



**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in Consolidation
of Social Work Practice
LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits
BMPPF6044**

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

Learner's name: Dafydd Aled Beattie

Email address: Dafydd.beattie@conwy.gov.uk

**Learner's University Registration Number:
2320160**

Cohort: 21 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: 05/08/2024

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 following direct observation will be undertaken with '1', a middle aged single white female which resides in a social housing flat in an urban coastal town, which has good transport links and access to local amenities. 1 suffers from chronic back pain, poor mobility, anxiety and depression and has been alcohol dependant for the past decade and is very isolated. 1 prefers to converse in English and the language of choice was established by offering the Active Offer in line with the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and 'More than just words' Framework (Gov.wales, 2012). 1 had been referred into the local authority for their alcoholism, fluctuating mental health issues, poor home conditions and self-neglect.

As 1 had been supported by the local authority for a while and had an active care and support plan in line with part 3 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, a review of their care and support plan is needed.

The aim of the direct observation was to review the Integrated Assessment and establish if the care and support plan was still meeting 1's needs. By undertaking a new assessment it would give an opportunity to assess if 1's care and support needs had changed and to give greater insight if the care plan needed to be changed and gather new information. The assessment would give 1 and opportunity to have their voice and control heard in line with Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) (2014) principles (socialcare.wales, 2017).

1 does not like meeting new people and becomes very anxious and by having a second person observing I was conscious on how this might affect 1 having to discuss personal issues and 1 not opening up and being open and honest. 1 did consent via a telephone call to the observation and felt comfortable knowing that she had met the observer in the past.

Word Count: 312

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).

1 was given the choice of where they wanted the observation to happen either in their home, office or somewhere they would feel most comfortable with, of which they decided to have it undertaken in their home. The principles that underpin the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 promote voice and control and co-production which is key in making sure that 1 is part of the decision making and is able to have her voice heard (socialcare.wales, 2017).

As 1's mental health fluctuates from one day to another because of previous trauma it was important for me to do some research about how would be best to approach the re-assessment with 1 depending on the way she presented that day. It was important that I was aware of my presentation and the way that I engaged by being verbal and knowing when to be non-verbal, gaining vital information and showing empathy throughout the assessment (Baldwin and Walker, 2009). I knew from previous difficult conversations with 1 about their mental health and childhood trauma that they would become silent and would not continue with the conversation, so it was vital that I was self-aware and communicated sensitively and appropriately with 1.

We visited 1 at their flat and when she allowed us in I introduced the observer/manager and again asked consent from her for the assessment to be observed and explained the purpose of the observation. 1 consented to observation and realised that she had met the observer before which eased her anxiety. I asked again which language they wanted the assessment to be carried out in of which she wanted it to be in English but I still gave her the Active Offer so they had the choice as stated in the strategic framework 'More than just words' (Gov.wales, 2012). As I can speak both English and the Welsh language fluently I'm able to make sure that any individual that I support can speak in their preferred language and not having to ask. On previous screening assessments I have gone out to assess individuals who were reluctant to work with social services but once they knew I spoke Welsh felt happier to ask for my support and felt at ease. 1 recognised as we entered the small living room that it could be overwhelming having two professionals there and had to contemplate the power imbalance and my anti-oppressive practice (Dalrymple and Burke, 2006). I asked 1 where they would want us to sit so that they had power in her home to decide and the observer stood behind me so that it was more of a one on one conversation between the both of us.

When we all sat down I explained the purpose of the visit and that I was there to complete a re-assessment of the integrated assessment and to review her care and support plan to determine if it's still meeting her needs and if any changes were needed. I explained that this was to be done collaboratively between the both of us and that she can voice her views on the plan and add anything that she wanted. This ensured that I was working in a person centred way with 1, allowing them to have choice and control in the support that they were receiving (Gardener, 2013). By adopting the person centred approach it also focuses on the relationship between me and 1 by ensuring that I show empathy, respect and genuineness (Murphy, 2013). As I had worked closely with 1 for a long period of time in a person centred way I had already instilled the trust and empathy which had formed the foundation for a good and honest relationship. 1 has been involved in one way or the other with social services since her childhood and was very critical and distrusting of social workers so using the person centred approach allowed me to discuss how I could work alongside them and not make any decisions on their behalf. This ensured 1 had a voice and control on the care she received (beesly, et. Al., 2017)

