

PCF



Professional
Capabilities
Framework

End of last
placement/completion

BASW
England

The professional association for
social work and social workers

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1. PROFESSIONALISM - Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development

Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession. Our title is protected in UK law. We demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for our conduct, practice, self-care and development. We seek and use supervision and other professional support. We promote excellent practice, and challenge circumstances that compromise this. As representatives of the profession, we safeguard its reputation. We are accountable to people using services, the public, employers and the regulator. We take ethical decisions in the context of multiple accountabilities.

I...

- am able to meet the requirements of the professional regulator
- am able to explain the role of the social worker in a range of contexts, and uphold the reputation of the profession
- understand that social work is an international profession with a global definition
- demonstrate an effective and active use of supervision for accountability, professional reflection and development
- demonstrate professionalism in terms of presentation, demeanour, reliability, honesty and respectfulness
- take responsibility for managing my time and workload effectively, and begin to prioritise my activities including ensuring supervision time
- recognise the impact of self in interaction with others, making appropriate use of personal experience and awareness, and begin to develop effective use of self in practice
- recognise and maintain personal and professional boundaries in all contexts and media

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- recognise my professional strengths and limitations and how to seek advice
- demonstrate a commitment to my continuing learning and development
- with support, take steps to manage and promote own safety, health, wellbeing, self-care and emotional resilience
- identify concerns about practice, procedures and ethos in the workplace, and seek support to find appropriate means of challenge and/or offer suggestions for improvement.

2. VALUES AND ETHICS - Apply social work ethical principles and value to guide professional practices

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves and make decisions in accordance with our [Code of Ethics](#). This includes working in partnership with people who use our services. We promote human rights and social justice. We develop and maintain our understanding of the value base of our profession throughout our career, its ethical standards and relevant law.

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- understand and apply the profession's ethical principles (as defined in the Code of Ethics) and legislation, taking account of these in reaching decisions
- recognise and, with support, explore and manage the impact of my own values on professional practice
- manage situations of potentially conflicting or competing values, and, with guidance, recognise, reflect on, and work with integrity with ethical dilemmas
- demonstrate respectful partnership work with service users and carers, eliciting and respecting their needs and views, and promoting their participation in decision-making wherever possible
- recognise and promote individual's rights to autonomy and self-determination
- promote and protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals within and outside their families and networks, recognising the requirements of professional accountability and information sharing.

3. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY - Recognise diversity and apply anti- discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice

Social workers understand that diversity characterises and shapes human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Diversity is multi-dimensional and includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender (including transgender), faith and belief, and the intersection of these and other characteristics. We understand that because of difference, and perception of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim. We identify this and promote equality.

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- understand how an individual's identity is informed by factors such as culture, economic status, family composition, life experiences and characteristics – and the intersection of such factors – and take account of these to understand their experiences, questioning assumptions where necessary
- with reference to current legislative requirements, I recognise personal and organisational discrimination and oppression and, with guidance, I make use of a range of approaches to challenge them, working in partnership with people using services, carers, families and/or communities where possible
- recognise and manage the impact on people of the power invested in my role in accordance with our [Code of Ethics](#).

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4. RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING - Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic wellbeing

Social workers recognise and promote the fundamental principles of human rights, social justice and economic wellbeing enshrined in national and international laws, conventions and policies. These principles underpin our practice and we use statutory and case law effectively in our work. We understand and address the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty. Wherever possible, we work in partnership with people using services, their carers and families, to challenge inequality and injustice, and promote strengths, agency, hope and self-determination.

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- understand, identify and apply in practice the principles of human rights, social justice, inclusion and equality
- understand how legislation and policy can advance or constrain people's rights and recognise how the law may be used to protect or advance their rights and entitlements
- work within the principles of human and civil rights and equalities legislation, differentiating and beginning to work with absolute, qualified and competing rights and differing needs and perspectives
- recognise the impact of poverty and social exclusion and promote enhanced economic status, income and equal opportunities through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits
- recognise the value of – and aid access to – independent advocacy
- demonstrate skills and approaches to practice that promote strengths, agency, hope and self-determination in people using services, carers, families and communities.

5. KNOWLEDGE – Develop and apply relevant knowledge from social work practice and research, social sciences, law, other professional and relevant fields, and from the experience of people who use services

We develop our professional knowledge throughout our careers and sustain our curiosity. As a unified profession, we develop core knowledge that relates to our purpose, values and ethics. We also develop specific knowledge needed for fields of practice and roles. Our knowledge comes from social work practice, theory, law, research, expertise by experience, and from other relevant fields and disciplines. All social workers contribute to creating as well as using professional knowledge. We understand our distinctive knowledge complements that of other disciplines to provide effective services.

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- demonstrate a critical understanding of the application to social work of research, theory, evidence and knowledge from social work and other relevant fields (eg sociology, social policy, psychology, health and human development, technological and digital spheres, and from the experience of people who use services)
- demonstrate a critical understanding of the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice, recognising the scope for professional judgement and its importance to ethical practice. This may include Knowledge and Skills statements in adults and children's social work
- demonstrate and apply to practice a working knowledge of human growth and development throughout the life course
- recognise the short and long-term impact of psychological, socio-economic, environmental and physiological factors on people's lives, taking into account age and development, and how this informs practice

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- understand the value of systemic approaches and how they can be used to understand and work with the person in their environment, social context and relationships, and inform social work practice
- acknowledge the centrality of relationships for people and the key concepts of attachment, separation, loss, change and resilience
- understand forms of harm and their impact on people, and the implications for practice, drawing on concepts of strength, resilience, vulnerability, risk and resistance
- demonstrate a critical knowledge of the range of theories and models for social work intervention with individuals, families, groups and communities, and the methods derived from them
- demonstrate a critical understanding of social welfare policy, its evolution, implementation and impact on people, social work, other professions, and inter- agency working
- recognise the contribution, and begin to make use, of research and evidence to inform practice
- demonstrate a critical understanding of research methods
- value and take account of the knowledge and expertise of service users and carers and other professionals
- develop knowledge and understanding of the opportunities and risks of online communications, virtual environments and social media in social work.

