

**Organisation:** Barnsley Council

**ASYE co-ordinator:** Cora Beard

**Programme:** Adults ASYE programme

**Number of NQSWs in your current cohort:** 8

The practice identified	Internal support group for black and ethnic minority NQSWs and Assessors.
Element(s) of the NEC/NEC+ to which the example relates	
<p>Please record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the relevant points you would like the NQAP to consider in their endorsement process</li> <li>▪ the reasons and evidence for the identified practice meeting or contributing in a meaningful way to meeting an element of the NEC/NEC+</li> </ul>	
<p>Discussions have taken place with Cora Beard on the 11/09/2023 in respect of their application for endorsement.</p> <p>Barnsley Council have created a support group for black and ethnic minority Social Workers, which was initially for Students, NQSWs and Assessors but has since expanded to invite Social Workers from across the service who would like to attend. They meet bi-monthly and this was initially virtual but has since changed to face to face. The session is for two hours. There has been four sessions so far and currently ten Social Workers who have attended each session. Those in attendance have named the group – Equality and Diversity Support Group. After consultations with the group’s members, they have agreed for this group to be external to other ASYE Support Groups but to feed into each other, to ensure that all NQSWs and Assessors can learn from one another, but that the support is not inclusive to those within current roles in the ASYE Programme. <b>(NEC A4, A5, A6)</b>.</p> <p>The idea came about when there were concerns highlighted by a Social Worker who was considering applying for work at another Local Authority and their feedback was that there was little direct support and a safe place for discussion regarding social work practice issues faced by black and ethnic minority Social Workers. There was already an existing HR Group for black and ethnic minority Social Workers but the identified gap was in relation to practice issues and a place for reflection with others who may have similar experiences and views. Barnsley Council wished to provide this group for everyone to feel valued and supported, but also hoped to retain fantastic Social Workers in doing so. Cora spoke about wanting the support group to become valued and respected, as opposed to being a tokenistic event. They raise awareness also of the GEMS minority group ran by Skills for Care. <b>(NEC A4, A8)</b></p>	

The sessions are advertised on the monthly bulletin accessed virtually by all in adult social care. It is also discussed within a NQSW's Support and Assessment Agreement Meeting and ASYE Support Groups. It is discussed within a student's induction and will also be discussed at the next bi-annual Staff Forum reaching out to the whole service. **(NEC A3)**

Developments of the support group are lead by those in attendance. They have involvement in regards to the content of future sessions and also the running of the group. Cora has asked the group if they wanted to identify a Chair, but no one was confident at this time. She and the PSW will continue to Chair the group and will continuously review this with the attendees as it becomes more established. Cora explained that the PSW is a non-bias role within the Local Authority who is approachable and acts to advocate on behalf of staff to improve resources and practice. They do not complete minutes currently or an agenda, but this is something they are looking to do. The minutes will balance the need for accountability for change, and measuring progress, but will be respectful of personal disclosures which are of a sensitive manner. They also plan to complete a Terms of Reference to be displayed on the intranet to clarify the purpose of the support group. **(NEC A4)**

The first four sessions have gone well. There has been a gradual increase in those attending, sharing experiences and worries. This is as expected as there is trust to be built and many barriers to sharing. It is a safe place to share, but also a place where feelings and emotions needs to be managed. There is the risk that people may encounter secondary trauma or experience triggers within their own experiences or values. In consideration of staff wellbeing and welfare, Barnsley have various services and signposting in place. They offer a discount on the sports centre for fitness and exercise. Occupational Health complete referrals for counselling. They have also considered the supervision policy and template to include direct questions about mental health and support for emotional wellbeing. They are considering options to improve work/life balance for workers and exploring flexibility for caring/childcare responsibilities. **(NEC A3, A4, A5).**

Suggestions for future sessions are made by the Chairs and those attending. Suggestions have included anti-racism resources and extending training for the whole service. There has been discussions also within the Support Group on the Mandela Model and Social Graces. There is also discussions planned for updating templates and policies to be reflective of anti-discriminate practice **(NEC A4, A5, A6)**

There are stakeholders in the Local Authority who are invested within the development of this support group and encouraging Social Workers to attend. The Assistant Director has given permission for it to be set up. There has been careful consideration for their direct involvement as they would like the Support Group to be a safe haven to share experiences and to consider areas for development in policy and practice without intimidation from those higher in hierarchy. Although Cora and the PSW can feedback to the Assistant Director and Service Managers who are visible within this but not heavily involved for this reason. **(NEC A2)**

Moving forward, Barnsley plan to Quality Assure the Support Group to ensure its effectiveness and that it is meeting the needs of those who attend. They plan to arrange a working group. And send out qualitative data questionnaires via their communications department. They will request feedback on how the group is received, whether there are suggestions for improvements or any identified areas of concern. It will consider the frequency of bi-monthly and whether this is appropriate. So far, the barriers within the development have been due to the sensitivity of the focus of the Support Group, which is understandable and that it is anticipated that with time, this will become more established. **(NEC A1)**

Evidence to support the submission to the NQAP

e.g. documentation, materials, tools, guidance, feedback from NQSWs/assessors or other stakeholders or other evidence of impact

Skills for Care QA visit

Skills for Care Action Plan

Changes to templates including wording on the Supervision Policy

Inclusion within the ASYE Support and Assessment Agreement discussions and PDP.

Terms of Reference