

Look After Your Practice Educator! (LAYPE)

BASW
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The professional association for
social work and social workers

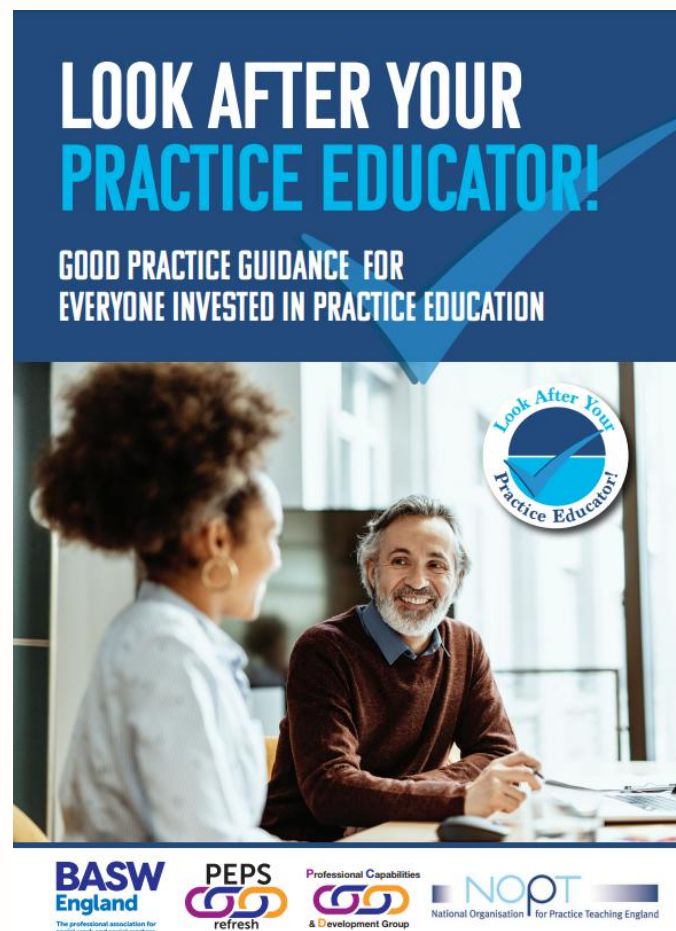
Professional Capabilities



& Development Group

NOPT

National Organisation for Practice Teaching England



Introductions

- **Sarah Brown** – Lecturer (Open University and NOPT)
- **Jenni Burton** - Independent Practice Educator, Mentor and PC & D group Co-Chair
- **Carol Dicken** - Independent Practice Educator and PC & D group Vice-Chair
- **Lynda McDonald** - Senior Lecturer (Manchester Metropolitan University, PC & D group and NOPT)

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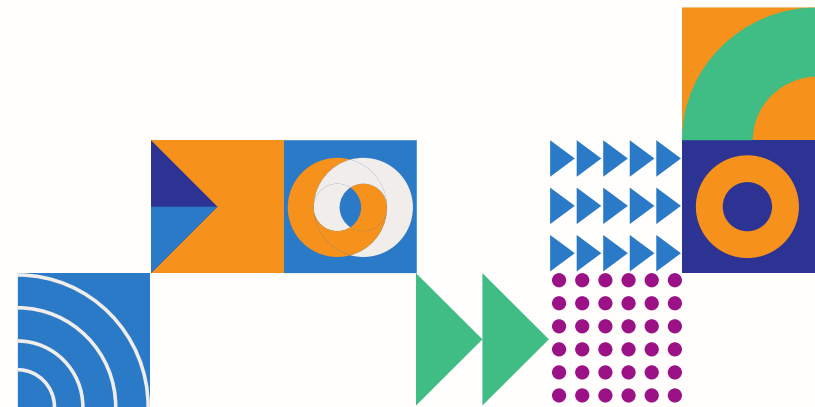
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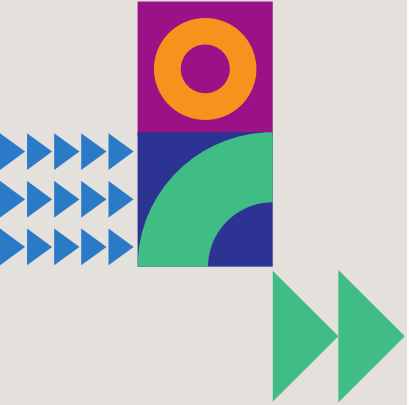
Frequently used acronyms

- Assessed and Supported Year in Employment - ASYE
- British Association of Social Workers - BASW
- Black and Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium – BPS
- Higher Education Institutes - HEI
- Look After Your Practice Educator guidance - LAYPE
- National Organisation for Practice Teaching – NOPT
- Practice Educator - PE
- Practice Educator Professional Standards – PEPS
- Professional Capabilities & Development group – PC & D group
- Professional Capabilities Framework – PCF
- Quality Assurance in Practice Learning – QAPL
- Social Work England - SWE

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What is Practice Education?

