

Direct observation 1	
Background Information	
Name of observer	Sian Roberts
Role and relationship to student (e.g., PE, OSS, team manager, etc.)	PE
Date of observation	04/03/2025
Consent	
Have all participants received an information sheet about this direct observation in advance?	Yes
<i>If no, have all participants received appropriate information (in a form suitable to their age, understanding, and capacity) about this direct observation in advance?</i>	n/a
Have all participants had the opportunity to ask questions about this direct observation in advance?	Yes
Do all participants with capacity to do so understand that they can decline to participate in this direct observation at any time without giving a reason?	Yes
If children or young people (aged 0 – 15) are involved, has informed consent (or assent) been obtained from the child or young person <i>and</i> consent from a person with parental responsibility?	n/a
Have all participants (16+) with capacity given their informed consent for this direct observation to go ahead?	Yes
<i>If you have answered 'no' to any of these questions, use the space below to add explanatory comments and justify why you are going ahead with the observation.</i>	
n/a	
Are there any concerns about the capacity of any participants to give informed consent for this direct observation?	No
<i>If yes, use the box below to explain what you and / or your PE have done to assess mental capacity, how you can justify this direct observation going ahead, and how you will monitor the participant's ongoing wellbeing during the observation.</i>	
n/a	
Please confirm that the observation will be stopped immediately if any concerns arise in relation to consent, capacity or the well-being of any participant(s).	Yes

Context
Pen-picture (250 words)
<i>A concise description of the individual, family, or group involved including personal, language (e.g., Active Offer), identity-related, social, economic and / or cultural circumstances.</i>
Sarah is the primary carer for her brother Bryn, who is in his late 50s and has long-term alcohol dependency and associated health issues, including early-stage liver disease and type 2 diabetes. Both Sarah and Bryn are White Welsh and have lived in the same rural community all their lives. They describe themselves as private people, and neither has strong ties outside immediate family. They do not identify with any particular faith or cultural group, but both expressed a strong attachment to their home area and Welsh identity. They both speak Welsh although have chosen to receive services in English. Nonetheless, I am going to take some Welsh-language and English-language leaflets about a local coffee morning for carers, so that Sarah has the choice of which one she would like to keep.

Sarah took on the caring role after their mother passed away four years ago. She lives nearby and visits Bryn almost daily, supporting him with meals, medication, and appointments. She works part-time as a teaching assistant and receives carer's allowance. Financially, the household is under strain, with Sarah reporting difficulty managing her own bills while helping Bryn stay afloat.

Sarah describes feeling increasingly isolated and unheard by services. She has limited time for self-care or social contact. She also expressed frustration at what she sees as gendered assumptions about her role as a carer.

Bryn has a long history of contact with substance misuse and mental health services, including past safeguarding concerns related to self-neglect. He is not currently engaged with formal support and has expressed both frustration and shame in relation to past service involvement. His speech is sometimes slurred, and he struggles with short-term memory loss. He declined formal care services during the last review.

Word count	290
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Legal and policy frameworks (250 words)

Summarise the legal and/or policy frameworks relevant to this visit or activity, including any safeguarding responsibilities.

This visit is underpinned by the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*, which places duties on local authorities to assess and meet the care and support needs of individuals like Bryn, and to assess and support carers like Sarah. The Act reinforces the principle that substance misuse can constitute a care and support need, and that services must work co-productively to promote well-being and autonomy. I am mindful of the Act's focus on early intervention, voice and control, and the duty to promote preventative, strengths-based responses.

I am also drawing on the *Substance Misuse Delivery Plan for Wales 2019–2022*, which highlights the importance of harm reduction, person-centred recovery, and the need to reduce stigma within services. This is especially relevant to Bryn, who has had negative past experiences with professionals. The *Human Rights Act 1998* is also relevant, particularly in relation to Bryn's right to be treated with dignity, and Sarah's right to be heard as a carer.

