

Approach social work participant shadowing guidance

This guidance provides information regarding your social worker shadowing experience. The two-day shadowing experience is an essential component of Approach Social Work. Shadowing is an opportunity for you to learn about the local authority you will be joining and about the role of a social worker in the local authority. The shadowing experience takes place in person and must be completed by **the end of June**. This document outlines essential information about shadowing, and the readiness for practice module and assessment which shadowing is a part of.

The purpose of the shadowing experience

The shadowing experience is designed to allow you to gain a better understanding of the role of social work, the local authority in which you will be working, and meet local authority colleagues. The shadowing experience is also a **compulsory part** of the module and assessment *FLSW921 Readiness for Practice* that you will be studying as part of the MA in Social Work. The module is designed to enable you to demonstrate basic communication skills, an ability to engage with service users, a capacity to work as a member of an organisation, a willingness to learn from feedback and supervision, and show basic social work values, knowledge and skills. You will not be able to pass the module without having completed the two-day shadowing experience, so it is essential that you schedule the days promptly.

Scheduling the days

Once you have received confirmation of your local authority allocation, you will subsequently be introduced to your local authority over email. This introduction will either be to your consultant social worker or the other members of staff in the local authority who are your key points of contact ahead of the programme starting. Whilst your local authority will take into account your availability when setting the days, we ask that you are as flexible as possible as they will be trying to arrange shadowing activities for all five applicants to the hub.

Prior to shadowing

Please make sure that you have read and reflected on the following documents prior to your shadowing days:



- [Social Work England's Professional Standards](#)
- [Professionals Capabilities Framework's Readiness for Direct Practice](#)

What will happen during the shadowing experience?

The two days will provide you with the opportunity to shadow your consultant social worker as they go about their daily work with children, families, and colleagues, as well as an opportunity to gain an understanding of the work of your local authority. You may have the opportunity to meet other Approach Social Work participants from the previous cohort who are currently working with your consultant social worker, and potentially shadow their work and talk to them about the programme. Please note that some of our consultant social workers are new for this cohort and therefore do not manage a live participant hub.

The shadowing should be arranged with your consultant social worker and will usually involve you shadowing them personally for one day. If they are not available, you will shadow another qualified social worker in the same team. The second day will typically be spent in a contrasting team to gain insight into adults' social work, or you may also be hosted by a children's services team showing you another aspect of social work.

During the shadowing experience your role as participant is to:

- Attend the local authority as agreed.
- Behave appropriately towards service users and professionals, in line with the [Professional Capabilities Framework](#).
- Take general notes of your experience and reflections, being mindful not to record any confidential or personal information about the service users you might meet or hear about.
- Request at the end of the two days that your consultant social worker completes and signs off your shadowing sign off form. You must file and save the signed copy somewhere safe as you will need to upload this as part of your readiness for practice assessment.

During the shadowing experience the consultant social worker's role is to:

- Ensure you are provided with local authority information (including confidentiality requirements) beforehand.



- Ensure you can shadow relevant and meaningful practice, e.g., inter-professional meetings, home/office visits, team meetings etc., so that you gain a rounded experience. Direct contact with service users is desirable, but participants must be aware that this may not be possible. The CSW and local authority will ensure that you are supervised appropriately during the two-day period. **You should not be left alone with any service users during shadowing days.**
- Sign your shadowing sign off form at the end of the two-day experience.

Shadowing and the readiness for practice portfolio assessment

As mentioned above, the shadowing experience forms part of your readiness for practice assessment. Other than completing your shadowing days, completing notes and reflections on your experience and getting your shadowing form signed, you are not required to start the written part of this assessment. The following is for information only to help you better understand what your first assessment on the programme will entail.

Before you are permitted to begin your Practice Learning Experience (the formal term for your placement) in your local authority practice hub, you must demonstrate that you are 'ready for practice'. The "FLSW921 Readiness for Practice" module, as part of the five-week readiness for practice teaching stage, is designed to ensure that you are ready for practice.

The readiness for practice portfolio assessment, which includes your time shadowing, is designed to ensure that you meet the threshold level of the *Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) at Readiness for Direct Practice level*. The readiness for practice assessment will require you to submit a four-part portfolio of evidence of 1,800 – 2,200 words. Typically, the portfolio comprises:

1. Written answers to a small number of questions allowing evaluation, reflection and analysis of the social work role.
2. A self-assessment of your strengths and areas for development along with a development plan.
3. A shadowing sign off form, completed and signed by your consultant social worker, which evidences that you attended your shadowing and that there are no concerns in relation to your readiness to practice.
4. GDPR eLearning completion certificate.



Once you have fully registered on the programme in July you will gain access to Moodle, our virtual learning environment, where the full readiness for practice portfolio assessment specification will be available for you. Likewise, once teaching commences you will be provided with further teaching and support to help you complete the assessment.

Remember you are not required to start the portfolio of evidence now. Rather, it is advisable that in order to prepare for this assessment you should take some notes during and following your shadowing experience to capture the context of your local authority and your learning about social work and yourself. Please make sure that any notes taken are anonymised and there is no information that could identify the individuals within or accessing the agency.