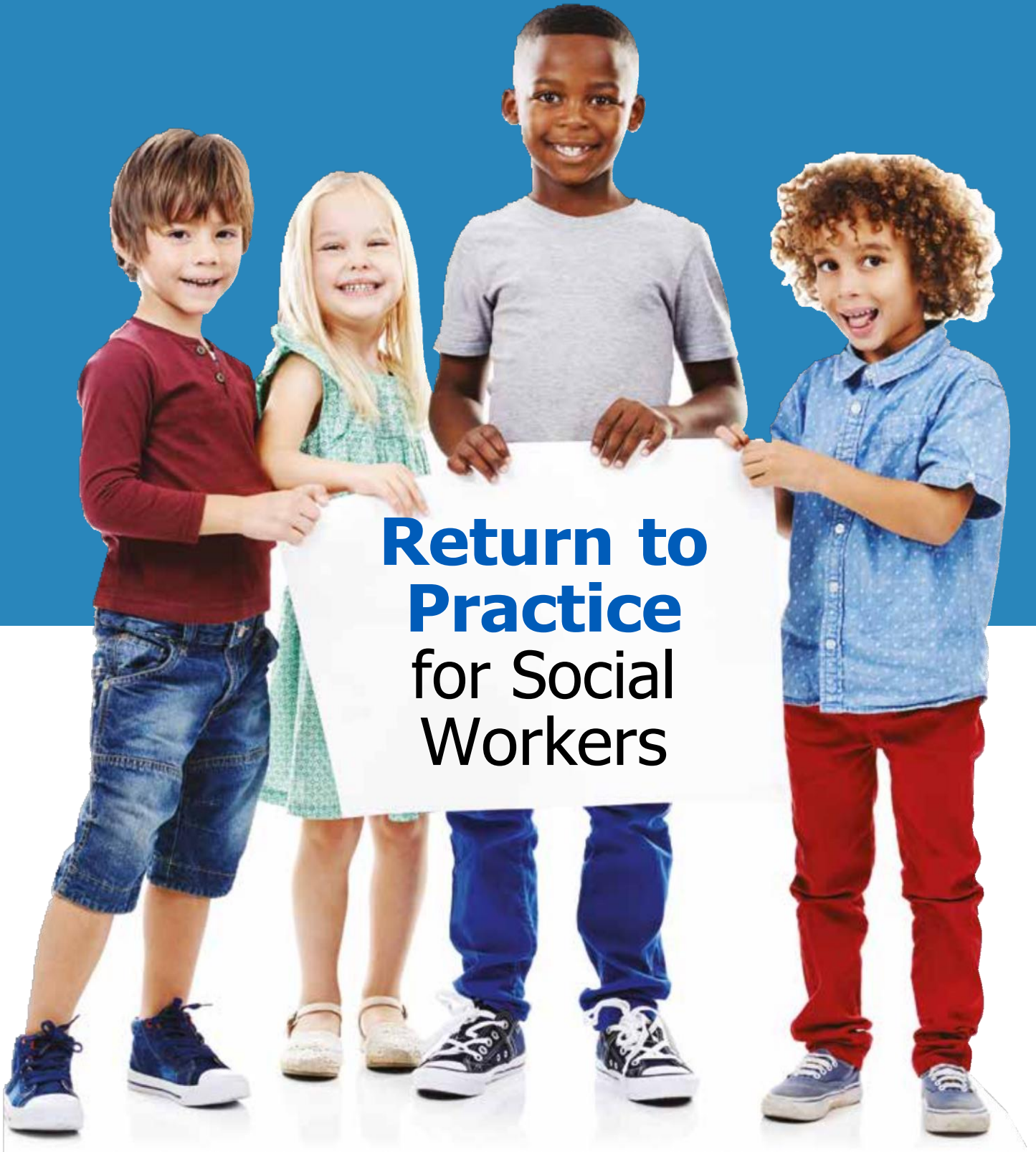


# Coventry Children's Services



**Return to  
Practice  
for Social  
Workers**

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## Foreword

Thank you for your interest in our Return to Practice Programme. Coventry is rated good by OFSTED and is committed to attracting quality practitioners to our workforce. We have an award-winning Social Work Academy which offers an intensive supportive learning environment to newly qualified social workers stepping into professional practice. The Academy supports a range of initiatives, for example Frontline, Step-Up and a new Apprenticeship Model that have broadened to support local experienced children and families' workers to progress their social work career. The Return to Practice Programme will complement this portfolio reaching out to those who have qualified as a social worker that have been out of practice for some time and are now looking to reignite your passion for social work as a career

