or executive dysfunction, as concerns for neglect or emotional abuse. Applying anti-oppressive frameworks

(Dominelli, 2002) allows practitioners to look more closely at their assumptions and ensures assessments distinguish between actual parental neglect and wider structural poverty.

To make sure a child's voice isn't lost during serious safeguarding enquires, such as S47 enquiries, Lundy's (2007) model offers a vital model centred on Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence. In practice, this means ditching rigid interview styles and offering low-sensory environments (Trevithick, 2012) along with flexible, non-directive communication tools like sensory profile mapping and visual elicitation (Autism Wales, 2012; Maclean, 2022). Giving children structured pause times of at least five seconds (Forrester et al., 2019) allows them to express their lived reality without feeling rushed into giving an answer they think professionals want. Combined with delivering the Welsh Government's (2016) 'Active Offer' and abiding by the Code of Professional Practice (Social Care Wales, 2026), practice stays grounded in rights and language equality. Ultimately, staying reflective through Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action model, using journaling and supervision, helps practitioners realise their own biases in real-time, keeping the child's authentic voice at the centre of multi-agency decisions.

Word Count 1286

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?	
Did the social worker get your permission in advance for the observer to be present? Did they explain why they were being observed?	
Were you clear why the social worker met with you today?	
How well prepared do you think the social worker was for his or her meeting with you?	
How has the social worker listened to you and respected your views and wishes?	

Did the social worker talk to you in a way that you understood? Did the social worker consider your language needs?	
How has the social worker's involvement met your expectations for this visit?	
Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make?	

★ My Direct Work Feedback Form ★

Your Name: __Child A__

Date: ____17/09/2026____

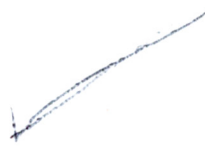
1. How did you feel when you and Natalie worked together today?

 Very sad

 A bit unhappy

 Okay

 Happy

 Very happy 

2. Did you enjoy the activities Natalie and you did today?

 No, not really

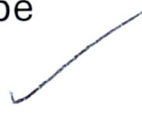
 They were okay

 Yes, I liked them a lot 

3. Would you like to do this again?

 No

 Maybe

 Yes 

Anything else you want to tell me?

 Natalie listens to me.