

## Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust

# Implementing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment in an NHS Trust

Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust was formed in April 2002 as one of only five mental health and social care NHS organisations in the country.

### Background

Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust offer a wide spectrum of mental health, social care and wellbeing services to meet the needs of adults of working age and older adults in Manchester. The Trust provides inpatient care from sites at North Manchester General Hospital and Wythenshawe Hospital.

We also provide care for those service users still living at home, through their six Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) based throughout the city which provide assessment, care and support for adults of working age and older adults with mental health problems.

The vision of the organisation is to improve and enhance mental and physical health and wellbeing, facilitate personal fulfilment and help people to make a positive contribution to their communities.

Social workers have been employed by the Trust since its beginning. They are led by a head of social work and 5 senior social workers who cover every area of the city. The senior social workers provide social work supervision to all the social workers and manage the city-wide Approved Mental Health Professional hub.

The organisation decided to support the ASYE in order to enhance the support to newly qualified social workers and thereby optimise the quality of social work provided by these employees.

### What we wanted to achieve

By introducing the ASYE programme, we wanted to offer additional support to newly qualified social workers (NQSW) recently employed by the Trust. In doing this we hoped to maximise their opportunity for learning within their first year of employment. This also involved them being observed in practice and assessed against the ASYE level indicators of the Professional Capabilities Framework.

In this way, we aimed to improve their practice and thereby improve the service delivered to people in need of mental health care and support in Manchester.

### What we did

By working in partnership with other organisations in the Greater Manchester ASYE partnership, we used the Greater Manchester ASYE handbook to form the basis of our programme. The senior social workers offered regular reflective supervision to the NQSWs and followed the programme of observations and regular reviews and assessments to support them to progress and develop.

We also worked in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), by sending our NQSWs on a Masters level module, Developing the Professional Practitioner, specifically designed to complement the ASYE.

In this way, they received high level teaching and academic tutoring to enable them to expand their knowledge and enhance their practice with service users.

At the end of the year, the NQSWs submitted a portfolio, which was read by a panel, including the head of social work, the ASYE coordinator and a member of the MMU module lead.

### What we achieved

To date we have supported 9 NQSWs to successfully complete the ASYE and are currently supporting 5 more. Those who have completed the programme have felt that they have benefitted personally and that their practice has been enhanced as a result of the support and supervision, which they received. They appreciated attending the university module and having the opportunity receive teaching related to improving their practice and to meet other NQSWs from other organisations in the area and share their experience.

Through providing this programme, the ASYE coordinator has attended the Greater Manchester ASYE partnership meetings and has made links with others involved in social work Continuing Professional Development in the area. This in turn has meant that the Trust are now linked with the activities of these groups and this has enhanced the profile of the Trust as a provider of social care services in the region.

### What we learnt

We have learnt that it is vitally important to support and encourage NQSWs and that providing additional support to recently qualified social workers maximises their opportunities for development and practice improvement, which in turn improves service provision and outcomes for service users.

“The ASYE encouraged meaningful reflection and supervision from the very start of my career. It is a good framework for professional development.”

Newly qualified social worker

We have also learnt that it is important to support the assessors in the ASYE programme as the quality of the support and assessment they provide, is closely linked to the support they receive from the programme organisers.

The feedback we have received from the NQSWs, who have undertaken the programme, is that it has given them the opportunity for structured reflection about their practice. They have felt supported by the additional supervision they have been given with an experienced social worker and this has enabled them to further develop their skills and knowledge. This in turn has strengthened their professional identity and enhanced the status of social work within the trust.

We have been involved in the Greater Manchester ASYE partnership and this has improved our delivery of the ASYE programme. By taking part in area moderation panels and regular meetings, we have been able to update our ASYE handbook in line with recent changes, provide guidance to our assessors about their role and further support our NQSWs to get the most out of the programme. We also offer support to local voluntary organisations in terms of guidance and inclusion in our internal moderation panel.

“The ASYE provided structure and support in the first year of a demanding and difficult job. It promoted supportive relationships and continuing professional development”

Newly qualified social worker

### For more information please contact

Catherine Sainsbury - ASYE Coordinator  
[Catherine.sainsbury@mhsc.nhs.uk](mailto:Catherine.sainsbury@mhsc.nhs.uk)

Mary Smith - Head of Social Work  
[Mary.smith@mhsc.nhs.uk](mailto:Mary.smith@mhsc.nhs.uk)

### Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care has helped to develop the ASYE process and provides some practical resources and funding potential for employers involved in providing adult social care.

#### Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

The website provides an overview of the process, how employers can register their NQSWs and other support and guidance.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork)

#### Continuing to develop Social Workers

Skills for Care has produced core principles, resources and guidance to support employers to develop the social work workforce.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/swcpd](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/swcpd)

#### Action Learning for Social Workers

Action Learning facilitation is a useful support package for NQSWs undertaking the ASYE. The resources include a number of videos which provide the views of managers and facilitators.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork)

Skills for Care  
West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP  
telephone 0113 245 1716  
email [info@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforcare.org.uk)  
web [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

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