

BA in Social Work
Practice Learning Handbook 2024-5



[image link](#)

Contents

BA in Social Work.....	1
Practice Learning Handbook.....	1
Overview.....	4
Useful Contacts.....	5
Skills Development Days.....	6
What to expect on placement.....	6
Placement Allocation.....	7
Key roles.....	7
Practice Educator.....	7
On-Site Supervisor.....	7
Placement Tutor.....	8
The pre- placement process.....	9
Pre-placement meeting.....	9
Pre-placement checklist.....	9
The placement process and documentation.....	10
Practice Learning Agreement (PLA).....	10
Practice Learning Agreement meeting.....	10
Supervision.....	10
Mid-Placement.....	11
Critical Analysis of Practice (CAP) – FIRST PLACEMENT ONLY.....	11
Observations of Practice.....	11
Feedback from People with Lived Experience.....	11
Analysis of Feedback Document.....	12
The Mid-Point Review.....	12
End of Placement.....	13
The Final Report.....	13
Portfolio Submission via Moodle.....	13
Addressing concerns and difficulties during the placement.....	14
Additional Support available to Students, Practice Educators and Tutors.....	14
Concerns Meetings.....	15
Serious Concerns Meetings.....	15
What happens if a student fails placement?.....	16
Fitness to Practise Process.....	16
Complaints.....	17

Whistle Blowing.....	17
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).....	18
Will students be matched to a placement near their term-time address?	18
What will student hours be on placement?.....	18
Do students have to work weekends?.....	18
What should students wear on placement?	18
Will students get a statutory placement?.....	18
Business car insurance	19
What if students have childcare or other caring responsibilities?	19
What if students have a job?	19
Are students allowed to take any leave during placement?	19
What should a student do if they are 'off sick' whilst on placement?.....	19
How many hours a day should students be expected to do whilst on placement?	20
Are students entitled to any study time during placement?	20
What should a student do if they have a problem with their placement agency/PE?.....	20
What should students do if their Practice Educator leaves or is absent for a long period of time?	21
What should Practice Educators do if they find their student is absent from the placement?	21
How are travel costs for placements covered?	21

Overview

In order to facilitate the process of professional learning, personal development and assessment, Social Work England Guidance requires all social work students to complete at least 200 'practice learning days' prior to qualification. The 'practice learning days' are split across two placements and a series of 'skills development days' provided by the university.

For undergraduate students: first placement will normally consist of 70 days; the final placement will consist of 100 days (minimum). In addition, students are required to attend 30 'skills development days' across the full length of their course.

For postgraduate students: The first placement will normally consist of 90 days; the final placement will consist of 100 days (minimum). In addition, students are required to attend 10 'skills development days' across the full length of their course.

It is mandatory for students to attend all practice learning days, including the Skills Development Days provided by the University.

A placement day is usually taken to mean no less than 7 hours (plus a lunch break), but exact hours and working patterns may vary depending on the placement provider. Study time is given during the course of the placement at the discretion of the Practice Educator (up to half a day per week).

Each student will have:

- Placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences
- A minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high-risk decision making and legal interventions.

Guidance about Practice Learning is provided on our [Practice Learning website](#). This includes guidance for Practice Educators, On-Site Supervisors and Students, Practice Learning documentation and templates, and other supporting material in conjunction with the programme handbook and programme Moodle site.

More information about Social Work England requirements is available at [Practice placements guidance - Social Work England](#)

Useful Contacts

Professor Clare Stone

Lead Social Worker

Email: c.stone2@lancaster.ac.uk

Clare Brown

Practice Learning Lead and Lecturer

Email: c.brown24@lancaster.ac.uk

Nikki Stevens

Practice Learning Facilitator (Placement Tutor)

Email: n.stevens1@lancaster.ac.uk

Sarah Collins

Practice Learning Facilitator (Placement Tutor)

Email: s.collins5@lancaster.ac.uk

Catherine Hotchkiss

Teaching Coordinator (Practice Learning)

Email: swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk

Skills Development Days

All undergraduate students need to complete a minimum of 30 Skills Development Days (SDDs) in addition to 170 placement days, in order to reach the requirement of 200 days of Practice Learning.

All graduate students need to complete a minimum of 10 Skills Development Days (SDDs) in addition to 190 placement days, in order to reach the requirement of 200 days of Practice Learning. SDDs comprise of full day sessions which are designed to prepare students for practice. They do not count as a placement day.

