



# Your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

A guide for newly qualified social workers  
2021/2022

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**GREAT THINGS**



## Welcome from John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

I am delighted that you are thinking about starting your social work career in our **Social Work Academy**.

By completing your social work qualification you have gained lots of useful knowledge, skills, and tools, as well as indispensable experience. Your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) will give you a strong base for your career by ensuring that you get the right support to develop your skills, knowledge and professional confidence further.



**I believe the best place to start your career is in our innovative Social Work Academy.**

You will be based in a social work team undertaking meaningful work with the support of your Team Manager, Social Work Consultant and team members. Alongside this, you will have a dedicated **Practice Lead, we have 2 in Durham**, who will support you throughout your ASYE, providing **regular reflective Action Learning Sets and 1:1 supervision**, ensuring you have opportunities to network with other NQSWs and supporting you to produce your portfolio. Your Practice Lead will work alongside your Team Manager to ensure that your **caseload is protected**, and that you have **protected time for development and learning. You will also have the support of an Enhanced Practitioner who will support you to embed your learning whilst in your team**, See pages 6-8 to find out more.

You will be joining Durham at a very exciting time. We are focusing on creating an environment where social workers can practice as effectively as possible. We have embedded Signs of Safety into our practice with children and families and the implementation of the Liquid Logic case management system, we are supporting our workforce to become more **Trauma Informed**, as one of our Newly Qualified Social Workers we provide you with a range of **Direct Work Resources** to support your practice.

We are looking for NQSWs who want to build a **career** in Durham. From the start of your ASYE you will have a **permanent contract**. As the 7th largest local authority in England, and the largest in the North East we offer excellent opportunities for career progression. Our **development pathway** (page 5) shows how we will support you to meet your career goals. We have a clear **professional development offer** (reviewed annually) which includes a wide range of learning and development opportunities, and we make a commitment to you of **5 days a year** to spend undertaking continuing professional development (CPD).

We are looking for NQSWs who want to be part of our **dynamic, energetic and creative** workforce, and who aspire to make sure our **families are supported** and that our **children and young people are safe and able to reach their full potential**. In Durham, children, young people and families will be at the heart of everything you do. You can find out what our children and young people want from you on page 9, and see what children, young people and families say about us on page 10.

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# Why work with children and families in County Durham?

County Durham is a great place for child and family social workers. You will benefit from:

- Competitive salary and contributory career average salary pension scheme
- Recruitment and retention allowance in our Families First teams
- A possible attractive relocation package in our Families First teams
- Practice educator payments
- Car salary sacrifice scheme
- Interest-free travel loans
- Discounted gym membership

## **A senior leadership team that listens**

- Opportunities for meaningful communication including regular briefings, and practice weeks where senior managers spend time with you in your workplace
- A culture of high expectations, high challenge and high support

## **Career progression**

- As the 7th largest local authority in England, and the largest in the North East we offer excellent opportunities for career progression, whether broadening your experience as a social worker or stepping into management
- Aspiring managers programme to help you step up to the next level, whether that is social work consultant, team manager, or head of service

## **Professional development**

- Development pathways for every stage of your career
- A clear professional development offer
- Funded specialist training
- A commitment to offer you 5 days a year for continuous professional development (CPD)

## **Celebrating social work**

- We make sure you get positive feedback about the things you do well
- We have regular events to celebrate your

achievements such as completing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment or progression to senior social worker

## **Holiday**

- 26 days holiday per year, increasing to 31 after five years continuous Local Government service.
- Option to purchase up to 10 additional days annual leave per year through our salary sacrifice scheme.

**One of my favourite things about working for Durham County Council is the people.**

**There's a great team spirit and people are very willing to help each other. We encourage a supportive atmosphere and that permeates across all of our teams.**

**Haley**

## **Flexible working**

- Laptop/tablet and mobile phone to help you work wherever you can access wifi
- Freedom to arrange your working day and up to 13 days flexi leave per year
- Opportunities for part time/job share working and for flexible retirement

## **Family life**

- Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave
- Salary sacrifice policy for childcare vouchers
- Dependent leave for carers

## **Support when you need it**

- Physiotherapy
- Confidential telephone counselling
- Occupational Health service

## **Opportunity to join a trade union**

# Introducing the Social Work Academy

## Social worker

You can go through the progression process, taking you to senior social worker with a significant increase in salary, from as early as 18 months. Progression recognises and celebrates your ability to work consistently at a higher level of responsibility with more complex cases.

## Social worker

You can develop your career in Durham – whether you want to develop your expertise, move into management or progress to another level of management. Our aspiring managers programme will give you a comprehensive professional development offer, including 5 days a year for continuing professional development.

