

**ORGANISATIONAL MODULES 2024**

**MUCKAMORE ABBEY HOSPITAL INQUIRY  
WITNESS STATEMENT**

**Statement of Patricia Higgins  
Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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I, Patricia Higgins, make the following statement for the purpose of the Muckamore Abbey Hospital (MAH) Inquiry.

The statement is made on behalf of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council in response to a request for evidence by the Inquiry Panel.

This is my first statement to the Inquiry.

I will number any exhibited documents, so my first document will be "Exhibit 1"

**Qualifications and positions**

1. I am a qualified social worker. I hold a Bachelor of Social Science Degree awarded on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1981. I hold a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work awarded on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1985 and the associated professional social work award; the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work awarded on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1985. I hold a Postgraduate Diploma in Education awarded on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1990.
2. I have held the following positions. From 2000 to 2001, I was a Social Work Education Adviser with the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work. From 2001 to 2002, I was a Professional Adviser with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. From 2002 – 2018 I was the Director of Regulation and Standards with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. From 2018 – to date I am the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

## Module

3. I have been asked to provide a statement for the purpose of M6: Resettlement.
4. My evidence relates to paragraph 16 of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.
5. I have been asked to address a number of questions/ issues for the purpose of my statement. I will address those questions/ issues in turn.

### **Q1. Please explain the training requirements and professional standards for social care workers in learning disability services.**

#### Professional Standards

6. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (the Social Care Council) is the regulator of social workers and social care workers. Regulations governing the compulsory registration of social workers and specific groups of social care workers have been made under section 2(2)(a) – (d) and 2(3)(f) of the *Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 (the Act)*. Compulsory registration of specified groups of social care workers was completed in 2018. Social care workers working within learning disability services who are employed in any of the settings specified in section 2(2)(a) – (d) are required to be registered in order to practise. Entry to the Social Care Council Register for social care workers does not require a qualification. It is based on the setting in which the social care worker works as described in the Act and associated Regulations.
7. The Social Care Council has in place *Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers*. These are generic standards intended for social care workers working in any setting and with any service user group. The Standards of Conduct describe the attitudes, values and behaviours expected of registered social care workers, and the Standards of Practice outline the knowledge and skills required for competent practice.

8. Social care workers are required to sign a declaration on their initial application form and any subsequent renewal form, which states that they will comply with the Social Care Council's Standards of Conduct and Practice.
9. The Standards of Conduct and Practice are used as the basis of a Fitness to Practise (FtP) investigation into the conduct or practice of a social care worker.

#### Training Requirements

10. All registered social care workers are required to undertake 90 hours of Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) within their five-year period of registration. This training and learning will normally be specific to their area of practice. The Social Care Council provides guidance for social care workers regarding PRTL.
11. The Guidance for social care workers outlines five continuous learning and development standards. These include: Principles of Care; Health and Safety; Social Care Skills; Communication; and Safeguarding.
12. The *Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001* section 9(1)(b) also requires the Social Care Council to publish standards of conduct and practice in relation to social care workers, being standards expected of persons employing or seeking to employ them.
13. Section 4 of the *Standards of Conduct and Practice for Employers* require employers to provide learning and development opportunities to enable registrants to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge. These Standards have been developed in collaboration with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). The RQIA will take these Standards into account in their inspection of regulated services.

**Q2. Is there any guidance on the skills needed by social care staff to care for patients with complex needs, including autism and challenging behaviour, particularly once such patients are resettled from MAH into the community?**

14. The Social Care Council is not aware of any regional guidance on the skills needed by social care staff to care for patients with complex needs, including autism and challenging behaviour, particularly once such patients are resettled from MAH into the community.

15. However, each person being resettled into the community will have a detailed care plan in place outlining their specific needs. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure that their staff have the requisite skills and knowledge to meet the person's needs and to provide the relevant training as required. Standard 1 of the *Standards of Conduct and Practice for Employers* states: "As a social work and social care employer, in line with organisational expectations and governance requirements, you must provide vision and leadership to registrants, to ensure they are enabled to deliver safe, effective and values-led care focused on the needs and experiences of service users."

**Q3. What, if any, resources and training are provided to social care staff who care for patients with complex needs, including autism and challenging behaviour, particularly once such patients are resettled from MAH into the community?**

16. There is a vocational qualifications framework available for staff working in health and social care. The *Health and Social Care Diploma* is available from vocational levels 2-5. Level 5 is the current recognised management and leadership qualification. Vocational qualifications are comprised of mandatory and optional units enabling the qualification to be tailored to the specific needs of the learner. The *Health and Social Care Diploma* includes optional units for care workers working with adults with learning disability and autism.

17. These qualifications are specific to Northern Ireland, developed in partnership with the sector, awarding organisations, training providers and the Social Care Council. The qualifications are accredited by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Regulation Function (CCEA Regulation) and are offered by awarding organisations through a network of accredited centres which includes further education colleges, training providers and employer designated training and assessment centres.
18. Training is also provided to social care staff by their employers, such training would be focussed on the specific requirements of the organisation and the needs of their service users.
19. The Association for Real Change NI (ARC) is an umbrella body representing the learning disability sector and has a membership comprised of Health and Social Care Trusts, Community and Voluntary sector organisations and private sector organisations. ARC provides a range of training courses for its members.
20. The Social Care Council has a digital Learning Zone available through its website which is open access and free to use. There is a wide range of learning resources for social care workers. An example of some learning resources of relevance to the Inquiry include: *Making the Right Decision* and *Standards of Conduct and Practice* - two learning resources to help social care workers understand and adhere to the Standards of Conduct and Practice; *Safeguarding* - a learning resource for social care workers working with adults to understand safeguarding, the types and signs of abuse, how to recognise abuse, deprivation of liberty; *Values, Behaviours, and Person Centred Practice* – a learning resource for social care workers to support their understanding of the values and behaviours required to work in the social care sector and the importance of using a person centred approach. The resource contains a section on ‘Transitions into Care’, and while this is not specifically related to resettlement, rather focussed on people moving into a care setting or moving between care settings, it considers the impact of change on the person being cared for and focusses on the importance of person-centred care.