Finally, although there are no current safeguarding concerns, I am aware that Sarah has indicated she is nearing the limit of what she can manage alone. Section 3 of the *Code of Professional Practice* reminds me to work in ways that maximise the voice, control, and well-being of both individuals and carers, and to share information in a timely and appropriate way if risk concerns do arise. Section 6 also reminds me to be accountable and thoughtful in the way I record and report back on this visit.

Word count	248
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Preparation

Purpose (200 words)

*Describe the overall purpose of social work involvement, and the aims of **this** visit or activity (including how this visit or activity will contribute to meeting the overall purpose)*

The purpose of this visit is to check in with Sarah and Bryn following recent concerns raised by Sarah, to explore any changes in need or well-being, and to support both to express what is going well and what isn't. I want to give them space to be heard, and to find out whether either would like support to change their current arrangements. The visit also provides an

opportunity to clarify rights, offer information, and build on the existing relationship we've started to develop.

I've planned this visit carefully to allow both people to feel respected and in control. I want to practise active listening and avoid jumping in with assumptions or solutions. I aim to demonstrate person-centred and empathic practice, and to hold in mind both Bryn's well-being and Sarah's role as an unpaid carer. This links directly to NOS 10 (Support people to participate in decision-making processes) and CoPP Section 1 (Respect the views and wishes of individuals and carers).

This is also a chance for me to further develop my skills in direct communication, identifying unmet need, and responding appropriately to frustration or distress. If appropriate, I will also begin to explore options for additional support or follow-up.

Word count	201
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Empathy and structural awareness (200 words)

What might the people involved be thinking, feeling, or expecting from this visit? How have you considered their experience in light of anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory, and anti-racist practice?

I expect this visit may feel tense at times. Sarah has expressed anger and frustration in previous contacts, and I anticipate she may be feeling let down, unheard, or overwhelmed. Bryn may be expecting to be judged, or to have to justify his lifestyle. I need to be alert to these emotions and work hard to build trust.

I also need to be conscious of how structural stigma and discrimination shape both their experiences. Bryn's visible alcohol use, history of disengagement, and appearance have led to him being treated with suspicion and dismissal, especially in health and social care settings. Sarah, as an unpaid carer, is likely used to being overlooked and may feel that her emotional labour is invisible. Drawing on CoPP Section 5, I want to make sure I act with integrity and challenge discriminatory assumptions – my approach will be to try and name the pressures they are under, validate their experiences, and avoid rushing to solutions. I'll be looking out for opportunities to reinforce their strengths and to remind them that they matter and deserve respect. This links with NOS 9 (Engage people in social work practice) and CoPP Section 3 (Promote well-being, voice and control).

Word count	206
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Self-reflection and power dynamics (200 words)

How might your own social identities (e.g., race, gender, age, class, etc.) and role as a student social worker (thinking about power and authority) affect this interaction?

As a younger woman in my 20s, I'm aware that I may be perceived as inexperienced or "just a student," particularly by adults who are older than me and like Sarah and Bryn who have been dealing with services for a long time. I also come from a different area and a more urban background, and I don't share their strong rural or Welsh community identity, which may affect how they relate to me. I'm conscious that I hold some authority by being part of the social work team, even though I'm still learning, and I want to be careful not to overstep or underplay that role.

I've thought about how power operates in this visit - not just between me and Sarah or Bryn, but also how power has played out historically in their experiences with services. Sarah has spoken about not being listened to, and Bryn has felt judged and written off. I need to be aware of how my questions, tone, and even body language might reinforce or disrupt those dynamics.

Following CoPP Section 4, I want to balance rights and responsibilities in the conversation and ensure that I am clear, respectful, and honest in how I communicate - even if difficult topics come up.

Word count | 208

Relevant literature and theory (250 words)

*Identify at least theory or theoretical concept **or** one specific academic article or book chapter that you have read in preparation for this observation (which could be empirical or theoretical or both) and provide (i) a brief summary of the theory, concept, article or book chapter and (ii) how it helped you prepare.*

In preparing for this visit, I revisited the *Voices of Carers* report (2021) by Dan Burrows et al., which shares the experiences of unpaid carers across Wales. One of the clearest messages from the report is that carers often feel excluded from decision-making and undervalued by professionals. Sarah's recent frustration in phone calls seems to reflect this - not just a reaction to current pressures, but also a sense that her role and emotional investment are not being recognised.