Attendance at SDDs is mandatory, and if a session is missed, students will be required to complete a replacement piece of work.

What to expect on placement

Placements provide the opportunity for students to develop and integrate theory, knowledge, skills and values with social work practice settings, or agencies related to social work.

Placements are provided by agencies in the Statutory and Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Sectors, primarily in Lancashire, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness.

The Practice Learning Team (PLT) make every effort to ensure a good supply of placements. Due to limited availability of Practice Learning opportunities, there can be no guarantees that specific interests can be accommodated. Students also need to be aware that they may be required to travel some distance to their placement. We aim to place students within 90 minutes journey time of their term time address whenever possible. To facilitate this, we would expect students to have a term time address within the areas covered by our placement partners in Greater Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Many social work jobs are essential car user posts and placements may require students to have access to a car during placement to ensure that they maximise the learning opportunities available.

We ensure that all students have the opportunity to meet the requirements of the Social Work England Professional Standards for social work.

Placement Allocation

Placements are coordinated by the Practice Learning Team in partnership with colleagues from other agencies. Each year, students will be asked to complete a placement profile which will form the basis for finding a placement (a briefing will be provided). The purpose of the profile is to capture useful information to inform the allocation process and introduce students to a potential placement. It is important for students to advise the Practice Learning Team of any relevant information they might need to know to help in matching students to a suitable placement.

The Practice Learning Team will contact a student when they have been allocated a placement. It is the responsibility of each student to arrange a pre-placement planning meeting without delay. If a placement is lost because a student fails to respond to these instructions, the student will not normally be offered an alternative until all other allocations have been completed. The student may, as a result, face delays in completing the programme with the remainder of the cohort.

Failure to engage with the placement allocation process, or failure to accept a placement offered without sufficient justification, will normally be interpreted as a decision to withdraw from the course. Normally, the student will be transferred to an alternative non-professional programme.

If a student does not wish to accept their allocated placement, they must write to the Lead Social Worker to outline the reasons for this.

Key roles

Practice Educator

A Practice Educator (PE) is a registered social worker who holds a recognised qualification as set out within the Practice Educator Professional Standards and who takes overall responsibility for assessing the student against relevant frameworks including the Professional Capability Framework. The PE will be the person to make the recommendation of a 'pass' or 'fail' for the placement. The PE may or may not work for the agency the student is placed in. Some PEs are known as "off-site" Practice Educators, which means they work independently.

More information about Practice Education is available at: [BASW England Practice Educator Professional Standards for social work \(PEPS\) 2022 | BASW](#)

On-Site Supervisor

Please be aware that the role of the On-Site Supervisor (OSS) is often covered by the Practice Educator and you may therefore not have an OSS in addition to a PE. The OSS is responsible for the day-to-day support for the student and will work closely with the Practice Educator in their overall assessment.

Placement Tutor

All students will be allocated a Placement Tutor by the University before they go out on placement. The Placement Tutor is the University's representative in the agency, and will support students and PEs through the placement period. They are the first point of contact for any placement issues.

The pre- placement process

Pre-placement meeting

The pre-placement meeting is an opportunity for the Student, Practice Educator and On-Site Supervisor (if applicable) to meet and talk about expectations of the placement and how it can support the learning, development and progress of the student.

Please note, this meeting is not a formal interview. If there are any concerns from either the student, the Practice Educator or On-Site Supervisor, they should be raised with the organisation's Practice Learning Coordinator and with the University Practice Learning Team.

In preparation for this meeting, Practice Educators and On-Site Supervisors should think about what information they can provide about the agency and placement, and what support mechanisms are in place for students.

Students should bring with them to the meeting:

- Original paper version of their DBS (not a photocopy or electronic copy)
- Driving license and evidence of business car insurance (if using a car)
- Final report from their first placement (where applicable)

Where students have any additional needs including but not limited to pregnancy, health and disability that they think may affect their ability complete a placement without appropriate adjustments, they should inform the university as soon as possible. Please notify your placement tutor and [Wellbeing | ASK - Lancaster University](#). An individual learning support plan will outline the recommended reasonable adjustments. As part of that process a referral for an Occupational Health Assessment may also be considered.

While students are not obliged to share information about any health issues, disabilities or specific learning needs with their placement provider, they are strongly encouraged to share information at an early stage so that adjustments (including any equipment required) can be put in place to ensure that they are appropriately supported on placement.