Through the Social Work Academy there is plenty of support available. Your paid supervised practice opportunity in a children's services team will be complemented by support from the Professional Practice Educators based in the Academy offering the opportunity to access a learning and development offer, to renew and enhance your existing skills. You will then continue with your employment as a registered social worker in Coventry. Coventry is highly committed to improving outcomes for children and their families and attracting enthusiastic and experienced practitioners with the right kind of support and encouragement to come back into this challenging and interesting profession.

Coventry Children's Services has a strong ethos of supporting all its employees to progress and reach their full potential. The career pathway for social workers from newly qualified through to advanced practitioners and managers is in place. All learning opportunities will be underpinned by the need to meet statutory and regulatory requirements and will be mapped against the Professional Capabilities Framework and Post Qualifying Standards. This will enable you to assess how you are progressing and support you in your registration with Social Work England.



## Information about the Programme

Taken a career break? Wanting to return to social work practice? Coventry Children's Services can support you back into practice through the Return to Practice Programme.

If you are unregistered and have been out of practice for more than two years, the 12 weeks Return to Practice Programme will enable you to update your knowledge and skills so that you can meet the requirements for registration with Social Work England. As a paid, full-time employee, we will provide you with an opportunity to complete a period of 'supervised practice'. Linking you with a social work team manager based in one of our busy front-line teams for a minimum of 3 days per week, you will undertake a period of shadowing, observing and learning about current practice to update your understanding of social work with children and their families. This, together with 2 study days per week, will form your updating period to refresh your knowledge and skills, you will then be able to meet the requirements for your professional registration.

You will be supported with coaching and mentoring from a Professional Practice Educator based in the Social Work Academy alongside an internal package of bespoke learning and development which will enable practitioners to meet the knowledge requirements for the Post Qualifying Standards (PQS) and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

This handbook provides guidance around our criteria, the application process and how you will be supported to complete your learning programme.

If after having looked through this booklet you have any further questions, please contact:

Louise Shorthouse, Professional Practice Educator or Arin Sotoudeh, Recruitment and Retention Lead.

e-mail [louise.shorthouse@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:louise.shorthouse@coventry.gov.uk)  
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## What is the process?

### Application Process

- ▶ Complete the Return to Social Practice application form, providing documentation to confirm identity and qualification
- ▶ Return to Practice Interview
- ▶ Complete DBS check

### Supervised Practice Experience (12 weeks)

- ▶ You will be linked with a team manager in one of our children's teams to undertake a period of supervised practice
- ▶ Complete a PQS Self-Assessment and draw up a Professional Development Plan with the Professional Practice Educator outlining what the supervised practice will include.
- ▶ Complete supervised practice period
- ▶ Supervision, Coaching and Mentoring will be provided through the Social Work Academy by a Professional Practice Educator
- ▶ Private study undertaken, and evidence gathered to produce a portfolio of learning
- ▶ Formal study undertaken through workshops and our Children's Services Learning and Development programme

### Completion of evidence for professional registration

- ▶ Complete form for registration with team managers confirming you have completed your supervised practice days
- ▶ Professional Practice Educator to be counter signatory for private and formal study
- ▶ Apply for registration

### Once your registration is complete

- ▶ Job title will change to Social Worker and salary will increase
- ▶ You will have the opportunity to meet with a Professional Practice Educator monthly for 6 months to support your continuing professional development with a review being held at 3 months.

## Guidance on Returning to Practice

Social Work England requirements state that if you have had a break of more than two years from social work practice and wish to return to the profession, there is a self-directed process you can follow. Social Work England states that "It is your responsibility to make sure you have met the appropriate requirements and can practice safely and effectively within your scope of practice, in line with our standards."