This made me reflect on the concept of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), and how it applies not only to social workers but to carers like Sarah, who carry the emotional weight of holding things together - often invisibly. She manages not just Bryn's practical needs, but also the emotional toll of watching someone she loves deteriorate physically and mentally, while trying to engage with systems that haven't always listened.

As a student, I'm also becoming more aware of my own emotional labour — especially the need to remain calm, compassionate and present even when situations feel emotionally charged. I'm hopeful that this visit will be constructive, but I also want to be prepared to respond thoughtfully if difficult feelings arise. This links with CoPP Section 5, which reminds me to act with integrity and uphold public trust - not by being detached, but by responding with humanity, respect, and professional responsibility.

Word count | 229

Learning needs (150 words)

What areas of your practice are you aiming to develop and demonstrate in this observation? What specific areas would you like the observer to focus on in their feedback? (You can use bullet points for this section.)

One of my main learning needs on this placement is to build my confidence in practice. I sometimes worry about saying the wrong thing or not knowing how to respond, particularly when people are distressed or frustrated. I want to develop the ability to stay present, respond with empathy, and avoid becoming defensive or shutting down when things feel uncomfortable.

This visit is also an opportunity for me to practise linking what I've learned in the classroom - about person-centred practice, power dynamics, and structural disadvantage - with real-life conversations. I want to keep improving my ability to listen, summarise, and reflect what someone is saying in a way that helps them feel heard.

Finally, I'd like to get better at planning purposeful visits with a clear structure, while still staying flexible and responsive. I'd welcome feedback on how I manage the flow of the conversation and any moments I could have handled differently.

Word count | 154

Optional - clarity about risk and need (150 words)

If you need to raise any difficult topics during this visit - for example, in relation to risk, unmet needs, or other areas of concern – outline here what you are worried about. What do you

<i>intend to share with the individual or family, and how will you do so in a way that is clear, concrete, and concise? If not, leave this section blank.</i>	
Word count	
Optional - additional information	
<i>If applicable, is there any other information you need to provide? If not, leave this section blank.</i>	
Date preparation write-up completed	28/03/2026
Date preparation write-up discussed with observer	01/04/2026

<i>PE feedback on preparation</i>
Up to 500 words
<i>To what extent does the student's preparation demonstrate professional curiosity and critical reflection? To what extent does the student's preparation link theory, knowledge, values and practice?</i>
The student's preparation for this visit is thoughtful, structured, and demonstrates emerging professional curiosity. They show a clear desire to understand the dynamics within the family and to engage meaningfully with both Sarah and Bryn. The work is underpinned by a strong values base, including an emphasis on dignity, voice and control, and the importance of listening — all in line with CoPP Sections 1, 3 and 5. The pen-picture is appropriately detailed, with attention to identity, caring roles, and the impact of stigma. There is a welcome effort to describe both individuals in a respectful, person-centred way, avoiding assumptions or stereotypes. The student also begins to locate the family's experiences within broader social and structural contexts — for example, the impact of poverty and gendered caring roles. This suggests growing confidence in applying NOS SW3 (manage your role) and SW8 (prepare). The student makes good use of legal and policy knowledge. Their understanding of the <i>Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</i> and the carer's rights within it is appropriate for their stage of training. They also use the <i>Voices of Carers</i> report (Burrows et al., 2021) to deepen their appreciation of the lived experiences of carers, linking this clearly to their practice intentions. The discussion of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) is well handled — it goes beyond simply naming the theory and reflects engagement with the concept. The student recognises the emotional demands placed on Sarah and begins to reflect on the emotional demands of practice for themselves. One area for development is to continue exploring how emotional labour plays out in the moment - for example, how might the student manage competing pressures to be empathic, boundaried, and effective all at once? This would help move from theoretical insight into practice. Their reflections on power dynamics are careful and balanced. They acknowledge how their age, role and background might shape the relationship, without overplaying their own position. Going forward, it would be useful for the student to consider how to address power differentials explicitly in conversation - for example, through transparency about their role or active efforts to share decision-making.

