

Practice Learning in Falkirk

For Social Work & Occupational Therapy Students,
Link workers, Practice Educators and Managers

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For further advice or clarification, please contact Practice Learning Coordinators
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(vivian.fitzsimmons@falkirk.gov.uk)

The Learning Team

Student Name:

Start Date:

Link Worker Name:

Practice Educator Name:

Tutor Name:

Placement Team:

Placement Service:

Placement Assistant Team Manager(s):

Placement Team Manager(s):

Getting off to the right start

Induction

Week 1

Date	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon
	Student arriving for 09:30. Show layout of offices, workspaces, fire safety arrangements, toilets and changing areas, identify personal spaces.		Plan lone worker and safety arrangements with Admin, including personal contact information, management team and link worker. Spend time with colleagues.
	Setting up on laptop and encourage Student to begin familiarising themselves with the workplace. Completing Induction Planning and Training Record from Practitioners Pages.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services Arrange first Supervision with Practice Educator.
	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services. Access CPD Manager and book in for Training		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.
	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.
	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.

Week 2 – Study Day to also be included!

Date	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon
	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.
	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.
	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.
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	Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.		Shadowing / Policies / Olle Learning / Visiting services.

Core Policies

Policy	Dated	Policy	Dated
Dress Code		Data Protection & ICT Policies	
Equality & Human Rights		Records Management	
Absence Management		Booking a Pool Vehicle	
Wellbeing		Reasonable Adjustments	
Identity Cards		Whistleblowing Policy	
Fire Safety		Codes of conduct for Driving on Council Business	
Adverse Weather		Lone Working	
Dignity at Work		Smoking Policy	
Drug and Alcohol Policy		Infectious Diseases Policy	
Health and Safety Policy		Duty of Candour	
The Promise & Falkirk Council Family & Friends		AI Policy	
Closer to Home for Looked After Children			

Team and Workplace

To be discussed	Dated	To be discussed	Dated
Who's who in your team & wider service structure		Absence Management & your University's absence management processes.	
Workplace tour & Local Housekeeping (toilets, dress code, lockers, kitchens etc.)		Learning & Development: Olle, CPD Manager etc.	
Who you report to & when you work (base, hours, cover, leave arrangements etc.)		Social activities and social media	
Your service, aims and outcomes		Initial induction de-brief and feedback	
Your responsibilities description, duties, authority, scope, area/coverage/territory		Mentoring & Supervision arrangements	
Emergency Contact Forms, Lone Working & team safety arrangements		Feedback from service users & professionals	
Where to go, who to call, who to ask for help and advice		Fire Safety	
Accessibility: Training support, assistance, support to meet individual specific requirements		Emergency Duty Team	
The systems in your service: Shared Drives, Teams Channels, Group Emails, and updating display information on Intranet		Our Locations	
Office Procedures: photocopier, mail, stationary etc.		Door entry/access/lock training (if applicable)	
Communications: Telephones, email, internet & engaging with others		First Aid arrangements	
Team meetings, communities of practice and project development groups		COSHH regulations/requirements/procedures	

The Legislative and Policy Context of Practice Learning

Social Work

This framework has included key policy drivers such as [Framework for Social Work Education and the Scottish Social Services Council's \(SSSC\) Standards in Social Work Education and Ethical Principles](#).

This framework includes information from [SWEP \(Social Work Education Partnership\)](#) and [Social Work Scotland](#). [The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services \(Iriss\)](#) provides very handy and informative [learning materials](#) to supplement the learning and development of students and newly qualified social workers which has been considered in this document.

Occupational Therapy

This framework includes key documentation relating to the training and development of OTs within Falkirk Council, outlined in the Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC) [Standards in Practice Education and Training](#), the [Standards of Proficiency and Standards of conduct, performance and ethics](#). OTs and interested professionals should consult the HCPCs guidance on their registration requirements where needed. This framework also aims to support with the Scottish Government's joint strategy for AHPs contained in [The Scottish Government Allied Health Professions Education and Workforce Policy Review \(2023\)](#).

[This document considers key information relating to the AHP Principles of Practice-Based Learning including the 7 principles of Practice-Based Learning.](#)

Falkirk's Practice Based Learning (PrBL) Framework is guided by the NES [Indicators for the Quality Standards for Practice Learning \(QSPL\)](#) and [NHS Education Scotland's \(NES\) vision for supporting OTs in their training and development](#). NES outlines the requirements for [Occupational Therapists to become Practice Educators](#) by completing the relevant modules on [Turas](#).

