

Northern Ireland

**Social**

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Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

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# Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work

**Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
& The Northern Ireland Social Care Council**

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## FOREWORD

The Degree in Social Work was introduced in Northern Ireland in September 2004 and was based upon the Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work, March 2003. This current document is an up to date version of the Framework Specification and is based on the National Occupational Standards, (NOS), for Social Work which were issued in November 2011. The NOS standards specify the skills, knowledge and performance criteria, (learning outcomes), to be achieved throughout a social worker's career, including the learning to be achieved from qualifying training on the Degree course.

The Framework Specification will continue to make a major contribution to the shape of the social work profession in Northern Ireland. The content and structure of this edition of the framework is the result of consultation with key interests, including direct contributions from service users, employers, students, and academic staff. The Northern Ireland Degree in Social Work Partnership has also been involved in the production of this edition.

The Honours Degree provides professional education and training for social workers operating in health and social services, criminal justice, education welfare and in the wider voluntary sector. While provision of care is a major responsibility for social workers, protection, control and rehabilitation are also essential elements of social work practice.

As well as making use of the 2011 NOS, the Framework uses the updated academic benchmarks statements published in 2008. It makes clear that the Degree will require social workers to demonstrate their competence as fully rounded professionals, based on sound understanding of human growth and development i.e. child development and adult development; of the systems in which social workers work; and methods of intervention which have been proved to produce beneficial outcomes for people who use social work services. The Degree will also require social workers to understand and be competent to assess needs, risks and circumstances as a core competence in working with individuals.

It should be acknowledged that Northern Ireland continues to provide a unique learning ground for social work students. It offers the chance for students destined for personal social services, the criminal justice sector, the voluntary sector and education welfare to learn together; the opportunity to learn to practise in an integrated health and social services multi-disciplinary structure; and the opportunity to learn how to work with individuals in communities which have to deal with the consequences of conflict. Successful completion of the Degree will therefore prepare students for social work practice anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Continued delivery of the Degree course will be demanding for all the partners involved, universities and colleges, employers in all sectors, users of services and their carers and, of course, the students themselves. Partnership in social work education in Northern Ireland has had a successful history over many years and, through continued strong partnership arrangements, this revised Framework Specification can be operationalised.

# NORTHERN IRELAND FRAMEWORK SPECIFICATION

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work (the Framework) is a joint publication by Department of Health and Social Services and Personal Safety (DHSSPS) and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. It sets out a single comprehensive set of learning outcomes in the form of performance criteria, core skills and knowledge and understanding statements for the Honours Degree in Social Work. The Framework incorporates both academic and practice learning components of social work education and takes account of the full range of social policy, law and service delivery arrangements for social work in Northern Ireland. It also specifies the value base as an integral part of the knowledge and practice requirements.
- 1.2. This version of the Framework has been developed following consultation with the sector. Service users and carers, employers, students and providers of social work education have been involved in determining the content and format of the Framework and the document incorporates feedback from a range of stakeholders.
- 1.3. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council is a statutory body established by the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The main purpose of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council is to regulate the social care workforce and professional education and training courses for those who are, or wish to become, social workers. The aims of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council are to: strengthen safeguards for those who use services; promote high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers; promote and support the professionalism of the workforce and public confidence in the sector.
- 1.4. Under Section 10(3) of the Act, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council has the authority to make rules about the provision of social work education and training. These may include rules about the content of courses. In accordance with Section 18(3) no rules shall be made by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council without the consent of the DHSSPS.
- 1.5. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council will approve social work courses whose content reflects the Framework and course providers will need to ensure that their course equips students to achieve the learning outcomes. How course providers choose to deliver these outcomes will be for them to determine, within the constraints of the Framework and the Rules for Approval of the Degree in Social Work<sup>1</sup>
- 1.6. The Framework will also be used by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council to ensure consistency of standards of course provision for all students undertaking social work training in Northern Ireland.
- 1.7. The Degree in Social Work in Northern Ireland will prepare students to work in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. It is designed to be

<sup>1</sup> Rules for the Approval of the Degree in Social Work January 2012.

generic and will prepare students to work in a variety of settings, including health and social services, the Justice sector, Education sector and in the voluntary and private sectors.

- 1.8 All students undertaking social work training in Northern Ireland will be required to be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council before they commence their training. The Register will allow employers and the public to verify that a social work student has met the requirements for entry to the Register and has formally agreed to abide by the standards set in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students. (The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Code of Practice for Social Care Workers was replaced by separate Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students, Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers and Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers on 1 November 2015. Copies of these Standards are included in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.)
- 1.9 Following successful attainment of the Degree in Social Work, social work graduates, wishing to practise in Northern Ireland, will be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, with a condition that they undertake and successfully complete an Assessed Year in Employment, (AYE). During the assessment year, graduates will have the opportunity to apply and consolidate the knowledge, skills and performance criteria, (learning outcomes), acquired during training in their employment setting. Requirements for the Assessed Year in Employment are specified by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.
- 1.10 Following registration as a social worker it will be for the individual, his or her employer and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council to ensure the learning outcomes acquired on qualification are maintained and enhanced for the benefit of service users and carers and the social worker.

## 2. RATIONALE

- 2.1 The revised Framework Specification (2013), addresses the professional education and development of social workers. It sets out what a social work student must know, understand and be able to do to be awarded the Degree in Social Work. It replaces the Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work, March 2003.
- 2.2 The Framework Specification draws on the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (November 2011). Full details of the NOS can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website: [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info). In developing their curriculums, course providers can usefully refer to these standards for a detailed breakdown of the underpinning knowledge and competence requirements.
- 2.3 Course providers may wish to refer to other relevant national occupational standards in the development of their curriculum, for example, NOS for Qualifying Probation Officers in England and Wales and NOS for Youth Justice Services.
- 2.4 The Framework also incorporates the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmark Statements: Academic Standards – Social Work, 2008. The standards are underpinned by defining principles which describe the scope and complexity of social work courses offered at honours degree level. They provide guidance on subject knowledge and skills and reflect the fact that practice learning is central to the Degree and should cover a broad spectrum of connected learning experiences. The QAA Benchmark Statement can be accessed on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk). In the document the following statement can be accessed on page 5,<sup>2</sup> “Contemporary social work increasingly takes place in an inter-agency context, and social workers work collaboratively with others towards interdisciplinary and cross-professional objectives. This document also provides useful additional information which will be of benefit to course providers in continuing to develop the curriculum.
- 2.5 For social workers, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council has developed Standards of Conduct and Practice which describe the standards of professional conduct and practice required of social workers<sup>3</sup>. The Standards of Conduct apply to social work students. The Standards of Practice are not applicable to students until they are qualified social workers. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care Workers sets down the responsibilities of employers in the regulation of social care workers. Together these Standards and Codes reflect existing good practice and it is expected that course providers will ensure students understand and adhere to the Standards in all aspects of their training.
- 2.6 Social workers work in a wide range of settings which offer services for children, families, older people, people with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities, sensory impairment, those who experience

<sup>2</sup><http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/socialwork08.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>The NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL Code of Practice for Social Care Workers is replaced by the Standards of Conduct & Practice in November 2015. The Code of Practice for Employers remains unchanged.

homelessness, and those whose lives are adversely affected by drugs, alcohol, and HIV/AIDS and other excluded and marginalised groups such as Travellers and members of the LGBT community. Some social workers work in youth and criminal justice services, education welfare or in adoption and fostering. Social work training must prepare students to make a difference to the quality of life for the broad range of people with whom they work and the communities in which they live. It must also enable students to understand, work with and value people as individuals with unique life histories.