21. In relation to training for social care staff dealing with challenging behaviour, the Social Care Council understands that there is a range of training programmes available across the social care sector. Across statutory provision the Crisis Prevention Institute have developed Clinical 'Safety Intervention' training for staff working with people with challenging behaviour. This programme was previously known as MAPA (Management of Actual or Potential Aggression) training.

**Q4. Do you wish to draw to the attention of the Panel any other matters not covered by the above questions that may assist the Panel's consideration of paragraph 16 of the Terms of Reference?**

22. The Social Care Council has been working with the Department of Health (DoH) to support the implementation of proposals to reform adult social care. The DoH has commissioned the Social Care Council to develop a career structure for the social care workforce, aligned to qualifications and a continuous professional development framework. The Social Care Council in partnership with social care employers and awarding organisations have developed a new entrance *Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice* for new social care workers registering with the Social Care Council for the first time. This certificate will be available for delivery in September 2024 after accreditation by CCEA Regulation.

23. The Health and Social Care Vocational qualification framework as described above will be the qualification framework linked to the career structure. The continuous professional development framework will be tailored to the social care worker's specific area of practice and will be determined in collaboration between the social care worker and their employer and contribute to the Social Care Council's PRTL requirement as outlined above. The DoH are developing a workforce strategy for social care and the career framework will be a central component within this strategy.

**Declaration of Truth**

The contents of this witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have produced all the documents which I have access to and which I believe are necessary to address the matters on which the Inquiry Panel has requested me to give evidence.

Signed: 

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**List of Exhibits (Patricia Higgins)**

- Exhibit 1: Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers.
- Exhibit 2: Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) Continuous Learning & Development Standards – Guidance for Social Care Registrants
- Exhibit 3: Standards of Conduct and Practice for Employers.





**Standards of Conduct and Practice for**  
**Social Care Workers**



**Working together.**  
**Making a difference.**

# Introductory Notes

## About Us

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (the Social Care Council) was established in 2001 as the regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland.

We regulate the workforce by maintaining a register and setting standards for the conduct, practice and training of social care workers to ensure that the quality of care provided to service users and carers is of a high standard.

Our register is a public record that those registered have met the requirements for entry onto the register and have agreed to adhere to the standards of conduct and practice set by the Social Care Council.



# About the Standards 267 - 11

As part of its roles and responsibilities, the Social Care Council is required to produce and publish standards of conduct and practice expected of social workers and social care workers. This booklet contains the 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.



The standards are binding on all social care workers registered with the Social Care Council, irrespective of employment status or work setting. Your fitness to practise will be judged against these standards and failure to comply could put your registration at risk. If someone raises a concern about your conduct or practice, it will be considered against these standards when deciding if we need to take any action.

The standards are intended to reflect existing good practice and public expectations of the behaviour and practice of social care workers. They form part of the wider package of legislation, regulatory requirements, practice standards and employers' policies and procedures that social care workers must meet.

Social care workers are accountable for their practice which means that they are responsible for ensuring their conduct and practice does not fall below the standards set out in this document and that no action or omission on their part harms the wellbeing of service users or carers.

The standards provide social care workers with clear criteria to guide their practice and to check that they are working to standard. They are intended to be a support to registrants in their day to day practice.

The standards provide service users and carers with a clear understanding of how a social care worker should behave towards them and the standards of care they can expect to receive. Consistent application of these standards by social care workers will benefit service users and carers.

Employers of social care workers are expected to take account of the standards in making decisions about the conduct and competence of their staff. To help you understand these standards, we have published a glossary of terms. We will also publish guidance from time to time to support and underpin the standards. Guidance will be available on our website: [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).

## Underpinning Values

The following values inform and underpin the standards of conduct and practice:

### **Social care workers must:**

- Respect the rights, dignity and inherent worth of individuals
- Work in a person-centred way
- Treat people respectfully and with compassion
- Support and promote the independence and autonomy of service users
- Act in the best interests of service users and carers
- Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure the care they provide is safe and effective and of a high quality

# Standards of Conduct

MAHI - STM - 267 - 13

- 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.

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

# Protecting the rights and promote the interests and wellbeing of service users and carers

MAHI - STM - 267 - 15

## **This includes:**

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

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



# **Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers**

MAHI - STM - 267 - 17

## **This includes:**

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

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

# **Promote the autonomy of service users while safeguarding them as far as possible from danger or harm**

MAHI - STM - 267 - 19

## **This includes:**

- 3.1 Promoting service users' independence and empowering them to understand and exercise their rights;
- 3.2 Using established processes and procedures to assess, respond to and manage dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour and practice;
- 3.3 Following practice and procedures designed to keep you and other people safe from violent and abusive behaviour at work;
- 3.4 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 care;
- 3.5 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;
- 3.6 Complying with employers' health and safety policies, including those relating to substance misuse;
- 3.7 Recognising and using responsibly with service users and carers, the power that comes from your work role.

**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.**

# **Respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people**

MAHI - STM - 267 - 21

## **This includes:**

- 4.1 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;
- 4.2 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;
- 4.3 Taking necessary steps to minimise the risks of service users' behaviour causing actual or potential harm to themselves or other people;
- 4.4 Ensuring that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments in a timely and effective manner.