For the reassessment I decided to adopt an open ended style of questioning so I could learn more about their current situation and give them opportunity to answer fully and give more information in their answers (Koprowska, 2008). This style was successful as 1 interacted well and was giving full answers and explaining her situation. By using semi-structured questions it enabled a discussion to take place about the topic and 1 was able to give as much information as they wanted to share with me. On some occasions I asked closed questions at the start of a new topic to gain more factual information and then turned my questions to an open-ended question to gain more information like their thoughts and feelings (Koprowska, 2008). Hargie and Dickenson (2004) suggest that starting with a closed question and then moving on to an open question helps a service user elaborate on their point. As I knew 1's situation well I avoided using leading questions as it would result in an answer that I would want to hear and not in some cases not what 1 was really feeling (Koprowska, 2008).

As we were doing the re-assessment 1's tenancy support officers arrived in the flat to visit and support with taking out rubbish. This was unfortunate timing as we were in the middle of the assessment and 1's focus was drawn to them. I used it as an opportunity to explain why I was there and asked them for feedback on their support and if they had any concerns. This was an opportunity to take a multi-agency approach and show 1 that we do work together and that everyone had 1's best interest central to their support (Sidebotham et.al, 2016).

Whilst discussing 1's alcoholism and why she drank so much on a daily basis it did bring up an ethical dilemma and conflict in my personal and professional view. 1 said that she drank to ease the trauma and that it helped with her chronic back pain, I tried to explain the impact of excessive alcohol consumption on their health and that there are other options. I had to be sensitive in the way I responded and be non-judgemental and try and offer solutions such as 1 working with more specialised agencies in addiction. As 1 had no intention of stopping drinking and has full capacity I had to be respectful of their decision and just offer harm

reduction advice which is in line with section 4 of the code of professional practice (Socialcare.wales, 2017).

When discussing more triggering subjects in 1's life such as mental health and their alcoholism I had to really be sensitive and thoughtful in my communication method. When discussing these subjects I allowed longer periods of silence and pause allowing 1 time to think of their response and ensuring that I wasn't asking another question before 1 had opportunity to answer the question (Koprowska, 2008). As 1 had tendencies to move off topic in difficult conversations I had to use active listening skills by allowing 1 time to speak about their thoughts and nodding when they were speaking, observing their body language and not interrupting (Bailey and Gast, 2014). I made sure that I was reflecting and clarifying what was being said and asking questions if I needed more information (Seden 2016). On occasions I had to paraphrase what was being said by 1 because of their thought process. This enabled me to fully understand the information that they were giving me and make sure that the information I was capturing was correct (Koprowska, 2008).

When we completed the reassessment I made sure that the actions were discussed and whom they were assigned to. This made sure that 1 understood what the actions were and who was working towards what.

After the re-assessment I used supervision as a platform to reflect on the visit and to discuss any concerns and make sure that I hadn't missed any key points from the visit. It was also an opportunity to discuss ethical dilemmas such as knowing that 1's alcoholism would result in serious health concerns.

Word Count: 1367

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?	Yes- I knew she was coming and that she was there to see how the social worker works.
Did the social worker get your permission in advance for the observer to be present? Did they explain why they were being observed?	Yes
Were you clear why the social worker met with you today?	They were prepared they know me.
How well prepared do you think the social worker was for his or her meeting with you?	Yes, the social worker always listens to me and I feel very respected by him.
How has the social worker listened to you and respected your views and wishes?	Yes, if I don't understand something I feel I can ask and he will tell me.
Did the social worker talk to you in a way that you understood? Did the social worker consider your language needs?	Yes, if I don't understand something I feel I can ask and he will tell me.
How has the social worker's involvement met your expectations for this visit?	It has met my expectations.

Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make?	I don't like social workers, I have met a lot and I don't like them. But I like my social worker- he is 5* 10/10. I think he is a great social worker.
--	--