

Support arrangements guidance

The minimum expectations of the support arrangements for all NQSWs are contained within the Standards for Employers of Social Workers. The minimum expectations apply irrespective of practice setting or situation and so includes mental health trust settings and private, voluntary and independent settings. The standards set out the support to NQSWs, which will enable them to develop their practice expertise to the ASYE level. A key process through which this happens is critical reflection, which the four support arrangements facilitate:

Assessor

A registered social worker, experienced in practice. This role is enhanced if the assessor's practice is informed by the relevant professional standards:

- [Practice Supervisor Standards](#)
- [Practice Educator Professional Standards](#)

Supervision

To be provided at the following frequency and duration ([Standards for Employers of Social Workers](#)):

- Frequency:
 - weeks 1-6: weekly
 - weeks 7 – 6 months: fortnightly
 - 6-12 months: monthly
- Duration: a minimum of 1.5 hours
- Focus: critical reflection

Reduced workload

The equivalent of up to 90% of what is expected of a social worker in the same role in their second or third year, weighted over the course of the year by considerations of case complexity, risk and growing proficiency.

It's helpful if the assessor (if different from the line manager) is consulted in decisions about the allocation of work to the NQSW as they're familiar with the NQSW's learning needs and their level of capability and confidence.

Protected development time

The equivalent of 10% of the NQSW's working time over the course of the ASYE, which equates to two days per month where they are employed full-time. If the NQSW is working reduced hours, it is calculated on a pro rata basis.

Protected development time can include attending training sessions and other learning and development opportunities provided by the programme and stepping

back from their practice and engage with research and theoretical perspectives relating to the practice issues they are experiencing.

NQSWs who work reduced hours (part-time)

Where a NQSW is working reduced hours then the support arrangements should be provided on a basis that is pro rata, subject to the following considerations:

- the support arrangements are a minimum
- the [national evaluation criteria](#) make it clear that a programme should be tailored to the individual NQSW
- tailoring the programme to the individual NQSW might mean that some of the support arrangements, such as the frequency and duration of supervision, are enhanced to take account of the confidence and capability levels of a NQSW in the earlier review periods of the programme.