Getting familiar with Social Work services

Undergraduate students are offered 2-day shadowing through their Universities to better understand what Social Work looks like, and to help students get familiar with roles, remits and the impact of the work undertaken by different services.

Falkirk Council will explore whether we can offer placement to Undergraduate students to be able to support them with their professional growth before they come on their first placement.

We encourage students to share their areas of interests, and some of the teams that have hosted before include:

**Women's
Justice Team**

**Children &
Families
Throughcare &
Aftercare**

**Central Locality
Community
Care Team**

**Caledonian
Women's
Justice Team**

**Children &
Families Initial
Response Team**

Universities should email the Practice Learning inbox at PracticeLearning@falkirk.gov.uk with any requests for shadowing.

Arranging your Practice Learning Placement

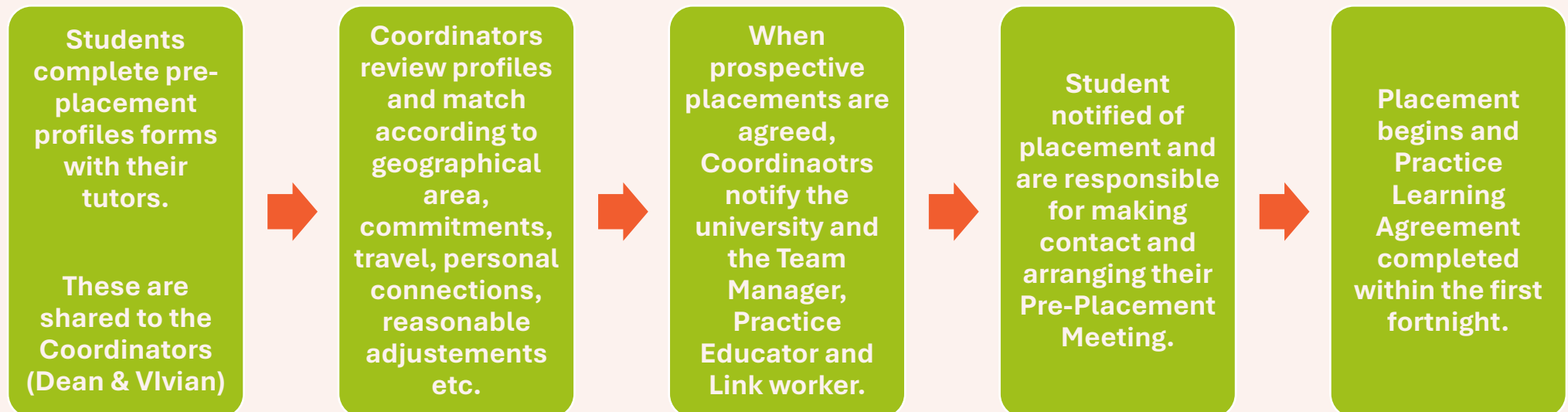
Students cannot source their own placements. Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership works alongside different Universities to match appropriate placements.

Students will complete a Pre-Placement Profile which outlines their experience, their strengths and areas for professional development. Students bring so much value and our teams love to share in their learning to support professional growth. Students are also encouraged to reflect on what they will need to help them embed good learning, including any reasonable adjustments needed.

Student Profiles are then shared by University Tutors to PracticeLearning@falkirk.gov.uk and the Coordinators will then begin matching student placements. If there is limited information within the Profiles these may need to be returned to the University.

We ask Universities to ensure they have shared the **Student Profiles at least 8 weeks before the placements are due to begin**, so matching can take place timeously.

Here is a breakdown of the matching process:



Key Concepts

Placements

The Practice Learning Coordinators hold a centralised list of the Practice Educators and Link Workers. The coordinators will contact the Team Managers, Practice Educators and Link Workers to identify suitable placements and will match students. This will also include information such as the length of the placement, the level of study, and any other specific information needed.

Students are supernumerary and are unable to be counted as part of Falkirk Council's staffing and are unable to carry out some of the essential functions of the local authority such as Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, and Complaints Handling. If Team Managers are unsure about this, they should speak with the Practice Learning Coordinators for guidance.

It's important for Team Managers, Practice Educators and Link Workers to reflect on the learning opportunities, team culture, availability and capacity to offer good placements. It's often good practice for Teams to discuss this before accepting a student.