- 2.7 In recognition of the wide scope of social work practice, the Degree in Social Work in Northern Ireland is generic and is designed to help students acquire knowledge and develop skills which are transferable across social work settings and with different service user and carer groups, as well as to other areas of study and professional employment. The ability to transfer knowledge and skills appropriately is not additional to the requirements specified in the Framework but will be a natural outcome for successful students.
- 2.8 Social work is a professional activity and social workers have obligations to service users, carers, families, and communities, their employers, to each other, to colleagues in other disciplines sectors and agencies and to society. It involves questions of ethics, morals and values about individual rights and welfare; about rights and interests of parties other than service users; about freedom, social justice and fairness; about inequality and structural oppression and about the distribution of scarce resources. Social workers deal with complex, ambiguous and difficult situations and have to exercise professional judgements about human situations. Social work training must prepare students to exercise professional judgements about complex situations that involve the potential for benefit or harm.
- 2.9 Social workers work in the lead role in cases where there is one or more of the following:
- major complexity
  - significant level of risk
  - need to safeguard children & vulnerable adults and/or protect the public
  - actual or potential interference with people's rights (including right to liberty and right to family life)
  - the need and/or accountability for the discharge of statutory functions
  - need for knowledge of relevant legislation and its application
  - significant trauma or change in people's lives
  - a need for expert interagency and/or multidisciplinary co-operation.
- 2.10 Social workers practise in a society of complexity, change and diversity. This diversity is reflected through religion, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, social status, family structure and lifestyle. While social work training needs to prepare students to work with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures in different jurisdictions throughout the United Kingdom and internationally, it is important that it also takes account of the particular needs of providing services locally. Social workers in today's

culturally diverse society need to acquire skills in cultural competency. The impact of past and current violence, conflict and divisions in Northern Irish society requires particular emphasis in the education and training of social work students in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council has developed curriculum guidance on the Northern Ireland Context<sup>4</sup>.

2.11 Social work and criminal justice agencies are given specific responsibilities and powers through government policies and statute and professional workers have to practise within legislative frameworks and organisational policies and procedures. They have to balance the needs, rights and responsibilities of people with those of the wider community, and provide appropriate levels of support, advocacy, care, protection and control within available resources. Social workers in justice settings also need to balance the needs and rights of offenders with the needs and rights of victims, potential victims, communities and the courts, i.e. balancing the need to protect the public and working to rehabilitate the offender. Social work training must prepare students to participate in formal decision-making forums, including courts, and to understand their responsibilities in relation to the courts according to the statutory function they carry. Social work also needs to keep up to date, and take cognisance of, the lessons from Case Management Reviews and Inquiries.

2.12 Social work education and training must prepare students to work in a broad range of situations and to respond and contribute to change in the professional context. Social work courses must promote 3 main elements of professional development:

- **Ethical Practice;**
- **Professional Responsibility and Accountability**
- **Professional Competence**



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<sup>4</sup>[http://www.niscc.info/content/uploads/downloads/publications/Curr\\_Guidance\\_NI\\_Context\\_1005\\_V2.pdf](http://www.niscc.info/content/uploads/downloads/publications/Curr_Guidance_NI_Context_1005_V2.pdf)

- 2.13 The inter-relationship and synthesis between these 3 elements is fundamental to developing professional social workers whose practice is founded on values, is carried out in a skilled manner and is informed by knowledge, critical analysis and reflection. Courses should be designed to help foster the integration of these 3 elements in a holistic way.
- 2.14 The Framework Specification must be delivered in the context of the following standards, requirements and strategy document:
- The Standards for Practice Learning, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, June 2009
  - The Practice Learning Requirements, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, August 2010
  - The Regional Practice Learning Strategy, 2010-2015, DHSSPS, April 2010
- 2.15 Social work courses should adhere to the international definition of social work and adhere to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Codes of Practice applying to social workers and the values embedded in them. Courses should also adhere to the Statement of Expectations of Service Users & Carers and the principles of Section 75 of the NI Act, 1998.

### **The Policy Context for Social Work**

- 2.16 The way in which social work is delivered is changing and will continue to change. Current government policies promote inter-professional and inter-agency working. Social work training should therefore prepare students to work effectively with other professions and agencies and in multi-disciplinary and integrated teams.
- 2.17 Social work education and training must also take account of the major policy document, *Transforming Your Care* which was published in December 2011<sup>5</sup>. The Report sets out the case for change and a strategic direction for the future of health and social care services in Northern Ireland which will have the potential to make a huge difference to how services are planned and delivered into the medium and long term. *Transforming Your Care* focuses on reshaping how services are to be structured and delivered in order to make best use of all of the resources available and in so doing ensure that services are safe, resilient and sustainable. Through the use of prevention, early intervention and community development approaches strong resilient communities can be built and supported into the future. See the H&SCB's Community Development Strategy, May 2012.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.18 *The 10 Year Social Work Strategy, 2012-2022*<sup>7</sup> is the first Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland and reflects the Department of Health, Social

<sup>5</sup> Transforming Your Care: Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, DHSSPSNI, December 2011

<sup>6</sup> Working in Partnership, Community Development Strategy for Health & Wellbeing (& Executive Summary), May 2012, H&SCB <http://niscc.info/download.ashx?r=284>; <http://niscc.info/download.ashx?r=285>

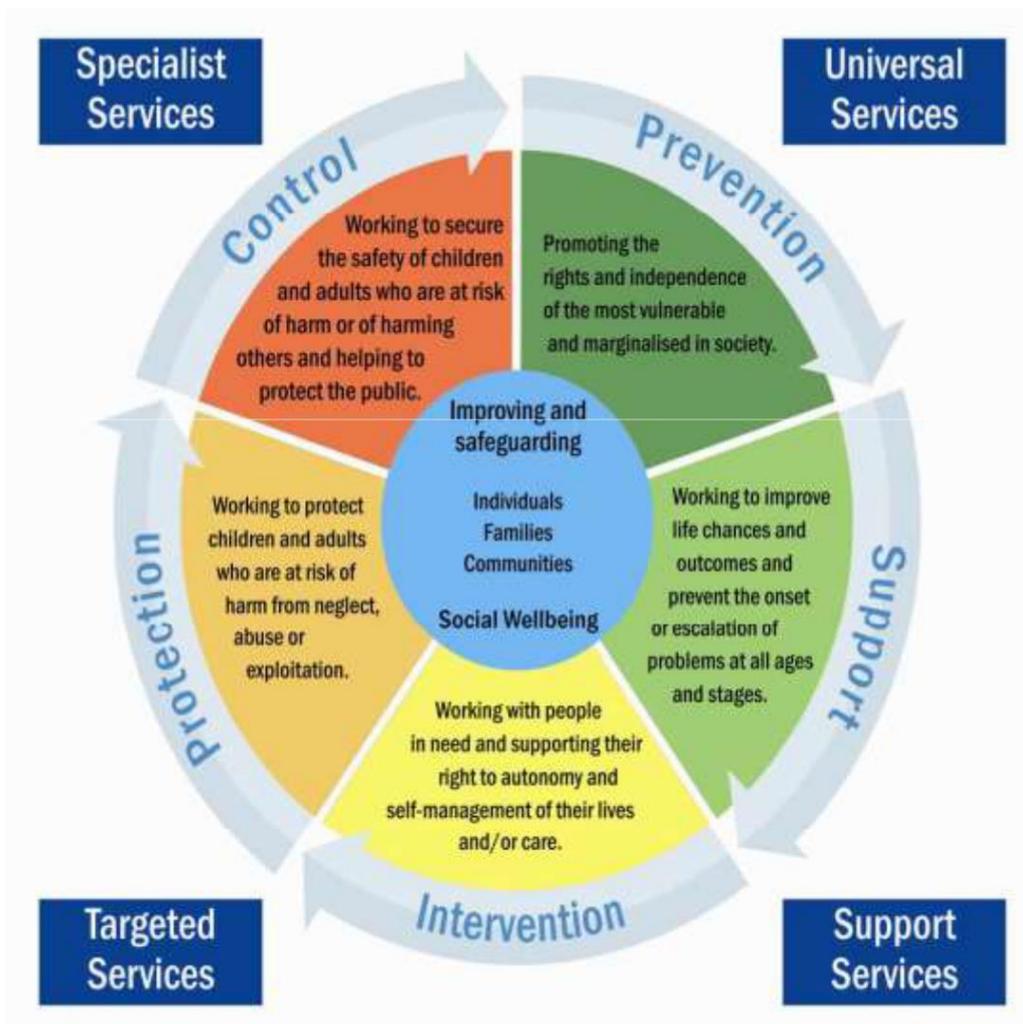
<sup>7</sup> Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing – A Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland

Services and Public Safety’s commitment to social work as a valued and valuable profession. The strategy sets out a vision for social work in the context of the current political, economic and social challenges and their implications for social work. A number of strategic priorities and recommendations are made to help social work and social workers meet the challenges ahead. A Framework for Social Work Practice and a Social Work Practice Continuum to support the delivery of the vision for social work are outlined in the strategy. The Framework combines five key social work roles which include:

- Prevention
- Support
- Intervention
- Protection
- Control

At a practice level the 6 Key Roles in the Framework Specification will enable social workers to achieve best outcomes and work within the Framework for Social Work Practice. The 6 Key Roles and the Framework for Social Work Practice are interdependent and complement each other.

## 2.19 A Framework for Social Work Practice



## 2.20 The Social Work Practice Continuum



The practice continuum reflects the current emphasis on early intervention and prevention both as a means of improving the quality of life and outcomes for people but also in terms of reducing the need for more expensive, targeted or specialist services in the immediate or longer term. Presenting social work in this way has its limitations and is not intended to suggest that any stage or role along the continuum is mutually exclusive of the others. All social workers, irrespective of their job or work context, will adopt elements of each role in their day to day practice, reflecting their professional commitment to empowering and promoting the self-determination and rights of those they work with alongside their professional responsibility to safeguard and protect the most vulnerable in our society.

2.21 Overarching statements of purpose are identified to indicate the primary focus and desired outcome of social work practice against each specific role. It is therefore important that measures and outcome indicators are developed and linked to this framework, to demonstrate the effectiveness of social work intervention at individual, community and regional levels.

### 3. FORMAT

## NORTHERN IRELAND FRAMEWORK SPECIFICATION FOR THE DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK

### 3.1 The Key Purpose of Social Work

The Executive Committee of IFSW and the Board of IASSW have agreed that the review of Global Definition of Social Work has been completed and the proposed definition will be adopted in July 2014.

The key purpose of social work internationally will be defined as:-

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing”<sup>8</sup>.

### 3.2 The Key Roles of Social Work

- Key Role 1** Maintain professional accountability
- Key Role 2** Practise professional social work
- Key Role 3** Promote engagement and participation
- Key Role 4** Assess needs, risks and circumstances
- Key Role 5** Plan for person centred outcomes
- Key Role 6** Take actions to achieve change

A review of social work education in England carried out by David Croisdale-Appleby has proposed that we should consider the role of the social worker as 3-fold:

- the social worker as a practitioner;
- the social worker as a professional;
- the social worker as a social scientist<sup>9</sup>.

Each of these perspectives is crucial to how social workers should practise in a competent and confident manner. This perspective is also reflective of the above proposed global definition of social work in respect of the profession being an

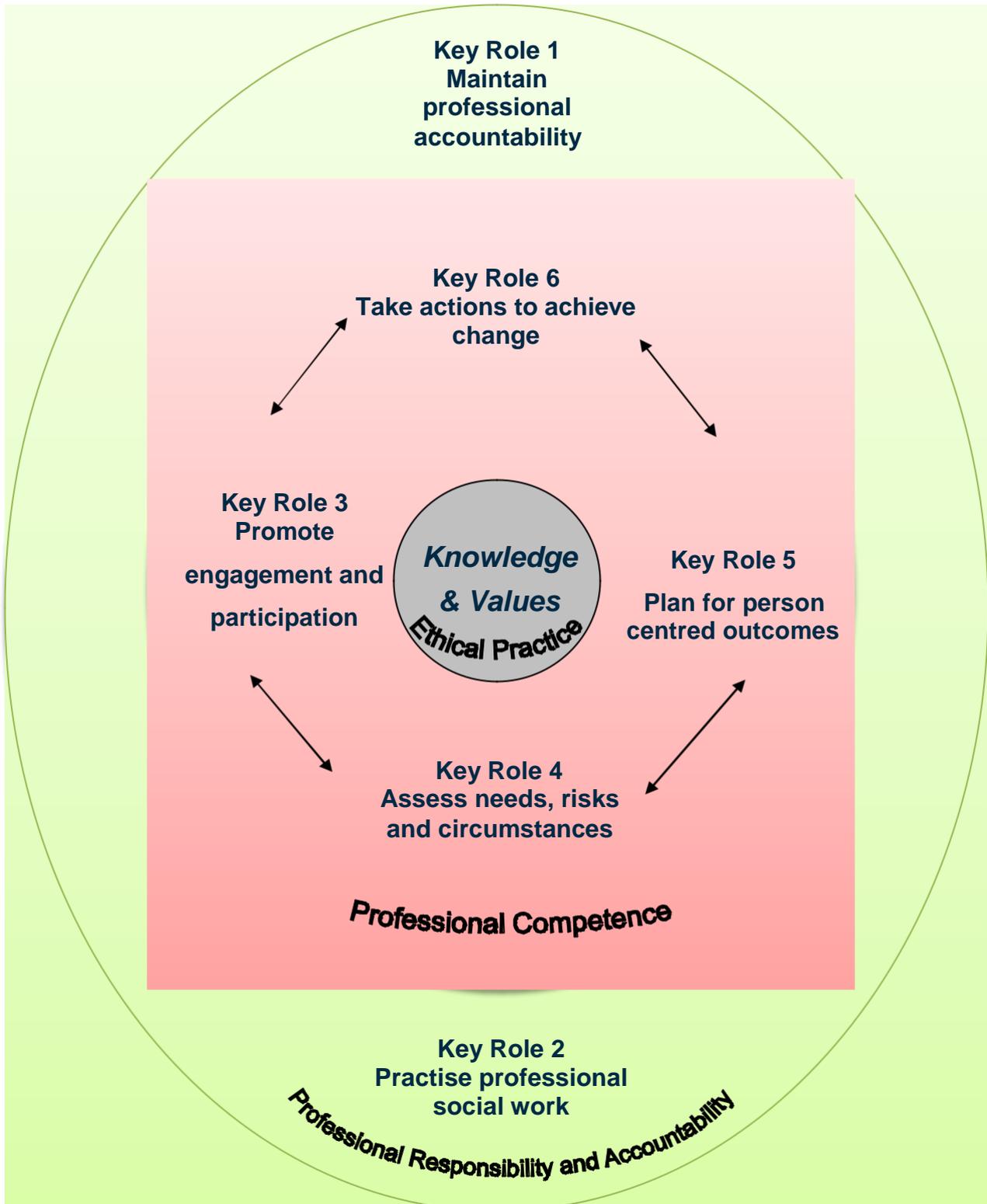
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<sup>8</sup> International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social work proposed definition of Social Work to be agreed in July 2014, <http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work/>