### Minimum Social Work England requirements

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/restoration-guidance>

You need to update your knowledge and skills as follows:

<b>0-2 years</b>	Evidence of how skills, knowledge and experience have been kept up to date.
<b>2 - 5 years</b>	<b>30 days of updating</b> within 6 months of renewal of your registration where at least 15 days must be made up of supervised practice alone or both supervised practice and formal study
<b>5 years and over</b>	<b>60 days of updating</b> within 12 months of renewal of your registration where at least 30 days must be made up of supervised practice alone or both supervised practice and formal study



The updating period can be made up of any combination of supervised practice, formal study or private study. Private study must not make up more than half the period. This updating period must be completed within 12 months before the date you apply to come back on the register or within 6 months when you re-register.

This programme offers a full time, paid post to support you achieving registration with Social Work England therefore enabling you to practice as a social worker within Coventry.

We offer a period of 3 days per week supervised practice with a team manager out in a front-line team, alongside 2 days per week study. This could be in addition to or inclusive of training sessions you may attend as part of our core training offer. In addition to the supervised practice, you would also need to be able to evidence how you have met the requirements around private and/or formal study, to share with your Professional Practice Educator, who can then countersign the Social Work England form to confirm you have completed the updating period. Should your updating period be 15 days, the programme could be completed within 6 weeks (at the discretion of the Team Manager / Professional Practice Educator)

Still wondering if this is for you? Here are a couple of examples to get you thinking:

#### Example 1

When Frank completed his Social Work Master's Degree in 2012, he went to work in a voluntary sector mental health service and stayed there for five years. He then decided to take some time out and travelled extensively, so this meant his professional registration lapsed. He has been out of practice for two years, but really wants to refocus on social work in a children and families team. He has not worked in this kind of statutory setting and is worried that he will be at a disadvantage during the interview process. He would like to undertake as much supervised practice as possible in order to build his confidence.

#### Example 2

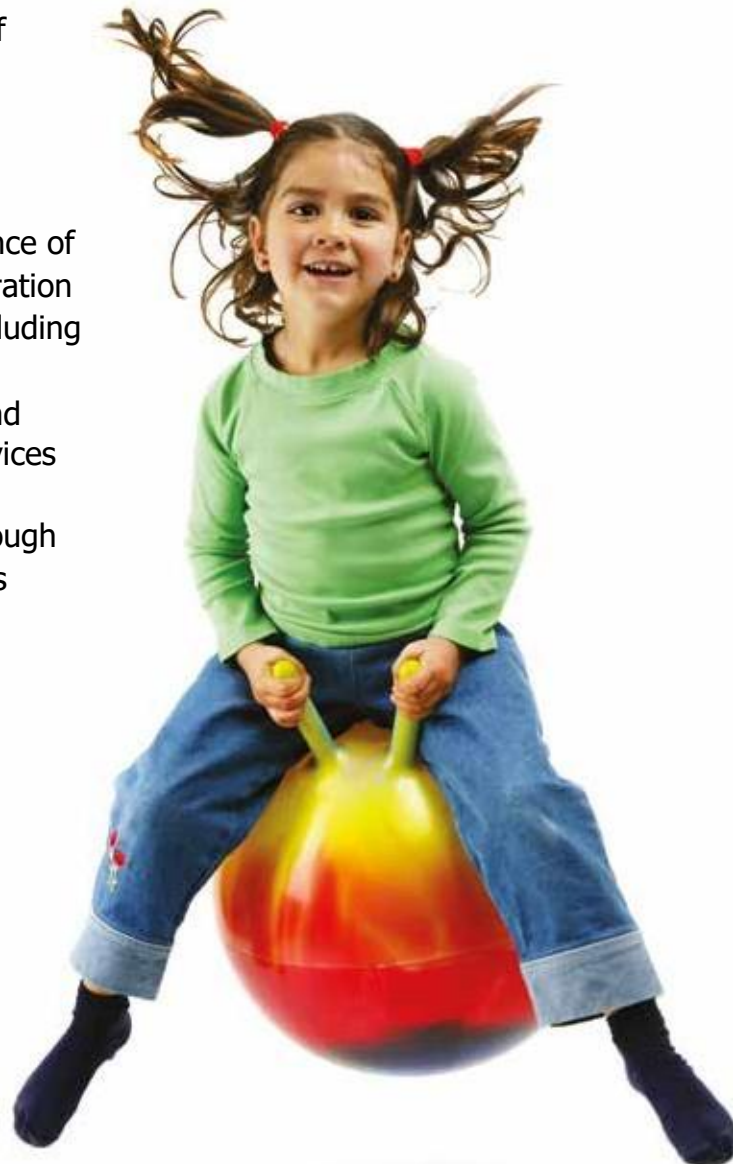
Surinder qualified ten years ago and was a registered social worker in a local authority until four years ago. At that point, she resigned from work in order to support members of her family with pressing health needs. For the last five years of her practice Surinder worked in a family placement team. She feels ready and excited to get back into practice and would really like the challenge of working with children and families. At the same time, she feels that her knowledge base may be out of date. She would also like to understand what the day-to-day work of a children and families social worker looks like now. Whilst she feels she has relevant skills, she would like to see how they can apply to this setting and start to critically evaluate her practice with an experienced practitioner again.

