

Your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

A guide for Newly Qualified Social Workers

2024



#Nothing about us without us

Why work with children and families

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

- A really wonderful assessed and supported first year in employment (ASYE) offer with additional support in year two. This includes a taught programme assessed by portfolio, a beautiful set of direct work resources to support you in practice, action learning, a protected caseload, a team based enhanced practitioner for mentoring and a dedicated practice lead to support you every step of the way
- Signs of safety as our embedded strengths based, trauma informed practice model and liquid logic as our case recording system
- Working in a supportive and experienced team with fantastic wrap around support from our social work academy
- A permanent contract from day 1, £2,000 (pro-rata) welcome payment, and eligibility for progression to our senior social worker grade at the end of your ASYE
- Recruitment and retention allowance of £2,500 (pro-rata) in our Families First, Children with Disabilities and Pre-Birth teams
- Practice educator payments
- Excellent wellbeing support including: wellbeing portal, employee assistance, counselling and occupational health support
- Car salary sacrifice scheme
- A local government pension scheme
- Interest-free travel loans
- Discounted gym membership and a range of other useful employee benefits

Recently we asked our team why people stayed and what was good about Durham and feedback to our principal social worker was:

'We stay because of strong leadership and an open culture where you can ask questions. Supportive. An organisation that focuses on children rather than services. The opportunity to work in specialist services and we appreciate flexible/hybrid working'.

In our most recent Ofsted Durham's Children's Services received a judgement of good overall and leadership was described as outstanding noting that 'Leaders in Durham have an acute knowledge of the needs of children in Durham' and that 'There has been a relentless focus and deliberate drive to working longer and more intensively with families, in order to achieve real sustainable change, and to improve children's circumstances in the longer term, preventing multiple re-referrals back to the service'. 'Leaders intelligently recognise and understand the needs of Durham children and build supportive services around them' and 'Leaders and managers at all levels continually strive for excellent social work practice and are not complacent.' We would love you to be part of this journey with us.

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
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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
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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)
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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 and progression to senior social worker
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Holiday

- 27 days holiday per year, increasing to 32 after five years continuous local government service.
 - Option to purchase up to 10 additional days annual leave per year through our salary sacrifice scheme.
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Hybrid and 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
 - We encourage social workers to consider flexible working options such as compressed hours, part-time/job share and flexible retirement
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Family life

- Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave
 - Dependent leave for carers
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Support when you need it

- Physiotherapy
 - Confidential wellbeing portal, telephone and video counselling
 - Occupational health Service
 - A really fantastic staff wellbeing and employee assistance programme
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Opportunity to join a trade union

Introducing the Social Work Academy

Social worker

As a newly qualified social worker you will receive additional protection and support to achieve and complete your ASYE in your first 12 months. In Durham we have extended the support you receive into your second year to help you to consolidate your learning and achieve progression. We are really proud of the support and protection we offer you as a NQSW - our programme is outstanding.

You will receive a welcome payment of £2,000 as a lump sum when you start your career with us, whatever part of the service you work in. You will become eligible for progression, taking you to senior social worker with a significant increase in salary as soon as you complete your ASYE. Progression recognises and celebrates your ability to work consistently at a higher level of responsibility with more complex cases.

Senior social worker

You can develop your career in Durham – whether you want to develop your expertise or move into 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)	Enhanced practitioner	Social work consultant	Team manager
Grade 9	Grade 11	Grade 12	Grade 13	Grade 14
Progress through increments to top of grade	Progress through increments to top of grade	Progress through increments to top of grade	Progress through increments to top of grade	Progress through increments to top of grade
£33,024	£38,223	£41,418	£44,428	£47,420
£33,945	£39,186	£42,403	£45,441	£48,474
£34,834	£40,221	£43,421	£46,464	£49,498
£35,745	£41,418	£44,428	£47,420	£50,512
£36,648	£42,403	£45,441	£48,474	£51,515

Note: Welcome payment of £2,000 as a lump sum when you start your career with us. Recruitment and retention allowance of £2,500 (pro rata) annually paid as a lump sum in Families First and other eligible teams (following completion of ASYE and subject to annual review against market conditions).

Figures correct as of November 2024, pay award pending

Welcome payment

As a newly qualified social worker joining any of our teams to complete your ASYE you will receive a welcome payment of £2,000 (pro-rata), paid as a lump sum.

Recruitment and retention allowance

Social workers (following completion of ASYE), senior social workers, social work consultants or team managers joining our Families First and other eligible 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 and other eligible 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