<sup>9</sup> Re-visioning social work education, An Independent Review, dated February 2014, David Croisdale-Appleby

academic discipline and this should be taken into account in the future education and training of social work students.

3.3 The NOS Performance Criteria or learning outcomes are set out under 6 Key Roles. These are set out in the Diagram below, which shows how the Key Roles relate to the 3 key elements of professional development.



- 3.4 The Framework Specification describes the key components of the social work role. There are 20 NOS Standards for Social Work which are available at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info). These are contained within the 6 Key Roles and are outlined in the Functional Map below. The Performance Criteria and Core Skills for each of the 20 NOS are outlined in the following pages.
- 3.5 Each NOS standard includes a set of Performance Criteria, (learning outcomes), a set of Core Skills, and a set of Knowledge & Understanding Statements.
- 3.6 The Performance Criteria and Core Skills are specified separately for each NOS standard in this document. The Knowledge & Understanding Statements are available in the compendium which is outlined later in the document on pages 36-40.
- 3.7 Course providers are expected to maintain a curriculum which includes both academic and practice learning, and fosters the integration of the knowledge statements, core skills, and values in teaching, learning and assessment which will lead to the learning outcomes or Performance Criteria.
- 3.8 In assessing student competence the practice teacher should use the Statements of Knowledge & Understanding as appropriate. While the NOS for Social Work each address a discrete function within social work practice, the statements of knowledge and understanding within them are by their nature cross-cutting. The Framework Specification recognises that the repertoire of skills is also cross-cutting. The statements represent the extensive body of knowledge that underpins social work practice as a whole. Repetition of many items is therefore inevitable across the NOS themselves.
- 3.9 The practice teacher needs to be satisfied that the repertoire of skills is evident across the range of social work practice and that there is sufficient evidence to verify that the Performance Criteria have been achieved. The practice teacher should refer to the guidance available in the Northern Ireland Degree in Social Work Regional Practice Learning Handbook and any other regionally agreed procedures.

## 4. FUNCTIONAL MAP – KEY ROLES FOR SOCIAL WORK & NOS



## KEY ROLE 1 - SW1

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

### Performance criteria

- P1 establish your own strategy for maintaining an up to date knowledge and evidence base for social work practice
- P2 research statutory, legal and procedural requirements and academic literature relating to social work practice
- P3 analyse the statutory and non-statutory powers exercised by social workers and organisations
- P4 review the outcomes of previous social work practice for individuals, families, groups and communities locally
- P5 review your own knowledge about issues of equality, fairness, access and anti-discriminatory, anti-sectarian practise and provision
- P6 synthesise information to understand how evidence-based practice applies in your own role
- P7 plan, with support, how to integrate current and emerging research into your own practice

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes.
- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Use study skills to plan and undertake learning
- Use research skills
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 1 - SW2

Develop social work practice through supervision and reflection

### Performance criteria

- P1 seek professional supervision to develop accountable social work practice
- P2 prepare for formal professional supervision in ways that will maximise its effectiveness
- P3 access additional sources of support compatible with professional social work principles
- P4 use feedback from supervision and other sources to inform reflection on and evaluation of your social work practice
- P5 reflect on the cultural context in which you practice and how this impacts upon your work
- P6 reflect on your own values, beliefs and assumptions and how they impact on your social work practice
- P7 integrate learning within practice
- P8 contribute your own knowledge of best practice to the continuing development of the profession

### Repertoire of Skills

- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 2 - SW3

Manage your role as a professional social worker

### Performance criteria

- P1 work within the context of your own organisation
- P2 establish the parameters of your own work role and how the responsibilities of others link with these
- P3 ensure your understanding of processes in which you may be involved
- P4 plan, with support, how to prioritise work in order to use your time effectively
- P5 take steps to ensure your safety in situations where there is risk of harm to you
- P6 recognise the effect that work situations may have on your well-being and your practice
- P7 implement strategies to develop your personal and professional resilience
- P8 challenge your own assumptions that could lead to discrimination in your practice
- P9 reflect on the way you manage your role, to ensure continual development and continued professional registration

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 2 - SW4

Exercise professional judgement in social work

### Performance criteria

- P1 analyse a range of information that will inform professional decisions about specific complex situations
- P2 develop a range of options for addressing the situation
- P3 evaluate the implications of different options for the people involved
- P4 exercise professional judgement to make evidence-based decisions
- P5 present both verbally and in writing the rationale for your professional judgements
- P6 justify your professional judgements where others disagree or challenge them
- P7 challenge judgements of others that appear to conflict with the evidence or to work against people's best interests
- P8 consider the need to modify your own judgement where new evidence is presented

### Repertoire of Skills

- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 2 - SW5

Manage ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts

### Performance criteria

- P1 recognise ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts that arise in the course of social work practice
- P2 review sources of information and knowledge that can inform professional judgements about ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts
- P3 reflect on how your own values and experiences may impact on managing ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts
- P4 make professional judgements taking account of ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts
- P5 support others to understand how ethical considerations may have affected decisions made
- P6 measure outcomes of how you have managed ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts to inform your future practice

### Repertoire of Skills

- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values and human rights
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Use research skills
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 2 - SW6

Practise social work in multi-disciplinary contexts

### Performance criteria

- P1. develop collaborative working relationships with professionals from other disciplines
- P2 uphold the role and function of social work when working in a multi-disciplinary context
- P3 develop your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of others involved in multi-disciplinary work
- P4 ensure that social work principles, codes of practice and values are applied when working with others
- P5 contribute to identifying and agreeing the goals and objectives of the multi-disciplinary work
- P6 negotiate responsibilities that respect legal, ethical, organisational and professional boundaries in a multi-disciplinary context
- P7 negotiate agreements on systems for the exchange of information which contribute to the safeguarding and well-being of individuals and the wider community
- P8 apply social work knowledge and skills to deal constructively with disagreements and conflict within multi-disciplinary relationships
- P9 contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of the multi-disciplinary work

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 2 - SW7

Prepare professional reports and records relating to people

### Performance criteria

- P1 use language appropriate to the intended audience to construct professional reports that are evidence-based, analytical and coherent
- P2 maintain accurate, complete, retrievable, and up-to-date records
- P3 ensure reports and records can be understood by those who have a right to see them
- P4 make use of information communication technology that supports information exchange within and across disciplines and organisations
- P 5 ensure that records and reports comply with legal and organisational requirements, balancing the tension between safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection

### Repertoire of Skills

- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Apply person centred approaches
- Consult service users/ carers in relation to reports which they have a right to see
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information

## KEY ROLE 3 - SW8

### Prepare for social work involvement

#### Performance criteria

- P1 clarify details of the referral and any associated risks
- P2 engage appropriately with others to access additional information
- P3 investigate legal requirements and organisational procedures with a bearing on the proposed involvement
- P4 research further information that may inform your initial involvement
- P5 reflect on aspects of self that may have an impact on the social work relationship
- P6 synthesise all information gathered
- P7 make a professional judgement with support from others about the best form of initial involvement

#### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communications for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 3 - SW9

Engage people in social work practice

### Performance criteria

- P1 plan how to use communication to facilitate initial engagement
- P2 use communication skills to establish the social work relationship
- P3 support people to find effective ways to communicate their views, needs and preferences
- P4 develop understanding in others of your own and the organisation's duties and responsibilities
- P5 support people to explore their own circumstances, their existing networks and other resources available to them
- P6 engage people to participate in finding creative ways to achieve change
- P7 work with others to address any hostility or resistance encountered
- P8 appraise the impact of self in sustaining engagement and partnership working
- P9 seek feedback from people on how effective your engagement with them has been
- P10 adjust the way you develop and sustain engagement in the light of reflection and feedback

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Investigate community strengths and capacity in order to offer solutions to individuals
- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 3 - SW10

Support people to participate in decision-making processes

### Performance criteria

- P1 assess people's capacity to navigate systems and make their voices heard
- P2 agree the level and nature of your own contribution in supporting people to participate in decision-making processes
- P3 ensure literature and documentation is made available to people in their preferred language and format
- P4 support people to understand the concepts of power and empowerment in different situations
- P5 explain processes and procedures to enable people to participate as fully as possible
- P6 work with people to build their capacity to advocate for themselves
- P7 carry out your agreed role to support participation in decision-making processes
- P8 confirm people's understanding of the outcomes of their participation and any decisions made
- P9 identify any prejudice and discrimination encountered
- P10 promote social justice by challenging systems or processes that present barriers to people's participation
- P11 review the effectiveness of support provided

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 3 - SW11

### Advocate on behalf of people

#### Performance criteria

- P1 establish if people require you to advocate for them in specific situations
- P2 clarify with people the desired outcomes of the advocacy and other possible outcomes
- P3 support people to participate to the extent that they are able
- P4 make professional judgements about any potential conflicts of interest that may arise if you act as advocate
- P5 collaborate with people to prepare a case that represents their best interests
- P6 make representation to achieve desired outcomes
- P7 communicate outcomes of the advocacy in ways that can be understood
- P8 review the effectiveness of advocacy

#### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 4 - SW12

Assess needs, risks and circumstances in partnership with those involved

### Performance criteria

- P1 listen to people's own accounts of their situation
- P2 work holistically with people to enable them to identify, clarify and express their strengths, needs and expectations
- P3 identify obstacles that create limitations for people
- P4 assist people to identify what would help them build on their own strengths, abilities and achievements
- P5 work with others to gather further information relevant to the assessment
- P6 work with people to identify any risks associated with their situation
- P7 analyse the nature, level, urgency and implications of any risks identified, in compliance with legal and other requirements
- P8 assess the balance of people's rights and responsibilities in relation to any risks identified
- P9 make professional judgements about needs, risks and protective factors to inform planning
- P10 record assessment information accurately and in accordance with organisational requirements

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 4 - SW13

### Investigate harm or abuse

#### Performance criteria

- P1 identify behaviours and environments that present potential risk of harm or abuse
- P2 work within organisational procedures and in partnership with others to plan an investigation into suspected harm or abuse
- P3 maintain a focus on safeguarding the person at risk throughout the investigation process
- P4 use persistence and assertiveness to gather direct evidence about the harm or abuse
- P5 co-ordinate other evidence from a variety of sources and disciplines to assess the level of risk
- P6 make a professional judgement in partnership with others on the level and nature of intervention required
- P7 develop options for achieving immediate and longer term outcomes
- P8 make recommendations in partnership with others about the intervention required
- P9 record information relating to the investigation accurately and in accordance with organisational and other requirements

#### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and Understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 5 - SW14

Plan in partnership to address short and longer term issues

### Performance criteria

- P1 support people to understand the planning process and their rights and responsibilities within it
- P2 work with people to agree the overall outcome that the plan should achieve
- P3 establish agreement on short, medium and long term objectives
- P4 support people to recognise resources within themselves, their personal networks and the community
- P5 explore with the people involved a range of possible solutions and their feasibility
- P6 formulate a plan based on collated information
- P7 establish agreement to the plan with those involved in it or affected by it
- P8 agree how the plan will be monitored and reviewed
- P9 record the plan and any issues or needs that the plan does not seek to address

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Investigate community strengths and capacity in order to offer solutions to individuals
- Empower individuals to take control of their own plans and solutions
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 5 - SW15

Agree risk management plans to promote independence and responsibility

### Performance criteria

- P1 review your own and the organisation's legal and professional duties when supporting people to balance risks, rights and responsibilities
- P2 assess the individual's capacity to make decisions regarding risk
- P3 assess risk according to legal and organisational requirements
- P4 use assertiveness to ensure that the actions of others work in the best interests of the individual and take account of the wider community
- P5 with the individual, develop a plan to minimise risks while maximising independence and the responsibility for taking positive risks
- P6 work with the individual and others to ensure they understand the reasons why specific safeguards need to be put in place
- P7 establish agreement to the plan with all those who will share the management of risk
- P8 agree a strategy for monitoring and reviewing the risk management plan
- P9 complete records of the risk management plan

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 5 - SW16

Agree plans where there is risk of harm or abuse

### Performance criteria

- P1 analyse from the outcome of an investigation the degree of risk to a person, to their immediate or extended network, or to the community
- P2 collaborate with the person, those close to them, colleagues and professionals from other disciplines to develop a plan that will protect the person, those in their networks and the community
- P3 support the person to be as fully involved as possible in the planning process
- P4 negotiate agreement on the least restrictive and least damaging plan of action that will offer short term safety in respect of the risks evidenced
- P5 develop a long-term therapeutic plan to restore or continue to provide protection
- P6 review plans with others at agreed times
- P7 make changes to the plan in response to the trajectory of the intervention in consultation with others
- P8 produce professional records and reports to document plans, progress, changes to plans and outcomes

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 6 - SW17

Apply methods and models of social work intervention to promote change

### Performance criteria

- P1 research a range of methods and models of social work intervention that may promote change in specific situations
- P2 analyse how your own professional and interpersonal skills can be demonstrated within methods and models of social work intervention
- P3 articulate your rationale for choosing particular interventions in specific situations
- P4 use your own professional and interpersonal skills to apply social work interventions
- P5 monitor through reflection in practice the effectiveness of the interventions in achieving change
- P6 revise interventions to take account of reflective monitoring

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Develop and use research skills
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- Synthesise knowledge and practice

