

COVID-19 Pandemic Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) guidance

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) is the professional association for social work in the UK with offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. With over 20,000 members we exist to promote the best possible social work services for all people who may need them, while also securing the well-being of social workers working in all health and social care settings.

We are aware that the suspension or early ending of student placements due to the Covid-19 Pandemic may have disrupted training for Practice Educators who are completing Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) training. This may include the requirement for the supported and observed supervision sessions of PEPS Practice Educator (PE) learners to be carried out by the PEPS Assessor/Mentor. BASW recommends that PE learners should be supported through this situation by applying a flexible and blended approach to the provision of academic and practical support which maintains the overall standard of the qualification as set out in the BASW PEPS refreshed standards and guidance.

Where observed supervision practice has been compromised due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we suggest that PE training providers address these situations with the flexibility that is currently being used to support prequalifying students. Possible courses of action could be:

- To seek alternative methods to observe PE learners, for example using teleconferencing or online media systems to observe supervision sessions.
- PE learners in Stage one could possibly have an extra observation with their second student when they progress to Stage Two.
- Direct feedback could be sought from a student on their experience following placement.
- Reflective work could be given to the PE learner asking them to consider adult learning theories and supervisory models, perhaps using a bad and good supervision case scenario.
- Peer support and assessment opportunities may be available for PE learners for example as part of ASYE training for newly qualified social workers.
- Reviewing of supervision records throughout the placement.

Where placements finish early due to the current pressures and the PEPS trainee has written a summative/holistic report on the progress of their student at that stage this should be used as part of the PEPS assessment process.

If the candidate's ability to complete the course has been affected through additional duties or ill-health due to Covid-19, consideration could be given to additional time to fully complete the course including

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the experience of supervising the required number of social work learners with support and feedback. The PE learner should continue to have access to support and assessment from a qualified mentor.

The capability of PE learners should continue to be assessed in relation to the PEPS domains and values. Arrangements being made for social work students to continue their placements are being agreed and coordinated by the practice educator according to the progress and capability of each individual student. In the same way, it is important to recognise that PEPS PE learners have unique learning strengths and developmental needs to consider if alternative options are put in place to enable the learner to progress.

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