Pre-placement checklist

There is a pre-placement checklist for the student to complete at the pre-placement meeting. The checklist template can be downloaded from the [Practice Learning webpage](#). The completed checklist should then be returned to swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk within 5 working days of the pre-placement meeting.

The placement process and documentation

Practice Learning Agreement (PLA)

The Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) is discussed at the Practice Learning meeting, which should take place within the first two weeks of the student starting placement. The agreement considers the opportunities offered by the agency, and professional development and learning needs of the student. The PLA also sets out expectations for the placement, and considers factors such as induction, health and safety and insurance. Final Placement students are strongly advised to share the recommendations from their first placement Final Report to inform this agreement.

Practice Learning Agreement meeting

The PLA meeting will be attended by:

- The student
- The Practice Educator
- The On-Site Supervisor (if applicable)
- The Placement Tutor

The PLA document must be completed and submitted to Moodle as soon as possible (within 5 working days of the PLA meeting). The PLA should be continually reviewed throughout the placement, and amendments made as and when required. This document is available to download from the [Practice Learning website](#).

It is important to include in the PLA any information about potential barriers to learning. **You are encouraged to be as open as possible about ongoing and previous life experiences and/or health conditions which may have an impact on your placement.**

Supervision

The student is to receive the equivalent of one-hour formal supervision per five placement days, or two hours per ten placement days (minimum), with their Practice Educator (PE).

Where a student has an Onsite Supervisor (OSS), we strongly recommend that the OSS provides the student with half an hour 1:1 supervision per week in addition to the formal supervision provided by the PE.

The supervision notes are not to be included in the Portfolio but are to be kept safe in case they are needed at a later point, for example, if a student raises concerns or fails their placement, etc. The supervision calendar is to be included in the portfolio and is available to download from the [Practice Learning website](#).

It may be useful for students to complete a 'supervision contract' with their PE. An example of this can be found on the Practice Learning website.

To aid communication, we also recommend that Student, PE and OSS hold a 3-way meeting at least twice during the placement, once before the Midpoint meeting.

Mid-Placement

Documents completed by students on placement include two Critical Analyses of Practice (CAPS) (first placement only), an Analysis of Feedback Document (final placement only), and Observations of Practice (3 for first and 4 for final placement). More information about these documents is available below. At least one CAP and one Observation of Practice should be completed by first placement students before the Midpoint review. At least two Observations of Practice should have been completed, and a plan made for completion of the Feedback Document by final placement students before the Midpoint review.

Critical Analysis of Practice (CAP) – FIRST PLACEMENT ONLY

A Critical Analysis of Practice (CAP) is a written, reflective assignment. The aim of the CAP is for the student to consider all stages of the social work process, including the service user perspective; legislation and theory that underpin practice; and to reflect upon and evaluate their experiences. CAPs should include a bibliography and use the Harvard referencing system.

The first CAP should be submitted to the Placement Tutor at least 48 hours in advance of the Mid-Point Review meeting. The first CAP will focus on induction and understanding the work of the organisation.

The second CAP will focus on an intervention. For more details on the first and second CAPs please see the [Practice Learning webpage](#).

Ideally your CAPs and observations should reflect different learning experiences. Please avoid using the same material in your CAPs and observations. If in doubt please speak to your Placement Tutor.

Observations of Practice

To reflect the breadth of social work practice a range of experiences can be observed. One observation may be in a multi-professional meeting or group work setting; the other observations need to include engagement with service users. A minimum of three formal observations will be completed during first placements, and a minimum of four formal observations will be completed during final placements. The PE must complete at least two observations. Another professional such as the OSS may complete the other observation(s). Observations should reflect different learning experiences.

The first observation should be sent to the Placement Tutor at least 48 hours in advance of the Mid-Point Review meeting.

Feedback from People with Lived Experience

Feedback from people with lived experience must be obtained regularly during the placement, and the student must reflect on this. Feedback can be verbal, non-verbal or written. This feedback should be gathered by the PE following observation.

Analysis of Feedback Document

Final placement students are required to complete a written analysis of two pieces of feedback from people with lived experience. A template for this Document is provided on the Practice Learning Website

The Mid-Point Review

The Mid-Point Review is an opportunity to review the PLA and consider the student's development. The development plan records targets for the remainder of the placement. This is an important opportunity for PEs and OSSs, as well as students, to raise any concerns. This meeting will be attended by:

- The Student
- The Practice Educator
- The On-Site Supervisor (where appropriate)
- The Placement Tutor

The Placement Tutor will reach out to the student between the PLA and the Midpoint. If the student also needs time to speak to their Tutor alone at the beginning of the Midpoint meeting, it is their responsibility to request this.