## KEY ROLE 6 - SW18

Access resources to support person centred solutions

### Performance criteria

- P1 confirm with people the outcomes and the resources required to achieve them
- P2 carry out actions needed to secure agreed resources
- P3 keep people informed of progress in securing resources
- P4 support people to deal with any unexpected or unwelcome news that may arise when securing resources
- P5 agree a way of monitoring and reviewing the use of resources, to meet the needs of both the people involved and the organisation
- P6 provide monitoring information on resources to meet organisational requirements and to inform service planning, commissioning strategies and capacity building
- P7 evaluate the effectiveness of resources in achieving outcomes for people over time

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## KEY ROLE 6 - SW19

### Evaluate outcomes of social work practice

#### Performance criteria

- P1 review the intended outcomes of social work practice in specific situations
- P2 analyse information from a range of perspectives on progress towards outcomes
- P3 in partnership with others, evaluate outcomes for individuals, their families or communities
- P4 analyse the outcomes for your own organisation
- P5 reflect on your own role and use of self in specific social work interventions
- P6 in partnership with others, revise plans for practice and interventions to take account of evaluations
- P7 identify lessons learned that should inform your future practice and the work of your organisation
- P8 articulate how your own evaluations may contribute to the development of social work as a profession

#### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- Analyse and synthesise complex information
- Make professional judgements about complex situations
- Apply person centred approaches
- Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice

## KEY ROLE 6 - SW20

Disengage at the end of social work involvement

### Performance criteria

- P1 agree a plan for disengagement when the end of your involvement is approaching
- P2 explain to people the reasons for your forthcoming disengagement
- P3 provide people with information on the closure or continuity of support for them
- P4 arrange for the transfer or closure of information relating to social work involvement
- P5 complete required documentation to close your involvement

### Repertoire of Skills

- Plan courses of action in partnership with others to achieve identified outcomes
- Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- Apply person centred approaches
- produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

## **5. COMPENDIUM OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

### **5.1 Introduction to the Compendium**

While the National Occupational Standards for Social Work each address a discrete function within social work practice, the statements of knowledge and understanding within them are by their nature cross-cutting. This Framework Specification recognises that the repertoire of skills is also cross-cutting. The statements represent the extensive body of knowledge that underpins social work practice as a whole. Repetition of many items is therefore inevitable across the NOS themselves. This document gathers together all statements of knowledge and understanding used anywhere in the Social Work NOS, grouping them under headings for ease of reference.

### **5.2 The Compendium of Knowledge and Understanding:**

#### **5.2.1 Policy and legislation**

1. International legislation, its relationship to UK policies and social work practices
2. UK legislation, its relationship to national policies and social work practices
3. Northern Ireland legislation, its relationship to policies and social work practices (scope: social care, safe-guarding, re-settlement/community re-integration, criminal justice, migration and asylum, education, health, housing, welfare benefits, diversity, social justice, human rights, discrimination and promoting the independence and autonomy of adults, children, families, groups and communities)
4. Statutory and professional codes, standards, frameworks and guidance; their relationship to social work policy and practice
5. The characteristics of the home nation, its language, culture, geography and institutions

#### **5.2.2 Theory and Research**

6. Theories underpinning our understanding of human development and factors that affect it. This includes child development and the impact of childhood

adversity, adult development, the ageing process as relevant to the workplace.

7. Theories underpinning our understanding of social issues from psychological, sociological community assets, community development and criminological perspectives
8. Theories of discrimination in contemporary society
9. Understanding of social determinants of inequality which affect social well-being in adults and children
10. Theoretical and research based critiques of the relationships between legislation, policies and social work practice, including the most robust and up to date research and information to inform understanding of the nature and impact of social work intervention on service users, carers and survivors

### **5.2.3 Social work practice**

11. Social work as a profession, including historical accounts, contemporary issues, social justice and anti-oppressive practice.
12. The nature, role and mandate of the social work relationship, including professional and ethical boundaries
13. Principles, theories, methods and models of social work intervention and practice
14. Factors commonly associated with social work involvement (scope: substance misuse; mental health; frailty; physical ill health; physical disability; learning disability; sensory needs; migration and asylum; poverty; adults or children at risk of harm or abuse; children in need; difficulties around schooling; ethnic or other minority group status; offending behaviour; public protection, social justice, discrimination and racism.
15. Demographic and social trends and health and wellbeing evidence
16. Your own background, experiences and practices that may have an impact on your social work practice
17. Principles of risk assessment and risk management
18. Principles of positive risk-taking
19. Techniques for problem solving and innovative thinking
20. Principles of conflict management

21. The nature of conflict and post-conflict impact on society and its impact in the NI context and on social work

#### **5.2.4 Processes and procedures**

22. Working in your organisation: principles, procedures and professional practices

23. Assessment and planning tools and frameworks including outcome measurement

24. Formal requirements for legal and other external processes

#### **5.2.5 Multi-disciplinary working**

25. The purpose of working with other professionals and agencies, sectors and departments

26. The remit, functions, ethos and responsibilities of disciplines and organisations involved in multi-disciplinary, interagency and inter-sectoral work

#### **5.2.6 Partnership working**

27. The cultural and language context of the individual, family, group or community

28. Principles of partnership working with individuals, families, carers, groups and sectors and communities, ensuring that users, carers, groups and communities are meaningfully engaged in service planning, commissioning and provision

29. The systems, processes and procedures of your own and other organisations in which individuals, families, groups or communities may participate

30. The range of support that may be needed to promote participation empowerment, engagement, and support

#### **5.2.7 Safe-guarding**

31. Local multi-disciplinary and organisational procedures for investigating harm or abuse

32. Types of harm or abuse

33. Indicators of potential harm or abuse

34. Common features of perpetrator behaviour

- 35. Indicators of hostility, resistance or disguised non-compliance
- 36. Legal and statutory powers and responsibilities that may be exercised in order to safeguard individuals, families, carers, groups and communities

#### **5.2.8 Personalisation and resources**

- 37. The potential of individuals to use their personal strengths and resources to achieve change by building strengths in individuals, groups and communities and empowering individuals to take control of their own plans and solutions
- 38. The value and role of family networks, communities and groups in achieving positive outcomes, and ways to develop them including investigating community strengths and capacity in order to offer solutions to individuals
- 39. The nature of personalisation and personalised services, including self-directed support; and the role of the social worker in relation to these in the context of Northern Ireland policy
- 40. The range of resources available within informal networks, within the wider community, through formal service provision and through innovation
- 41. Knowledge of independent advocacy services

#### **5.2.9 Commissioning and funding**

- 42. The eligibility criteria for services or funding streams
- 43. The opportunities afforded by different funding mechanisms including individual budgets and direct payments and other funding streams
- 44. The commissioning cycle for provision including opportunities for the commissioning of services by those using them
- 45. The brokerage role in securing services

#### **5.2.10 Handling information**

- 46. How to express written information with accuracy, clarity, relevance and an appropriate level of detail
- 47. Legal and organisational requirements for recording information and producing reports
- 48. Legal requirements, policies and procedures for the security and confidentiality of information

### **5.2.11 Reflective practice,<sup>10</sup>**

- 49. Principles of reflective practice, critical thinking and learning
- 50. Processes and requirements for formal supervision within your own organisation
- 51. How and when to access informal support in the course of practice
- 52. Sources of feedback that may inform reflection on practice and critical thinking

**5.2.12** In addition to the knowledge that is cited above, all social work students and social workers must understand the responsibilities that come with being a regulated professional. This includes professional social workers taking personal responsibility for their own continued professional development to ensure best outcomes for service users. The knowledge statements above are not finite as new challenges confront the profession every day. New legislation, policies and research will continue to be developed and published e.g. personalisation, self-directed support, impact of adversity on children's development, multiple adversities, human trafficking, historical abuse, child sexual exploitation, to name but a few. Social work students, social workers and education and training providers must incorporate into their repertoires new factors affecting children and adults and identify evidence-based interventions which are proven to work.