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

# **Uphold public trust and confidence in social care services**

MAHI - STM - 267 - 23

## **In particular you must not:**

- 5.1 Abuse, neglect or harm service users, carers or colleagues;
- 5.2 Exploit service users, carers or colleagues in any way;
- 5.3 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;
- 5.4 Form inappropriate personal relationships with service users;
- 5.5 Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users, carers or colleagues;
- 5.6 Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by service users, carers or colleagues;
- 5.7 Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk;
- 5.8 Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services;
- 5.9 Use social media or social networking sites or other forms of electronic communication in a way that contravenes professional boundaries, organisational guidelines or the Social Care Council standards.

**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.**



# Be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills

MAHI - STM - 267 - 25

## This includes:

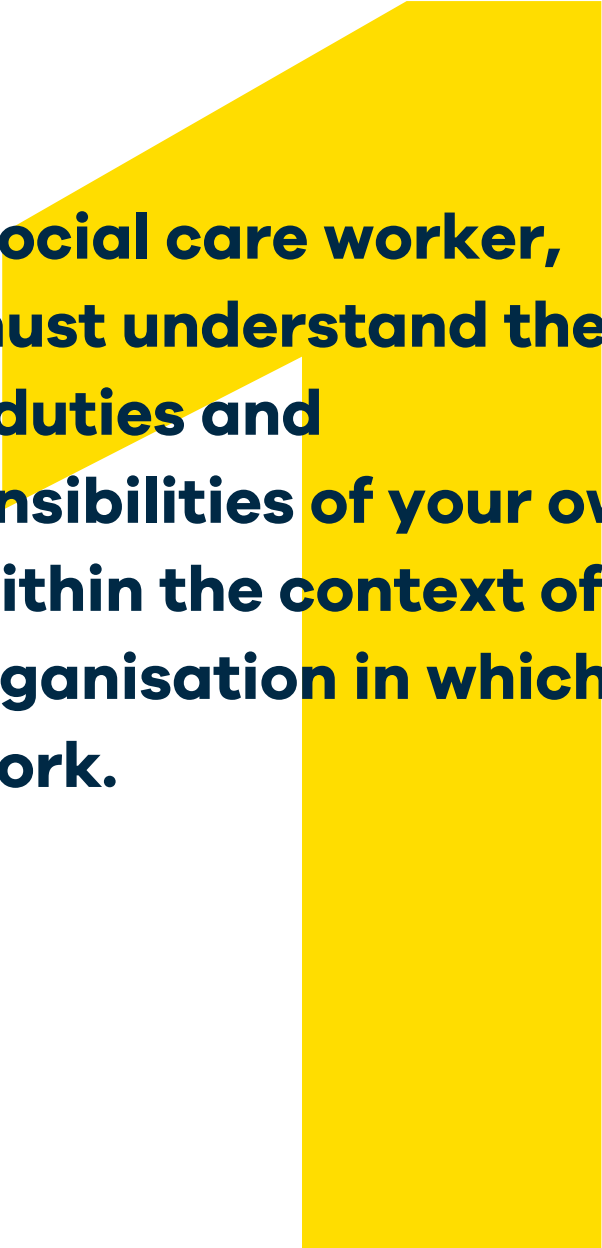
- 6.1 Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a lawful, safe and effective way;
- 6.2 Taking personal and, where appropriate, collective responsibility for quality improvement and safety in line with your job role;
- 6.3 Being personally accountable for your actions and able to explain and account for your actions and decisions;
- 6.4 Maintaining clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for your work;
- 6.5 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;
- 6.6 Informing the 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;
- 6.7 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;
- 6.8 Ensuring that if there is a conflict between the Social Care Council standards of conduct and your work environment, your first obligation is to the standards;

- 6.9 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 Social Care Council;
- 6.10 Making service users and carers aware of your responsibilities within the Social Care Council standards of conduct;
- 6.11 Being open and honest with people if things go wrong, including providing a full and prompt explanation to your employer of what has happened;
- 6.12 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;
- 6.13 Working openly and co-operatively with colleagues and treating them with respect;
- 6.14 Taking responsibility for work delegated to you, recognising and working within the limits of your knowledge, skills and experience;
- 6.15 Recognising that you remain responsible for the work that you have delegated to other workers;
- 6.16 Recognising and respecting the roles and expertise of workers from other disciplines and agencies and working in partnership with them;
- 6.17 Undertaking relevant training and learning to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and meeting the Social Care Council Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements in line with your job role;
- 6.18 Contributing to the learning and development of others.

# Standards of Practice

MAHI - STM - 267 - 27

- 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.**

A large yellow graphic element consisting of a vertical bar on the right and a diagonal bar on the left that meets the vertical one at the top, creating a triangular shape on the left side.

**As a social care worker,  
you must understand the  
main duties and  
responsibilities of your own  
role within the context of  
the organisation in which  
you work.**

# **Understand the main duties and responsibilities of your own role within the context of the organisation in which you work**

MAHI - STM - 267 - 29

## **This includes:**

- 1.1 Knowing the aims, objectives and values of the service in which you work;
- 1.2 Accessing full and up-to-date details of policies, procedures and agreed ways of working from your employer and adhering to them;
- 1.3 Knowing your main responsibilities to those service users and carers you support including duty of care;
- 1.4 Prioritising and managing your work effectively;
- 1.5 Working in partnership with key people, advocates and others who are significant to individual service users and carers;
- 1.6 Possessing the required level of literacy, numeracy and communication skills necessary to carry out your role and being able to communicate using written English;
- 1.7 Keeping records that are up to date, complete, accurate and legible;
- 1.8 Reporting any adverse events, incidents, errors and near misses that are likely to affect the quality of care and wellbeing of service users or carers;
- 1.9 Responding appropriately to comments and complaints in accordance with your organisation's complaints procedure.



