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## **NQSW      e   b      a              f   ae   e**

Direct observations are a good practice tool and remain a key method of learning and reflection for the NQSW. Direct observations should be a central component of the process of assessment and review of the NQSW during their ASYE. The ASYE requirement is that a minimum of three direct observations are undertaken by a registered social worker, ideally at least two of these by the ASYE assessor. A minimum of one of the direct observations over the year must be face-to-face, while the other(s) can be undertaken by a variety of media if appropriate.

Given their importance, observations need to be carefully planned and given the appropriate time to ensure the learning experience is maximised by the NQSW. The observations also need to be meaningful and purposeful for the NQSW and for the assessor/observer.

The pandemic has changed the nature of social work practice and, therefore, has implications on the nature of NQSW assessment and its various components, especially direct observations.

## **Face - - fe              e   b      a              f   ae   e**

Face-to-face direct observations need to be considered carefully in terms of appropriate risk assessments related to good practice and the NQSW's employing organisation specific guidelines. The impact on the service user of these new ways of social work practice and the tools/methods to assess those new to practice (NQSWs) also need to be considered by the NQSW, assessor and the organisation. Face-to-face direct observations should happen within an ethical framework.

Consideration should be given to who undertakes the direct observations of practice in a face-to-face environment. Observations can be carried out by any registered social worker, either in your team or from another team. It should be remembered that the focus must be on the impact of introducing another person (i.e. the assessor/observer) into an already challenging situation where you and 97 361.71% Tm(framework

**G a e e a a**  
**b a f a e e**

As set out in the current Skills for Care ASYE observation of practice template, all observations contain the following three key stages:

1. **P - b a e a a** between the NQSW and the assessor
2. Undertaking **b a f**
3. **P - b a e** , **f e a f bae** – as soon after the observation as possible and in greater depth some days later.

In all of these stages it is useful to consider the following **a e e**  
**e a** relating to the planning and undertaking of a direct observation of practice.

# **P a b a** **NQSW - m f e**

Ensure there is clarity about the purpose of the call and what the NQSW wants to achieve from the virtual learning experience:

How is the NQSW intending to adapt their approach to a virtual platform?

How has the NQSW tried to ensure a confidential space that is not distracting?

Has the NQSW prepared a list of their objectives/any questions they need to ask or points they need to raise?

Has the NQSW considered how they are going to engage the service user in the call?

Has the NQSW considered:

• their appearance and emotional state and how it affects how they will be perceived?

• checking that they will be looking at the camera on their laptop/phone so that they will be seen to be looking at the person?

• finding a neutral area in their own home for the call, trying to avoid personal or family pictures in the background and/or objects that could be distracting?



## Ob a a 2 - ae a b a

The careful planning in stage 1 above should inform the actual observation and the role of the NQSW and assessor during the meeting. It is wise not to stray too far away from the plans you have made, unless the meeting takes an unexpected turn (particularly if you need to intervene).

As the assessor you should look for the following indicators/evidence in the NQSW's practice:

- joined in a timely manner
- introduced themselves and the assessor
- checked that everyone on the call can see and hear each other and introduced themselves
- active listening skills
- attentive observation
- comfortable with silences
- rapport building and building safe space, empathetic connection with the person(s)
- emotional state
- summarising, paraphrasing what is said and reflecting back your understanding
- use of self
- adapted communication style
- person actively engaged
- end the call/intervention in a timely manner, summarising any key points/actions agreed
- adopted a flexible and relationship-based approach while ensuring that the NQSW met their objectives
- at end of call asked about their experience of the call and what they would like to be different next time
- did the NQSW meet their aims and objectives.

If the NQSW is chairing a meeting, have they:

- been clear about the ground rules for a meeting using a virtual platform e.g. press mute when not speaking, clarified turn taking and raising hands to speak?
- emphasised that the child and the family/people being supported can intervene and ask to speak at any time if they have questions or wish to share something?
- explained how the chat box can be used?
- if the meeting is being recorded explain the reasons for this in line with GDPR
- stick to the timings of the meeting – did the meeting finish too early, on time or overrun?

## Ob a a 3 - - b a e , a f ba e

Ideally, this stage should embrace two sub-stages:

- observer feedback and a short two-way discussion with the NQSW immediately after the observation
- more detailed/considered observer feedback and two-way discussion a few days after the observation.

Issues/evidence to consider and discuss:

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