

Northern Ireland

Social

Care

Council

Professional in Practice (PiP)

Mandatory Two Requirements

Guidance for Social Workers

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This guidance is relevant to all social workers who completed the Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) on or after 1st April 2011.

Introduction

Relevant qualifications have been shown to support social workers to deliver safe and effective practice. To help social workers deliver best practice the Northern Ireland Social Care Council has linked achievement within the Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework to renewal of registration. The way in which this has been done is set out in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Registration) Rules 2017 approved by the Department of Health:

Rule 8(6)(c) – Schedule 3: Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements.

2 (a) Social Workers in the first three-year period of registration following successful completion of the Assessed Year in Employment shall complete a minimum of two Requirements of the Northern Ireland Consolidation Award within the period of registration.

Registration with the Social Care Council is renewed in 3 yearly cycles and it is during the first of those cycles that all social workers post Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) must complete a minimum of two PiP Requirements.

EG: If you complete your AYE on 1/1/2022, you must have achieved a minimum of the two Requirements by 1/1/2025.

What do I need to do?

Now that you have completed your AYE, you should familiarise yourself with the Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework. The PiP Framework is the CPD (Continuous Professional Development) Framework for all social workers in Northern Ireland and it will provide you with many options for lifelong learning during your career. You can read more about the Framework from the [Professional in Practice Framework on the Learning Zone](#).

Prior to completing the AYE, the final appraisal should be used as an opportunity to develop a plan for meeting the Mandatory Two PiP Requirements. On successful completion of the AYE, you should make contact with your PiP Agency Representative. Most agencies employing social workers have an identified PiP Agency Representative. Some smaller voluntary sector agencies share access to the same PiP Agency Rep. You can find out who your PiP Agency Rep in [Professional in Practice Framework on the Learning Zone](#) (See Associated Resources).

If you don't have an agency PiP Agency Rep, please contact the PiP Team at the Social Care Council PiP@niscc.hscni.net

There are many ways in which you can complete the PiP Requirements and your PiP Agency Rep will explain those to you.

What are the PiP Requirements?

The Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework provides you with a structured set of options for ongoing learning and development. This is commonly known as CPD (Continuous Professional Development). There is an expectation that social workers will continue to learn and develop throughout the course of their careers and the PiP Framework provides ways in which that learning and development can be tailored to specific job roles.

Within the PiP Framework there are 4 Professional Awards which you can achieve and each of those awards is made up of competence statements which are called PiP Requirements. You can read more about the Professional Awards and Requirements in the [Professional in Practice Framework on the Learning Zone](#).