**As a social care worker,  
you must be able to  
communicate effectively.**

# Be able to communicate effectively

MAH1 - STM - 2017 - 01

## This includes:

- 2.1 Developing effective relationships with service users and carers;
- 2.2 Establishing the service user's communication and language needs, wishes and preferences;
- 2.3 Using a range of communication methods and styles to meet a service user's communication needs, wishes and preferences;
- 2.4 Recognising and addressing barriers to effective communication;
- 2.5 Working effectively as part of a team, sharing relevant information to ensure the service user receives the best support and care possible;
- 2.6 Sharing information with other health and social care staff and agencies in a timely manner in line with organisational procedures and principles and practices relating to confidentiality.



**As a social care worker,  
you must deliver person-  
centred care and support  
which is safe and effective.**



# Deliver person-centred care and support which is safe and effective

MANM 31M 267 93

## This includes:

- 3.1 Promoting and applying person-centred values in your day to day work with service users and carers;
- 3.2 Delivering care in line with assessed needs and service user and carer preferences;
- 3.3 Undertaking risk assessments appropriate to your role, in partnership with service users, carers and other key people;
- 3.4 Contributing to the risk assessment process by identifying and reporting risks and concerns;
- 3.5 Contributing to the planning process with service users and carers;
- 3.6 Working in partnership with service users to enable them to achieve their goals and be as independent as possible;
- 3.7 Developing care or support plans and/or risk management plans where appropriate, which promote independence in daily living while taking account of any legal or organisational requirements;
- 3.8 Contributing to the implementation of care or support plans and risk management plans;
- 3.9 Participating in the review of care or support plans and/or risk management plans where appropriate;
- 3.10 Supporting service users in their daily living;
- 3.11 Supporting service users to retain, regain and develop skills to manage their daily living;
- 3.12 Contributing to the physical and emotional well-being of service users and carers;

- 3.13 Enabling service users and carers to make informed choices about their lives and to actively participate in decision-making processes;
- 3.14 Supporting service users to develop and maintain social networks and relationships;
- 3.15 Contributing to effective group care where appropriate;
- 3.16 Ending your involvement with service users and carers in a planned way, ensuring that they are provided with information on the closure and any continuing forms of support for them.

**As a social care worker,  
you must support the  
safeguarding of individuals.**

# Support the safeguarding of individuals

## This includes:

- 4.1 Knowing the main types of abuse and the factors that may make a service user or carer vulnerable to harm or abuse;
- 4.2 Knowing the regional policies and procedures relating to safeguarding;
- 4.3 Knowing your own role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding;
- 4.4 Recognising the signs and symptoms of harm or abuse when present;
- 4.5 Taking the appropriate actions to safeguard a service user or carer if you suspect they are being harmed or abused or if they disclose that they are being harmed or abused;
- 4.6 Reporting suspected or actual harm or abuse to the designated person in accordance with employer safeguarding policies.

**As a social care worker,  
you must maintain health  
and safety at work.**

# Maintain health and safety at work

MAH1 - 3.11 - 2017 - 36

## This includes:

- 5.1 Applying your organisation's policies and procedures in relation to health and safety in your work setting and with regard to the service users and carers you support;
- 5.2 Applying your organisation's policies and procedures in relation to medication and health care tasks;
- 5.3 Applying your organisation's policies and procedures in relation to moving and handling service users;
- 5.4 Knowing what you can and cannot do relating to general health and safety commensurate with your role and training;
- 5.5 Recognising the risks to your personal safety and wellbeing in your work setting and taking steps to minimise these.

**As a social care worker,  
you must develop yourself  
as a social care worker.**



# Develop yourself as a social care worker

## This includes:

- 6.1 Being aware of relevant standards that relate to your work role;
- 6.2 Evaluating your own knowledge, performance and understanding against relevant standards;
- 6.3 Reflecting on your practice to continuously improve the quality of service provided;
- 6.4 Using sources of support for your personal development, including supervision, appraisal and training;
- 6.5 Seeking and using feedback, including that from service users and carers to help you develop and improve the way you work;
- 6.6 Recording progress in relation to your personal development.



# Glossary

MAHI - STM - 267 - 41

## **ACCOUNTABLE**

Being responsible for the decisions you make and being able to justify them.

## **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**

A way of working that recognises an individual's right to participate in the activities and relationships of everyday life as independently as possible and to be an active partner in their own care and support rather than a passive recipient.

## **ADVERSE EVENT**

Any event or circumstance that could have or did lead to harm, loss or damage to people, property, environment or reputation.

## **CARE PLAN**

A written plan that sets out in detail the way daily care and support must be provided to an individual.

## **COMPETENCE**

The overarching set of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to practise safely and effectively without supervision.

## **DIVERSITY**

Accepting that everyone is different and respecting and valuing those differences.

## **DUTY OF CARE**

Prioritising the safety, welfare and interests of service users and doing everything you can to keep them safe from harm.

## **EFFECTIVE**

To be successful in producing a desired or intended result.

## **EMPOWER**

To give someone the strength and confidence to act on their own initiative.

## **EQUALITY**

Treating everyone fairly and ensuring they have access to the same opportunities irrespective of their race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

# Glossary

MAHI - STM - 267 - 42

## **FITNESS TO PRACTISE**

When someone has the competence, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

## **INCLUSION**

Ensuring that people are treated equally and fairly and are included as part of society.

## **NEAR MISS**

An unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage, but had the potential to do so.

