



**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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Task 1

Developmental review – Part a

Guidance:

This task should be completed by taking into account the work that you will have undertaken since qualifying, and discussions with your mentor and supervisor/line manager as part of your First Three Years of Practice Individual Plan.

Task one (part a and b) should incorporate the use of a model of reflection.

You must meet the Learning Outcomes for this task (see appendix 5 of the handbook).

Please answer the question below.

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your professional development since qualifying as a Social Worker. Make reference to the supervision, training, learning and research that has impacted on your work. Based on this and continuing to use a reflective model outline what you have identified and agreed with your manager and/or mentor for your development over the coming 12 months. You must demonstrate how you intend to meet all of the following learning outcomes:-

- applying analysis in assessment to inform interventions;
- working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers and other professionals;
- intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations.

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

I qualified as a social worker in 2019 and since then I have worked in a supportive social work team with managers and colleagues who have mentored me which has helped towards my professional development. A part of my role as a social worker is to undertake integrated assessments where I collate information regarding individuals and their carers' in order to analyse their personal outcomes, the strengths, barriers and risks to inform intervention. Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in Part 3 section 19, 21 and 24 we have a duty to assess an adult and child's need for care and support and a carer's need for support (Social Care Wales, 2022). Over the first 12 months, after qualifying, I held a case load which varied in range of work and complexity. The reflective theory by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) is a good model of reflection to reflect on my own practice. I have been on maternity leave therefore, returning to work and starting to undertake assessments again has made me question my own ability to undertake a professional assessment to a high standard. I read through other assessments to remind me how they should be structured. My manager has arranged for me to attend a session to have refresher training on integrated assessments. I believe this would be beneficial to my practice, part of the training is to read through an assessment which I have already completed. By using the reflective practice by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) I would be able to discuss the strength and weak points of the assessment and how I could improve in

the future. I wish to work on developing my assessment skills, to put training into practice and to develop by using the feedback from it to reflect on my own practice and to continuously improve the quality of my work over the next 12 months (Maclean & Harrison, 2015).

Working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers' and other professionals. The Social Care Wales, social worker code of professional practice sets out in section 4.2 the importance of good communication which is essential in social work practice as a big part of our work is communicating with individuals, their families, carers and other professionals [hereafter SCW], (2019). One part of good communication is the importance of being open, accurate and straightforward. As a social worker, I have to have difficult / sensitive conversations with individuals, carers and with other professionals. I would find using Donald's Schon's theory, written in his book the reflective practitioner, where he explains that there are two forms of reflection, reflection in action and reflection on action (Schon, 1992). My learning need over the next 12 months is to develop my communication skills to be able to have difficult and sensitive conversations with others to a professional standard. By applying Schon's reflective theory, I will aim to achieve this through learning through practice and also by utilising my supervision sessions with my manager. The supervision sessions will be an important part of my personal development as it is an opportunity to discuss cases in detail providing me with a safe space to reflect on my case work.

Intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations. As a social worker I attend a variety of different meetings with individuals, their carer's and other professionals. Many of the MDT meetings which are held are due to a case being complex and the need to bring all professionals together to discuss and share information, with the aim of putting a plan in place. As part of my role I will be expected to attend MDT meetings with the NHS to undertake Decision Support Tools under Continuing Health Care. Part of the learning outcome that I wish to achieve is to work on building my confidence when attending meetings with other professionals. Building on Schon (1992) theory of the two stages of reflection I would look to Killan and Todnem (1991) reflection for action theory. This theory considered to be the third stage of 'thinking forward' or 'preparing for practice'. By applying this theory to my professional development, I aim to achieve the learning outcome by attending role specific training to further develop my learning and to access the online Community Care Inform resource to undertake my own research.

Word count – 728

Task 1 (Part b) Developmental Review

Guidance:

Please ensure you refer to a reflective model and that you met the required learning outcomes for this task (See appendix 5 of the handbook).

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your development including reference to training, learning, research and use of supervision since completing Task 1 (part a) (when you began the programme).

Consider in discussion with your mentor/supervisor/line manager the extent to which your learning needs have been achieved. Identify any additional learning needs to support your development in the transition to becoming an experienced practitioner in your future career. You must include a reflection on feedback that you have received from individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers and how this feedback has informed your future professional development.

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

Over the past year I have been working towards enhancing my knowledge and skills by undertaking case work, attending training and accessing supervision with my manager and by working alongside colleagues and professionals from other services. I will use Gibbs reflective cycle theory to reflect back on the last 12 months to discuss and identify the learning outcomes.

I have undertaken a number of assessments and applied analysis in assessment to inform interventions whether that is to assess for care and support or for social work intervention. When undertaking assessments I have taken a person centred approach by working in partnership with individuals to identify care and support needs, with Neil Thompson stating that working in partnership is a '*fundamental principle of good practice*' (Thompson, 2015 p.158). When I reflect back on how I was feeling at the start of the year and looking at the learning outcomes I feel that I have gained confidence in writing assessments and being able to assess for intervention. The feedback from individuals and other professionals has on the whole has been positive, with some stating that it is clear, takes a holistic approach and includes the individuals voice and what matters to them. However, I have received some negative feedback from panel stating that in some assessments I have not evidenced the need for services and my rational needs to be clearer. Therefore, it is important that I firstly consider my communication skills when gathering information and to know what information is relevant to be able to have the skills to analysis and make a professional judgement (Martin, 2010). Over the next 12 months I believe I would benefit from undertaking more safeguarding enquires to further develop my skills when undertaking Section 126 enquires. Having this discussions with the manager in supervision will help me work to achieve this in terms of my personal development.

When discussing working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers and other professionals one of my learning needs was around communication and having difficult and sensitive conversations with others to a professional standard. I believe that the cases I have worked on has given me this opportunity to build on my experience. One of the cases was supporting an individual over the past 12 months in line with the Hording Protocol a policy by the Local Authority. I have been open and honest with the individual about the risks and discussed my concerns and supported by actively listening (Lindsey, 2013). The feedback I have received from the individual has been that she has felt heard, supported and respected and she is now engaging with us and we have started to see positive results in working towards reducing risks. However, even though this is positive I feel that I have more to learn and I would benefit from attending further training around working with issues around hoarding and self-neglect to further build on my skill base.

I have had the opportunity to be part of MDT meetings with the NHS to undertake Decision Support Tools (DST) under Continuing Health Care (gov.uk, 2023). The assessment is a complex assessment which is health lead where there is intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations. When I first started to attend the meetings I did not feel confident and felt intimidated to express my thoughts as it was a Health lead meeting and felt at times a power imbalance (Thompson, 2015). However, having attended a number of DST I have gained experience and feel more confident in my own professional judgement. During the meeting I have express my professional judgement clearly and have been able to say when I disagree with a decision and being able to provide a rational. The negative aspect is that there is no clear guidance on the scoring system therefore the funding can be up for interpretation of the professionals. The feedback from one individual's family who were representing, question whether they needed to be part of the final stages of the assessment to discuss funding as they felt uncomfortable. Therefore, going forward it is important to have discussions with individuals and their families to explain the purpose of the assessment and which parts they would like to be involved in. One positive is that we have received up to date training on the DST assessments enhancing my knowledge and confidence.

Looking at the next 12 months I would like to focus on developing my experience around mental health and consider the AMHP training. Also, being mindful of continuing to build my resilience as a professional and understanding the importance of practicing self-care (Dombo, 2021) to be able to continue to work as a social worker providing the best service for individuals and their carers'.

Word count – 794

