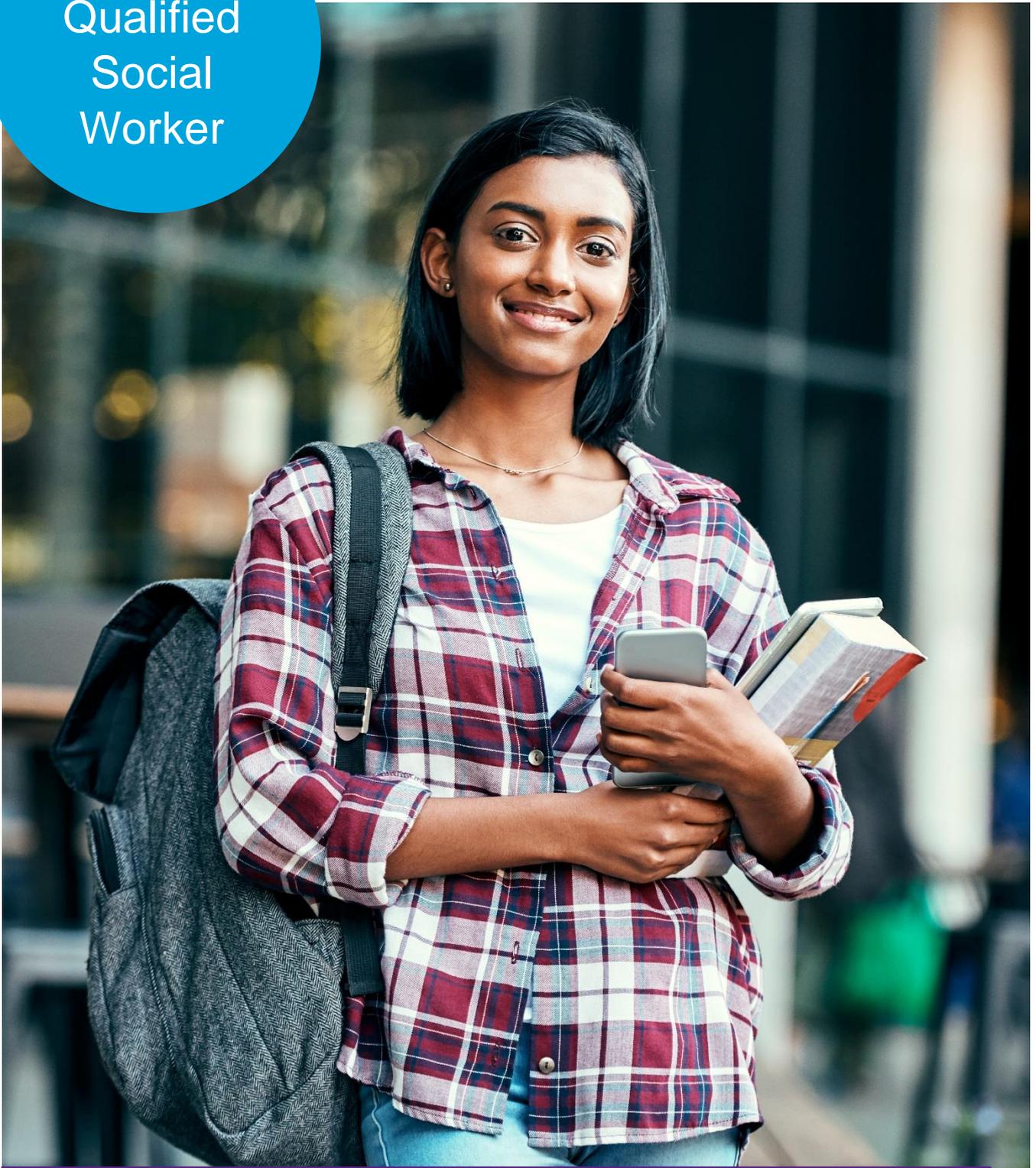


Newly
Qualified
Social
Worker



NQSW & ASYE Handbook
(Assessed and Supported Year in Employment)

This handbook is to support you as a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) during your ASYE year within Cafcass; it includes all the relevant links to the Professional Capability Framework (PCF), The Post Qualifying Knowledge and Skills Standards (KSS) and Social Work England (SWE) Standards of Proficiency (SOPs).