Practice Education is usually understood to be the parts of a pre-qualifying course where the learner is learning about practice skills and the application of knowledge in a workplace and is being assessed against professional standards such as the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF BASW). It can also refer to the support and assessment of some qualifying frameworks such as the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (AYSE).

A **Social Work Practice Educator (PE)** is a qualified and experienced registered social worker who has completed a PE course and has been assessed to meet the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS BASW 2022) and has continued to take a student or be involved in other practice education activities. At **Stage 1** a PE can assess a first placement student. At **Stage 2** they can assess a final placement student and/or act as an off-site PE.

PE's can be **on-site** and based in the same team as the student. They will be the main support for the student (although students should be supported by all members of the team) and will be involved in allocating work and providing supervision as well as teaching and assessing the learner.

Off-site PE's (sometimes referred to as an Independent or Long Arm PE) are “*physically located away from the learner's practice area*” (BASW PEPS p.3) and may be employed by the organisation or by the course provider to support teach and assess the learner.

If there is an off-site PE there will be an **on-site supervisor** who “*is responsible for the day-to-day support for the learner and will work closely with the Practice Educator*” (PEPS BASW 2022 p.3). The on-site supervisor can be a social worker but can also be another qualified/experienced member of the team where the learner is situated.

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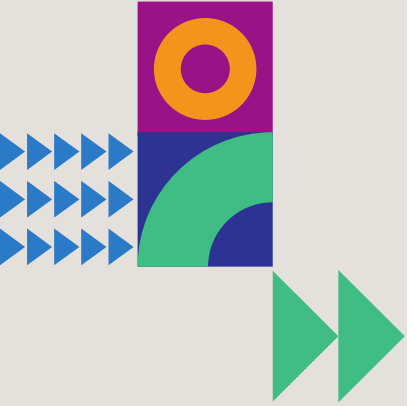


Current Issues

- Top-down government scrutiny of the Social Work profession and constant review and overhaul of the Professional Standards has created a complex and crowded assessment structure.
- Management support for Practice Educators in teams differs and is often poor. The impact is a need to strengthen and increase the consistency of support and status of the PE role including remuneration.
- **Independent Practice Educators (IPE)** often feel sidelined from support networks and refresher training opportunities. The impact of this can be an inconsistent quality of assessment and support for students and losing valued IPEs within the profession.
- Students perceive the relationship with their PE as the most important for their own professional development (Blundell (2023)).
- Students do not always have positive placement experiences, and this can vary across **Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) and Teaching Partnerships**. There is a need for a national steer for social work practice education and to strengthen quality standards and support (through the Professional Capabilities Framework).

