Practice learning in non-statutory organisations

Planning workload and learning opportunities

Social work students are placed in a variety of third sector, private or independent organisations to undertake at least some of the practice learning part of their course. Wherever students are placed they are required to meet the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE).

The generic nature of the SiSWE means they can be applied to different contexts and in most organisations students will be able to meet all of them. However, if there are specific standards which you don't think can be met in your organisation, it's helpful to explore this with the person arranging practice learning. This might be a practice learning coordinator in your own organisation, a coordinator in the university or the practice educator who will supervise the student.

You may decide that students will require additional work from another team, either within or outwith your own organisation, to make sure all the SiSWE can be met. This can provide a very rich learning experience for students, providing they are well supported.

Before you start planning for practice learning, it's helpful to have a copy of the SiSWE and look at the heading of each of the six standards. This will help you think about how the work students might undertake in your organisation will enable them to meet the SiSWE.

We've broadly summarised the range of learning opportunities students will need below.

A summary of learning opportunities required for social work students

- Undertaking assessments of peoples' needs (informal discussions or formal assessments).

- Developing opportunities for early intervention and prevention.

- Assessing and managing risk (to self and others) and enabling positive risk taking.

- Supporting the wellbeing, safety and protection of vulnerable adults and children.

- Working in partnership with people to meet their support needs.

- Planning, reviewing and evaluating plans.

- Working in crisis situations (or working with people to prevent crisis).

- Working in group settings (family groups, professional groups, informal or formal groups).

- Collaborating with other professionals.

- Recording and report writing.

- Contributing to managing resources and services.

- Being involved in decision making forums.