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LINKS

These links are referred to throughout the document:

NQSW Job Profile

<https://intranet.cafcass.net/nis/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2Fnis%2FShared%20Documents%2FPLPQ%2FNQSW%20Handbook>

The Professional Capability Framework and guidance programme (PCF)

<https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf>

Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work>

Putting your portfolio together:

Confidentiality Statement

<https://cafcass.learningnexus.co.uk/course/view.php?id=163#section-1>

Critical Reflective Log

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/ASYE-child-and-family/ASYE-templates/CRL-child-and-family-guidance.pdf>

Direct Observation

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/ASYE-child-and-family/ASYE-templates/CRL-child-and-family-guidance.pdf>

Record of Support and Progressive Assessment

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Learning-and-development/ASYE-child-and-family/ASYE-templates/RSPA-child-and-family-guidance.pdf>

ASYE Evaluation

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=qjeQnsuTyUyyMwtWrp6E3UfeVd12yxNJo0ARJg7tjAIUMEMxTjVNME84VzY1OEZTUUQwMjAwQ0I1RiQIQCN0PWcu>

WELCOME TO CAFCASS

A message from Sarah Parsons, Principle Social Worker

We are very pleased indeed that you have decided to join Cafcass as a Newly Qualified Social Worker and undertake the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Programme. Nothing and no-one but the best will do, working with our children, young people and families.

We recognise the value of good social work and the potential for a positive and life changing impact it has on the lives of children, young people and their families. We hope that joining this programme will build on the skills and knowledge you bring with you, and we want to back you up with the support you need to develop your potential. Your contribution will make a difference.

The first year of Cafcass' ASYE Programme is registered with the Department for Education Social Work Unit. The vision is to ensure that those working with children and young people receive the best possible training and support to do their job effectively, and also have the opportunity to work towards additional qualifications. The ASYE Programme aims to provide a bridge from initial training to confident and competent practice that is based on a firm foundation of skills and knowledge and forms the basis for career-long professional development.

The programme is underpinned by the Social Work England (SWE) Standards, Professional Capability Framework (PCF), the Post Qualifying Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) and supporting guidance, which go to the heart of the social worker's role. They set out what you should aim to achieve as a Newly Qualified Social Worker by the end of your first year in employment and hence, guide you in consolidating, extending and strengthening the skills, knowledge and abilities gained during your professional training and previous experience.

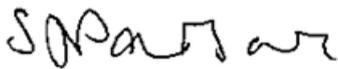
The Cafcass ASYE programme aims to:

- Help you to improve your skills, competence and confidence as a social worker in a systematic manner in your early years of practice by clarifying what is expected of you.
- Enables Cafcass, as your employer, to provide you with focused supervision, support and guidance by defining the responsibilities of staff who work with and support you.
- Give greater assurances to managers around what NQSWs need to achieve to deliver the best possible practice to and with children and young people.
- Contribute towards the requirements for your post-registration training.
- Improve your job satisfaction and hence your enthusiasm to continue to work as a social worker.

The work will be challenging and demands the capacity to critically analyse strengths, difficulties, conflicting perceptions and views. The expectation is that your professional judgements will be based on sound research and evidence and that you will be able to communicate and justify these to the children and families we work with, carers and other professionals.

You will not be working alone to achieve the standards expected by the professional body for social work (Social Work England (SWE)) and the Chief Social Workers Post Qualifying Knowledge and Skills Standards. As a Newly Qualified Social Worker you are entitled to a protected caseload, tailored development opportunities and access to support, guidance, and supervision to help review and develop your skills, knowledge and confidence to operate at increasing levels of complexity.

We hope that you will find this programme accessible, clear and effective, and that you will take up the many opportunities that will be provided to you to meet your development needs.