At the end of this meeting, a date should be agreed for the student to submit their portfolio to the PE. This date is likely to be about 10 working days before the end of placement, so that the PE has enough time to complete their final report so that the completed portfolio can be submitted on the final day of placement.

The Mid-Point Review document must be submitted to Moodle no later than five working days after the Mid-Point Review meeting. If this is not possible, you will need to request an extension from the Practice Learning Lead, by emailing swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk.

The template for the Mid Point Review is available on the [Practice Learning website](#).

End of Placement

The Final Report

Students must complete their section of the Final Report and provide it to their PE by the date agreed at the Mid-Point Review meeting. The PE will then complete the other sections, make a recommendation and return the report to the student in a timely manner for portfolio submission via Moodle.

PE's supporting students may be at a stage in the qualification process where PEPS guidance indicates that 'formal assessment documents' must be signed off by a 'Practice Educator Assessor'. In this situation, it is the responsibility of the Practice Educator and/or their employer to identify a 'Stage Two' qualified Practice Educator to sign off their final report. The monitoring of other portfolio documents will be undertaken by University Placement Tutors.

The Final Report will demonstrate whether or not the student has met all of the required domains of the Professional Capability Framework (PCF) and the Professional Standards of Social Work England in order to pass their placement.

Students are not required to meet Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) until after qualification, but it is useful for PEs to reference these in order to provide recommendations for the student's ongoing professional development as a Newly Qualified Social Worker. More information about the KSS is available here:

[Social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/standards/social-work-post-qualifying-standards-knowledge-and-skills-statements)

[Adult social work: knowledge and skills - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/standards/adult-social-work-knowledge-and-skills)

Portfolio Submission via Moodle

At the end of each placement, students are required to prepare and submit a practice portfolio. This should be uploaded to Moodle on the last day of their placement. Students will finish their placement at different times and the Practice Learning Team (PLT) will use the student's final day of placement as a deadline date for their portfolio submission.

If, for any reason, the student is unable to submit their portfolio in its entirety, they must contact the Practice Learning Lead to discuss and agree an extension, by emailing swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk. **If this does not take place, students will receive a FAIL for non-submission.**

For further guidance on submitting documents via Moodle (including a full list of contents to be included), please see the Portfolio Moodle Submission Guidance document, which can be found on the [Practice Learning website](#).

Addressing concerns and difficulties during the placement

Social work involves promoting and protecting the welfare of individuals and the wider community. Students are required to attain the highest standards in their practice, which is underpinned by relevant theory as well as demonstrating commitment to the social work ethics and value base. The assessment of practice learning is taken very seriously. If students do not attain the required standards within their practice, they will not pass the practice component of the programme and cannot therefore be awarded the professional qualification.

It is of vital importance not to delay addressing any concerns. If a student is experiencing problems, the first thing they should do is talk to their Practice Educator or On-Site Supervisor to see if the difficulties can be resolved through discussion.

The following process may facilitate the resolution of concerns:

- identify and share the concern
- draw up an action plan to outline targets, responsibilities, and support
- set a review date
- record and agree the plan
- formally review and record the outcomes

Students are NOT permitted to leave their placement without permission from the University. It is expected that student and Practice Educator instead follow the processes outlined in this handbook.

Additional Support available to Students, Practice Educators and Tutors

A wide range of support is available from the University to assist students and Practice Educators.

The Placement Tutor will usually be the first point of contact at the University for both student and Practice Educator. In some instances, when the issue is related to personal problems, it may be appropriate for the student to talk to the Placement Tutor before their Practice Educator.

Students also have access to their Academic Tutor and the department's Personal Tutor. Practice Educators can seek advice from either their own agency Practice Development Worker (PDW) and/ or a member of the Practice Learning Team at Lancaster University. University Tutors can seek further support from the Practice Learning Lead, the Director of Social Work or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Lead.

In most instances the Practice Educator and student will be able to draw up an action/development plan. This must be monitored and the Placement Tutor should receive a copy and be kept informed of progress.

The Placement Tutor should be informed of any concerns that cannot be quickly and easily resolved by a discussion between the Practice Educator and the student. If the issue has not been resolved by informal discussion, a Concerns Meeting should be arranged promptly.