Assessment

Students will be assessed by their Practice Educator while on placement and will be measured against key learning outcomes related to their regulatory body. The Practice Educator will provide an assessment of this alongside the student mid-way through their placement and this will indicate whether outcomes are being met and the student is in a position to pass their placement. This may also include reflection on what else needs to be considered to support with a pass. A final report will be produced, and this will provide evidence and rationale for whether the student has met their learning outcomes sufficiently and whether there is a pass or fail recommendation.

Practice educators will support the students to achieve a positive outcome. Occasionally students fail but this should be visible at the midway point where their tutors will be involved to offer additional support. Practice coordinators may also be involved if necessary.

Working as a Professional

The Team Manager and Practice Educator will work together to allocate work to meet the student's learning outcomes. There is no prescribed number of cases for student while on placement in Falkirk because each student's learning needs are different. Caseloads should be considered on a case-by-case basis and should consider the needs of our service users and the needs of our students.

There may be circumstances where the Student is no longer able to undertake certain types of work/assessments and it would be at the discretion of the Team Manager or Assistant Team Manager to identify actions.

Timelines

Student placements are variable in their length, and it is not unusual for them to need to be extended due to absences etc. Placement dates will be provided by the Universities to Team Managers, Practice Educators and Link Workers prior to the placement beginning.

Placements can also take place throughout the year. Falkirk's main placement dates begin in:

**February &
March:
Open University**

**May:
Stirling University**

**August &
September:
Stirling,
Caledonian and
Strathclyde
Universities**

**November:
Open University**

However, this is not an exhaustive list and we would support students who want to work and learning in Falkirk from the other universities such as:

**Robert
Gordon
University
(RGU)**

**Napier
University**

**Dundee
University**



**Edinburgh
University**

**University of
the West of
Scotland
(UWS)**

It is good practice for placement dates to be reviewed at the mid-point (or Interim) meeting with the Universities. This ensures all are clear about placement dates.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Students should arrange their pre-placement visit to meet with the practice educator and/or link worker. They will agree the start date of the placement and this encourages students to take ownership of their learning from the outset.
- Be open to their learning and professional growth as a Social Worker in training. To be able to critically reflect and analyse how they can empower themselves to be able to undertake the role of a Social Work student.
- Produce a Learning Agreement to outline their learning outcomes and how their placement and Learning Team can achieve these.
- Demonstrate sufficient evidence of their learning of the SSSC Standards in Social Work Education & Ethical Principles, or the Occupational Therapy Four Pillars of Practice.
- Work in a manner consistent with Falkirk's policies and the [SSSC](#) or [HCPCs](#) Codes of Practice.
- Work agreed hours and engage with their University's policies on absence management alongside Falkirk Council's.
- Work in accordance with Falkirk's confidentiality and social media policies and GDPR requirements.
- Uphold Falkirk Council's reputation as a student representing Falkirk's Social Work Services.
- Meet weekly for supervision with the practice educator, sharing responsibility for the agenda, and taking a full and active role.
- Submit agreed written assignments on time to both the Practice Educator and the University. This includes reflective journals, directed work, reports, assessments and academic work.
- Give feedback on their practice learning placement to the Practice Learning Coordinators.

Link Workers

- Work alongside Practice Educators to co-produce learning experiences.
- Reflect with the student on their role and purpose within the Link Worker's team, and prepare staff for the student's arrival.
- Work with the Team Managers to ensure the student has access to phones, laptops, systems and processes.
- Support the student with a tailored induction using the Pre-Placement Checklist and Induction Plan to ensure the student has access to relevant information to get them off to the right start in their placement. A copy of this is available on the Practitioner's Pages and on the Practice Learning Teams Channel.
- Support the student on a day-to-day basis to offer best practice guidance, emotional support, tackle any practical issues and provide appropriate information and advice.
- Meet regularly with the practice educator and student to discuss the student's progress and workload, the frequency and purpose of these meetings being noted in the Practice Agreement.
- Link Worker to support with specific assessments of the student's capabilities and this should be explored within the Learning Agreement.

- Give feedback to practice educator on student's learning, progress and development. The process of giving feedback must be clear to the student and must be included in the Practice Agreement.
- Share successes and discuss difficulties directly with the Practice Educator and student at the earliest opportunity.