The learning needs identified are appropriate and realistic. The student is rightly focused on communication, confidence, and integrating values with action. A useful next step would be to continue linking these goals to specific behaviours and strategies - for example, what active listening might sound like in different conversations, or how to bring the SSWBA principles into practice in a meaningful way.

Overall, this is a strong and values-driven piece of preparation that shows clear professional development. The challenge now is to translate this insight into confident, attuned and ethical practice.

Word count	442
Date completed	02/04/2025

Description of the visit or activity

What happened during this direct observation? (up to 250 words)

The visit took place at Bryn's home. Sarah had arranged to be there and met me at the door. She appeared tired and slightly on edge, though she was polite and welcoming. Bryn remained seated throughout the visit and engaged with me in a relaxed but low-energy way. I began by asking how things had been since our last visit, and Sarah quickly took the lead in describing her concerns.

Around ten minutes into the visit, Sarah became visibly emotional and raised her voice. She said she was "doing everything on [her] own" and that "nothing ever changes." At one point, she said, "You're all the same — you'll come and go, and he'll still be dying in that chair." I felt really taken aback by this and didn't know what to say. After an awkward pause, I said something like, "I know how hard this must be for you," and then tried to move the conversation on by asking about something more practical.

Bryn didn't say much but spoke briefly about not wanting to be "a problem." I acknowledged that and said I'd share their concerns with the team. We agreed I would follow up in the next few days.

The visit lasted around 40 minutes.

Word count	206
Date completed	04/03/2025

Observer summary of participant feedback (up to 200 words)

Summarise the feedback obtained from participants in the direct observation about the student and their practice.

Alternatively, if the participant(s) have provided written feedback or completed a feedback form, this can be scanned, photographed or otherwise copied and then pasted into the space below (instead of writing an observer summary).

If no feedback has been provided, please provide a brief explanation as to why not (e.g., participant declined).

I sought verbal feedback from both Sarah and Bryn following the visit. Sarah was initially hesitant but agreed to share her thoughts. She said the student had "done fine — no better or worse than anyone else who's come to talk to us." Sarah also said that the student "seemed to listen to what I was saying" and appreciated that she "didn't talk over me." While she did

not offer any more detailed comments, she did not express any concerns about the student's approach or conduct.

Bryn was more positive. He said he felt the student "was polite and didn't rush things" and that she "asked decent questions" and "didn't treat me like a problem." He said he appreciated her calm tone and that she "seemed to want to understand."

Overall, while the feedback was relatively brief and informally given, both participants appeared comfortable with the student's presence and approach. Sarah's comments suggest that the student was able to maintain professional composure during a challenging conversation, and Bryn's feedback indicates respectful engagement and an emerging rapport.

Word count	175
Date completed	04/03/2025

Observer feedback on the student's practice during the direct observation (up to 300 words)

In relation to the student's identified learning needs (see Preparation section, above), what did the student do well? What do they need to develop further? To what extent did the student demonstrate person-centred practice? Any other comments?

The student approached this visit with professionalism and care. They were calm and respectful in their manner and made efforts to engage both Sarah and Bryn in the conversation. They demonstrated a clear commitment to person-centred values, including treating both parties with dignity and avoiding judgemental language or assumptions. However, their ability to translate these values into purposeful communication was variable.

The student used some basic reflective listening skills and maintained appropriate eye contact and tone. That said, their responses tended to remain at a surface level. More complex reflections — including paraphrasing underlying emotion or summarising meaning — were largely absent. During the more emotionally charged part of the visit, when Sarah became distressed, the student appeared uncertain how to respond. They defaulted to a series of closed questions, which may have been an attempt to regain control, but this limited opportunities for collaborative exploration and risked undermining Sarah's autonomy.