If it appears when arranging a Concerns Meeting that the nature of the concerns may lead to the placement being terminated, then a Serious Concerns Meeting should be convened (see below).

Concerns Meetings

A Concerns Meeting should be attended by the student, the Practice Educator and the Placement Tutor. The Practice Learning Lead may also be invited to attend. The meeting will be facilitated and, in the majority of situations, chaired by the Placement Tutor. Written notes should be made by the Placement Tutor and shared with meeting attendees. The Placement Tutor should ensure that the student is being supported appropriately and that the concerns of the Practice Educator are heard and responded to. In accordance with fair assessment principles, a student should receive clear indications of whether or not they are on track to pass the placement.

Where the concerns are about the student's practice, they must be given an opportunity to improve. An action plan should be recorded in writing with a clear indication of what the student needs to achieve within an agreed timescale. Agency accountability and the safety of people using the service must be considered when agreeing an action plan. It should be agreed how progress towards the agreed outcomes will be reviewed and any further issues addressed. A date of a further Concerns Meeting should be agreed, to formally consider whether the objectives in the action plan have been met.

It is the responsibility of the Placement Tutor to inform the Practice Learning Lead of the outcome of any Concerns Meeting. Any changes to placement arrangements should be recorded in an updated Practice Learning Agreement and emailed to swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk. Where additional placement days are deemed necessary, this can only be agreed by the Practice Learning Lead.

Occasionally at a Concerns Meeting, it may become apparent that the placement cannot continue. A Serious Concerns Meeting should then be arranged to formally terminate the placement.

Serious Concerns Meetings

The Practice Learning Lead should be invited to all Serious Concerns Meetings, and in most cases will chair the meeting. Written minutes must be taken. If the concerns raised can be resolved in the Serious Concerns Meeting, then the process will be the same as a Concerns Meeting. If, however, it is felt that the placement cannot continue following the meeting, reasons for the termination should be fully recorded. The student should then submit their portfolio with the work that has been completed so far. The Placement Calendar must be signed by the Practice Educator and

submitted as part of the Portfolio. The Practice Educator will then write a final report identifying the areas where the student has, or has not, met the domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework, in order to evidence why the student has not met the required standard to pass their placement. The University will send the student a copy of this report and ask them to write a reflective statement (up to 1000 words) about their understanding of the report and the reasons why the placement has concluded.

The Practice Educator's report and the student's reflective statement will be considered by the Practice Learning Team who may ask for supervision notes and other evidence identifying what steps have been taken to rectify the difficulties raised earlier on in the placement.

What happens if a student fails placement?

A degree in Social Work cannot be awarded to anyone who has not successfully completed two practice placements. It is expected that a student will have evidenced the ability to meet the majority of Social Work England Professional Standards by the end of the first placement, and all the Professional Standards by the end of the second placement. In the event that a student has not met the required standard in relation to the Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework PCF (BASW 2018) by the end of their placement, evidence from the student, the Practice Educator and the Placement Tutor will be considered by the Practice Learning Team before one of the following recommendations are made:

- I. Extend the practice learning experience within the same placement OR
- II. Repeat the whole placement in a different agency OR
- III. Extend the practice learning experience but in a different agency OR
- IV. No repeat placement offered

In some cases, a referral to the 'fitness to practise' panel will be made as a result of recommendations I-IV listed above.

Fitness to Practise Process

The University recognises that, in rare circumstances, information or events may come to light which appear to question the fitness to practise of a student for Social Work. For the Social Work programme at Lancaster University 'fitness to practise' is taken to mean whether the 'conduct, character and health' of a person raises concerns about whether they could or should be able to practise social work. In line with Social Work England advice, this would arise in cases of behaviour damaging or dangerous to people with lived experience of services, other students, or agency stakeholders; or behaviour presenting an unacceptable risk to self or others. When there are 'fitness to practise' concerns, the Fitness to Practise policy will be enacted.

Complaints

The Placement Complaints Procedure is for use by a student in relation to the practice learning opportunity, the Practice Educator or the On-Site Supervisor. In relation to placements there are two grounds for a formal complaint by the student:

- I. *The Practice Educator/Supervisor is failing significantly to carry out their part in the practice learning agreement or to provide the learning opportunities as agreed.*
- II. *The Practice Educator/Supervisor is deemed by the student to be engaging in unprofessional conduct or discriminatory behaviour, which the student must specify.*

In either of these cases, the student should follow the Placement Complaints Procedure which can be found on the Practice Learning website. Any other concerns about the degree should be dealt with through academic complaints procedures or examination board appeals. Complaints within an agency (not relating to practice assessment or learning opportunities) should be dealt with through the agency's own complaints procedure.