Social worker	Senior social worker (post progression)	Social work consultant	Team manager
<b>Grade 9</b> Progress through increments to top of grade	<b>Grade 11</b> Progress through increments to top of grade	<b>Grade 13</b> Progress through increments to top of grade	<b>Grade 14</b> Progress through increments to top of grade
£28,672	£33,782	£39,880	£42,821
£29,577	£34,728	£40,876	£43,857
£30,451	£35,745	£41,881	£44,863
£31,346	£36,922	£42,821	£45,859
£32,234	£37,890	£43,857	£46,845
<b>Note:</b> Recruitment and retention allowance of £2,500 (pro rata) annually paid as a lump sum in Families First teams (following completion of ASYE and subject to annual review against market conditions).			

## Recruitment and retention allowance

**Social workers (following completion of ASYE),** senior social workers, social work consultants or team managers joining our Families First teams will receive a recruitment allowance of £2,500 (pro rata), paid as a lump sum.

Social workers (following completion of ASYE), senior social workers, social work consultants or team managers who have worked in one of our Families First teams for a year or more will receive an annual retention allowance of £2,500 (pro rata), reviewed annually against market conditions.

## Salary at appointment

Salary is agreed with newly appointed social workers, social work consultants and team managers, based on relevant experience.

## Practice educator allowance

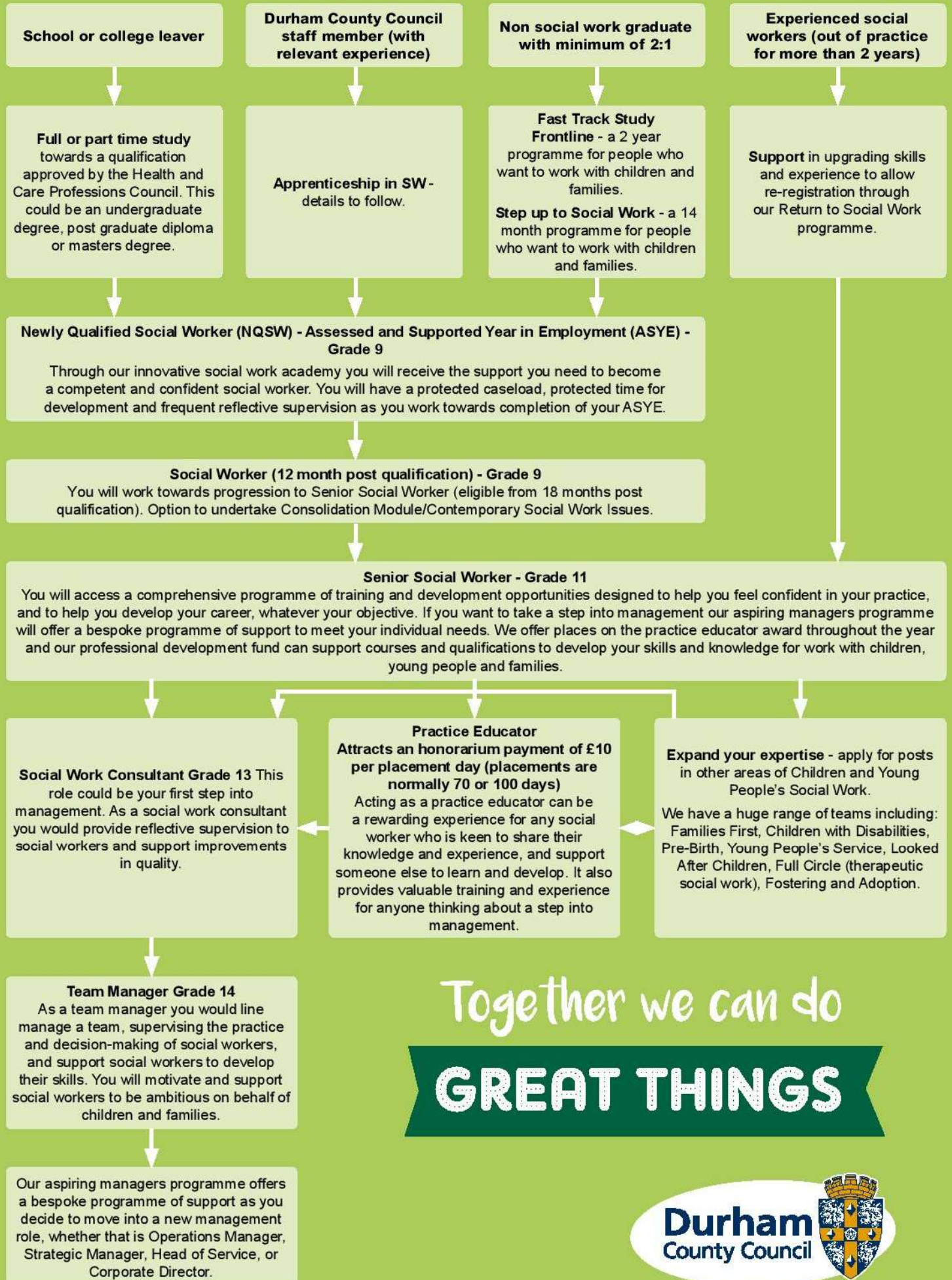
We encourage our social workers to become practice educators and support students. You will receive an allowance of £10 per placement day, normally £700-£1,000 per placement (normally 70 or 100 days in length).