The student also found it difficult to balance the conversation between both individuals. While they responded appropriately to Sarah's emotional presentation, they were less proactive in drawing Bryn into the discussion. As a result, he was positioned in a more passive role, and opportunities to promote his voice and control were missed.

In line with their identified learning needs, the student would benefit from continuing to develop empathic confidence and the ability to hold space during emotionally intense interactions. Practising more open questions, silence, and emotionally attuned responses would support this. They also need to develop greater purposefulness in structuring conversations and ensuring both parties are enabled to participate meaningfully.

Word count	259
Date completed	05/03/2025

Student reflection (option 1) – delete if completing option 2

Which model of reflection are you applying? (1,000 words)	In Someone Else's Shoes
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This visit gave me a lot to reflect on, especially in terms of how I respond to emotion, how I manage power dynamics in the room, and how I can continue developing my communication skills to promote voice, empathy and autonomy. I went into the visit with a clear intention — to listen, build trust, and support Sarah and Bryn to share their views. I think I made some progress with that, but I also know there were moments where I fell short of what I hoped to do.

How I thought the other person might be feeling

Sarah seemed tense from the outset. She was polite when I arrived, but her body language and facial expressions suggested she was carrying a lot. When she became upset and raised her voice, I could see how much frustration had built up over time. She talked about “doing everything on her own” and how “nothing ever changes.” It felt like she had been waiting for someone to hear that, and I just happened to be the person in front of her at the time. Looking back, I think she was probably feeling exhausted, angry, and very alone — and not just with Bryn’s care, but with the whole situation she’s been living in for years.

Bryn was much quieter, and it was harder to read how he was feeling. He engaged with me but in a low-energy, passive way. When he said he didn’t want to be “a problem,” it really struck me that he might be internalising a sense of burden — feeling like he’s to blame for Sarah’s stress or the lack of support they’ve received. That one comment carried a lot of meaning, and I regret not exploring it more in the moment.

What they might have needed from me

I think Sarah needed more than just politeness or professional distance — she needed to feel properly heard. She was clearly testing whether I was just another person coming to ask questions, or whether I was someone who would stay with her through the difficult bits. When I moved the conversation on after she became emotional, I think she noticed that. She did keep talking, but I realise now that I had missed an opportunity to give her control and to show deeper empathy. If I had paused for a bit longer, or responded with a more open and validating statement, I might have helped her feel less alone in that moment.

Bryn needed a space to speak as well — and I didn’t really give him that. I don’t think he felt excluded on purpose, but I also didn’t invite him in as much as I could have. I was so focused on managing the intensity of the moment with Sarah that I allowed Bryn to remain passive. He might have benefited from a more direct invitation to share his view — perhaps something like, “Bryn, I know this has been a lot to hear — how’s it felt from your side?” That could have shifted the balance.

What I learnt about myself and my practice

One thing I’ve learned is that I’m still uncomfortable with strong emotion. When Sarah raised her voice, I froze slightly. I didn’t panic, but I wanted to get the conversation “back on track.” At the time, I told myself I was helping — moving to something more practical — but in hindsight, I think I was avoiding the discomfort of not knowing what to say. I see now that sometimes staying with the emotion *is* the work. It’s not about having the right answer, it’s about being present and showing that I can hold that space without shutting it down.

Afterwards, I thought a lot about Hochschild’s (1983) concept of emotional labour — the effort involved in managing one’s own emotions and responding to the emotional states of

others in a professional role. I hadn't realised before how hard it can be to stay grounded when someone else is in distress or angry. I also hadn't appreciated how quickly I fall into "managing" rather than "feeling." While emotional labour is part of the role, I can see that I need to develop more capacity to recognise my reactions without letting them steer the interaction.

I also noticed that I defaulted to closed questions after that moment — probably as a way of keeping the conversation manageable. But those questions didn't support autonomy or collaboration. They gave me more control, but probably made Sarah feel less heard. That's something I want to be more conscious of going forward — using open questions to promote choice and voice, even when it feels risky or unpredictable.