More information on the Complaints Procedure can be found on the [Practice Learning webpage](#).

Whistle Blowing

Social work students have an obligation to challenge unsafe behaviour and cultures, and organisational wrongdoings. All placement agencies will have a whistle blowing policy and process in place which you are required to familiarise yourself with during the induction.

You may see or hear things that make you feel uncomfortable and that you do not understand. In most cases it is appropriate to discuss these with your PE and or Placement Tutor. Should you still have concerns it may be appropriate to draw upon whistle blowing procedures.

If a student becomes concerned that there has been a breach of any aspect of Social Work England Professional Standards and/or other professional Codes of Conduct, whether by the student, a colleague or placement provider, they must report this to both an appropriate senior person within the agency concerned and the Placement Tutor.

At this point the University would expect the employer to investigate the matter and report back on its conclusions and actions taken. If the University is satisfied that the employer is fulfilling its responsibilities then the matter will rest there. Where this is not the case, the University will take further action to fulfil its responsibilities towards students and the public drawing upon 'Raising Serious Concerns and Disclosing Public Interest Matters (Whistle blowing)' [Raising-Serious-Concerns-and-Disclosing-Public-Interest-Matters-Whistleblowing.pdf \(lancaster.ac.uk\)](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Will students be matched to a placement near their term-time address?

The Practice Learning Team will aim to place students within a 90-minute journey of their term time address whenever possible. In order to facilitate this, we would expect students to have a term time address within the areas covered by our placement partners in Greater Lancashire and South Cumbria. The cost of commuting to and from placement is the responsibility of the student (see below **How are travel costs for placements covered?*).

What will student hours be on placement?

The placement day is normally full-time, 9-5pm or the equivalent hours worked within the specific agency. Students may be expected on occasion to undertake work outside these hours e.g. when dealing with an emergency situation. Punctuality is an important aspect of professional practice. Any specific arrangements to deviate from normal agency hours must be agreed in advance with the Practice Educator and the Placement Tutor and recorded in the Practice Learning Agreement (or as an addendum to this agreement).

Do students have to work weekends?

For some placements, the Practice Educator may offer students the opportunities to work weekends. Although this will not be mandatory, if students can work on a Saturday or Sunday it may be advantageous to take up this offer as students may experience some aspects of the service that are not available during the week.

What should students wear on placement?

Students should discuss with their Practice Educator appropriate dress including jewellery et., and the agency will advise students if a specific dress code is required. Appropriate dress forms part of the pre-placement checklist.

Will students get a statutory placement?

Students will be offered a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high-risk decision making and legal interventions. Social Work England guidance is that a placement at a PVI can be defined as being in a statutory setting if:

- the local authority has delegated a statutory function to the PVI and
- there is opportunity at the PVI for students to be directly involved with children and families who are subject to s17 and s47 (under the Children Act 1989) and/or
- there is opportunity at the PVI for students to be involved in delivering requirements of the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005

Business car insurance

If students are using their car for placement their placement provider may need to see evidence that they are appropriately insured. Business car insurance is a type of car insurance that covers you if you use your car for work-related purposes, other than commuting. It is the responsibility of the student to check with their insurer that they have the correct insurance to cover their car usage during placement, and to provide evidence of this to the placement provider. This will also be recorded in the Practice Learning Agreement.

What if students have childcare or other caring responsibilities?

Some students may have childcare responsibilities or caring responsibilities towards an adult family member. Students should be entitled to the same flexibility around their caring roles as would be available to employees of the placement agency. Students are encouraged to share information with the Practice Learning Team in their placement profile form, and with the Practice Educator at the pre-placement meeting. Discussions between the student and the agency should establish how the student will be able to complete each full placement day.

What if students have a job?

The university recognises that some students may need to maintain some paid employment whilst also being on placement. Students are encouraged to share any information concerning working hours outside of placement. As part of their commitment for a full-time degree course, students are expected to prioritise the requirements of their placement over any paid work commitments.

Are students allowed to take any leave during placement?

