

# NQSW Supported Year in Falkirk



## How it Works

The Supported Year will last one calendar year for full time employees from the date they're registered as social workers with the SSSC, and 18 months for part time workers.

## Relationships

There's a real emphasis on working relationships as part of the Supported Year in Falkirk. Supervisors and NQSWs should take care to build up good, strong, honest working relationships.

Supervisors need to give developmental feedback to the NQSW throughout their first year of practice and having a good working relationship will help facilitate this.

## Learning Styles

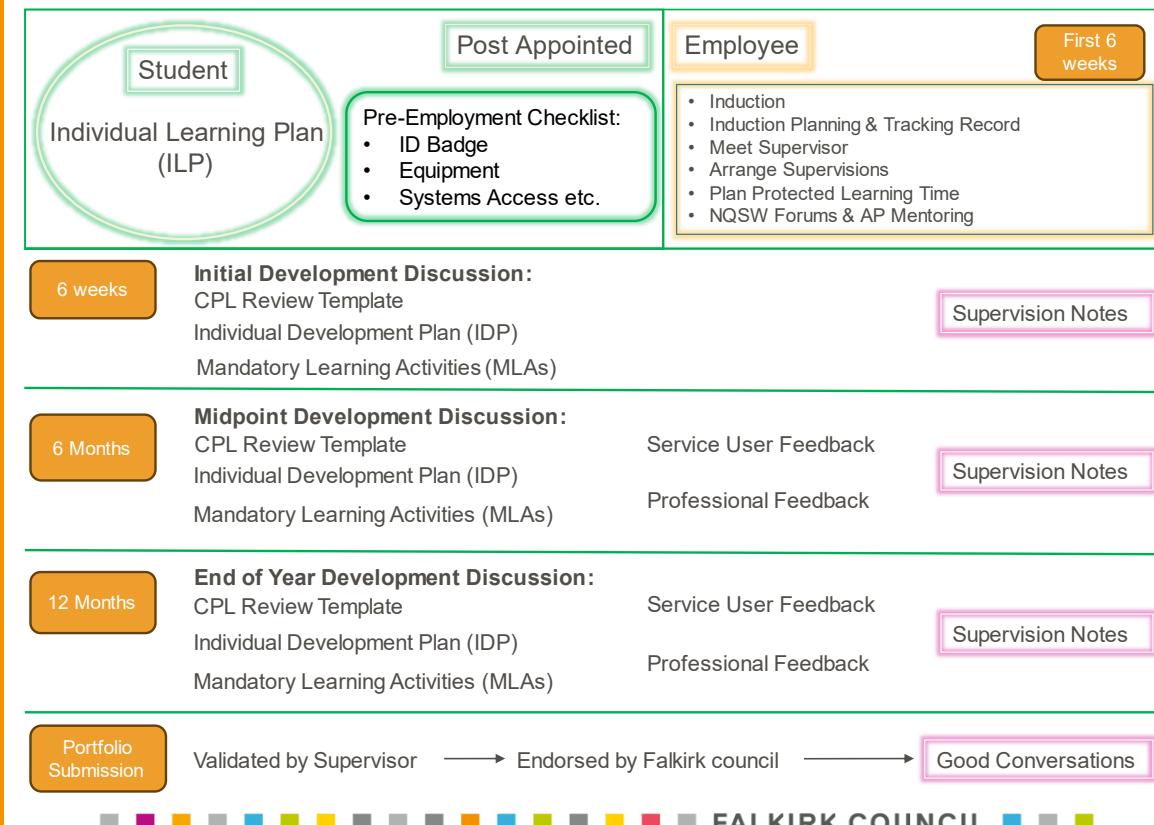
NQSWs are being encouraged to identify their learning needs and learning styles from the outset of their journey as a NQSW in Falkirk. This means that it's important to reflect on *how* you best learn, *how* you consolidate your learning, and *how* you communicate this to your Supervisor.

## Supervisions

The Supported Year process should sit alongside the existing Supervision arrangements for NQSWs. This means that we should not be arranging additional meetings and Supervisions would incorporate these processes within them.

It's important that these processes work side-by-side as they both aim to achieve the same outcomes in terms of professional development.

The image below is a roadmap of the NQSW Supported Year in Falkirk. There are links at the end of the document to access the original documents from the SSSC.



## Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

NQSWs joining Falkirk Council should be supported by their university to create an [Individual Learning Plan](#) which outlines their strengths, experience, and areas for further development. This document should be used to reference the starting point of NQSWs professional learning journey as they begin working with Falkirk Council.

There might be occasions where a NQSW does not have this, and we would encourage the NQSW to reach out to their university or take time to reflect and take stock of their learning needs as they begin their new post in the Supported Year.

An example ILP is stored in the Supported Year Teams Channel.