Also, the profession is experiencing new ways of learning through technology, use of smart phones, Apps and YouTube. The learning environment has never been richer. Social work students, social workers and education and training providers should exploit new methods of learning in order to drive up standards in practice.

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See Houston, S. (2014) Reflecting on Psycho-Domains in Social Work. Belfast: the Northern Ireland Social Care Council

## 6. VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 It is essential that social work practice is founded on, informed by, and capable of being, judged against a clear value base and ethical principles. This is because of the responsibilities which social workers carry; the ethical problems and dilemmas they face and the potential influence and impact they may have on the lives of people.
- 6.2 Values are not just ideals. They are a set of practical criteria to inform and guide actions, decision-making, and the relationship between the social worker and others. Values are determinants of behaviour and should be integral to social work practice.
- 6.3 National and international professional social work organisations have produced guidance on values to underpin social work practice. These may be a useful reference for both course providers and students.
- 6.4 To be competent against the standards contained in the Framework Specification, social work students must demonstrate that they have achieved the performance criteria whilst adhering to and demonstrating the values and principles stated within the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students (See 5.5 below), and the Statement of Expectations from individuals, families, carers, groups and communities who use services and those who care for them (see 5.6 below).

## 7. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students<sup>11</sup>

### 7.1 *As a social worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests and wellbeing of service users and carers.*

This includes:

- Treating each person as an individual
- Treating people with consideration, respect and compassion
- Empowering service users and carers to communicate their views, needs and preferences, taking account of their preferred language and form of communication
- Respecting and, where appropriate, representing the individual views and wishes of both service users and carers
- Supporting service users' right to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they receive
- Gaining consent as appropriate from service users before you provide care or services, in line with your employer's procedures and any statutory requirements
- Explaining your role, the purpose of your involvement and the reasons for any decision you make
- Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users
- Treating service users and carers fairly and promoting equal opportunities
- Respecting diversity, beliefs, preferences, cultural differences and challenging discriminatory attitudes or behaviour

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11 The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students replace the Codes of Practice on 1 November 2015

**7.2 As a social worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.**

This includes:

- Being honest and trustworthy
- Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way
- Being able to communicate clearly in the English language, both verbally and in writing
- Respecting confidential information and clearly explaining agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers
- Holding, using and storing records in line with organisational procedures and data protection requirements
- Being reliable and dependable
- Honouring work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to service users and carers
- Declaring issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that
- Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money, hospitality or services from service users and carers
- Refusing any loans of money or property from anyone in your care or anyone close to them
- Not engaging in practices which are fraudulent in respect of use of public or private monies.

**7.3 As a social worker, you must promote the autonomy of service users while safeguarding them as far as possible from danger or harm.**

This includes:

- Promoting service users' independence and empowering them to understand and exercise their rights
- Using established processes and procedures to assess, respond to and manage dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour and practice
- Following practice and procedures designed to keep you and other people
- Bringing to the attention of your employer or the appropriate authority, without delay, resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of the delivery of safe practice
- Informing your employer or an appropriate authority, without delay, where the practice of colleagues or others may be unsafe or adversely affecting standards of care
- Complying with employers' health and safety policies, including those relating to substance misuse
- Recognising and using responsibly with service users and carers, the power that comes from your work role.

**7.4 As a social worker, you must respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.**

- Recognising that service users have the right to take positive risks and helping them to identify and manage potential and actual risks to themselves and others
- Following risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of service users or others presents a risk of harm to themselves or other people
- Taking necessary steps to minimise the risks of service users' behaviour causing actual or potential harm to themselves or other people
- Ensuring that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments in a timely and effective manner
- Abuse, neglect or harm service users, carers or colleagues
- Exploit service users, carers or colleagues in any way
- Abuse the trust of service users and carers or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property, home or workplace
- Form inappropriate personal relationships with service users
- Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users, carers or colleagues
- Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by service users, carers or colleagues
- Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk
- Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services
- Use social media or social networking sites or other forms of electronic communication in a way that contravenes professional boundaries, organisational guidelines or the Northern Ireland Social Care Council standards.

**7.5 As a social worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social work services.**

In particular you must not:

- Abuse, neglect or harm service users, carers or colleagues
- Exploit service users, carers or colleagues in any way
- Abuse the trust of service users and carers or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property, home or workplace
- Form inappropriate personal relationships with service users
- Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users, carers or colleagues
- Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by service users, carers or colleagues
- Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk

- Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services
- Use social media or social networking sites or other forms of electronic communication in a way that contravenes professional boundaries, organisational guidelines or the Northern Ireland Social Care Council standards.

**7.6 As a social worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills.**

This includes:

- Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a lawful, safe and effective way
- Taking personal and, where appropriate, collective responsibility for quality improvement and safety in line with your job role
- Being personally accountable for your actions and able to explain and account for your actions and decisions
- Maintaining clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for your work
- Informing your employer or the appropriate authority in a timely manner about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to do your job competently and safely
- Informing the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and any employers you work for at the first reasonable opportunity if your fitness to practise has been called into question. This includes ill-health that affects your ability to practise, criminal convictions, disciplinary proceedings and findings of other regulatory bodies or organisations
- Seeking assistance from your employer or the appropriate authority if you do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your work, or you are not sure about how to proceed in a work matter
- Ensuring that if there is a conflict between the Northern Ireland Social Care Council standards of conduct and your work environment, your first obligation is to the standards
- Helping service users and carers to make complaints where required, taking complaints seriously and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person including your employer or the Northern Ireland Social Care Council
- Making service users and carers aware of your responsibilities within the Northern Ireland Social Care Council standards of conduct
- Being open and honest with people if things go wrong, including providing a full and prompt explanation to your employer of what has happened
- Co-operating with any investigation or formal inquiry into your conduct, the conduct of others, or the care or services provided to a service user where appropriate
- Working openly and co-operatively with colleagues and treating them with respect
- Taking responsibility for work delegated to you, recognising and working within the limits of your knowledge, skills and experience
- Recognising that you remain responsible for the work that you have delegated to other workers

- Recognising and respecting the roles and expertise of workers from other disciplines and agencies and working in partnership with them
- Undertaking relevant training and learning to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and meeting the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements in line with your job role
- Contributing to the learning and development of others.

## **7.7 Statement of Expectations from those who use services, and carers**

As part of the development of the NOS for Social Work, consultations have taken place with those who use services and their carers. The statements below summarise their expectations of social workers. To be competent against the standards contained in the Framework Specification, social work students must demonstrate that they meet these expectations in their practice.

This Statement of Expectations has been shared with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Participation Partnership and social work students. Service users and carers endorse the statements below and would remind social workers and social work students that they must be aware at all times that they are working with human beings who are real people, who lead real lives and have feelings and individual needs. Service users and carers are Experts by Experience and should be as involved as possible in decisions about their lives, bearing in mind the social worker's statutory duty of care to them and significant others.