## **PERSON-CENTRED VALUES**

These include individuality, independence, privacy, partnership, choice, dignity, respect and rights.

## **POST REGISTRATION TRAINING AND LEARNING REQUIREMENTS**

These are the learning and development activities you must undertake to maintain your registration.

## **PREFERENCES**

A person's preferred option or choice.

## **PROMOTE**

To support or actively encourage.

## **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

The process of thinking about every aspect of your work, including how and where it could be improved.

## **RESPECT**

To have due regard for someone's feelings, wishes or rights.

## **RIGHTS**

The entitlements that individuals have legally, socially and ethically, including human rights.

## **SELF-CARE**

Practices undertaken by service users towards managing health and wellbeing and managing their own care needs.

# Glossary

MAHI - STM - 267 - 43

## **SERVICE USER**

Any individual who receives social care services.

## **WELLBEING**

Enjoying a good quality of life characterised by keeping well and healthy, feeling safe and secure, being able to participate in purposeful activities and social networks and realise one's full potential.







MAHI - STM - 267 - 47

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# Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL)

Continuous Learning & Development Standards

## GUIDANCE

for Social Care Registrants



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# Part 1: Introduction

## About this document

**This document is for social care workers, senior care workers and social care managers on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Register.**

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers state:

*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.*

There are different PRTL requirements for social care workers, senior care workers and for social care managers.

## Definitions

### **SOCIAL CARE WORKER**

The function of the social care worker is to provide service users with direct personal care, practical support and to work under direction and supervision.

### **SENIOR CARE WORKER**

The function of the senior care worker is to provide supervision and appraisal of social care workers. Senior care workers may also be involved in the direct provision of care.

### **SOCIAL CARE MANAGER**

The function of the social care manager is to provide a governance and accountability role for the overall operational management of the care provision, quality assurance of that provision and the supervision and appraisal of others.

## Part 2: Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL)

### What is PRTL?

PRTL is the learning and development activities through which you maintain and develop your competence throughout your career and which helps you to:

- Improve the service for the people you support/care for
- Develop and improve your job skills, knowledge and behaviour
- Keep up to date with new practice developments, legislation and policy

### Why is PRTL important?

#### Meeting Requirements

As a social care worker, you will undertake learning and development in your job. You must keep a record of all learning and development completed. As part of your registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, this must meet the Northern Ireland Social Care Council PRTL requirements. This will ensure you meet minimum standards for your role.

#### Having a learning and development plan

You should have a plan for your learning and development, discussed and agreed with your manager. This should be reviewed annually.

#### Providing focus for your learning

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Continuous Learning and Development Standards (Appendix 2) provide a focus for PRTL activity by specifying common standards to be met by all social care workers, alongside specific standards to be met by senior care workers and social care managers. Meeting these standards should ensure that your learning and development is relevant to your job and your knowledge and skills are kept up to date.

#### Providing a better service

Skilled and knowledgeable registrants provide a better service and this contributes to increasing the confidence of service users, their carers and the general public in social care services.

# PRTL and Renewal of Registration

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Registration Rules require social care workers, when renewing their registration, to confirm that they have completed a minimum of 90 hours training and learning.

Renewal timescales are:

**SOCIAL CARE WORKER & SENIOR CARE WORKER  
FIVE YEAR RENEWAL PERIOD**

**SOCIAL CARE MANAGER  
THREE YEAR RENEWAL PERIOD**

When you apply to renew your registration, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council will ask you to confirm that you have met the PRTL requirements of 90 hours' learning and development. PRTL is a mandatory element of renewal. Failure to meet this requirement may lead to referral to a Registration Committee and may call into question your fitness to practise.

## Part-time workers

PRTL requirements are the same if you work part-time as for full-time colleagues (90 hours). Part-time staff should be given similar opportunities and support for their learning and development as full time staff.

## Agency workers

There is a shared responsibility for the employment agency and the social care contractor to ensure you are fit and competent to practise. The contractor must ensure you are provided with opportunities to meet PRTL requirements, including supervision and support from a line manager.

# Responsibilities of Social Care Registrants

## As a social care registrant, you are responsible for:

1. Undertaking a minimum of 90 hours' PRTL in a registration period
  - 5 years for a social care worker/senior care worker
  - 3 years for a social care manager
2. Planning your PRTL - which may be a mixture of formal and informal learning, in the workplace and in your own time.
3. Having a written learning and development plan agreed and reviewed annually with your employer. This should link to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Continuous Learning and Development Standards (Appendix 2).
4. Recording your learning and development. Keep a record of any training undertaken and keep a copy of any certificates of training. This is your responsibility.
5. If selected for audit, you must submit the Audit Submission Form to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council within the timescale if you wish to remain on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council register.

# Responsibilities of Social Care Employers

## As an employer, you are responsible for:

1. Providing induction, training and development opportunities to help registrants do their jobs effectively, and ensuring they are appropriately trained for their post within the context of the Continuous Learning and Development Standards.
2. Working with registrants on the development of a learning and development plan which is regularly reviewed. This plan should link to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Continuous Learning and Development Standards.
3. Supporting registrants to record their learning and development.
4. Support registrants to submit the Audit Submission Form following an audit request from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

# What do I need to do to meet the Continuous Learning and Development Standards?

## **SOCIAL CARE WORKER**

Focus on the five Continuous Learning and Development Standards:

- Principles of Care**
- Health and Safety**
- Social Care Skills**
- Communication**
- Safeguarding**

## **SENIOR CARE WORKER**

Focus on the five Continuous Learning and Development Standards, plus the standard on supervision and appraisal:

- Principles of Care**
- Health and Safety**
- Social Care Skills**
- Communication**
- Safeguarding**
- Supervision/ Appraisal**

## **SOCIAL CARE MANAGER**

Focus on the five Continuous Learning and Development Standards, plus the standards on supervision and appraisal as well as leadership and management:

- Principles of Care**
- Health and Safety**
- Social Care Skills**
- Communication**
- Safeguarding**
- Supervision/Appraisal**
- Leadership and Management**

Your learning and development plan should link to the Continuous Learning and Development Standards that are specific to your job role (see diagram above) and (Appendix 2).

Much of your learning and development may be mandatory training which is required by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). This may be supplemented by a wide range of activities from formal training to learning from others, reading journal articles, or relevant viewing materials. For each activity, you need to think about how this learning will improve the service you provide and benefit the people you support/care for.

There are examples of PRTL activities in (Appendix 5). There is also a range of useful resources published by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) which are available on their website at [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk).

You must keep a record of your learning and development (PRTL) activities and keep copies if moving between social care roles.

## Part 3: PRTL Audit

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council is required to audit the PRTL activities undertaken by social care workers. This is to ensure the required standards for PRTL are being maintained across all sectors of social care employment.

Twice a year, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council selects a random sample of social care registrants to submit for audit. If you have completed a learning and development plan and kept evidence/records of learning undertaken, this will enable you to submit for audit. For social care workers, this requires a completed Audit Submission Form to be returned to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Appendix 3). Social care managers have a different form to submit (Appendix 4).

Examples of completed audit forms for social care workers and social care managers can be found at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info). There are also learning points for social care registrants included from previous audit points.

### What will happen if selected for Audit?

1. You will be contacted in writing advising you that you have been selected for audit and you have 90 days to submit.
2. You should advise your employer that you have been selected for audit.
3. You should complete the audit submission form for your role as social care worker or senior care worker (Appendix 3) and for social care managers (Appendix 4), and then return to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council within the timescale.
4. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council will assess your audit submission against the PRTL requirements.
  - The outcomes of your PRTL activity.
  - The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers (Appendix 1).
  - The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Continuous Learning and Development Standards (Appendix 2).
5. If your audit meets the standards, you will receive a letter confirming competence.
6. If your audit does not fully meet the requirements, you will be given the opportunity to re-submit.
7. You must submit for audit if you wish to remain on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council register.

### How to submit for audit:

#### Social Care Workers/ Senior Care Workers

- Gather your learning and development plan and evidence for PRTL.
- Advise your employer you have been selected for audit.
- Read examples of the Audit Submission Form at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).
- Complete the Audit Submission Form – (Appendix 3).
- Sign and date the form.
- Ask your manager to sign and date your form.
- Submit your form to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.



## Social Care Managers

- Gather your learning and development plan and evidence for PRTL.
- Advise your employer you have been selected for audit.
- Read examples of the social care managers Audit Submission Form at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).
- Complete the Audit Submission Form for Social Care Managers (Appendix 4).
- Sign and date the form.
- Ask your manager to sign and date your form.
- Submit your form to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

## Exemption from Audit

**Qualifications:** if you have completed and hold a certificate for a qualification in social care that you have undertaken within the last five years, please contact [registration@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:registration@niscc.hscni.net) or call **Customer Services on: 028 95362600** to check if you are exempt from audit.

## Deferral due to exceptional circumstances

- It is important that every social care worker keeps their knowledge and skills up to date. It is appreciated there may be exceptional circumstances which are beyond your control that prevent you from submitting for audit.
- The Northern Ireland Social Care Council is prepared to consider requests for deferral of audit due to exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Registration Rules, as set out below:
- Rule 8 (9) The Council shall not refer a registrant to the Registration Committee, where that registrant has failed to complete the post registration training and learning requirements due to exceptional circumstances or where the registrant is on maternity, adoption or fostering leave.
- If you believe you will be unable to complete your audit due to maternity, adoption or fostering leave, or due to exceptional circumstances, you should contact the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Customer Services at least 20 days before your audit is due and request consideration of an extension.  
Contact: [registration@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:registration@niscc.hscni.net) or telephone: 028 95362600

# Appendix 1: Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers and Standards for Employers of Social Workers and Social Care Workers

## Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers

Registrants are responsible for their own professional development and for meeting their PRTL requirements. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct (**Standard 6**) state that:

**“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.”**

This includes:

Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a lawful, safe and effective way (**6.1**).

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 (**6.17**).

## Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards for Employers of Social Workers and Social Care Workers

Employers have a shared responsibility in supporting their staff to meet their development needs. Standard 4 of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council standards for Employers of Social Work and Social Care Workers state that:

**“As a social work and social care employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable registrants to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge.”**

This includes:

Providing appropriate induction training and on-going learning and development opportunities to help registrants do their job effectively and prepare for any new and changing roles and responsibilities (**4.1**).

Contributing to the provision of social work and social care education and training, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning (**4.3**).

Click [here](#) to download copies of the [Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Care Workers](#) and [Standards for Employers of Social Workers and Social Care Workers](#)

## Appendix 2: Northern Ireland Social Care Council Continuous Learning and Development Standards

**Principles of Care:** The service provided by the registrant is underpinned by the quality of interaction and engagement with service users, carers and families and involves applying key values such as dignity, respect, independence, rights, choice and safety. This requires the registrant to be honest, reliable and accountable for the care they provide. The registrant must demonstrate and apply understanding of the principles of care as appropriate to his/her practice, taking account of the work context and job role. This will include adherence to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice and the values outlined in the Quality of Standards for Health and Social Care (DHSSPS 2006).

**Safeguarding:** The registrant must understand different forms of abuse, the signs and symptoms of abuse and have an awareness of when individuals are or might be vulnerable to abuse. Within the context of the service user group, job role and work context, the registrant should understand his/her particular responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and know how and when to act appropriately, including reporting to a senior colleague.

**Communication:** The registrant must know how person centred care is informed by appropriate levels and methods of communication, which can include written, verbal or other creative approaches. Within the context of his/her particular responsibilities, job role and work context, the registrant should communicate in a timely and effective way with users, carers, families and colleagues, and be able to maintain or update relevant written records to support communication.

**Social Care Skills:** The registrant must have skills, knowledge and understanding specific to the needs of the service user group, job role and work context. Depending on the level of responsibility and accountability for the service, direct skills and knowledge should reflect the individual registrant's specific role to provide a high quality personal care or social care service for users, carers and families.

**Health and Safety:** The registrant must have knowledge and understanding of the health and safety issues relevant to the context and job role and to undertake work with service users, carers and families without causing risk of injury or harm to self or others. The registrant should understand his/her particular health and safety responsibilities and, where relevant, those of other disciplines, and know how to act appropriately within the boundaries of own job role.

Compliance with mandatory health and safety training which assists organisations to meet Department of Health legislative requirements, and minimum standards against which they are regulated, is essential. This training is detailed in the Guidance for Mandatory Training in PRTL Regulated Settings (RQIA) 2010.

There are additional learning standards for senior care managers and social care managers as follows:

### **SENIOR CARE WORKER**

#### **Supervision and Appraisal:**

Senior care workers must undertake training in respect of supervision and appraisal. Senior care workers should know how to apply skills, knowledge and understanding in their support, supervision and appraisal of staff, and be aware of the contribution this has to promote and support safe and effective social care practice.

### **SOCIAL CARE MANAGER**

#### **Leadership and Management:**

Social care managers must undertake appropriate leadership and management skills training that addresses governance, accountability and performance management responsibilities. Social care managers should know how to apply knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to their specific management role and be aware of the contribution this has to promote and support best practice and confidence in the quality of service provided by their organisation.

**Appendix 3:**

**PRTL Audit Submission Form**

**Social Care Worker/Senior Care Worker**

Northern Ireland



# PRTL Audit Submission Form

## Social Care Worker/ Senior Care Worker

Full name .....

Registration number.....

Employer name.....

(if in employment)

**Complete electronically if possible and return via email to:** [registration@nisc.hscni.net](mailto:registration@nisc.hscni.net)

**If completed manually, please return to the address below:**

Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
7th Floor, Millennium House  
19-25 Great Victoria Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7AQ

**PRTL Audit Submission Form  
Social Care Worker/ Senior Care Worker**

Full name .....

Registration number .....

Employer name (if in employment) .....

Description of your Social Care Role:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date	Duration (Hours)	Brief Description of activity	How has this activity improved your work and helped the people you Support/care for?

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Date	Duration (Hours)	Brief Description of activity	How has this activity improved your work and helped the people you Support/care for?



Date	Duration (Hours)	Brief Description of activity	How has this activity improved your work and helped the people you Support/care for?

**Total training and learning for period of registration (Hours):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Registrant Declaration**

I confirm that I have undertaken the activities recorded on this form and that the details I have provided are accurate. I understand that failure to meet Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements, or the provision of false information in relation to meeting these requirements, may be considered by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council as misconduct.

**Registrant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4:**

**PRTL Audit Submission Form**

**Social Care Manager**



# Audit Submission Form Social Care Manager

Full name .....

Registration number.....

Employer name .....

(if in employment)

**Complete electronically if possible and return via email to: [registration@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:registration@niscc.hscni.net)**

**If completed manually, please return to the address below:**

Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
7th Floor, Millennium House  
19-25 Great Victoria Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7AQ

## PRTL Submission Form

### Summary of Social Care Role

Full Name .....

Registration number .....

Employer name (if in employment) .....

Summary of Social Care Role (Maximum 500 words)

Total words:






## PRTL – Learning and Development Pro-forma

Name .....

Registration Number .....

Identified training Development needs	Plan to address training needs	How will this help the Registrant in their Job	Achievement Timescale

Registrant Signed..... Date:.....

Line Manager/Mentor Signed:..... Date:.....



## PRTL – Summary of PRTL Activities

Name .....

Registration Number .....

Date	Duration (Hours)	Brief description of activity



## **PRTL – Personal Statement**

Name .....

Registration Number .....

Please complete the statement outline how you have met the Leadership and Management Standards:

Personal Statement (500 1500 words)





**Total Word Count:** ..... **Total training and learning for period of registration (hours):** .....

**Registrant Declaration**

I confirm that I have undertaken the activities recorded on this form and that the details I have provided are accurate. I understand that failure to meet Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements, in accordance with Continuous Learning and Development Standards, or the provision of false information in relation to meeting these requirements, may be considered by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council as misconduct.

**Registrant Signature** ..... **Date:** .....

**Line Manager/Mentor Signature** ..... **Date:** .....

## Appendix 5

### Examples of PRTL activities

#### Work based learning:

- Discussions with colleagues
- Secondment to another team/department
- Mentoring and coaching from others
- In house training related to job role
- Mandatory in house training e.g. on health and safety, equality etc
- Work shadowing
- Learning from colleagues at team meetings/case discussions
- Journal club
- Project work
- Evidence from learning activities undertaken as part of progression on the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework

#### Professional activities:

- Involvement in a professional body
- Member of a special interest group
- Organising journal clubs or other specialist group
- Giving presentations at conferences
- Mentoring
- Supervising research
- Writing articles or papers

#### Formal Learning:

- Attending seminars/conferences
- Attending formal training programmes
- Distance learning

#### Self-directed learning:

- Work related reading and research (books, journals, newspapers)
- Internet research
- Social Care Council Learning Zone

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# Standards of Conduct and Practice for **Employers**

Published September 2017

**Working together.  
Making a difference.**

# Introductory Notes

This booklet contains standards for employers of social workers and social care workers which set down their responsibilities in the regulation of the workforce.