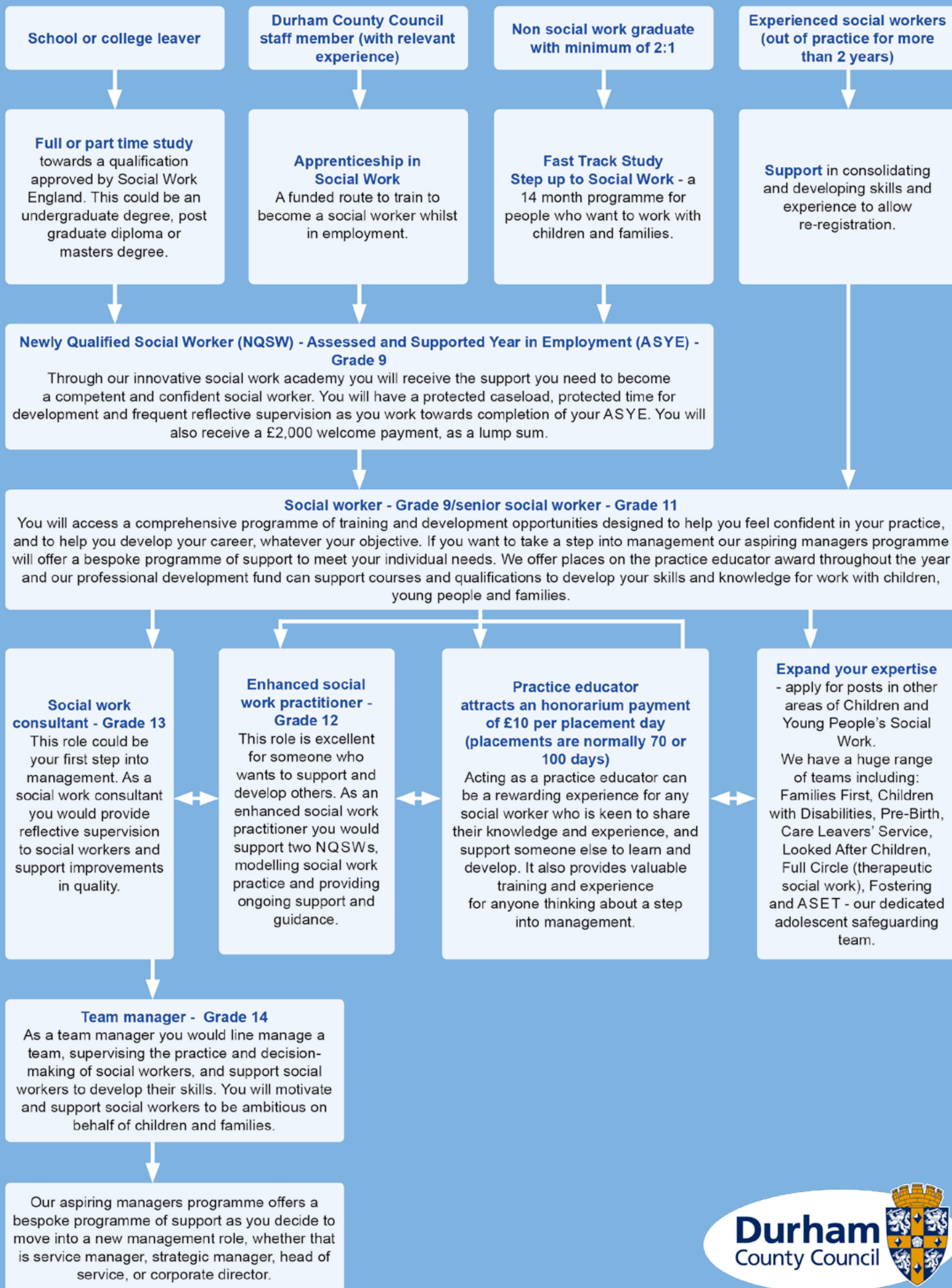
Salary is agreed with newly appointed social workers, social work consultants and team managers, based on relevant experience and existing pay.

Practice educator allowance

We love practice educators, it is such a rewarding role, keeps you fresh and invests in the workforce of the future. 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).



Careers in children's social work in Durham County Council



Throughout your time in the academy you will receive:

- ✓ High levels of support, offered by a dedicated practice lead in the academy and an enhanced practitioner as mentor in the team.
- ✓ 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, reflective space 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 enhanced practitioner.
- ✓ Access individual, group supervision and action learning (weekly for the first 6 weeks, followed by fortnightly).
- ✓ Take on appropriate work designed to develop your competence and confidence, with the support of your practice lead, team manager and enhanced practitioner, and other professionals where appropriate.
- ✓ Undertake essential learning and development activities and become familiar with key processes, evidence based tools and Signs of Safety Assessment Model.

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 action learning set with peers who understand.
- ✓ 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 and enhanced practitioner 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 and be observed in practice with feedback.
- ✓ Support and CPD continues into year 2 and 3 as you become a senior social worker, undertake more complex case work and develop your career.

On completion of your 1st year in practice we will support you in your 2nd year, you will:

- ✓ Be offered monthly reflective sessions to support you in your 2nd year of practice and continuing links with the Social Work Academy.
- ✓ Continue to receive support from your Practice Lead.
- ✓ Receive regular supervision from the manager of your allocated team, and from existing arrangements in the team for group supervision.
- ✓ Training opportunities to build on you knowledge and skills to undertake more complex case work and develop your career.

Learning and development opportunities

During your ASYE your learning and development opportunities will include:

- ✓ A thorough planned induction.
- ✓ A programme of informal reflective workshops, action learning 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 wide range of training and workshops including Court Skills, Domestic Abuse level 1, Graded Care Profile Training, Trauma and Attachment Training and many more.

Ongoing support in year two

We have successfully developed a bespoke training programme to support you in year two of your social work journey. Here you will build further on your knowledge and skills, completing Level 2 Domestic Abuse, Dr Jessica Taylor 'Victim Focus' training, and opportunities to become a link worker in preparation for undertaking your Practice Education Award.

Celebrating completion of your ASYE

We know that completing your ASYE is a significant achievement, an event for all of our social workers completing their ASYE is held to celebrate their achievement. We want you to be proud of your profession and we are here to support you every step of the way.

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)

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. Jane is also a qualified and experienced practice educator.

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.

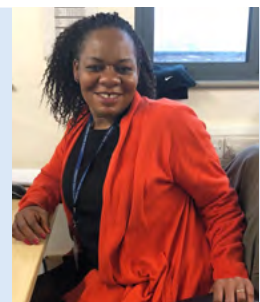
Jane is also a qualified teacher holding a PGCE in Education and is passionate about helping Newly Qualified Social Workers to build a strong foundation that will equip them for a fulfilling long career.



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, 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 qualified 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 a passion for supporting Newly Qualified Social Workers and helping them build their confidence in their roles.



Please do not hesitate to contact us for an informal discussion please contact socialworkacademy@durham.gov.uk