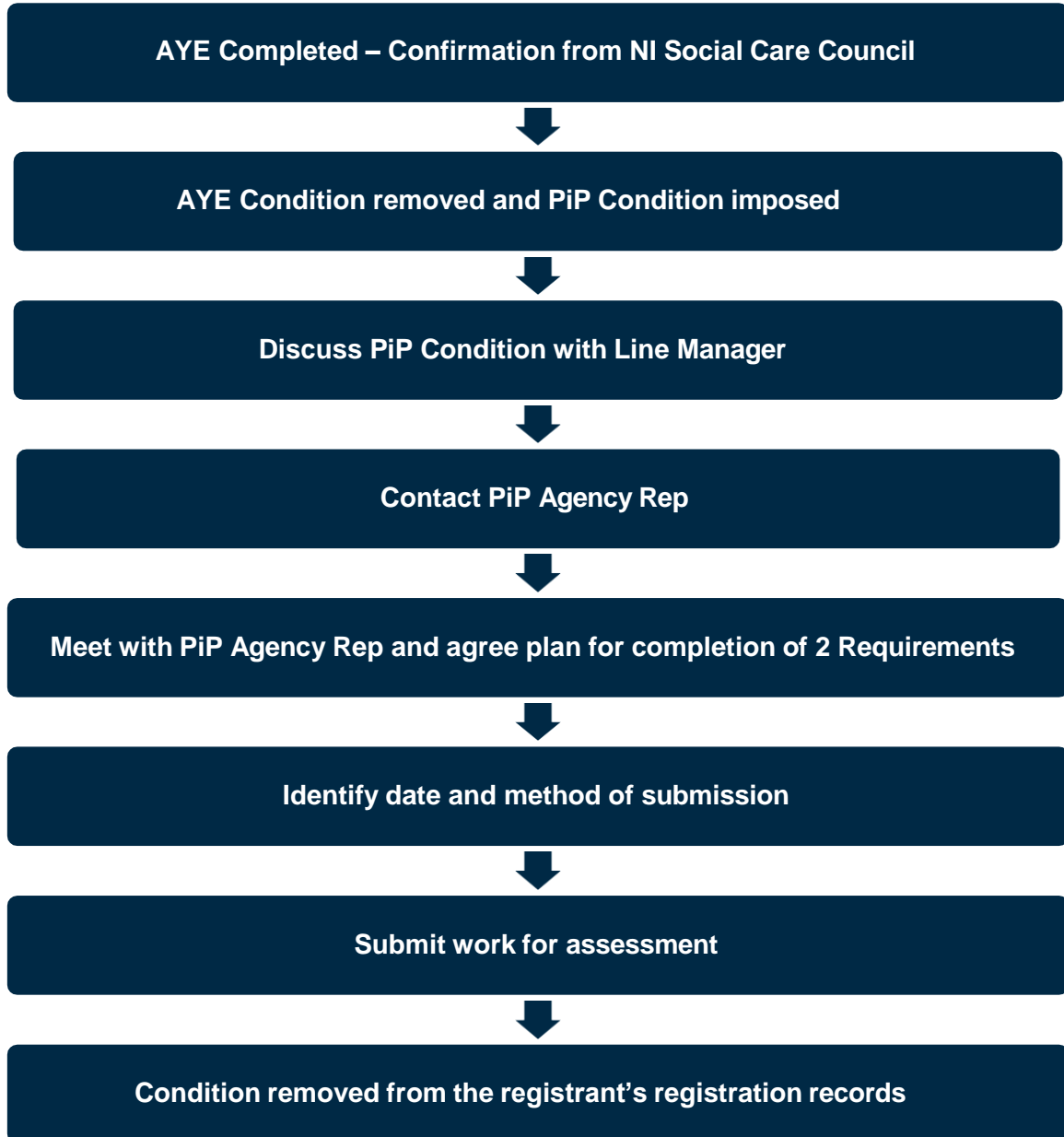
For social workers who have just completed their AYE, engagement with the PiP Framework is **mandatory** and is necessary in order for registration to be renewed at the end of the first three-year period. **As a minimum therefore, social workers must have achieved at least two PiP Requirements from the Consolidation Award or other relevant Award in that first three-year period of registration post AYE.** For social workers who have specific and unusual circumstances, the two Requirements chosen could be from a Specialist Award or even a Leadership and Strategic Award. Candidates **must** seek guidance from their PiP Agency Rep as to which award might be suitable.

All social workers are strongly advised to complete the minimum Requirements early in their first three-year period of registration i.e. on completion of AYE. Sometimes if there is a delay in completion, you may have very limited options in terms of assessment points and your registration could be at risk.

NB: It is illegal to work as a social worker in Northern Ireland if you are not on Part 1 (which is the part relevant to social workers) of the NI Social Care Council Register. If you do not complete the Mandatory Two PiP Requirements within the stipulated time period, your registration cannot be renewed and you will be unable to work as a social worker.

Process for Registrants

Mandatory Two PiP Requirements



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If the work is not successful, then the registrant must resubmit following the above steps again.

NB: The Mandatory Two Requirements should be achieved as soon as possible on completion of AYE.

It is the dual responsibility of the social worker and their employer to ensure that the Mandatory Two Requirements are successfully completed within the given timeframe as outlined in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice:

Standard 8.3 Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers (updated 2019).

- *Develop yourself and others. This includes: Taking responsibility for your continued professional registration and understanding what is required of you by your regulatory body.*

Standard 4.4 Standards of Conduct and Practice for Employers (updated 2019).

