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
If no, have all participants received appropriate information (in a form suitable to their age, understanding, and capacity) about this direct observation in advance?	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 *and* 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?	?

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.

n/a

Are there any concerns about the capacity of any participants to give informed consent for this direct observation?	?

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.

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)

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.

The main person I visited was a carer for someone with alcohol issues. They were upset and said some difficult things. Her brother has health problems and drinks a lot and doesn't want services. They've both had some support in the past, but it hasn't worked out. I don't know that much about them because this was only my second visit. The carer works in a school and lives nearby. It's quite a complex situation.

Word count	75

Legal and policy frameworks (250 words)

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

- Social Services and Well-being Wales Act. Carer's assessment.

○ Mental Capacity Act. Bryn might lack capacity because of his drinking.	
Word count	21

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 social work in this case is to offer support and advice and to make sure the family are coping. I think there's a lot going on for them, especially the carer. She seems like she's under pressure. The visit is going to be a simple check-in and to see if anything had changed since the last contact.

My aim for the visit was to have a chat and build rapport. I didn't have a specific task or intervention to do. I think if the carer wants to talk about anything I will just listen.

Word count	98

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 think the carer might have been feeling frustrated and a bit let down. She's probably tired of dealing with services and not getting the help she needs. She might also feel like no one's really listening. The brother seemed quiet but polite — I don't think he likes talking much.

I did try to show empathy but it's hard when people are upset and shouting at you. I do understand that people get emotional when they're under pressure.

In terms of discrimination, they might have experienced some because of the brother's drinking. People make assumptions about people with addiction and think they don't want to change. I don't think racism is relevant here, because they're both White Welsh and I treat people the same wherever they are from.

Word count	129

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?

I wasn't sure what to expect from this visit. I knew the carer could be emotional and sometimes angry, so I was a bit nervous beforehand. I was told she's quite independent and strong-minded. I wanted to make sure I listened and didn't say anything that would make things worse. I also didn't want to get too drawn in emotionally. I know in social work it's important to be professional and set boundaries.

In terms of power, I think I had more power because I'm from a team. But the carer also had more power in a way because it was her house, she's older than me, and she could say whatever she wanted.

Word count	114

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.*

I read a chapter about trauma-informed practice before the visit. It was about how trauma affects people's behaviour. It said that people might act out or be defensive because of past experiences. It also included a section about ACES and given what Sarah has been through, I think she probably has a lot of ACES and an insecure attachment.

I also thought about systems theory. What happens in one part of the system affects the rest. So, if Sarah is not happy in her job, she might feel more stressed having to look after her brother – if she doesn't do it, no-one else will, so she kind of has no choice. On the other hand, her job is only for a few hours a week, so she does have time to look after her brother anyway, not like if she worked a proper job full-time.

Word count	137

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.)

I want to get better at dealing with people who are emotional or confrontational. I also want to be more confident in visits generally. I need to develop my reflective practice and read more about things like trauma and resilience.

Word count	31

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 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.

Word count	

Optional - additional information

If applicable, is there any other information you need to provide? If not, leave this section blank.

Date preparation write-up completed	28/03/2026
Date preparation write-up discussed with observer	01/04/2026

PE feedback on preparation

Up to 500 words

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?

This is a solid piece of preparation work, and it's clear that the student has taken time to think about the visit and the people involved. There is a good sense that the student is aware of the complexity of the situation and the emotional dynamics that may be involved. It's reassuring to see that they are thinking ahead to how they will manage this and remain calm and empathic under pressure.

The student shows sensitivity to the carer's possible frustration and the brother's quiet demeanour, and there is evidence of early insight into how carers can feel overlooked or unsupported by services. It's good to see some acknowledgement that people can behave differently when under stress, and that this is not necessarily personal. The student appears

to be developing an awareness of anti-discriminatory practice and how assumptions can affect people with substance misuse issues, which is an important part of social work values.

There is some reference to legal frameworks, including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and the Mental Capacity Act, which shows the student is beginning to understand the key legislation relevant to adult social work. The reflections on trauma-informed practice and systems theory are also promising, and it's good to see the student trying to apply theory to what might happen in real-world interactions.

The learning needs identified are appropriate for this stage of the programme, including a desire to build confidence in emotionally charged situations and improve questioning skills. The student has asked for feedback on their handling of the conversation overall, which shows openness to learning.

The main area for development at this stage is simply expanding the preparation to meet the word targets. Some of the sections are currently under-developed and could benefit from more detail. This is less about content and more about confidence — the student is on the right track and just needs to take the time to elaborate their ideas more fully. Using the word targets as a guide can help ensure they are thinking through each aspect in enough depth.

