

Guidance for the Social Worker on the Student's Shadowing Experience

Thank you for agreeing to have a social work student shadowing you. Shadowing is a vital part of professional development for students. It enables them to observe the statutory context of social work and the complexity of the work involved. The Universities very much see shadowing as the first step in assessing whether students are aware of the challenges of the social work role and can reflect and learn from what they have observed during the two days shadowing they complete with yourselves.

We would ask that they be as fully involved in your day-to-day work as data protection and confidentiality allows. Being able to observe duty, home visits, meetings with other professionals, phone conversations, team meetings and so on is extremely useful experience. Students also need to see the full range of paperwork you use and to reflect on the standard of written work that is required.

We envisage the shadowing opportunity providing opportunities for the student to observe and discuss with you the remit of the team as well as the following:

- The remit of the team
- The client group
- The other professionals who are worked with
- The area that the team covers
- Example of the type of referral that the team would respond to.
- The main roles undertaken in the team
- The most interesting / rewarding aspects of the role
- The most challenging aspects of the role
- The most contentious issues when trying to work and support clients
- To what extent are resources an issue.

In addition, the student needs to attend a meeting, which help them understand the social work role. This could be a combination of team meetings, client meeting or meeting with other professionals. This can be more difficult to do now with less time spent in the office, online meetings are fine. While we know this can take time to facilitate, students have identified that this is really central to them understanding the social work role in the first year.

In most cases, students will be keen and enthusiastic to learn. However, if there are concerns about student behaviour during the shadowing experience, we do really need to know about it. We ask you to confirm there have been no issues on the **Confirmation Statement** [HERE](#) needs to be submitted once the shadowing has been completed.

Examples of concerns may be:

- Student is late and has not contacted you as to why
- Student appears disinterested and disengaged in the conversation
- The student is unable to reflect on the subjects discussed
- The student is inappropriately dressed for professional practice
- The student does not follow advice e.g. when observing
- The student offers inappropriate comments during conversations or meetings



We hope that this is helpful in relation to the shadowing experience and please contact us to discuss.