Social workers and social work students are directed to the short film below in relation to international messages about the involvement of service users and carers in the provision of services.

<http://www.mediator.qub.ac.uk/ms/SocialWork/Int.m4v>

Social workers and social work students will work with a range of service users and carers and will be working with the groups outlined in Section 75, and Schedule 9, of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which came into force on the 1 January 2000. This places a statutory obligation on public authorities, in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without

## **Statement of Expectations:**

### **5.1.1 Communication skills and information sharing**

Social workers must:

- *explain their:*
  - *role and the purpose of contact;*
  - *their powers, including legal powers in a way that can be understood by all involved;*
- *inform users and carers about what steps they are going to take;*
- *give information to users and carers about their rights and entitlements;*
- *be open and honest about what they can and cannot do;*
- *be honest if the agency they represent cannot offer the resources needed;*
- *inform users and carers about what is available, beyond the brief of their organisation;*
- *listen actively to what users and carers have to say;*
- *talk to those requiring and using services, and their carers, with due respect for their age, ethnicity, culture, understanding and needs;*
- *involve users and carers in decision making;*
- *offer users and carers choices and options;*
- *share records with users and carers;*
- *build honest relationships based on clear communication.*

### **5.1.2 Good social work practice**

Social workers must:

- *be good at time keeping; and time management;*
- *be good at starting, continuing and closing relationships;*
- *respect confidentiality, and explain when there is a need to share information with others;*
- *recognise the expertise of users and carers groups, families and communities about their own situation and have regard for their wishes;*

- *involve users and carers in all meetings which may affect them, where appropriate;*
- *give users and carers groups, families and communities sufficient time to work with them properly;*
- *ensure that contact is maintained;*
- *assess needs properly:*
  - *making sure that all options are explored properly before deciding on a plan;*
  - *looking for options when the services needed are not available;*
  - *being creative;*
  - *involving users and carers:*
    - *in setting goals;*
    - *when developing a care plan, and being honest about the limitations of choice and the options;*
    - *when reviewing and changing plans;*
- *help users and carers groups, families and communities access benefits and services;*
- *assess risk and support risk taking when appropriate;*
- *work with users and carers to develop and/or maintain independence;*
- *link users and carers to support groups and networks and support them to extend involvement with groups and networks;*
- *be accountable to users and carers for their practice.*

### **5.1.3 Advocacy**

Social workers must:

- *be able to:*
  - *lobby on behalf of users and carers groups, families and communities to access services;*
  - *challenge their own organisations on behalf of users and carers, communities, and excluded groups;*
  - *challenge injustice and lack of access to services;*
  - *challenge poor practice, racism and discrimination and promote social justice;*
  - *advise users and carers about independent advocacy that can best meet their needs;*
- *enable users and carers, groups and communities to be empowered to represent their views;*
- *help users and carers, groups and communities, to represent their views in all meetings affecting them;*
- *involve independent advocates, where appropriate.*

### **5.1.4 Working with other professionals, agencies and sectors**

Social workers must:

- *be honest, clear and make sure all involved understand:*
  - *what happens to the information users and carers give to the social worker;*
  - *how it is kept;*
  - *who it is shared with, and why;*
  - *how it might be used;*
- *understand what information other organisations can offer and share with users and carers;*

- *work effectively with others to improve services and best outcomes offered to users and carers.*

### **5.1.5 Knowledge and Research**

Social workers must:

- *have knowledge of:*
  - *services relevant to users' and carers' needs and circumstances (not just those offered by their organisation) and how to access other relevant services;*
  - *benefits and direct payments;*
  - *legislation;*
- *have in-depth knowledge of the users and carers group and communities they are working with;*
- *keep themselves up to date with:*
  - *all relevant knowledge, research and information;*
  - *the rights of users and carers.*

### **5.1.6 Values**

Social workers must:

- *have respect for:*
  - *users and carers, regardless of their age, ethnicity, culture, level of understanding and need;*
  - *the expertise and knowledge users and carers have about their own situation;*
- *empower users, carers and communities in decisions affecting them;*
- *be honest about:*
  - *the power invested in them, including legal powers;*
  - *their role and resources available to meet need;*

- *respect confidentiality, and inform users and carers when information needs to be shared with others;*
  
- *be able to:*
  - *challenge discriminatory images and practices affecting users and carers and excluded groups and put users and carers first;*
  
  - *balance the needs of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities first.*

## **Appendix 1 – Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students**

The standards of conduct for social work students are the same as for professionally qualified social workers. This makes it clear to students from the outset of their training course what is expected of them as a registered professional.

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council has also developed standards of practice for social workers which describe what they need to know, understand and be able to do. These standards apply to new social workers from the point of qualification.

### **Summary of the Standards of Conduct for Social Work Students**

(Full text is available from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info))

- 1. As a social worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests and wellbeing of service users and carers.**
- 2. As a social worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.**
- 3. As a social worker, you must promote the autonomy of service users while safeguarding them as far as possible from danger or harm.**
- 4. As a social worker, you must respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.**
- 5. As a social worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social work services.**
- 6. As a social worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills.**

## Appendix 2 – Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers

The standards of conduct describe the values, attitudes and behaviours expected of social workers.

The standards of practice outline the knowledge and skills required for competent practice.

Together, both sets of standards combine to provide a baseline against which a social worker's conduct and practice will be judged.

### Summary of the Standards of Conduct for Social Workers

(Full text is available from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info))

1. As a social worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests and wellbeing of service users and carers.
2. As a social worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.
3. As a social worker, you must promote the autonomy of service users while safeguarding them as far as possible from danger or harm.
4. As a social worker, you must respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.
5. As a social worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social work services.
6. As a social worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills.

### Summary of the Standards of Practice for Social Workers

(Full text is available from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info))

As a social worker you must be able to:

1. Manage your role as a professional social worker.
2. Maintain an up-to date knowledge and evidence base for social work.
3. Develop social work practice through supervision, consultation, reflection and analysis.
4. Practise competently within your area of practice.
5. Engage and participate with service users and carers.
6. Assess needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks in partnership with those involved and respond appropriately.
7. Use social work interventions to manage risk and improve outcomes for service users.
8. Develop yourself and others.
9. Practise in multidisciplinary and inter-agency contexts.

## **Appendix 3 – Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers**

The standards of conduct describe the values, attitudes and behaviours expected of social care workers in their day to day work.

The standards of practice outline the knowledge and skills required for competent practice.

Together, both sets of standards combine to provide a baseline against which a social care worker's conduct and practice will be judged.

### **Summary of the Standards of Conduct for Social Care Workers**

(Full text is available from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info))

1. As a social care worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests and wellbeing of service users and carers.
2. As a social care worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.
3. As a social care worker, you must promote the autonomy of service users while safeguarding them as far as possible from danger or harm.
4. As a social care worker, you must respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.
5. As a social care worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services.
6. As a social care worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills.

### **Summary of the Standards of Practice for Social Care Workers**

(Full text is available from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info))

As a social care worker you must:

1. Understand the main duties and responsibilities of your own role within the context of the organisation in which you work.
2. Be able to communicate effectively.
3. Deliver person-centred care and support which is safe and effective.
4. Support the safeguarding of individuals.
5. Maintain health and safety at work.
6. Develop yourself as a social care worker.