Overall, the student has produced a good starting point for the observation and is demonstrating emerging skills in preparation, empathy, and theoretical application. With continued practice and encouragement, they will grow in confidence and clarity.

Word count	377
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 the service user's home. The carer was there as well. We arranged the visit last week and they were expecting me. I got there on time, and we had a quick chat at the door. Then we sat down in the living room and talked for a bit.

The carer started talking quite a lot about how hard things have been and seemed quite upset. At one point she raised her voice and said she was fed up and that no one ever listens or does anything. I wasn't sure what to say so I just listened and let her talk. I tried to keep things calm and changed the subject after a bit, so we didn't get stuck on one thing.

The brother didn't say very much but seemed to be ok with me being there. He answered a couple of questions but mostly let his sister speak for him. I didn't want to push him too much.

I said I would feed back to the team and keep in touch about any next steps. The visit lasted around 40–45 minutes. There were no safety issues, and I think it went ok, even if the carer did get a bit frustrated at one point.

Word count	211
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).

Both individuals gave brief verbal feedback at the end of the visit. The brother said the student was "fine" and that he didn't mind the visit. He didn't have much else to say but nodded along when asked if he felt comfortable. The carer also said the student was "fine" and did "as well as anyone else" who has been to visit them in the past. She mentioned that the student had listened and didn't interrupt her.

Neither of them raised any specific concerns, and both seemed reasonably satisfied with the visit overall. The carer also said it was good to have someone checking in, even if she wasn't sure anything would come of it.

Word count	115
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?

I confirm verbal feedback was given to the student at the end of the visit. The student arrived on time, was appropriately dressed, and had prepared for the observation in line with course requirements. She submitted her preparation form in advance and had arranged the visit herself with support from the OSS. This demonstrated a good level of professionalism and time management.

The visit involved a carer (Sarah) and her brother (Bryn), who has ongoing alcohol misuse issues. The carer became visibly emotional and raised her voice during the conversation. The student remained calm and composed throughout. She allowed the carer to speak and didn't interrupt.

The student completed the visit and took brief notes afterwards. There were no safety concerns during the observation, and the student represented the team professionally. She ended the visit by saying she would follow up and feed back to the team.

The student had completed the Preparation Form required for her course paperwork. She mentioned the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and recognised the importance of including carers in decision-making processes.

The student has shown awareness of Welsh culture through identifying that both participants were White Welsh.

More work is needed on applying theory critically, but she is making good progress.

No further actions required.

Word count	222

Date completed	05/03/2025

Student reflection (option 1) – delete if completing option 2	
Which model of reflection are you applying?	In Someone Else's Shoes
(1,000 words)	
This visit was part of my Stage 2 placement in an adult substance misuse team. I was visiting a family with ongoing challenges, including a carer who looks after her brother. I knew it might be difficult because the carer had been described as quite stressed, but I didn't expect her to be so upset. When she raised her voice and said that nothing ever changes and that her brother was going to die, I felt quite awkward and unsure what to say. I think in her shoes, I would probably be fed up too. She's been looking after him for a long time and doesn't seem to have a lot of support. I think she probably just needed to get it off her chest. I did try to listen and stay calm, which I think helped the situation not get worse. In the brother's shoes, I think he might just be tired of being asked the same questions by different people. He didn't say much but seemed OK with me being there. I didn't want to push him too hard or make him uncomfortable. I think sometimes silence is a sign that people are fine with things. This experience showed me that social work can be unpredictable and that people can behave differently than you expect. I think I need to work on not taking things personally and just letting people talk when they need to. I also want to be more confident in knowing what to say next when someone is upset or angry. It's hard to know what the right thing is in the moment. In future, I'll try to prepare for emotional visits by reminding myself that people are under pressure and it's not about me. Sometimes people are just having a bad day, or feeling upset for no reason. If her brother would accept more help, then she would probably be coping better but he won't – and that his choice according to the law, you can't make someone do something if they say "no". I'll also try to stay calm and carry on the conversation even if it gets tense.	
Word count	355
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)	
Before the visit I was nervous because I didn't know what to expect. The carer had a reputation for being quite upset with services and I didn't know how she would react to me. When she got emotional and shouted, I was surprised and didn't know what to do. I just sat there and tried to stay calm. I felt a bit uncomfortable and awkward and didn't want to make things worse. Afterwards I felt a bit unsure about whether I'd handled it right or not.	
Word count	86
Evaluation: What went well? What were the challenges? (200 words)	