Practice Educators

- Take overall responsibility for planning, co-ordinating, supervising and assessing practice learning.
- Enter into a clear agreement with the link worker about their role in the process of the assessment. It is expected that the written contract between the practice educator and link worker is appended to, or included in, the practice agreement and stored securely within the students Teams Channel.
- Work with the Link Worker to develop a tailored induction using the Pre-Placement Checklist and Induction Plan to ensure the student has access to relevant information to get them off to the right start in their placement. A copy of this is available on the Practitioner's Pages and on the Practice Learning Teams Channel.
- Provide formal supervision weekly and lasting at least 1.5 hours. At least 50% of Supervisions should be in-person unless another arrangement needs to be considered. This should be discussed with the Practice Learning Coordinators.
- Build a good working relationship with the student to support them to meaningfully engage with reflection and professional development.
- Enter into the working agreement planning for a Pass recommendation, and critically reflecting with Team Managers, Practice Learning Coordinators and peers to make use of a Good Fail where necessary.
- Produce an interim report and a final report incorporating link worker's comments where relevant. Final reports must be evidenced and include a pass or fail recommendation.
- Identify any areas of difficulty and provide opportunities for the student to work on these. This includes identifying where the student's practice is borderline or is likely to Fail, and agreeing shared actions to work towards a Pass.
- Assess the quality of the evidence provided by students to show that they have met their learning outcomes in line with their regulatory body. This may include submitting further written evidence to their Professional Practice Progress Board if required.
- Ensure feedback is gathered from Link workers to be included in interim and final reports.

Team Managers & Assistant Team Managers

- Work alongside the Practice Educator and Link Worker to ensure they are supported to deliver a good learning experience to students.
- Supervisory arrangements with Practice Educator and Link Workers should consider their skills, knowledge and values, and the role that the wider team may have in supporting student placements.
- Work alongside Practice Educators to ensure appropriate work, cases or projects to allow the student opportunities to learn and to achieve the standard of practice as indicated in the Practice Agreement.

- Provide feedback to Practice Educator and Link Worker that may be important to the student's learning and development. Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers are well placed to monitor the pace and flow-through of students' work to inform their development.
- Provisioning equipment to make sure that Students have sufficient access to laptops, mobile phones, workspaces and buildings. Teams typically have access to equipment and should liaise with ICT via [this link](#) if they have any equipment requests.

Practice Learning Assessor-Coordiators

- Support the Learning Team with their Continuous Professional Learning to develop their skills in mentorship, coaching, sharing best practice, and developing leadership.
- Work with Sponsored colleagues and their management teams to ensure they have the right supports in place to undertake their degrees.
- Practice Educators and Link Workers will be supported with their learning and development to consolidate the following learning:
 - A grounding in education theory relevant to Practice-based Learning Placements.
 - How to give and receive effective feedback.
 - How to encourage safe and effective practice.
 - How to encourage professional conduct.
 - How to assess students, and how we can make the best of their learning while with Falkirk. "The Good Fail", and how you will work alongside the Practice Learning Coordinators to make sure any student who does not meet their Placement learning outcomes can still make the most of their time with Falkirk.
 - How to facilitate Students' integration of theory into practice and development into autonomous and reflective practitioners.
 - An overview of the learning and teaching methods used to help Students meet Practice-based Learning outcomes.
 - How to plan and implement Student-centred Practice-based Learning through a range of different models of provision and supervision arrangements.
- Evaluate Practice Learning arrangements in Falkirk Council and with stakeholders locally and nationally to ensure they meet the needs of our communities.
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure informed decisions are made, to review what works and what can change, to plan and implement new approaches, and to ensure timely reporting to meet the needs of our workers, services and the communities we are responsible to.

Universities, Tutors and Practice Learning Panels

- Universities are also known as Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). They are responsible for defining the Practice-based Learning assessment process for each Student and for the quality assurance of the Practice-based Learning award.
- A Tutor will be appointed to each student to support them alongside their placement in Falkirk.

- Universities will be responsible for preparing Students for Practice-based Learning in Falkirk. Students should be encouraged to explore the [Practitioner's Pages](#) for further context about working in Falkirk.
- Universities will provide relevant and regular feedback regarding Practice-based Learning.
- Universities will work collaboratively with Falkirk Council to develop a range of appropriate Practice-based Learning opportunities. These will align to current and future workforce requirements and national policy and support Students to become evidence-informed, reflective, outcomes focused and autonomous practitioners.
- The Practice Learning Coordinators are part of different Practice Assessment Panels and will sample and review Portfolios across Scotland to uphold quality and standards in Social Work Education.