## Feedback Forms

NQSWs need to gather feedback at various stages of their Supported Year to evidence their learning. Feedback is an essential part of professional development.

Feedback should be collected for the Midpoint and End of Year Development Discussions, but are also supportive outside of these meetings.

Click on this link for [Feedback from people who use services, their family and carers](#) and this link for [Feedback from professionals](#).

## CPL Review Template

[The CPL Review Template](#) is one of the main documents the NQSWs should be filling in as part of their portfolio of evidence. The Document is comprised of a front sheet, the Initial Development Discussion, Midpoint Development Discussion and End of Year Development Discussions.

NQSWs should take time to fill in these documents in advance of their meetings with their Supervisor.

It is essential that Supervisors provide honest and evidenced feedback to NQSWs within their CPL Review Template. There is a feedback section designed for this.

An example CPL Review Template stored in the [Supported Year Teams Channel](#).

## Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The Individual Development Plan should be used to plan out which activities are going to be used by the NQSW to progress their learning and development. This might include training, mandatory learning activities, shadowing etc.

This should be used similarly to a Support Plan and should be reviewed at each Supervision.

The Individual Development Plan is located at the end of the CPL Review Template docs as an appendix.

An example Individual Development Plan is stored in the Supported Year Teams Channel.



# Roles and Responsibilities

## NQSW

Complete the [Induction Planning and Tracking Record](#) alongside your SSSC portfolio. This is a requirement to be an employee of Falkirk Council.

Have the overall responsibility for producing their portfolios for their registration with the SSSC. All the portfolio documents can be accessed via the [SSSC NQSW Website](#).

Work with their Supervisor to ensure either one half day per week or one day per fortnight is used for Protected Learning Time. These should be in your electronic diary.

Prepare for their Initial Development Discussion, Midpoint Development Discussion and End of Year Development Discussions in advanced by populating information in the CPL Review Template Document. These dates should also be in your electronic diary.

Complete their Mandatory Learning Activities and keep a record of learning. These should be stored in a secure location where the NQSW and Supervisor can access them. They may be sampled by either the SSSC or Workforce Development.

## Supervisors

Supervisors are Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers with line management responsibilities for NQSWs.

They will be responsible for the professional development and guidance during the Supported Year.

Work with NQSWs to arrange supervisions reflective of their development. These are typically very frequent when NQSWs join Falkirk and will slowly move to monthly as NQSWs develop.

Check in on NQSWs portfolios and progress through the Supported Year in supervisions.

Agree dates in advanced for Initial Development Discussion, Midpoint Development Discussion and End of Year Development Discussions. These should be scheduled in your electronic calendar.

Use the Individual Development Plan in each supervision to agree on actions for the NQSWs development until next supervision. This should include learning, training and shadowing. This should also consider how the NQSW will use their Protected Learning Time.

## Advanced Practitioners

Work alongside NQSWs to share best practice and encourage learning and development alongside the supervisory relationship.

APs work throughout the council so if there are no APs within the NQSWs team, Supervisors should explore APs from other services to assist with shadowing and learning opportunities.

Provide peer mentoring support during the Supported Year with the purpose of sharing examples of best practice, practice wisdom, informal support, case discussions, and specialist knowledge.

APs are very experienced workers who have (or are in the process of gaining) further qualifications regarding their professional practice. This may include Mental Health Officers, Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Practice Education, Self-Directed Support, and many others. Some APs have gained further qualifications related to Mindfulness, Leadership, and other specialist subjects.

APs will not have managerial responsibilities such as performance management of NQSWs and should consult with Supervisors if they have feedback about the NQSWs development.

## Peer Mentoring

When a NQSW joins Falkirk the Supervisor should contact [socialservices.training@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices.training@falkirk.gov.uk) to invite them to the NQSW Peer Learning Forums.

These are monthly sessions where NQSWs from across the council meet together to share in learning.

NQSWs will be added to their own dedicated [Teams Channel](#) to share resources and learning.

## Falkirk Council

Falkirk is responsible for setting out and implementing the [Employer Support](#) as part of the Supported Year framework. The image below highlights each of the elements NQSWs need to set them up for success in Falkirk.

NQSWs will have an Induction to their workplace.

NQSWs will have formal Supervision.

NQSWs will have a professional development plan.

NQSWs will have either a half day per week or a full day per fortnight Protected Learning Time.

NQSWs will have a Protected Caseload.

NQSWs will be supported by a network of peers, Advanced Practitioners and the NQSW Peer Learning Forum.

There is emphasis throughout the Supported Year that NQSWs will develop incrementally with support and guidance. This forms the basis of tailoring each NQSWs continuous professional learning to them.