Another learning point is the importance of structuring conversations with purpose. I had a clear plan going in, but I lost some of that clarity in the moment. I think I let the visit drift at times, rather than gently steering it. I want to practise holding both things at once — being empathic and emotionally attuned, while also keeping a sense of direction.

What I will take forward

Going forward, I want to focus on building my empathic confidence — the ability to stay with distress, reflect it back, and sit with silence if that's what the moment needs. I want to practise offering more complex reflections — not just repeating what someone says but helping them hear their own meaning in a different way. I also want to work on the balance between people — making sure I bring in quieter voices and don't let the conversation be dominated by whoever is most vocal.

I'll also think more carefully about power and autonomy. In this visit, I held more power than I realised — not because I had answers, but because I shaped the flow of the conversation. I want to make sure I'm using that influence to promote choice and voice, rather than taking over or steering things away from discomfort.

Finally, I want to be braver in emotionally intense moments. That doesn't mean saying something "perfect" — it means being able to manage the emotional labour involved without shutting down. I want to stay more present, and learn how to hold that emotional space.

Word count	1021
Date student reflection write-up completed	10/03/2025
Can you confirm that any initials or pseudonyms included in this account have been fully anonymised, and that you have removed all other potentially identifying information about people who use services and carers?	Yes

Student reflection (option 2) – delete if completing option 1

Feelings: What were you thinking and feeling during the observation? (100 words)

At the start of the visit, I felt prepared and fairly confident. I'd thought through the key issues and wanted to make a positive impression. When Sarah became emotional and raised her voice, I was caught off guard. I felt unsure of myself and a bit exposed. I tried to stay calm and not show that I was flustered, but inside I was panicking. I wasn't sure what to say and worried about making things worse. I also felt guilty afterwards - like I'd missed something important.

Word count	87
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Evaluation: What went well? What were the challenges? (200 words)

I think I managed the overall tone of the visit fairly well. I stayed calm, was respectful in my communication, and didn't escalate the situation even when Sarah became upset. I tried to create a safe enough space for both Sarah and Bryn to express themselves, and I didn't speak over them or jump in with advice. Having said that, Sarah tended to 'dominate' the conversation and Bryn talked a lot less. In that sense, I don't think I managed it as well as I could have.

The main challenge was knowing how to respond to strong emotion. When Sarah expressed anger and frustration, I felt uncomfortable and moved the conversation on too quickly. I asked a series of closed questions rather than responding with empathy or a more open invitation to explore what was going on for her. That made the interaction feel more controlled by me, but less collaborative or empowering for her. As noted above, I also didn't do enough to bring Bryn into the conversation. He contributed briefly, but I didn't follow up or invite him in further. This meant that his voice was heard but not actively supported or encouraged. These are areas I want to develop — especially around promoting autonomy and managing emotion in a person-centred way.

Word count | 213

Analysis: Why did things happen the way they did? How can the law, theories and / or research help explain this? (300 words)

One reason I found it hard to respond to Sarah's distress was that I hadn't properly prepared myself emotionally. I focused on the issues and the practicalities of the visit, but I hadn't considered how I might feel if someone became angry or upset. When it happened, I felt exposed and under pressure to move things along. This led me to use closed questions, which gave me a sense of control but didn't help Sarah feel heard.

Reflecting on this through the lens of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), I can see that part of my role - even as a student - involves managing both my emotions and the emotional climate of the conversation. I was "performing" a version of calm professionalism, but underneath I felt overwhelmed. I've learned that this emotional work is part of social work practice and requires awareness and support, not just coping alone in the moment.

The *Voices of Carers* report (Burrows et al., 2021) also helped me reflect on Sarah's position. Her emotional reaction wasn't just personal - it was shaped by years of being a carer, often feeling ignored or excluded. Her distress made more sense when I saw it as a reaction to systemic issues, not just the situation in front of her.