Centralising Student Portfolios

Throughout the assessment process Students will complete a portfolio of their work to evidence they have met the learning outcomes of this placement. The student and their learning team are required to produce a Practice Learning Agreement, Direct Observations, Critically Analytical Reflections of Practice, Supervision Minutes and other evidence of learning.

To ensure that students and their learning teams can access the Portfolios and collaborate together on live documents each student will have a Private Teams Channel created to achieve this. The Teams Channel can be daunting to use at first but with practice can be an invaluable tool and has consistently helped students to keep their portfolios live. Here is an anonymised example of how a channel can look:

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Teams interface. On the left sidebar, the 'Teams' section is expanded, showing a list of channels. The 'CH PL2 Teams Channel' is selected, showing a last activity date of 16/04. The main pane shows the 'CH PL2 Teams Channel' with a 'Shared' status. Below the channel name, there are tabs for 'All documents' and 'In messages'. A toolbar at the top of the document list includes options like '+ New', 'Upload', 'Edit in grid view', 'Forms', 'New', and 'Add shortcut to OneDrive'. The 'Documents' section is active, displaying a table of files.

Name	Modified	Modified By
Feedback	May 21	Dean Mcgrandles
Paperwork	April 23	Dean Mcgrandles
Reflections	April 23	Dean Mcgrandles
Supervisions	April 24	Dean Mcgrandles
Placement 2 Handbook 2026.docx	April 23	Dean Mcgrandles
Pre-Placement Checklist and Induction Pla...	May 25	Collette Halliday

Trauma-Informed Learning

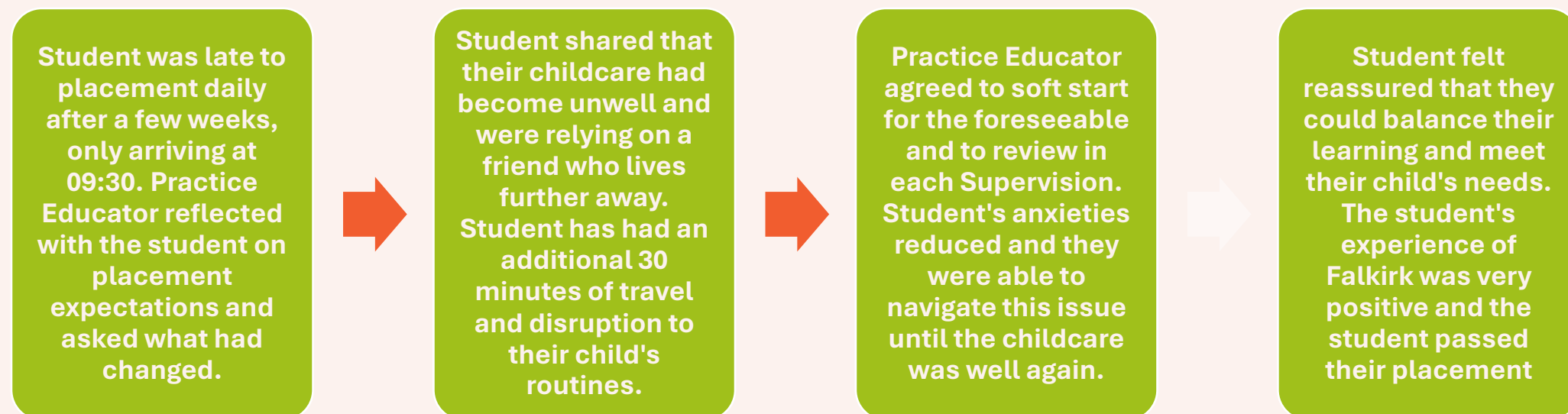
Students and their Learning Teams should be mindful of the impact of Trauma on Practice-based Learning. It is important that Students have the opportunity to develop in a psychologically safe environment where they can be vulnerable to learn. Falkirk Council has a strong emphasis on relationship-based and trauma-informed practice, and this should also be reflected in the supervisory relationships with Students. All staff are required to attend relevant Trauma training and these can be found on CPD Manager.

What happens if things go wrong?

It is important that Students and their Learning Team reflect on challenges and try to come to resolutions on their own at the earliest opportunity. Occasionally some issues are not easily resolved and the Practice Learning Coordinators should be contacted. There may be some instances where Tutors are needed to support to resolve matters.

It is important that the Learning Teams work collaboratively if things are going wrong. This means that it is a shared responsibility of all members of the learning team (Student, Link Worker, Practice Educator, Tutor, Team Manager & Practice Learning Coordinators) to reflect and work out a plan to address issues.

