

ASYE Quality Assurance meeting report template	
Organisation (Name and type)	East London NHS Foundation Trust
Date of Meeting	15.1.2024
Who was involved in the meeting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Management – Mary Brazier • ASYE Co-ordinator – Katie Lander • ASYE Administrator – Alice Ball • Social Work Lead – Alex Green • NQSWs x 3 • Assessors x 4 • Peer Reviewer – Sue Williams • Skills for Care Personnel – Tim Nicholls
<p>Summary of key points from meeting discussions</p> <p>We would like to thank you all for your support with this review visit both the advance preparation and presentation of paperwork as well as the organisation of, and attendance on the day. It was very much appreciated and made the afternoon run very smoothly.</p> <p>A: The NQSW experience is central to the ASYE</p> <p>It was apparent from the paperwork and initial discussions that the scheme has been developed significantly over the last two years to support the NQSWs in their first year so that they can consolidate their former learning and become better reflective practitioners. This was supported by the discussions with the NQSWs who spoke highly of the support they receive from both their assessors and Katie and Alice. Both the assessors and candidates were pleased that all the necessary information and documents for completion are held within a Teams Channel which helps them remain organised and focussed.</p> <p>B: The ASYE programme is delivered in accordance with the ASYE framework and employer standards</p> <p>The programme follows the guidance framework proposed by Skills for Care. As the coordinator recognised that the 360 degree tool did not give the breadth of feedback required it was good to see proactive action to overcome that by way of the Equality Impact Assessment and EDI data which should inform future development of the programme. The Equality Impact Assessment is a good piece of practice in the delivery of the ASYE programme and the organisation has been asked to apply for its endorsement by the National Quality Assurance Panel so that it can be shared with the wider ASYE sector.</p> <p>Developing reflection is integral to this programme and is encouraged by way of reflective supervisions, forums and online forums. It was also very positive that the assessors are</p>	

motivated to undertake their role and in this programme they deliver some of these sessions as well as the one to one reflective supervisions.

C: The ASYE programme ensures that PQS and PCF underpin NQSW professional practice

We heard from NQSWs and assessors that they considered the the quality of training and resources was very good to support the development and assessment process. Reflective supervisions and peer reflective sessions form a large part of the material to include the PQS and PCF in the NQSWs' development journey. This outcome is facilitated by the organisation separating the critical reflection supervision element from management supervision. When working in a health care setting where social work language is not always prevalent and managers are not all social workers, this separation is potentially very beneficial.

D: The ASYE programme is integrated within the wider organisational system

The organisation has developed an ASYE Handbook for the programme's stakeholders, which gives NQSWs, Assessors and Managers necessary information about the programme and supports the programme delivery in the event that Katie/ Alex are unavailable. The guidance and updates circulated to managers via email ensures that managers are constantly reminded of the programme and the requirements therein. It was good to hear from Alex that there is a stable workforce with good retention and that NQSWs are a part of that retention figure. Indeed, as the social work strategy is currently being written the focus of NQSWs and social workers therein can be raised.

B:

It was apparent from discussions that some teams have a culture of working long hours which the NQSWs believed was also an expectation of them. It can be very difficult for a NQSW to not fall in line with team culture as there is a power imbalance between them and other workers. It would be helpful for assessors and managers to support NQSWs with their working hours and protected development time. In some instances, emergency work seems to take precedence over protected development time as NQSWs felt obliged to pick up case emergencies rather than be out of office and use their given development time for their ASYE. If managers are seen to give NQSWs permission to maintain their development time this may be easier for the NQSWs.

Individual NQSWs' workloads is often difficult to quantify dependent on the nature of the work and events. It would be helpful for assessors to have more guidance into workload expectations and be able to liaise with managers to establish an appropriate workload at each stage in the programme. When the assessors are in other teams this can be challenging as they may not have the close working relationships with managers of the NQSWs. Katie did raise the point that more confident NQSWs are able to raise this as an issue and that this may not be the case for everyone. It was also recognised that as not all managers are social workers, they may not have full insight into what is required to support someone through their ASYE.

Assessors were very positive about their roles but also recognised that organisational changes have an impact on all workers particularly NQSWs who may require more support and support of a consistent nature.

Assessors would like more specific feedback about their assessments and support so they can develop their practice to support effective and robust future assessments, which would reassure them. It seems they don't understand how their work is quality assured and perhaps meeting with them could overcome this shortfall. If they were able to attend and observe an internal

moderation panel and hear the discussions, they could gain more insight and perhaps feel more confident in their roles. A buddy system for new assessors could also be beneficial and reassuring.

For both NQSWs and assessors being employed by the NHS can present its challenges when the language used is more medically focussed and social work career planning is in its early stages. The East London NHS Foundation Trust developed a social work strategy in 2019 which sought to raise the focus of social work in the Trust and support the career planning for social workers. The ASYE forms part of that progression and also good staff retention.

Personal wellbeing was discussed, and questions were raised about NQSWs recovering their time back. Indeed, when we consider wellbeing, we need to look at the whole picture and perhaps give the NQSW permission to say if they feel overwhelmed, have too many cases or cannot take their development time. The possibility of a procedure for the NQSW and/or assessor escalating the issue of workload being too much was raised. All of these will impact their wellbeing, but they feel that team cultural expectations don't always allow this.

The EDI framework has been helpful in giving Katie and Alice some direction of where attention and/or change is needed. It is positive that they are aware of the additional support which overseas workers require to help them settle into the UK, hospital culture and expectations. This can be strengthened by evaluations and seeking feedback in a more timely manner.

The East London NHS Foundation Trust ASYE programme, although only in its second year is well established and supported by knowledgeable personnel who seem willing to listen and learn from the candidates and assessors. This is a strength in the delivery and development of the programme. Indeed, the current NQSWs and assessors are assets who can help develop the programme from their own experiences and the centrality of their voice is clearly recognised by the ASYE Co-ordinator.

It is positive that there is a celebratory event after completing the ASYE and it should raise the profile of the NQSWs' achievements whilst also offering another opportunity for conversations about the experience of key stakeholders as well as the impact of the programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Katie is very aware of some of the areas for development and had highlighted some of these prior to our discussions.

Recommendations

1.To work with the assessors to: (1) develop the method and processes for quality assuring their critical reflection supervision; and, (2) consider the nature and degree of the specific feedback they would like to receive from the Internal Moderation Panel; (3) consider developing the resources that would help them develop their review reports, eg annotated examples of reports; (4) to consider how to support new assessors and, if wanted, current assessors eg observing internal moderation panel/s, buddying system.

2.To consider ways of further developing and/ or amplifying the voice of NQSWs and assessors in developing the programme. For example, 1:1 meetings with NQSWs and/ or Assessors following confirmation of the internal panel decision using a semi-structured interview

3. To consider developing a protocol for NQSWs and Assessors to escalate issues in relation to the support arrangements, particularly workload and protected development time
4. To review with NQSWs and Team managers the system for ensuring that NQSWs are able to engage their full quota of protected development time and recover it, where appropriate.
5. To review with Team managers how best to develop the support provided to them in understanding the programme and the delivery of its support arrangements. For example, providing bespoke sessions for individual managers
6. To consider making an endorsement application to the National Quality Assurance Panel in relation to the programmes Equality Impact Assessment and also the use of Microsoft Teams Channel to hold the NQSWs' and Assessors' documentation

**Final version
agreed (date)**

February 2024