The visit was a bit challenging because the carer got upset and said no one ever listens. I think I managed the situation well by keeping calm and letting her talk. It could have gone worse if I had said the wrong thing. The positive was that I didn't argue or interrupt her. I think she felt a bit better after letting it all out. Her brother didn't say much but didn't seem too unhappy with the visit. One thing that was difficult was not knowing what to say when she raised her voice. I just waited and then changed the subject. That seemed to work. I also found it hard to include both people in the conversation because the carer was doing most of the talking. It's hard to know what to do when one person is more dominant than the other. Overall, I think it went okay, and no harm was done. I could have done some things differently but at least it didn't escalate or turn into a major issue.
Word count | 173
Analysis: Why did things happen the way they did? How can the law, theories and / or research help explain this? (300 words)
I think the carer's reaction was probably because she has a lot on her plate. She's looking after her brother and working as well. That must be hard. I read about trauma-informed practice which says that people who have experienced trauma may respond strongly in situations. I think that applies here. She might have had some bad experiences with services in the past which makes her not trust people. I will try to remember that and not take it personally. There's also systems theory which says everything is connected. So, if her job is stressful and she's not getting support from the council, then it makes sense that she might take it out on whoever is in front of her. The Social Services and Well-being Act says we have to involve carers and make sure their views are heard. I think I did OK in this situation. I kept it professional and didn't get involved emotionally. I didn't really feel like I could do much to change things, but at least I didn't make it worse.
Word count | 176
Conclusion: What learning are you taking from this experience? (200 words)
From this experience I've learned that visits don't always go as planned and that emotions can run high. I think I need to be more confident when dealing with difficult conversations and be ready for anything. I also think I should try to ask better questions that help people talk about their feelings without getting too upset. I want to try and include quieter people more in the conversation, because it felt like the brother was a bit left out. But it's hard when one person is doing all the talking. Maybe I should try and speak to them separately next time. The carer did thank me at the end and said I was fine, so I think that means I did ok overall.
Word count | 124
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 improve, I will try to do more reading about communication with carers and how to manage emotional conversations. I also want to read more about trauma and addiction, so I understand better why people act the way they do. I'll ask my OSS if they know any good books or articles.

I would like to shadow another social worker on a visit with someone who is upset or angry to see how they handle it. I also think I need to work on my own confidence and not let things get to me too much.

I will try to bring this up in supervision and ask for feedback on how I handled the visit. I think just doing more visits will help me improve over time. I don't think there's a quick fix, it just takes practice.

I also want to remember to keep things in perspective and not take things personally. Sometimes people are just venting and it's not about me.

Word count	163

(Optional) Any additional information

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

National Occupational Standards and the Code of Professional Practice

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

NOS 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 18.

With this direct observation, how have you demonstrated adherence with the Code of Professional Practice?

All sections.

Word count	12

References

n/a

PE feedback on reflective account

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?

The student has produced a reflective account that provides a clear overview of what happened during the observed visit. It is good to see that the student is continuing to build experience of emotionally challenging interactions and is developing their awareness of the emotional demands of direct work.

Use of theory and policy

The student has made reference to trauma-informed practice and systems theory, which

shows that they are beginning to apply what they have learned in the university setting to practice. They mention how systems theory helped them understand the situation more broadly and supported them in staying calm. This shows they are starting to engage with theory.

The student also referred to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, although this could be further developed in future accounts by discussing how the Act relates specifically to carers or to the duty to promote well-being.

Awareness of Welsh culture and difference
The student recognised that the people they were working with were White Welsh.

Code of Professional Practice (CoPP)
The following sections were evidenced:

- Section 1: The student promoted the rights of the people involved.
- Section 2: The student maintained professional boundaries and trust in difficult circumstances.
- Section 3: The student respected voice and control.
- Section 4: The student worked safely and respectfully in the person's home.
- Section 5: The student acted with integrity.
- Section 6: The student demonstrated a willingness to learn from experience.

National Occupational Standards (NOS)
The following can be considered as met:

- NOS 2: The student reflected on the visit in supervision.
- NOS 4: The student explored a range of options and concerns during the visit.
- NOS 10: The student enabled participation and listened to the carer's concerns.
- NOS 12: The student gathered information and listened to both parties.
- NOS 19: The student reflected on their own practice and emotions.

Further learning needs
Please ensure word counts are met in future reflections. Several sections were under the recommended length.

Word count	336
(Optional) Any other information?	
If applicable, is there any other feedback you need to give? If not, leave this section blank.	
n/a	
Do you agree with the claims made in relation to the NOS and CoPP for this direct observation?	Yes
If no, please explain here	
Date completed	15/03/2025