Below are some common challenges and some of the ways trauma-informed reflection have helped achieve good outcomes:



Getting The Right Feedback Loops

Student Feedback

Student feedback is an invaluable way of finding out more about what works and what we could all be doing better. Towards the student's placement they will be asked to give feedback on their placement and it is essential we get this as it helps shape our services and how we support students.

What have our students said?

"I had an amazing experience during my placement within Falkirk Council, the team around me was fantastic and helped me with everything that I needed. I would strongly advise any other student that get offered the same placement as me to accept as this has been a learning experience that I will never forget. My link worker played a crucial part in my development and for that I am grateful."

"This placement has not only broadened my clinical skills but has also illuminated the critical role community OT plays in enabling independence and participation in daily life. From my perspective as a student, having the opportunity to learn from experienced practitioners like yourselves has been crucial. The guidance, expertise, and willingness to share knowledge from the OTs in Grangemouth has been instrumental in my development. I can confidently say that this placement has provided me with a robust foundation as I move forward in my career."

"Overall both placements have been very positive experiences and would highly recommend the placements I was involved in. I feel my practice has developed massively and my understanding of core social work ethics and principles have deepened."

"I am so grateful for the opportunities that I have received within this placement. I can say that I have utilised it to the maximum. This is my second placement with Falkirk Council and each of it gave me enormous opportunity to develop my skills and knowledge as a professional. I could build a good working relationship and contacts. I was included in every conversation and felt valued. I am happy and grateful for the wonderful opportunities."

Lived experience voices

Students should begin to collate feedback from the people they work with from the outset of their learning as there is lots of sensitive and meaningful learning to be gained from asking the people they work with how they are doing. Students should be mindful that this is developmental feedback, and praise and criticism should be reflected on to hone in on what works and what we could be doing differently.

Feedback will become an important part of the student's learning in their Newly Qualified Social Worker's Supported Year, and it is good to embed feedback from the beginning of placements.

Students should take time to reflect on how they could best collect feedback from the people they work with at a level they understand. For example, a feedback form for a child might make an older adult feel insecure, and an email might not be as accessible to a person with a learning disability. Students should take time to reflect with their Practice Educator about how they get authentic lived experience feedback.

Team & Professional feedback

The student will be working alongside experienced colleagues who will be able to share their practice wisdom. It is important that we collect feedback from the student's placement team and other professionals within their service to build a rounded picture of how the student manages.

The student will also spend time with other professionals working in partnership, co-producing plans with people accessing services, and negotiating expectations and understanding to benefit our communities. This can be sensitive work and it is important we also capture feedback from wider networks of professional colleagues such as Health, Education, Police etc. where possible.

Student Mileage and Expenses

While on placement it is reasonable that Students will be asked to travel around to complete business for Falkirk Council. It is also possible that students will incur expenses purchasing bus tickets to travel between locations, or picking up essentials such as baby milk as agreed with their team. These will come out of the Team's own budget so make sure to discuss with the Link Worker and/or Practice Educator and ATM.

All students who may need reimbursement for mileage and/or expenses should complete a Student Bank Mandate at the beginning of their placement. This will allow us to produce an invoice so that they can be reimbursed directly for any purchases made.

When a student claims any expenses students should ensure they have a **copy of their receipts** and submit a **Student Mileage & Expenses Claim** to the Team Manager or Assistant Team Manager on the 1st of each month. Claims cannot be guaranteed if they are submitted later than this or without a copy of their receipt.

In circumstances where a student is using public transport for Falkirk Council routinely it would be sensible for the team to authorise a Bus Pass instead of reimbursing for individual bus tickets. This is due to the overall cost effectiveness of a bus pass and the time needed by multiple workers to authorise and reimburse bus tickets individually.

This is not an exhaustive list. **Always discuss with the Link Worker and/or Practice Educator and ATM:**

Likely to be authorised

- Pre-agreed items for people accessing the service such as food, clothing etc.
- Public transport tickets and bus passes for travelling on behalf of Falkirk Council
- Car Park tickets while on Falkirk Council business

NOT likely to be authorised

- Amending student's car insurance to include Business Insurance
- Travel to and from placement
- Parking fines
- Car parking tickets while NOT on Falkirk Council business
- Purchasing non-essentials such as games, consoles etc.