Sarah Parsons

Assistant Director

The definition of the ASYE Practice Mentor, mentioned throughout this document, is: The Practice Mentor is the person who supervises, in line with the supervision requirements, the NQSW during their ASYE year. Their role is to support and assess the ongoing progressive development of the NQSW.

1. INTRODUCTION TO CAFCASS 3 YEAR PATHWAY: ASSESSED AND SUPPORTED YEAR IN EMPLOYMENT (ASYE) and EARLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (EPD)

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) is designed to help you as a NQSW to develop your skills, knowledge and capability and strengthen your professional confidence. It provides you with access to regular and focused support during your first year of employment. The overarching construction is based on the Professional Capability Framework (PCF) for social work and The Post Qualifying Knowledge and Skills Standards (KSS). (See Links Page)

For your second year, you will be known as being in your Early Professional Development (EPD). You will engage with local authority partners and further embed safeguarding skills, public law applications and consider how these would be applied in a Cafcass context. In your final year of your EPD you will consolidate your learning and begin to engage in more complex cases and further develop your public law knowledge by working alongside Family Court Advisers (FCAs).

Only when you have effectively demonstrated that you have successfully completed the three years, will you be offered a position as an FCA.

The NQSW three-year programme normally runs from December to December and therefore should your employment have commenced before the December your increment will be back dated, in the final year, to the anniversary of commencing employment with Cafcass.

1.1 Why Cafcass supports NQSW three-year pathway

Cafcass is committed to recognising and valuing the skills and talents of our people and supporting each individual to grow and develop in your role so you can make an outstanding contribution, and as part of our commitment we will:

- Recognise your individual contribution.
- Ensure that the right skills are present in each team and Service Area to enable Cafcass to provide the best possible service to each child and family on each case.

- Guarantee the right support is in place to enable our staff to learn and develop within their role.
- Pledge that, each year, our staff are better equipped to meet their personal career aspirations.
- Ensure we have a workforce that is sensitive to diversity issues, culturally competent and more representative of our children and families we work with.



In addition, as a new NQSW in your ASYE year you will have a set framework of objectives, known as The Professional Capability Framework (PCF) (see links page) and the Post Qualifying Knowledge and Skills Standards (KSS). You will be provided with structured and systematic support to create a foundation for successful completion to the required standard. Cafcass will do this by providing on the job training from experienced ASYE Practice Mentors personally allocated to individual NQSWs and provide provision for a protected case load in your first year (20% case work reduction).

As an NQSW following the ASYE programme you will be provided with no less than 90 minutes' supervision sessions with your Practice Mentor in line with the requirements outlined in section 2:2. Developing capability in the key areas is vital so, in addition to the Practice Mentor providing on the job training, there will be direct teaching sessions on the nine domains of the PCF, the 10 KSS and guidance to ensure that suitable evidence is provided to meet the ASYE standards.

Cafcass benefits by:

- ✓ The injection of energy, enthusiasm and new ideas from NQSWs who can share their up-to-date knowledge around practice developments.
- ✓ Opportunities for practitioners and managers to continue their own professional and career development by supporting and facilitating learning.
- ✓ Contributing to the future of social work training and practice.
- ✓ Developing the workforce of the future.

You, as an NQSW undertaking your ASYE year will benefit by:

- ✓ **An individual training and development plan:** You will work with your Service Manager, Practice Mentor and with the support of the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager at the beginning, midway and at the end, to create an individual training and development plan which is reviewed and revised at three monthly intervals.
- ✓ **Regular supervision and protected case load:** You will be provided with regular and focused supervision that is structured around both case work practice and reflection on your ongoing learning and skills development. You will also be entitled to a slightly smaller case load (80% of the work that an experienced FCA would undertake) in order to manage your

confidence in taking on responsibility for a level of complexity and risk that is comfortable for you, safe for the children and families we work with, and in line with the demands of the organisation.