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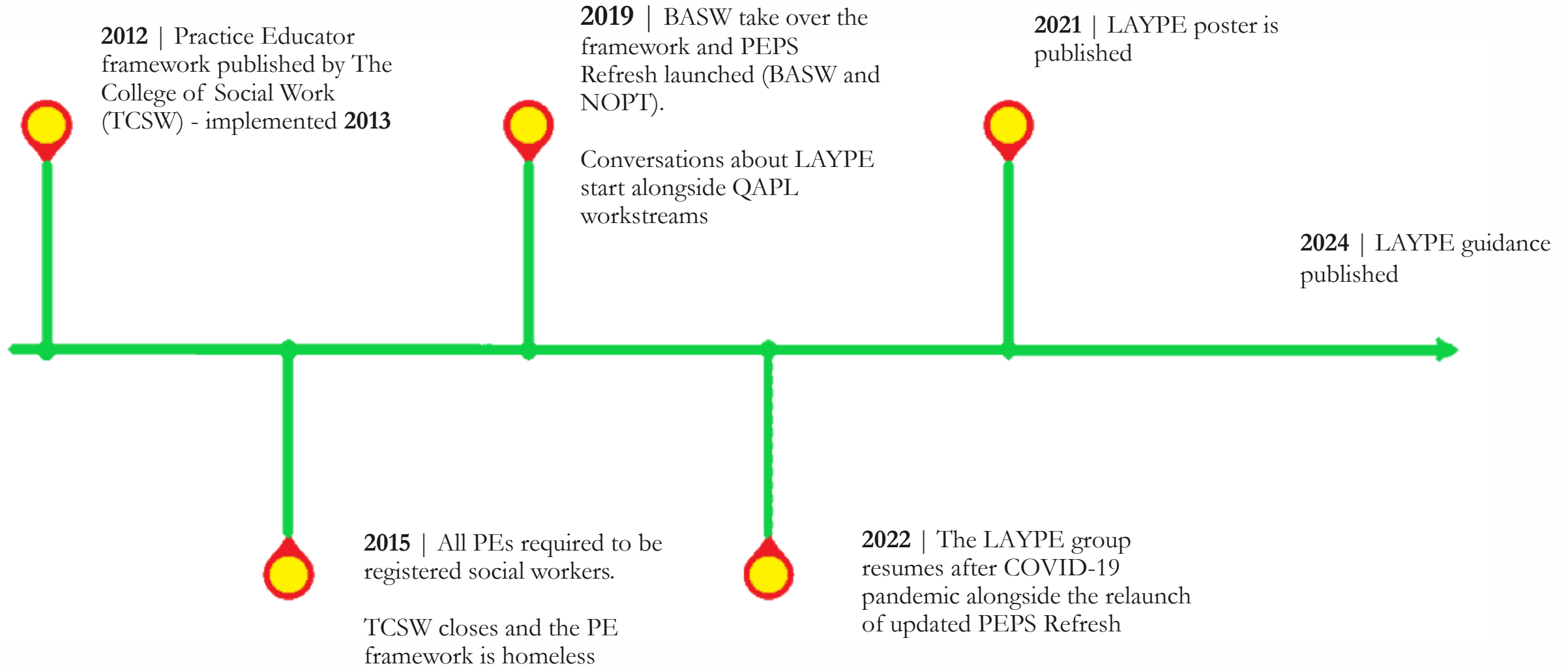
Why look after your Practice Educator?

- The guidance was developed from work undertaken by BASW with support from the National Organisation Practice Teaching and others on the refreshed PEPS in 2023.
- The focus is on recognising the significant role of the Practice Educator in social work in developing the future workforce.
- Practice Educators, both independent and those employed in organisations, are critical to the profession and should be valued and supported.
- The LAYPE guidance sets out how organisations can value PE's, it includes recommended best practice and procedures.
- The guidance suggests that PE's are in a good position within organisations to support the development of work around equality, diversity and inclusion.

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Practice education timeline

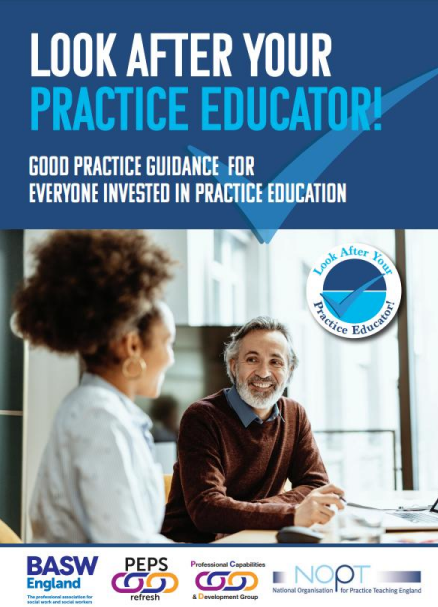
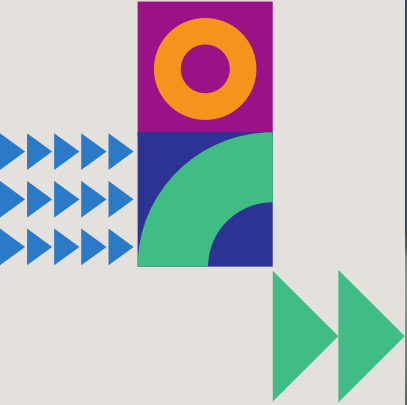


Hopes and dreams for practice education

- **Sarah** - Equitable practice education, and thus student experiences, across the whole of social work education both from independent and employed Practice Educators.
- **Jenni** - Time for Practice Educators to invest in Continual Professional Development (CPD).
- **Carol** - For Practice Educators to have supervision opportunities and support regarding their practice education activities - whether they are employed or independent
- **Lynda** - Increased value and recognition of Practice Educators, which is so critical to the enhancement of practice and the development of the future workforce.

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