Becoming part of the Learning Team

Becoming a Student

Falkirk Council routinely explores different options to support colleagues to become Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, and we recognise that workers also can choose to progress their studies independently. If any employees are studying independently or would like further information about their options and supports available please get in touch with the Practice Learning Coordinators Dean McGrandles and Vivian Fitzsimmons.

Social Workers

There are multiple routes to [becoming a qualified Social Worker in Scotland](#) and prospective students should consider which of these options is most suitable for themselves. There are undergraduate and postgraduate options depending on previous studies, and full-time, part-time and distance learning options. Anyone who would like to consider becoming a Social Worker should also consider completing the free Open University OpenLearn course [An Introduction to Social Work](#).

Falkirk Council Health and Social Care Partnership will sponsor employees to undertake their Social Work Degrees with the Open University. There is clear eligibility criteria for prospective student employees:

- Must have had a Good Conversations Annual Development Review completed and approval from Team Manager to submit application.
- Must have a permanent contract with Falkirk Council.
- Must have a minimum of 2 years' service in Falkirk Council / Falkirk HSCP.
- Will commit to remain in the employment of Falkirk Council for the duration of the course and for 2 years post-qualifying.
- Does not have a nationally recognised professional qualification such as Nursing, Teaching, Community Education, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Etc.

Falkirk Council will pay the whole of the funding for this qualification. The Practice Learning Coordinators need to be sensible about how this funding is used and will need applicants to apply for Credit Transfer/Migration and Part Time Fee Grants where applicable. If any other funding streams become available we will discuss this with each person as needed. As part of the agreement with Falkirk Council you would need to complete a Sponsorship Agreement which includes a plan for repayment if you do not complete your studies.

During their final placement, the sponsored student should be invited into discussion with their employing service team manager where they can express an interest in the service area they wish to progress post qualifying. This could be within their employing service or within another Falkirk Social Work Service depending upon available vacant positions.

Planning for this well in advance of course completion allows time for ring-fencing a vacant post. Planning discussions should involve the team manager and senior managers across Social Work Services and the sponsored student should be kept informed of available opportunities.

When a sponsored employee formally completes their qualification, they can be matched to a Social Worker vacancy within Falkirk Social Work Services. Sponsored employees will require to attend an informal interview ahead of being matched.

Until the sponsored employee's registration is transferred from student social worker to social worker with SSSC regulatory body, they require to be employed in their substantive post (social work assistant, social care officer, justice officer etc.).

Occupational Therapy

There are multiple routes to [becoming a qualified Occupational Therapist in Scotland](#) and prospective students should consider which of these options is most suitable for themselves. There are undergraduate and postgraduate options depending on previous studies, and full-time, part-time and distance learning options.

Becoming a Link Worker

All staff should consider becoming a Link Worker for students as it is part of the [SSSC Post-Qualifying Standards](#) and the [HCPCs Standards](#) to share practice wisdom and encourage the professional growth and development of others.

Social Workers with 2+ years of experience should discuss attending this training with their Line Manager and make it part of their planning as part of their Good Conversations Annual Development Review. There is no need for Occupational Therapists to take part in Link Worker training but this will be open to workers as an option to develop understanding about student learning, adult learning and development, and leadership responsibilities within Falkirk Council.

Link Worker training can be booked via CPD Manager and is in-person training facilitated by the Practice Learning Coordinators. The training will last a full day and workers will be added to our Learning Team framework.

Becoming a Practice Educator

Social Workers

Becoming a Practice Educator means workers need to complete a post-qualifying SCQF (Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework) Level 10 or 11 award with a University or Assessment Centre.

There is essential eligibility criteria for this award and workers should have the following:

- 2+ years of experience as a qualified Social Worker;
- Hosted at least one Student placement;

- Planned with line manager as part of Good Conversations Annual Development Review;
- Be on a permanent contract with Falkirk Council;
- Commit to hosting at least one student per year;
- Remain with Falkirk Council for at least two years upon qualifying.

If you are interested in becoming a Practice Educator please notify the Practice Learning Coordinators Dean McGrandles and Vivian Fitzsimmons.

As part of your SSSC registration requirements all Practice Education candidates require a Practice Assessor to assess their competence to qualify as a Practice Educator. Falkirk Council will arrange an Assessor to facilitate this as there are qualified staff in each service to carry this out.

Occupational Therapists

Occupational Therapists who wish to become a Practice Educator should plan this with their line manager as part of their Good Conversations Annual Development Review. They will then complete the TURAS Module [Being and Becoming an AHP Practice Educator](#) and share their certification with the coordinators and they will be added to the Learning Team framework.