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# Careers in children's social work in Durham County Council



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## Introducing the Social Work Academy



### Throughout your time in the Academy you will receive:

- ✓ High levels of support, offered by a dedicated Practice Lead.
- ✓ Reduced caseloads, with a phased approach to increasing the volume and complexity of your workload over the course of the year.
- ✓ An extensive programme of learning and development opportunities, with protected time to participate in them.
- ✓ Regular reviews so that you know how you are progressing.

### During your first 3 months you will:

- ✓ Get to know your team by attending team meetings, becoming familiar with team processes, shadowing workers etc.
- ✓ Commence the ASYE programme guided by your Practice Lead, with the oversight of your Team Manager and Social Work Consultant.
- ✓ Access individual and group reflective sessions/supervision (weekly for the first 6 weeks, followed by fortnightly). Access reflective Action Learning Sets monthly with other NQSW's.
- ✓ Take on appropriate work designed to develop your competence and confidence, with the support of your Practice Lead, Team Manager and Social Work Consultant, and other professionals where appropriate.
- ✓ Undertake essential learning and development activities and become familiar with key

### During months 4-12 you will:

- ✓ Maintain links to the Social Work Academy until you complete of the ASYE programme.
- ✓ Continue to receive reflective supervision from your Practice Lead, individually and as part of a reflective group.
- ✓ Receive regular supervision from the manager of your allocated team, and from existing arrangements in the team for group supervision.
- ✓ Have the support of your Practice Lead to meet the demands of the ASYE programme, carrying out observations of your practice, reviewing your work products and assessing your progress.
- ✓ Produce a portfolio to showcase your development throughout your first year in practice.



## Learning and development opportunities

During your ASYE your learning and development opportunities will include:

- ✓ A thorough planned induction.
- ✓ A programme of informal reflective workshops and group supervisions which bring NQSWs together. The workshops are designed to help you to gain a more thorough understanding of the service (through a programme of talks and activities), and to give you the opportunity to network with your peers.
- ✓ Participating in training and group supervision to support you to embed Signs of Safety in your social work practice.
- ✓ A programme of classroom based courses delivered by knowledgeable and experienced professionals covering key topics including “Safeguarding Processes”, “Assessment and Intervention”, “Engaging with Families” and “Neglect”.
- ✓ A wide range of e-learning courses including “Safeguarding Children”, “Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation”, “Domestic Violence” and “Parental Mental Health”.

## Celebrating completion of your ASYE

We know that completing your ASYE is a significant achievement. We recognise this with a financial reward (currently increasing your pay by an increment from your panel date), and by an annual celebration event for all our social workers who have completed the ASYE.

## What do our NQSWs say?

*“I have recently completed my AYSE with the support of Durham County Council’s Academy. The Academy has offered me continuous support during my first year of practice and a safe place to reflect on my practice, exploring cases and reflection on my decision making.*

*The supervision has helped me to explore my decision making process and helped me to grow in confidence. The group supervisions offered by the Academy gave me invaluable peer support and a safe place to discuss insecurities and the emotions that undoubtable every social worker feels within their first year. **This support has helped me to grow into the kind of Social Worker I want to be now and in the future.***

*As a student I was worried about the volume of work that the AYSE portfolio would entail and how I would manage this whilst managing a demanding caseload. In reality, with forward planning this portfolio completes itself alongside your caseload as you are able to evidence your development with the work completed within these cases.*

*During my first year I have held a variety of cases ranging from child in need, supervision orders, pre-birth assessments and court work. The Academy have supported me throughout this workload and with the staged capped case load throughout the first year, this allows you to find your feet at a reasonable pace.*

*I look forward to a long a happy future with Durham.” (Emma, NQSW)*

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## Introducing our Practice Leads

In our Social Work Academy you will receive the support of one of our dedicated Practice Leads throughout your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment. We will:

- ✓ Work alongside your team manager to ensure that your caseload is protected, and that you have protected time for development and learning.
- ✓ Provide regular reflective supervision, both on an individual basis and in groups with other Newly Qualified Social Workers.
- ✓ Undertake observations of your practice and assessments of your progress.
- ✓ Support you to produce your portfolio.