- ✓ **Protected training and development time:** The ASYE programme offers you the opportunity to have a reduced caseload, regular supervision and protected professional development time. Together, these will allow you to assess your level of development and plan how to fill any gaps and to gather the evidence to demonstrate progress over the initial period of employment against the nine domains of the PCF and the 10 statements of the KSS. Alongside the natural learning ‘on the job’ there will be recognised protected time. You will be encouraged, and expected, to continue to take responsibility for building on your existing knowledge and use this opportunity to participate in a range of learning activities identified through your personal learning audit. Things that might be included in the 20% might include attending courses, including the training delivered specifically in relation to the ASYE programme, less structured learning opportunities, and peer support sessions.

Your Practice Mentor can help to identify the many other learning opportunities that are likely to be available in the work setting (e.g. shadowing, observing, visiting, reading, researching on line, etc.). Training and peer support sessions specifically for NQSWs (facilitated by the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager) will be provided at regular intervals, to allow NQSWs across the service to meet, share and learn from each other and will also count as part of the protected learning time.



1.2 - Principles for case responsibility and support for NQSWs undertaking the ASYE programme in Cafcass

During your first year as an NQSW, following the ASYE programme, you will focus primarily on private law cases. (Please refer to [Glossary](#) for definitions) Should any case become more complex in nature than anticipated, you will be supported by your Practice Mentor to either relinquish the piece of work to a more experienced practitioner or helped to manage the case through co-working. In the event of you being invited to be involved in any public law case you will act in the capacity of observer only and this will be in agreement with all parties.

Throughout your first year you will be supported by an experienced FCA, acting as an Practice Mentor, who has been given the responsibility to support, guide and assist you to develop your skills, knowledge and experience.

Case responsibility will lie with you. In the initial stages or in complex private law cases the FCA may act as a co-worker.

Regular observations of casework practice, case recording, and case discussion will be carried out by your Practice Mentor in addition to all other structured QA processes already in place. Reports will be written and signed by yourself and will be a true account of the work that has taken place.

Practice and Learning reviews (PLR) will be carried out by your Service Manager, in line with the PLR requirements, and the Practice Mentor will, when required, provide case discussions in addition to the supervision sessions. In the initial stages you will be observed regularly carrying out direct contact and be given feedback to support your development.

Should you be required to provide evidence in court on the work you have undertaken in individual cases, your Practice Mentor will prepare, support and guide you throughout.

1.3 - Safeguarding

A key Cafcass function is that of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are involved in family court proceedings. Cafcass practice and policy in relation to safeguarding is clearly outlined in the Child Protection Policy (see links page).

As part of your induction process, ASYE Mentors will make sure that you are made aware of the Child Protection Policy and ensure that the relevant learning is completed. Where the safeguarding risks appear high the ASYE Mentor will ascertain whether the case is suitable for co-working or if it needs transferring to a more experienced practitioner. However, you will be expected to respond to risks that may come to light during the life of a case, in compliance with the Child Protection Policy. The Practice Mentor, Service Manager and yourself will carry the responsibility for ongoing monitoring, to assess whether the case is still appropriate for you to independently work on.



2. PROCESS FOR THE ASSESSED AND SUPPORTED YEAR IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME (ASYE)

This section considers the detail of the Induction and the ASYE programme.

2.1 – Induction

You may find that there is a gap between commencing employment and starting the ASYE programme. This is deliberate to give you a period of time to understand the role and responsibilities of a being a NQSW in Cafcass before introducing the requirements of the ASYE programme.

Induction into Cafcass

You will be given an induction period to familiarise yourself with Cafcass policies, purpose and structure, the role of the FCA, Business Services, IT, Health & Safety, the role of other agencies and resources.

Induction to ASYE Programme

During the initial stages of the ASYE programme the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager will invite you to the ASYE induction. This ASYE induction session introduces you to the organisation and considers the important differences between being a student social worker and undertaking the ASYE programme. The session will also consider the challenges and opportunities of the transition. This is in addition to the induction activities organised by the Service Manager and ensuring that the essential induction modules within Cafcass Learning are completed. This is followed by further NQSW sessions spread throughout the first year which will cover the full requirements of the ASYE programme. During the spring you will be invited to register with the preferred HEI to begin your academic CPD journey.