## Learning activities and opportunities

Through early discussion with a Professional Practice Educator, we will aim to identify a team setting that will best meet your learning needs, linking you with an experienced social work practitioner who can provide you with a range of learning opportunities within their team. A Professional Development Plan will be drawn up with the support of your Professional Practice Educator from the Social Work Academy to help you to access the different parts of the learning experience.

### Learning Opportunities:

- ▶ Shadowing social workers and other practitioners
- ▶ Observing practice and team processes
- ▶ Attending and observing home visits, direct work with families, Child in Need meetings, Safeguarding Conferences, Family Court Proceedings, Core Groups and Multi-agency meetings
- ▶ Contributing to Care Planning
- ▶ Opportunity to do some small pieces of work alongside a social worker
- ▶ Reflective supervision, coaching and mentoring under the guidance of a Professional Practice Educator
- ▶ Opportunity to share and review evidence of learning and development for re-registration
- ▶ Attendance at refresher workshops including Interview Skills
- ▶ Invitation to attend relevant training and workshops through the Children's Services Core Training offer
- ▶ Updating research and knowledge through access to books and learning materials
- ▶ Access to E-Learning Resources





## Children's Learning and Development Training:

Whilst completing a period of updating practice, you will have access to some of the Learning and Development portfolio for Coventry Children's Services which will be agreed within your Professional Development Plan. This is comprised of core and mandatory training alongside professional development and is mapped against the PCF and PQS for Children and Families social workers.

### Some of the courses on offer include:

- ▶ Induction
- ▶ Safeguarding Awareness
- ▶ The Record Business and Chronologies
- ▶ Domestic Abuse Awareness / Domestic Violence Recognition and Response
- ▶ Exploring Cultural Sensitivity
- ▶ Child Sexual Exploitation
- ▶ Prevent Awareness
- ▶ Life Story Work
- ▶ Introduction to Signs of Safety
- ▶ Coventry's Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency training at Level 1

### Introduction to Safeguarding

Corporate e-learning Programme - including Information Sharing and Consent; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Access to courses will be tailored to your individual requirements, your level of experience and how long it has been since you have been in practice.

There is also an annual Practice Week which provides a host of exciting workshops on interactive and thought-provoking topics.



## Children's Learning and Development Training: Post-registration Offer

Following on from the supervised practice placement and successful registration with Social Work England, candidates will become a social worker within Coventry City Council.

Upon registration there will continue to be a 6-month formal programme that will include internal and external development opportunities alongside coaching and mentoring provided by the Practice Educator team within the Social Work Academy.

### Learning and Development

An internal package of tailored learning and development will enable practitioners to meet the knowledge requirements for the Post Qualifying Standards (PQS) and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) along with Coventry Children's Services Practice Standards. Coventry Children's Services have a comprehensive learning and development offer with many face to face and online sessions available.

You will also be given the opportunity to join together, to reflect and share through group supervisions with other candidates.

### Coaching / Mentoring

Upon appointment Practice Educator 1:1s would be offered for 6 months. The frequency of these will be appropriate to the level of experience of the practitioner and the duration of time out of practice.