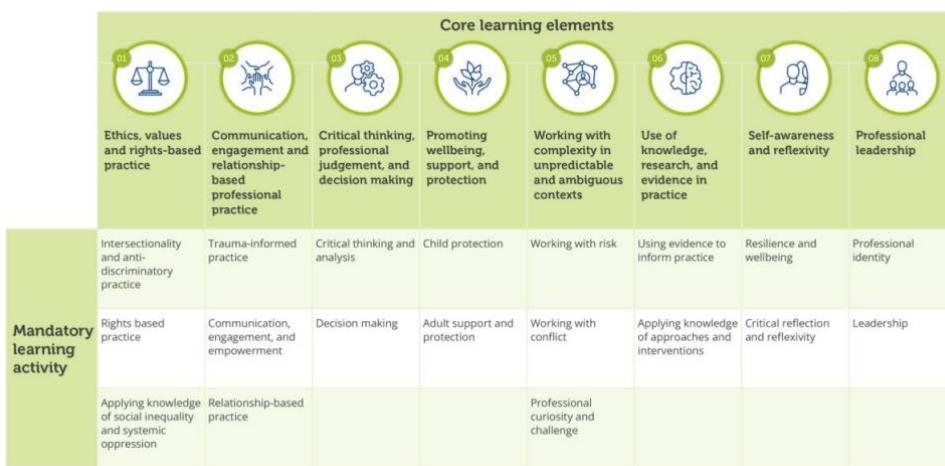


# Mandatory Learning Activities (MLAs)

NQSWs will work their way through the [Mandatory Learning Activities](#) by completing different learning tasks then linking this learning to their CPL Review Template.

These may include online resources; reflective journals; shadowing; training; sharing and disseminating information; reading policy, research and legislation; OpenBadges, etc.

Each of the MLAs can be completed on their own but it would be sensible for NQSWs to see which can be grouped together depending on pieces of work they are engaging in.

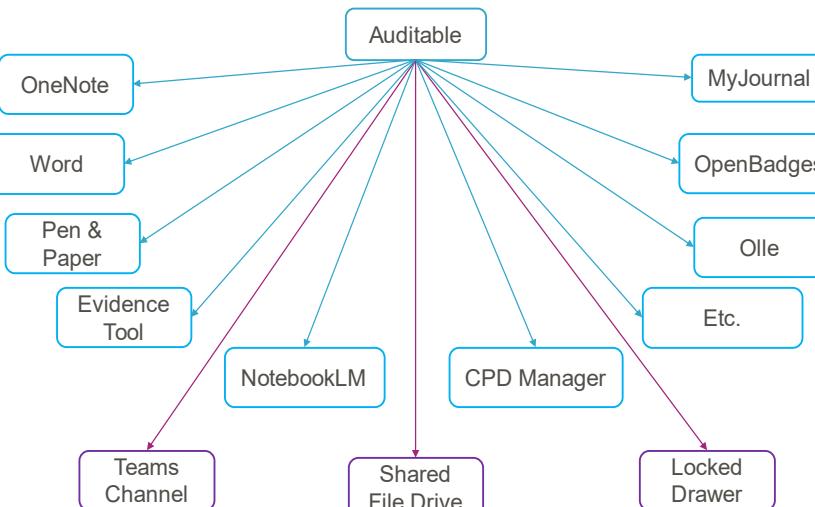


## Storing & Recording Learning

NQSWs need to create a **secured** shared space where they can record their Mandatory Learning Activities. This may be a shared folder on the 'W' drive, a OneNote document, Teams folder, or a physical file where information can be stored.

NQSWs can also record their reflections using [CPD Manager](#), [Olle](#), and can use the SSSC's [MyLearning](#) App and [Open Badges](#). See below for more examples of where our NQSWs are recording their learning and storing these.

**Note:** All learning should be accessible to your Supervisor on demand. And any evidence can be sampled by the SSSC.

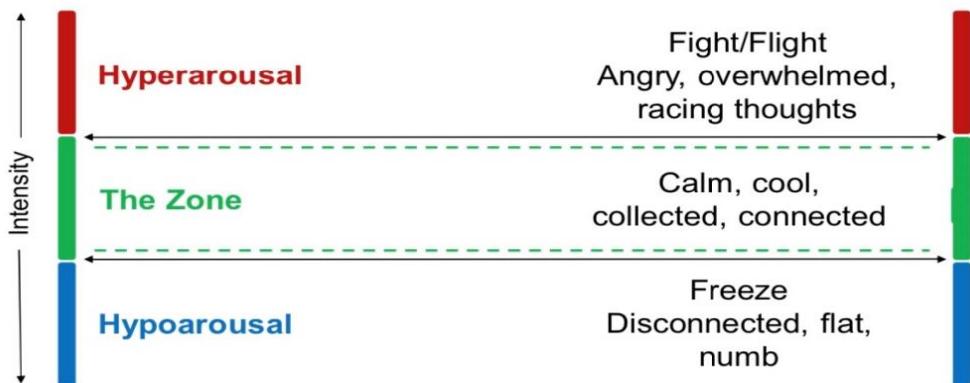


# Trauma-Informed Learning

## Window of Tolerance

Falkirk Council has a strong emphasis on relationship-based and trauma-informed practice, and this should also be reflected in the supervisory relationships with NQSWs. It's important we build relationships so we can have honest and transparent developmental discussions to support each other if things go wrong.

