

# Memorandum of collaboration guidance<sup>1</sup>

## **Background**

External moderation is an important element of the national system of quality assurance incorporated within the [Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services, 2015 \(KSS\)](#) (now known as the Post Qualifying Standards (PQS)). The purpose of the national quality assurance system is to achieve national consistency in experience of support, assessment and outcomes.

Every adults services employer is required to be a member of an ASYE partnership. The partnership moderation process will provide peer review, support, challenge and scrutiny of ASYE employer judgements in order to promote consistency and to identify and encourage the adoption of good practice.

Many ASYE partnerships now embrace both adult ASYE and child and family ASYE. This has happened organically and at the choice of participant organisations.

The Skills for Care [external moderation guidance for ASYE partnerships](#) states that an ASYE partnership will have a memorandum of collaboration which is signed by senior leaders within organisations whose areas of responsibility includes social work, outlines governance arrangements, membership, frequency of meetings and parts played by senior managers, principal social workers are expected to assume key roles in external moderation. The memorandum should be reviewed regularly.

This document provides guidance on the composition of a memorandum of collaboration for ASYE a external moderation processes. It complements our

Skills for Care may ask an ASYE partnership to submit their memorandum of collaboration. This may happen, for example, as part of a national moderation activity being undertaken in relation to a portfolio from an organisation that is a member of the partnership.

## **Social work partnerships**

Some employers may be members of existing wider social work education and development partnerships. Such partnerships may already have a memorandum of collaboration and this may include those who developed a memorandum to meet the requirements of the Skills for Care employer transition fund which operated from 2012 14.

If the broader social work partnership, which may be a teaching partnership, is going to also act as an ASYE partnership for the purposes of external moderation as detailed in the KSS (now known as the PQS), the partnership will need to ensure that ASYE external moderation processes are clearly identified within the

## **Content**

The memorandum of collaboration should include the following areas, these could be headings within the document:

### **1. Introduction and background**

This section will include a brief background or history of the partnership, member organisations and the community it serves. If it is a broader social work education or development partnership then this section can explain how ASYE external moderation is incorporated within its structure, remit and activities.

### **2. Aims and objectives**

The purpose of external moderation within an ASYE partnership is to scrutinise both the ASYE final assessment decisions of its individual employer members and the ASYE support and assessment process. The partnership may wish to expand this objective to include other collaborative activities such as supporting the development of ASYE assessors and delivery of an ASYE programme.

### **3. Governance and compliance**

Governance includes clarifying accountability and responsibilities; who is the partnership accountable to and for what? Again, if the ASYE external moderation process is integrated within a wider social work education partnership then there may be a reporting link to a strategic partnership body. If not, then the partnership may accept collective responsibility for ensuring that effective external moderation takes place and each organisation should nominate a principal social worker (PSW) or senior manager with responsibility for ASYE (e.g. Workforce Development Manager) to act as a signatory to the memorandum and commit their organisation to participating fully in the process.

Other areas to include in this section:

#### **Decision making**



moderation process. This could include activity to support the consistency of decision-making by reviewers.

## **7. Review and evaluation**

This should include arrangements for reviewing the memorandum of collaboration regularly. The partnership should decide the regularity of the review, taking into consideration any future guidance from Skills for Care.