The requirements of the academic timetable do not provide flexibility for holidays to be taken during placement. If, in exceptional circumstances, students need to take time off during these periods, this will need to be agreed by the Placement Tutor and Practice Educator and recorded as an addendum to the Practice Learning Agreement. Any placement days missed will need to be rearranged and completed, to ensure students have achieved the required number of days for qualification. If these days need to be added to the placement this may affect the timing of the student's graduation.

What should a student do if they are 'off sick' whilst on placement?

The procedure for reporting sickness absence will be agreed at the Practice Learning Agreement meeting and recorded on the PLA document. The student must follow the agreed procedure on each day of absence from placement. Absences must be recorded on the placement calendar, which should then be taken to the first supervision meeting following the students' return to placement. Students must also report their absence to the Placement Tutor and the Practice Learning Co-ordinator by emailing swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk on each day of the absence. They should also report when they return to placement, confirming the total number of days missed from placement.

Absences of more than five days must be supported by a 'sick/fit note'. Following an extended period of absence, the Practice Learning Team will contact the student to discuss arrangements for return to placement, and will send confirmation of this in writing to the Practice Educator (and On-Site Supervisor if applicable). Practice Educators may then carry out a 'return to work' meeting with the student, to assess if the student can undertake the full duties and also to discuss if any adjustments or additional support needs should be put in place.

Days off sick do not count as placement days – any missed days will need be added on to the end of placement.

How many hours a day should students be expected to do whilst on placement?

Students are expected to work the equivalent of a full-time worker, i.e. work the usual hours any employee of the agency works. These hours tend to be 0900-1700, Monday to Friday. However, some reasonable negotiation is allowed here if required. Social Work England specify that a placement day is usually taken to mean no less than 7 hours (plus a lunch break), but exact hours and working patterns may vary depending on the placement provider.

Are students entitled to any study time during placement?

Study time is given during the course of the placement (up to a half day per week). This should not be stored up to allow an early end to the placement or be taken as annual leave. Study time should either be taken on a weekly, or at the longest, a fortnightly basis. All study time needs to be agreed in advance with the Practice Educator. Students may take study time on Bank Holidays by agreement with their PE if they wish to do so.

Practice Educators may also give students a small amount of time each day to reflect on, read and write about their learning experiences. Students should not, however, complete portfolio work during their working day.

What should a student do if they have a problem with their placement agency/PE?

A student must not simply leave or terminate a placement. They should report any difficulties to the Placement Tutor and engage in negotiations with the Tutor and the agency in an attempt to rectify the situation. See the section above on addressing concerns and difficulties on placement.

Please note: A student who, without due cause, withdraws from a placement without the prior agreement of the Placement Tutor will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course and transferred to a non-qualifying academic programme.

Should a placement break down, the University's procedures for dealing with a complaint or fitness to practise are detailed on the programme Moodle site.

What should students do if their Practice Educator leaves or is absent for a long period of time?

In rare circumstances, Practice Educators leave the organisation unexpectedly. In these situations, it is important that students inform the Practice Learning Team by emailing swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk, so that a contingency plan can be developed which will work to support the student through to the end of their placement. A contingency plan should be discussed at the Practice Learning Agreement meeting.

What should Practice Educators do if they find their student is absent from the placement?

Practice Educators should inform the Practice Learning Team if their student is absent from placement, by emailing swplacements@lancaster.ac.uk.

What should Practice Educators do if the student experiences problems whilst on placement?

If Practice Educators have any concerns about the student whilst on placement, they should contact the student's Placement Tutor.

***How are travel costs for placements covered?**

It is the student's responsibility to cover travel expenses commuting to and from placement. All students in receipt of a bursary are entitled to a Placement Travel Allowance (PTA). PTA is automatically included in the basic bursary for those students in receipt of a social work bursary. Non-social work bursary recipients may be eligible (submit to criteria set out in the application form) to receive a PTA. This is intended to help students meet the costs of travel to and from their home to the placement provider's place of work. It is not intended to replace or supplement the placement provider's expenses policy for students travelling to individual assignments while on placements. Any expenses over and above the fixed contribution must be met by the student. Please consult the [HM Government website](#) for more information. Where a student has concerns about their personal finances, support and advice is available from the University.

Any travel expenses incurred while carrying out the work of the placement agency should be covered by the agency, and details about reimbursement of expenses should be discussed at the pre-placement meeting. The arrangements for this should then be documented in the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA).