

# PCF

Professional  
Capabilities  
Framework



End of first placement

**BASW**  
England

The professional association for  
social work and social workers

# End of first placement

## 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...

- recognise the role of the professional social worker in a range of contexts
- recognise the important role of supervision and make an active contribution
- demonstrate professionalism in terms of presentation, demeanour, reliability, honesty and respectfulness
- with guidance take responsibility for managing my time and workload effectively
- am able to show awareness of personal and professional boundaries in all contexts and media
- with guidance, recognise my limitations and how to seek advice
- recognise and seek to meet my own learning needs in response to practice experience
- show awareness of my own safety, health, wellbeing, self-care priorities and emotional resilience, and seek advice as necessary
- identify concerns about practice, procedures or ethos in the workplace and how they might be questioned and/or improved.

## 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.

I...

- understand and, with support, apply the profession's ethical principles from our Code of Ethics
- recognise and with support, explore and manage the impact of my own values on professional practice
- identify and, with guidance, manage potentially conflicting values and ethical dilemmas
- elicit and respect the needs and views of service users, carers and families, and with support, promote their participation in decision-making wherever possible.
- recognise and, with support, promote individuals' legal and ethical 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 appropriate 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.

I...

- understand how an individual's identity is informed by factors such as culture, economic status, family composition, community, life experiences and characteristics – and the intersection of such factors - and take account of these to understand their experiences
- with reference to current legislative requirements, I recognise personal and organisational discrimination and oppression, and identify ways in which they might be challenged by me and by service users and families.
- recognise and, with support, manage the impact on people of the power invested in my role.

## 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.

I...

- understand and, with support, 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
- work within the principles of human and civil rights and equalities legislation
- 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 independent advocacy.

## 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.

I...

- with guidance, apply research, theory, evidence and knowledge from social work and other relevant fields (e.g. sociology, social policy, psychology, health, human growth and development, technological and digital spheres, and from the experience of people who use services) to social work practice
- understand the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice, relevant to my placement setting
- understand forms of harm, their impact on people, and the implications for practice
- apply knowledge from a range of theories and models for social work intervention with individuals, families, groups and communities, and the methods derived from them
- value and take account of the expertise of service users and carers and other professionals in my practice and judgement.

## 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.

I...

- recognise the importance of applying imagination, creativity and curiosity to my practice
- inform my decision-making through the identification and gathering of information from more than one source and, with support, evaluate its reliability and validity
- with guidance use reflection and analysis in practice
- with guidance understand how to evaluate and review hypotheses in response to information available at the time and apply in practice
- with guidance, use evidence to inform 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.

I...

- with guidance, use a range of verbal, non-verbal and written methods of communication relevant to the placement
- with guidance communicate information, advice, instruction and opinion to advocate, influence and persuade others
- demonstrate the ability to build and conclude compassionate and effective relationships appropriate to the placement setting
- with guidance, demonstrate a holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks
- identify and use appropriate frameworks to assess, give meaning to, plan, implement and review effective interventions and evaluate progress and outcomes
- with guidance, demonstrate the application of a planned and structured approach, informed by at least two relevant social work methods and models
- recognise the importance of community resources, groups and networks for individuals



# End of first placement

- demonstrate skills in recording and report writing appropriate to the setting
- with guidance demonstrate skills in sharing information appropriately and respectfully
- demonstrate awareness of the impact of multiple factors, changing circumstances and uncertainty in people's lives
- with guidance understand the authority of the social work role
- with guidance identify the factors that may create or exacerbate risk to individuals, their families or carers, to the public or to professionals, including myself
- with guidance identify appropriate responses to safeguard vulnerable people.

## 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 proactively 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...

- with guidance, recognise that social work operates within, and responds to, changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts
- with guidance, understand legal obligations, structures and behaviours within organisations and how these impact on policy, procedure and practice, and service user and carer experience
- with guidance work within the organisational context of my placement setting and understand the lines of accountability
- understand and respect the role of others within the organisation and work effectively with them
- take responsibility for my role and impact within teams and with guidance contribute positively to team working
- understand the inter-agency, multi-disciplinary and inter-professional dimensions to practice and, with guidance, demonstrate 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...

- identify how professional leadership in social work can enhance practice
- recognise the value of sharing and supporting the learning and development of others
- understand my responsibility to develop individual and collective/collaborative professional leadership capabilities.