We should build on relationships from the outset, so we can be attuned to each other and support the emotional and psychological wellbeing of NQSWs. All NQSWs and Supervisors should engage with the Trauma learning on Olle and supplement this with in-person training booked via CPD Manager.



## What happens if things go wrong?

If things are going wrong it is a good idea to seek guidance from your line manager in Supervision. It is hoped that issues will be resolved through reflection, discussion, ownership and reassurance. If issues arise relating to [performance](#) or [absence](#) please consult the relevant policies and seek guidance.

Occasionally things might still go wrong and it is a good idea to reach out to the Workforce Development Team via [socialservices.training@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices.training@falkirk.gov.uk) for guidance from the Training Managers.

## Change of Supervisor or Employer

If there is a change to who the NQSW is supervised by or who they are employed by during their Supported Year please ensure this is recorded on the [Change in Supervisor or Employer Checklist](#).

## Extensions

NQSWs should request an extension if they are not going to have their portfolios completed within the timescales for the Supported Year. These should be discussed and agreed with their Supervisor, Team Manager and, where appropriate, Workforce Development, to review the circumstances of the extension.

## Unexpected Events

There may be circumstances that occur where we would need to check in with the SSSC for guidance. They can be contacted via [nqswproject@sssc.uk.com](mailto:nqswproject@sssc.uk.com) and 0345 60 30 891.



# The Policy Context

The Supported Year has been underpinned by research from the SSSCs [5-year longitudinal study](#) into the conditions for NQSWs joining the profession. The Supported Year was compounded further by IRISS research into [workplace learning for social workers](#).

The study highlighted some key findings to shape future generations of the social work workforce that have been implemented in the Supported Year such as the need for tailored Induction, emphasis on continuous learning, consistent supervisions and an overall development plan.



## Artificial Intelligence

AI has become part of the technological background in Scotland and there are a variety of different AI and Machine Learning tools for NQSWs to access.

Guidance from the SSSC has outlined that there are some instances where AI can be used. These might be enhancing social work practice such as spelling & grammar checks; rephrasing and language improvement; and identifying gaps in evidence.

What is not permitted is generating fictional experiences; generating fictional reflections; or outsourcing your work. Any students who are found to be mis-using AI may be at risk of their placement being ended as a result of breaching the [Codes of Practice](#) (2.1, 5.1 & 5.6).

These may have different importance depending on whether you work in Children & Families, Justice or Adult Services.

This is not an exhaustive list and it is essential for Supervisors and NQSWs to plan out learning in the Supported Year and beyond this.

## Essential Training

All staff should refer to the [Induction Planning and Tracking Record](#) to agree which learning and development is needed throughout the Supported Year.

Core learning essential for all staff includes Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and Trauma-Informed Practice.

Staff should engage with learning on Olle and supplement this with in-person training booked via CPD Manager.

Each service and team should map out the essential training that is needed for their staff.

## Qualifications and Progression

Falkirk's plan for supporting our workforce includes supporting our NQSWs to complete post-qualifying awards. These are typically offered with practice experience and should be discussed in annual [Good Conversations](#).

Post-qualifying awards will also support our colleagues with their career progression to Advanced Practitioners, then Assistant Team Managers etc.

Suggested awards include:

- Relative Matters: Good Practice in Permanence Planning and Kinship Care
- Social Work Practice Education
- Child Welfare and Protection
- Advanced Social Work Studies (Mental Health)
- Personality Disorder
- Substance Use
- Leading People-centred Integrated Care
- Dementia Care
- Dementia Studies
- Adult Support and Protection
- Criminal Justice and Penal Change
- Contemporary Drug and Alcohol Studies
- Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law

## Continuous Professional Development

Shadowing is an important part of sharing knowledge and best practice. Any NQSWs engaging in Shadowing should complete a [Request for Shadowing Opportunity](#) to reflect and consolidate their learning.

Please check the [Multiagency Training Calendar](#) for training and how to book these.

Team Managers will have oversight to the CPD opportunities available to their staff and should consult with the Training Managers in Workforce Development if there are gaps in knowledge identified.

Each service and team should map out the CPD that is essential for their staff.