From a legal perspective, the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* promotes voice, control and partnership. I didn't fully support that in this visit - especially with Bryn, whose quieter role meant he needed more encouragement. I also didn't fully promote *autonomy*, one of the key values in the Code of Professional Practice, because I was too focused on managing the flow rather than enabling choice and participation.

Word count | 280

Conclusion: What learning are you taking from this experience? (200 words)

This experience helped me realise that staying calm and being polite isn't always enough. Person-centred practice means being emotionally present and making space for difficult conversations, not just moving through an agenda. I also saw how easy it is to shift into a more controlling role when I feel unsure - by asking closed questions or steering the conversation away from discomfort.

I've learned that empathy in practice is not just about understanding, it's about how I show that understanding in the moment. That might mean saying less, using silence, or offering a reflection that shows I've really heard the other person. I didn't do that as well as I could have in this visit, but I can now see what I was missing.

I've also learned that promoting voice and control isn't just about giving someone space to speak - it's about how I structure the conversation and how I respond to what's said. Bryn needed more support from me, and I will take that learning into future visits. Overall, I've realised that emotional preparation is just as important as factual preparation - especially when working with people under pressure.

Word count	191
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Action Plan: What are you going to do next to help build on what you have learnt from this experience? (200 words)

For example, attend specific training, read an article or book, listen to a podcast, watch a film, do some research, talk about something in supervision, consult with a colleague, seek out a shadowing opportunity, learn more about a community, practice a specific skill, etc.

To build on this learning, I will first bring the experience to supervision and explore it in more detail - including what I was feeling in the moment and how I might have responded differently. I want to practise some reflective responses with my OSS or PE, especially in response to strong emotion or frustration, so I feel more confident next time.

I've also asked to shadow my OSS on a home visit where strong feelings might come up, so I can observe how they hold emotional space and maintain purpose. I'll pay attention to how they balance empathy, structure, and emotional regulation.

I've also saved a podcast episode on emotional labour in care work, which I plan to listen to on my way into work next week. I will also look back over the teaching materials in relation to person-centred practice and find a chapter or article on responding to managing strong emotions in other people.

Finally, I will plan my next visit to see Sarah and Bryn more deliberately - including thinking about how I will manage the flow of conversation and what I can say to support both individuals to feel heard and included.

Word count	199
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(Optional) Any additional information

Date student reflection write-up completed	10/03/2025
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Can you confirm that any initials or pseudonyms included in this account have been fully anonymised, and that you have removed all other potentially identifying information about people who use services and carers?	Yes
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National Occupational Standards and the Code of Professional Practice

With this direct observation, what NOS have you demonstrated - and how?

SW1: Maintain an up-to-date knowledge and evidence base for social work practice

I used the *Voices of Carers* report (Burrows et al., 2021) to inform my understanding of Sarah's experience as a carer and considered relevant policy and legislation before the visit.

SW2: Develop social work practice through supervision and reflection

I used supervision afterwards to reflect on the emotional dynamics of the visit and to think critically about how I could improve my practice in similar situations.

SW5: Manage ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts

I recognised the ethical complexity of balancing Sarah's distress with Bryn's quieter role and tried to support both, while acknowledging I could have done more to include him.

SW7: Prepare professional reports and records relating to people

I completed this portfolio entry and my visit notes in a timely and accurate way, aiming to reflect both individuals' views respectfully.

SW8: Prepare for social work involvement

I prepared thoroughly for the visit, including thinking about emotional readiness, identity, and how to structure the conversation.

SW9: Engage people in social work practice

I was able to build rapport with both Sarah and Bryn and encouraged open conversation, although I know I need to do more to support quieter voices like Bryn's.

SW10: Support people to participate in decision-making processes

I asked questions to help both individuals share their views and made clear I would follow up with the team — although I didn't give enough time for shared exploration during the visit.

SW12: Assess needs, risks and circumstances in partnership with those involved

I listened to both Sarah and Bryn and began to form an understanding of the pressures and gaps in support they are experiencing.