6. CRITICAL REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS - Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making

Social workers critically reflect on their practice, use analysis, apply professional judgement and reasoned discernment. We identify, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. We continuously evaluate our impact and benefit to service users. We use supervision and other support to reflect on our work and sustain our practice and wellbeing. We apply our critical reflective skills to the context and conditions under which we practise. Our reflection enables us to challenge ourselves and others, and maintain our professional curiosity, creativity and self-awareness.

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- apply imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice
- inform decision-making through the identification and gathering of information from multiple sources, actively seeking new sources
- with support, rigorously question and evaluate the reliability and validity of information from different sources
- demonstrate a capacity for logical, systematic, critical and reflective reasoning and apply the theories and techniques of reflective practice
- know how to formulate, test, evaluate, and review hypotheses in response to information available at the time and apply in practice
- begin to formulate and make explicit, evidence-informed judgements and justifiable decisions.

7. SKILLS AND INTERVENTIONS - Use judgement, knowledge and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, prevent harm and enable progress

Social workers engage with individuals, families, and communities, working alongside people to determine their needs and wishes, and what action may be helpful. We build productive working relationships and communicate effectively. Using our professional judgement, we employ appropriate interventions, promoting self-determination, support, protection and positive change. We develop and maintain skills relevant to our roles. We understand and take account of power differentials and use our authority appropriately. We evaluate our own practice and its impact, and how we improve outcomes for those we work with.

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- identify and apply a range of verbal, non-verbal and written methods of communication and adapt them in line with people's age, comprehension and culture
- am able to communicate information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to advocate, influence and persuade
- demonstrate the ability to engage with people, and build, manage, sustain and conclude compassionate and effective relationships
- demonstrate a holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks
- select and use appropriate frameworks to assess, give meaning to, plan, implement and review effective interventions and evaluate the outcomes, in partnership with service users
- use a planned and structured approach, informed by social work methods, models and tools, to promote positive change and independence and to prevent harm

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- understand and can apply knowledge, skills and interventions in accordance with organisational and national policy while maintaining professional, evidence informed critical perspectives
- recognise how the development of community resources, groups and networks enhance outcomes for individuals and understand social work's role in promoting this
- maintain accurate, comprehensible, succinct and timely records and reports in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines, to support professional judgement and organisational responsibilities
- demonstrate skills in sharing information appropriately and respectfully
- recognise complexity, multiple factors, changing circumstances and uncertainty in people's lives, to be able to prioritise my intervention
- understand the authority of the social work role and begin to use this appropriately as an accountable professional
- recognise the factors that create or exacerbate risk to individuals, their families or carers, to the public or to professionals, including myself, and contribute to the assessment and management of risk
- with support, identify appropriate responses to safeguard vulnerable people and promote their wellbeing.

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8. CONTEXTS AND ORGANISATIONS - Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing organisational contexts, and the social and policy environments that shape practice. Operate effectively within and contribute to the development of organisations and services, including multi-agency and inter-professional settings

Social workers are informed about and pro-actively respond to the challenges and opportunities that come from changing social, policy and work contexts. We fulfil this responsibility in accordance with our professional values and ethics, as individual and collective professionals and as members of the organisations in which we work. We collaborate, inform and are informed by our work with other social workers, other professions, individuals and communities.

I...

- recognise that social work operates within, and responds to, changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts
- understand the roles and responsibilities of social workers in a range of organisations, lines of accountability and the boundaries of professional autonomy and discretion
- understand legal obligations, structures and behaviours within organisations and how these impact on policy, procedure and practice
- am able to work within an organisation's remit and contribute to its evaluation and development
- understand and respect the role of others within the organisation and work effectively with them
- take responsibility for your role and impact within teams and be able to contribute positively to effective team working
- understand the inter-agency, multi-disciplinary and inter-professional dimensions to practice and demonstrate effective partnership working.

9. PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP – Promote the profession and good social work practice. Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others. Develop personal influence and be part of the collective leadership and impact of the profession

We develop and show our leadership, individually and collectively, through promoting social work's purpose, practices and impact. We achieve this through diverse activities, which may include: advancing practice, supervising, educating others, research, evaluation, using innovation and creativity, writing, using social media positively, being active in professional networks and bodies, contributing to policy and taking formal leadership/management roles. We promote organisational contexts conducive to good practice and learning. We work in partnership with people who use services and stakeholders in developing our leadership and aims for the profession.

I...

- recognise the importance of, and begin to demonstrate, professional leadership as a social worker, promoting our professional purpose, practice and impact
- recognise the value of - and contribute to supporting - the learning and development of others.
- begin to contribute to collective/collaborative professional leadership
- recognise own ongoing responsibility to seek, plan and undertake continuing professional development throughout my career
- recognise the significant opportunities and risks of online communications, virtual environments and social media use in social work.