Becoming a Practice Assessor

Practice Educators with experience of hosting at least three Social Work student placements can consider becoming Practice Assessors to Practice Education Candidates. This is a specialist role and Assessors are required to carry out:

- Co-produce the Candidate's own portfolio of their evidence towards their learning outcomes;
- Two Direct Observations of Supervision between Practice Educator Candidates and their Students;
- Monthly Practice Learning Supervisions lasting at least 1.5 hours;
- Attend key meetings with the Candidate and their own Tutor;
- Have oversight of the Student's portfolio, checking for quality and providing developmental feedback to the Candidate;
- Produce an assessment of the Candidate's competence towards their learning outcomes;
- Assume responsibility for the Student if the Candidate is unable to fulfil their role.

Empowering our Learning Team

The Practice Learning Coordinators are responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of systems, processes and supports for Practice Learning in Falkirk Council. This is done through the development of feedback loops, collaborating with local and national stakeholders, working with senior leadership teams to achieve shared goals, and critically reflecting on practice.

Student Learning Hub

The student learning hub meets monthly in Camelon Social Work Office to critically reflect on their skills, knowledge, values and behaviour in practice, applying theory, research, legislation and policy. This is a very well attended group where students will share their learning with peers. See below from our session in April 2026:

The student learning hub is open to all students in Falkirk and Forth Valley, whether they are in statutory, third sector or independent placements. Students will also be offered advice and guidance on maintaining their professional registrations, planning for their Newly Qualified Social Worker's Supported Year, and Employability.



Practice Educator and Link Worker's Forums

Practice Educators and Link workers are welcome to attend the Forums which are held quarterly. These forums are aimed at providing a space for members of the learning team to critically reflect on their practice and their role in facilitating the learning and professional growth of students.

There is a strong emphasis on the Forums being peer-led to be able to shape and plan opportunities together, to be able to network and build working relationships with colleagues across services, and to be able to learn from each other.

Pan-Forth Local Learning Partnership

Falkirk Council works collaboratively with partners across a number of Local Authorities with representatives from these councils, the universities, third sector, independent and lived experience groups. Aberlour, Clackmannanshire Council, Fife Council, HomeStart, One Parent Families Scotland, Perth & Kinross Council, Stirling Council and Stirling University are all core members of the Pan-Forth Partnership and we meet regularly to collaborate on different projects to benefit Social Work Education and Practice Learning.



Critical Reflection handbook

We routinely seek feedback from workers across services about how we could be doing things differently to achieve better outcomes for our Learning Teams, the students and the communities we are responsible to. One of these suggestions included producing a Critical Reflection tool here students and practitioners could have access to common models to benefit practice.

This handbook is available publicly on our Practitioner's Pages for anyone to use.

Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models (LLMs)

There needs to be some recognition that AI has become part of the technological background in Scotland and there are a variety of different AI and other similar tools for Students to use while on placement. It is important to recognise that the term *artificial intelligence* is not accurate for these tools and the more accurate name for them is Large Language Models (LLMs).

Falkirk Council's [Artificial Intelligence Policy](#) provides information on how and when Falkirk Council employees and students can use AI (LLMs) in their work. This should be done in conjunction with SSSC and University guidance.

[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 Conduct (2.1, 5.1 & 5.6).

The Scottish Government has developed an [AI Strategy for Scotland](#) which accounts for the changes arising from AI and the potential landscape of technology as this continues to develop. Further information can also be gained from the [Scottish AI Alliance](#).

The SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) have provided [guidance](#) on when AI can and cannot be used to support Students with their learning. Students who do access AI should consult their University and consider advice provided from It would also be supportive for Students to review the applicability of AI to their work by using [GenAI in the Education Exploration Hub](#).

Helpful Links

Falkirk Council Intranet: [Intranet](#)

Practitioner's Pages: [Practice Learning in Falkirk – Forth Valley Practitioner Pages](#)

CPD Manager: [Falkirk Social Work Services CPD](#)

Olle: [Olle - Login](#)

Turas: [Turas | My Turas | Home](#)

Falkirk's Knowledge Portal: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Community Justice: [Events Calendar - Community Justice Scotland](#)

SSSC Codes of Practice: [Codes of Practice | Scottish Social Services Council](#)

HCPC Standards of Proficiency – [Standards of proficiency | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](#)

HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics - [Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](#)