As soon as practical, after commencing the ASYE programme, the Practice Mentor, Service Manager, yourself and the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager will meet to outline the roles and responsibilities, consider the development plan, and sign the learning agreement. This meeting will also introduce the requirements of supervision and the evidence required to support you through to successfully completing the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment.

2.2 – NQSW undertaking the ASYE programme: Supervision

Supervision requirements

1. Every week for the first 6 weeks
2. Every two weeks until the 6 month point
3. Every month until the end of the ASYE programme.

These supervision targets must be met in-order for us to qualify for funding from Skills for Care who oversee the ASYE programme. It is mandatory for NQSWs to be supervised by a qualified social worker. A log of supervision dates must be maintained and recorded in the portfolio.

Whilst the casework supervision notes should be recorded as part of the performance management process, the Practice Mentor sessions should form part of the evidence building for your ASYE final portfolio (see links page).

Should the Practice Mentor and yourself experience difficulties at any time, this should be brought to the attention of the Service Manager and Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager at the earliest opportunity to ensure appropriate support is provided and procedures are followed.

2.3 - NQSW undertaking the ASYE programme: Workload

It is the responsibility of the Service Manager, in consultation with the ASYE Mentor, to identify and negotiate your caseload, in the context of individual learning needs. You will undertake your role as an [Officer of the Service](#); you may co-work aspects of this role with your Practice Mentor although the case remains your responsibility. Your work will be overseen at regular intervals and regular observations of contact will be conducted. All reports will be quality assured in line with Cafcass' procedures.

2.6 - Initial meeting

An initial three-way meeting between the Practice Mentor, Service Manager, yourself and the Practice Learning and Development Manager should take place to sign the learning agreement (see links page) and review the Development Plan.



2.7 - Review

A four-way meeting, between the Practice Mentor, Service Manager, yourself and the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager should take place after three, six and a final review at twelve months. At this meeting the NQSW's progress towards demonstrating capability of the PCF and the KSS will be reviewed and recorded. The Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager will chair and record these meetings. The NQSW will complete the Critical Reflective Log at these stages and the Record of Support and Progressive Development is completed by the Practice Mentor (see links page).

In the event of any identified difficulties a strategy and an action plan will be drawn up at this point in collaboration with the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager. The aim is to ensure that the NQSW is provided with appropriate resources and opportunities to enable them to address these difficulties.

2.8 – Evidence of capability

In the first year identifying and providing evidence of meeting the 10 KSS', is your responsibility, with the ASYE Mentor offering guidance, supervision and acting as a verifier. Evidence will be drawn from a number of sources:

- ✓ **Direct Observation** of practice on at least three occasions. One may be delegated to another suitably qualified worker who must provide the Practice Mentor with a written record of the observation.
- ✓ **Written feedback from colleagues, other professionals, co-workers, etc**
- ✓ **Feedback from children and families we work with.** It is essential that evidence includes feedback from the children and families. This may be in a variety of forms e.g. some children and families may prefer to have their views recorded or depicted in a picture. The aim is to provide up to 5 pieces of children and families feedback.
- ✓ **NQSW's written work.** This may include reports, records, letters, diary, assessments, case plans, reviews, although these are not submitted as part of the portfolio.
- ✓ **Process recordings of work with children and families, professionals, and meetings**
- ✓ **Team / individual discussions**
- ✓ **Supervision notes**
- ✓ **Agency, team or external presentations**
- ✓ **ASYE Mentor's assessment of conduct and performance at meetings**
- ✓ **NQSW's accounts of their learning**
- ✓ **NQSW's analysis of own work and progression**

The stages of the first-year assessment process should be:

- **Formative** - (interim assessments) by the Practice Mentor and the Service Manager who should sign off evidence of performance.
- **Summative** - (final) A collection of all the evidence at the completion of year one and a decision made as to whether you have achieved the required standard and therefore have passed the ASYE year.
- **Moderation** - A panel comprising of a member from the preferred HEI and the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager will consider the evidence to ensure that the judgments made are consistent. A further national moderation panel will consider the evidence and report to the employer on the overall assessment of your evidence but will not override the decision of the employer.