SW13: Investigate harm or abuse

I was aware of Bryn's past safeguarding history and remained alert to any current risks, including emotional strain and neglect of his own health needs.

SW16: Agree plans where there is risk of harm or abuse

There were no formal plans agreed during the visit, but I recognised emotional and relational risks and flagged the need for team discussion.

SW17: Apply methods and models of social work intervention to promote change

I reflected on my communication approach and plan to use Egan's Skilled Helper model to structure my next visit more intentionally.

SW19: Evaluate outcomes of social work practice

Through reflection, I evaluated what had gone well and what could be improved in terms of empathy, structure, and emotional presence.

With this direct observation, how have you demonstrated adherence with the Code of Professional Practice?**1. Respect the views and wishes of individuals**

I listened carefully and showed respect for both Sarah and Bryn.

2. Maintain individuals' rights and promote their interests

I reflected afterwards on how to better support both individuals' rights to be heard and involved.

3. Promote the wellbeing of individuals

I recognised the emotional toll on Sarah and the impact on Bryn.

5. Be accountable for the quality of your work

I took ownership of the areas I found challenging and used reflection to think about how to improve next time.

6. Uphold public trust and confidence in social care

I acted professionally and respectfully throughout, even when I felt uncertain.

Word count	513
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References

Burrows, D., Lyttleton-Smith, K., Sheehan, L., and Jones, D. (2021) *Voices of Carers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Messages for the future of unpaid caring in Wales*. Cardiff: Cardiff University.

Hochschild, A.R. (1983) *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

PE feedback on reflective account
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Up to 500 words

To what extent does the student's reflective account demonstrate critical reflection and learning? To what extent has the student reflected on theory, knowledge, values and practice?

This is a credible and thoughtful reflective account which demonstrates emotional honesty, emerging critical reflection, and a strong commitment to learning from direct experience. The student has been open about what didn't go to plan and has taken care not to overstate their competence — instead offering a balanced reflection on what was difficult, why it mattered, and how they intend to build from it. This kind of honest reflection is a strength.

The use of theory is appropriate and meaningful. The student has drawn on Hochschild's concept of emotional labour and used it to make sense of their instinctive reactions during the visit. The theory is used not just to label experience but to challenge and interpret it. Likewise, the inclusion of the *Voices of Carers* report is well-judged and shows an appreciation of wider context and structural influences. The student is beginning to connect individual distress with systemic pressures, including the impact of caring roles and stigma.

That said, there is scope to sharpen the analysis in places. At times, the reflection leans towards narrative description ("this is what happened") rather than full analysis of meaning and alternatives. For example, when discussing the decision to move the conversation on, the student could go further in considering how this impacted Sarah and what a different response might have achieved - even hypothetically. There is good recognition of what went wrong, but the learning could be more precisely framed.

The values underpinning social work practice - including rights, autonomy, voice and dignity - are present, but not always explicitly named. The student should consider making more

deliberate use of the CoPP in future reflective work, as a way of clarifying the link between values and action. Naming whole sections is not often the best way to go, you need to look at the more detailed descriptions and use this to help identify the different ways in which (for example) you can respect the views and wishes and promote the rights of people with care and support needs.

The action plan is practical and relevant, though slightly cautious in ambition. There is room to stretch yourself further - for example, by specifying how they will measure their own progress. There is a sense in which the student has outlined “what” they are going to do, but not “so what?” in relation to their own practice and development. Nonetheless, the direction of travel is positive.

Overall, this is a promising reflection that demonstrates developing self-awareness, professional judgement and a values-led approach to practice. The student is thinking carefully about the kind of social worker they want to become and is engaging reflectively with real-world challenges — a strong foundation to build on.

Word count	448
(Optional) Any other information?	
<i>If applicable, is there any other feedback you need to give? If not, leave this section blank.</i>	
n/a	
Do you agree with the claims made in relation to the NOS and CoPP for this direct observation?	Yes
<i>If no, please explain here</i>	
Date completed	15/03/2025