### Jane Farrell

Jane qualified as a Social Worker in 2003, being awarded a Diploma in Social Work and then progressing to complete the BSc (Hons) from Northumbria University.

After qualifying Jane initially worked in a children and families statutory Team, working with children, young people, and their families in a social work role. Jane has worked in a range of statutory social work roles in Darlington, Stockton, Sunderland, and County Durham, including Assessment, Early Help, Parenting Projects and she has also worked as a Team Manager. Jane has also experience working as an Independent social worker with experience of completing Form F assessments and PAMs assessments. Jane is also a qualified teacher holding a PGCE in Education and is passionate about helping Newly Qualified Social Workers to build a strong foundation that will equip them for a fulfilling long career.



### Gladys Mante-Nyadu

Gladys qualified as Social Worker in 2007 and was awarded BA (Hons) from Teesside University. After her qualification and prior to moving to Durham, she worked for many years as a senior social worker for a Hartlepool Borough Council in the North East, working with children and their families, completing Child Protection work, Child in Need, care proceedings and dealt with varying degrees of complexities and caseloads.

Gladys holds a Post Qualifying Award in Specialist Social Work with Children, Young People and their families and carers. As a Practice Educator for many years, Gladys has had a number of social work students in placement, supporting them in their social work journey. She has also been a regular visitor at a local university, delivering courses and sharing her experience with final social work students. Gladys has the passion of supporting newly qualified social workers and helping them build their confidence in their roles.



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# "What do I want from my social worker?"

## Keeping in touch

"Don't just ring or visit when something has gone wrong or when you have bad news to tell me."

"Give me your contact numbers and email so I can get in touch at any time."

## Open Minded

"Be open minded and non-judgemental."

## Open, Honest and Trustworthy

"Don't make promises you can't keep."

"Tell me the truth when I first come into care."

## Committed to children and young people

"Stays with me throughout my life in care."

"Makes time for me. I want to do fun things with you too!"

## Listens/Makes changes

"Take all my views seriously."

## Reliable feedback

"Give me feedback even if you can't do anything about what I asked."

## Flexible

"Be willing to try and find a time when I am not busy."

"Ask me when and where I want to meet."

## Respect

"Respect everyone."

## Approachable and Easy to talk to

"Be somebody I feel I can talk to."

## Organised

"Be prepared for our meetings."



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# “What children, young people and families say about us”

“How can we ever thank you enough, for all the help and support you have given us and more so [child]. You have been extremely supportive through this difficult time and we appreciate all your hard work. Your commitment is second to none. We now have one happy little grandson.”

(grandparent)

“You helped me feel more confident. You helped us get a new house and start our new life together without being scared all the time.

You helped our mum by showing her you were there for [brother] and me, which made us more relaxed and happier with our lives. You helped [brother] and I trust in people again. We are going to miss you, but we are glad to be moving and starting our new life.”

(young person)

“I liked her because she brought fun activities to help the family.” (child)

“She supported me at a low point in my life.” (parent)

“Thank you for always making sure I’m happy and safe, and for taking very good care of me.” (child)

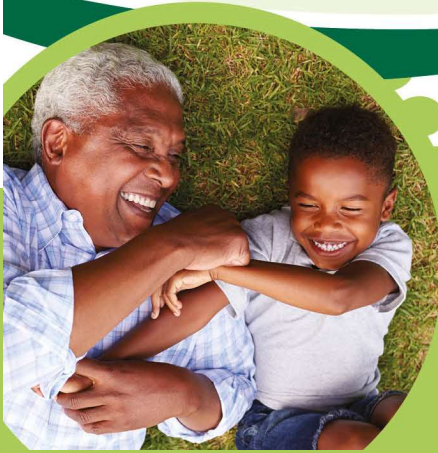


“She has never once said to me that she doesn’t think I can change or that I am a bad parent... I have gained a lot of insight about how my children look at things. I can see now that they are happier and settled.”

(parent)

“She was really nice. She always listened to me when I talked to her.” (child)

“The work she has done for us has been helpful in getting our lives back on track.” (parent)



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