2.9 – Final review

The final review between yourself, your Practice Mentor, Service Manager and Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager will consider the evidence and ensure that sufficient evidence is available to ensure compliance with the standards. That evidence should include:

- ✓ three observations of practice
- ✓ Critical Reflective Log
- ✓ Final holistic assessment completed by the Practice Mentor –The Record of Support and Progressive Assessment
- ✓ Five pieces of feedback from children and families you have worked with
- ✓ Professional feedback
- ✓ KSS evidence grid

A final report will be prepared by the Practice Mentor to recommend whether you should progress onto the second year which should be signed off by the Service Manager, Head of Practice and Assistant Director. If the recommendation is for you to progress, a Professional Development Plan (PDP) that outlines your learning needs in the second year will be produced.

Should you not meet the required standard the Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager and the local HR Business Partner should be informed.

Progression

NQSWs start employment at Band 5.1 (Commencement) of Cafcass’ pay scale and, subject to performance, you will progress to Band 5.2 (Target) after 18 months. Once you’ve successfully completed the three-year programme your Service Manager will write a report linked to the KSS and PCF and you will then move to the Family Court Advisor role (Band 7.1).



3.PROCESS FOR THE SECOND YEAR OF THE NQSW PROGRAMME

The second year of the NQSW programme is designed for you to gain public law experience from the perspective of a Local Authority (LA). During your ASYE year together with your Service Manager and Practice Learning and Professional Development Manager will arrange a secondment to the LA. This can take the form of a 3-month, 6-month or 12-month secondment depending on business need and LA availability. Should the placement be 12 month the LA will be required to second a LA Social Worker to Cafcass. Should your placement be less than the 12 months an academic route is linked to the second year and the LA is unlikely to second a LA Social Worker to come to Cafcass.

3.1 - NQSW: Workload

Should you be seconded to the LA for 3mth or 6mths your case allocation will increase during this period as there is no expectation that a caseload reduction would be sanctioned. Should you be

seconded to the LA for 12 months there will be time allocated to close and handover cases in preparation for your secondment to the LA.

3.2 – 12 month Secondment to the LA

The LA will be aware of your development and learning needs through the production of a Professional Development Plan (PDP). Your team will also be preparing for the seconded LA Social Worker to come to Cafcass. You will be placed in a LA children's services team linked to the work of child protection.

A three way meeting between the LA, Service Manager and you will be arranged in the first 2 weeks of starting the secondment and then subsequently reviews at three months, 6 months and a final review at 12 months. Progress will be assessed against your PDP and social work standards.

Keeping in touch days, annual leave and any attendance at court directed hearings will be discussed at the earliest opportunity with the LA and Cafcass.

3.3 – 3 or 6 month Secondment to the LA

Should you be seconded to the LA, children's service team -child protection, for a shorter period than the 12 months, the requirement of the LA seconding a Social Worker to Cafcass is not expected.

A three-way meeting between the LA Service Manager, Cafcass Service Manager and you is to be arranged during the first 2 weeks of commencing the secondment. A review should be arranged at midpoint and at the conclusion of your secondment. Your progress will be assessed against your PDP and social work standards.

Annual leave and court hearings that have ordered you to attend should be discussed with the LA and Cafcass at the earliest opportunity for the days to be agreed.

During the second year you will be required to register with the preferred university to begin the academic module.

4.PROCESS FOR THE THIRD YEAR OF THE NQSW PROGRAMME

On your return from the LA the third and final year will be measured against the KSS and PCF which throughout your final year you will be expected to share evidence against. Your PLR's will address developmental needs as a NQSW and the progression to an FCA grade. A final report is written by your manager to recommend the transition to the FCA post.