These would cover:

- Critical Reflection / Reflective Log
- Building Resilience
- Transferring learning to practice
- Group and Individual Supervision

In addition to this, there would be regular individual supervision provided by the team manager of the practitioner.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Returner

- ▶ To take responsibility for your own period of updating, making sure you meet Social Work England's standards, drafting an appropriate Professional Development Plan in consultation with your experienced social worker and professional practice educator
- ▶ To actively engage in discussion with your team manager and experienced social worker colleagues and professional practice educator to identify your learning needs and objectives
- ▶ Take up opportunities offered by the Academy for updating knowledge
- ▶ Participate in regular discussion to critically reflect on practice and evaluate learning
- ▶ Maintain a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate learning achieved using a range of methods e.g. reflective log, notes from observations, courses and reading undertaken
- ▶ Adhere to the Data Protection requirements for Coventry, signing the confidentiality statement

### Team Manager

- ▶ To meet with the returner and support them to identify the skills and knowledge they need to update their practice safely and effectively in relation to the role to which they plan to return
- ▶ Identify how the returner's learning needs will best be met in your team and consider whether any time spent in other work settings would complement the returner's learning
- ▶ Provide a range of learning opportunities to be tailored to the returner's previous level of experience
- ▶ With the support of a professional practice educator draw up a Professional Development Plan which outlines arrangements and enables you to be fully supported in your role by the Academy
- ▶ To offer supervision to ensure the returner is accessing learning opportunities, offering support and guidance, to ensure you and the learner are practicing safely and effectively
- ▶ The 'supervised practice' forms one part of the returner's period of updating their knowledge and skills. At the end of the period, you will be asked to sign the returner's supervised practice form to confirm the number of days completed
- ▶ You may be asked to complete the updating Period Cover Sheet; this is something that can also be signed by the professional practice educator - see below
- ▶ In the event of any concerns coming to light about the returner's practice, advice should be sought from your link professional practice educator

**Professional Practice Educator**

- ▶ Consider returner's application and whether they will be eligible for the programme
- ▶ Identify a team to provide the supervised practice period with an experienced social worker
- ▶ Support the drawing up of the Professional Development Plan, enabling access to learning resources
- ▶ Provide reflective supervision and guidance around relevant reading and areas of study to maximise the returner's learning from their practice experience
- ▶ Validate evidence of formal and private study for the purposes of the Updating Period Form, providing the counter signatory where appropriate.
- ▶ To be the link person with the Social Work Academy, supporting the experienced social worker responsible for the returner to provide a good learning environment. Overseeing the returner's experience with Coventry and developing the programme

**Role of Counter signatory**

At the end of the updating period, the returner will require a signature on the Updating Cover Sheet confirming they have completed the required number of days. You do not need to physically supervise every day of the returner's updating period and you do not need to confirm that they are fit to practice. You just need to take reasonable steps to be sure that the returner has completed the number of days of supervised practice, formal and/or private study that they need to overall.



## Important links:

### 1. Social Work England Return to Practice Guidance

This provides information about what you are required to do to be able to register or reregister with them

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/restoration>

### 2. Registration Application form

This is the application form to rejoin the register complete with instruction on how to fill it in

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/registration/apply-for-restoration>

### 3. Social Work England Professional Standards

You should be familiar with these standards because to register you will be signing to say that you will keep to them

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards>

### 4. Professional Capabilities Framework

This is the current framework held by BASW which outlines the 9 domains you need to meet to qualify as a social worker.

<https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/pcf-social-worker.pdf>

There is also a graphic fan which illustrates how the PCF develops as you progress through your social work career with increasingly complex domains for each level.

[https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/pcf\\_fan.pdf](https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/pcf_fan.pdf)

### 5. Post Qualifying Standards

The Department for Education updated the PQS for child and family practitioners in May 2018, these provide the national assessment and accreditation criteria for social workers supporting vulnerable children and families following qualification.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/708704/Post-qualifying\\_standards-PQS\\_for\\_child\\_and\\_families\\_practitioners](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708704/Post-qualifying_standards-PQS_for_child_and_families_practitioners)