- *As a social work and social care employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable registrants to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge. This includes: Supporting registrants to meet the Social Care Council eligibility criteria for registration and its requirements for post registration training and learning.*

Application for Extension

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council has linked achievement within the Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework to renewal of registration on the Social Care Council Register. All social workers who completed the AYE on or after 1st April 2011 have a condition attached to their registration. This means that registration cannot be renewed at the end of the registration period without the condition having been met.

It is imperative that all relevant social workers are aware of the date by which their condition must be met and they are required to have in place a plan for achievement of the Mandatory Two Requirements. **The plan should be developed immediately on completion of AYE.**

In exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted e.g. if there have been significant absences from work due to illness or bereavement. Formal requests for extensions are made to the Social Care Council and considered at a subsequent panel. Registrants are required to complete a request for extension form which must be completed in full including the signatures of the registrant's line manager and Governance Lead. The revised plan for achievement **must** be outlined on the form.

NB: Strict eligibility criteria apply and extensions are only granted in exceptional circumstances. Work pressures are not within the definition of exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances are defined in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Registration Rules (2017) as, “circumstances where the registrant is unable to complete the stated requirement in the relevant rule due to circumstances beyond the registrant’s control.”

- If the registrant is eligible for an extension, this is normally only granted on one occasion.
- If the condition has not been met by the end date of the extension, the social worker will be required to attend a meeting with their line manager, Governance Lead and the Head of Fitness to Practise at the Social Care Council.
- In the unlikely event of a second extension being granted and the condition still not met, this will mean a referral to the Fitness to Practise Team at the Social Care Council.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I don't have an PiP Agency Representative?

Most agencies employing social workers in NI have an identified PiP Agency Rep. If you work outside of NI or do not have a PiP Agency Rep, you can contact the PiP Team at the NI Social Care Council for advice. PiP@niscc.hscni.net

How long do I have to complete the mandatory two Requirements?

You have a period of three years from the completion date of your AYE e.g. If you completed AYE on 1/1/2022 then your completion date for the Mandatory Two Requirements will be 1/1/2025. You should complete your submission as early as possible as you may run out of assessment points.

Why do I have to do the two Requirements?

Completion of the Mandatory Two Requirements is the first stage in your CPD journey. There is a condition attached to your registration renewal which means that your registration cannot be renewed after three years if you haven't completed the Requirements and therefore met the condition.

How do I complete the two Requirements?

There is a whole range of ways in which you can complete the Mandatory Two Requirements. You can read about those in the PiP Guidance for Social Workers available from [Professional in Practice Framework on the Learning Zone](#).

Your PiP Agency Rep can also guide you with information on ways to complete.

What help is available?

Contact your agency PiP Agency Rep for advice and support. They will guide you with choosing an appropriate course of study and submission method. They will also support you with reading drafts of your work and giving feedback prior to submission.

What if I am employed by a recruitment agency?

You are still subject to the same condition as all social workers but your options within the Framework may be more limited. There may not be the same level of support available and you may be expected to work more independently. This might include self-funding for formal courses of study and you may have to make private arrangements for support.

What if I am unable to complete within the three year period?

Some extensions are available to the three-year period **but these are only available in extenuating circumstances**. Please refer to the information above on “Application for Extension”.

What if I am on a career break or currently unemployed?

If you are unemployed, you can voluntarily remove your name from the social work part of the register. If you do that your PiP “clock” will stop ticking and resume when you return to Part 1 of the register. If you are on a career break, you must check with your employer before removing your name from the register.

I am going on maternity leave, can I have an extension?

That will depend on the circumstances and how much time you will have left on your return to work or before you go off. There are numerous opportunities for submission during the three-year period of registration.

When can I submit the mandatory two Requirements?

You must contact your agency [Professional in Practice Framework on the Learning Zone](#) (See Associated Resources) who will guide you with submission dates and methods.

All social workers and their line managers must take their regulatory responsibilities seriously which includes keeping CPD as a standing item on their supervision agenda.