The standards have been developed jointly between the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Council) and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and in consultation with employers across the sector.

The Social Care Council is the workforce regulator for social work and social care in Northern Ireland. The purpose of workforce regulation is to protect and promote the interests and wellbeing of service users and carers.

RQIA is the body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

Both bodies are committed to driving up standards in social care.



## **What are the Standards?**

All social workers and social care workers registered with Northern Ireland Social Care Council are required to meet the Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice as a requirement of their ongoing registration. The Standards for Employers describe the responsibilities of employers in supporting and enabling their registered workforce to meet the Standards of Conduct and Practice. The Standards for Employers reflect the provisions within the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers and Social Care Workers.

The Standards for Employers are intended to reflect existing good practice. They are intended to complement rather than replace or duplicate existing employers' policies and form part of the wider package of legislation, requirements and guidance that relate to the employment of staff.

## **What will the standards mean for you?**

As an employer of the social work and/or social care workforce, you will know what part you are expected to play in the regulation of the workforce and in the support of high quality practice and care.

Employers are responsible for making sure that they meet the standards, provide high quality services and promote public trust and confidence in social work and social care services.

You are encouraged to review your own policies and practice in light of the standards set out in this booklet.

# Status

Northern Ireland Social Care Council has responsibility within the legislation for publishing standards for employers and keeping them under review.

RQIA has responsibility for enforcement of Department of Health standards and will consider compliance with the Standards for Employers as part of their registration and inspection processes.

The Social Care Council and RQIA will collaborate to effectively ensure adherence to the Standards for Employers and to share information on adherence to the standards within social care services.

## **To meet their responsibilities in relation to regulating the social work and social care workforce, employers must:**

1. Provide vision and leadership to registrants in line with organisational expectations and governance requirements, to ensure they are enabled to deliver safe, effective and values-led care focused on the needs and experiences of service users;
2. Make sure people are suitable to enter the workforce;
3. Have written policies and processes in place to enable registrants to meet the Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice;

# Status

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4. Provide learning and development opportunities to enable registrants to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge;

5. Promote the Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice to registrants, service users and carers and co-operate with Social Care Council proceedings.



**As a social work and social care employer, in line with organisational expectations and governance requirements, you must provide vision and leadership to registrants, to ensure they are enabled to deliver safe, effective and values-led care focused on the needs and experiences of service users.**

## **This includes:**

- 1.1 Setting or contributing to the setting of the strategic direction for the social care workforce within the organisation and communicating this to registrants.
- 1.2 Providing a defined line of accountability which ensures the appropriate support and management of registrants.
- 1.3 Ensuring that the necessary resources, working environment, training, support and systems are in place to enable registrants to comply with their duty of care, the Standards of Conduct and Practice and any relevant statutory duties;
- 1.4 Respecting and, where appropriate, representing the individual views and wishes of both service users and carers;
- 1.5 Promoting a learning culture that is open and fair and supports learning and development that meets both individual and organisational requirements;
- 1.6 Providing a working environment that upholds ethical practice and is committed to standards and providing good quality services;

## **This includes:**

1.7 Having effective systems in place to support workforce.

1.8 Having systems in place to listen to service user and carer feedback in order to shape and improve service provision to practice and deliver better outcomes.

**As a social work and social care employer, you must make sure people are suitable to enter the social care workforce.**

## **This includes:**

- 2.1 Using rigorous and thorough recruitment and selection processes focused on making sure that only people who have the appropriate knowledge, skills and values and are suitable to provide social work or social care services, enter your workforce;
- 2.2 Checking criminal records and relevant registers to ensure people are safe to practise;
- 2.3 Undertaking any required pre-employment health checks;
- 2.4 Seeking and providing reliable references;
- 2.5 Ensuring that workers who are required to be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council are registered and are clear about the consequences of failing to register or maintain their registration.
- 2.6 Ensuring clear lines of responsibility and accountability are established between recruitment/employment agencies and employing organisations in relation to agency workers.

**As a social work and social care employer, you must have written policies and processes in place to enable registrants to meet the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's Standards of Conduct and Practice.**

## **This includes:**

3.1 Developing, implementing and monitoring policies that ensure the safety and wellbeing of service users and registrants;

3.2 Providing and maintaining a work environment that is healthy and safe and free from harassment, bullying or violence;

3.3 Providing appropriate supervision and support to registrants, ensuring they provide safe, effective and values-led care;

3.4 Ensuring and enabling registrants to have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to safely and effectively undertake any tasks that you delegate to them;

3.5 Having appropriate systems in place to address and manage poor performance;

3.6 Having appropriate systems in place to enable registrants to raise concerns about inadequate resources or operational difficulties which might impact the delivery of care and taking appropriate action to address those issues;

3.7 Not requiring registrants to do anything that would put their adherence to the Standards of Conduct and Practice at risk.

**As a social work and social care employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable registrants to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge.**



## **This includes:**

- 4.1 Providing appropriate induction training and on-going learning and development opportunities to help registrants do their job effectively and prepare for any new and changing roles and responsibilities;
- 4.2 Providing effective, regular supervision to registrants to enable them to develop and improve through reflective practice;
- 4.3 Contributing to the provision of social work and social care education and training, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning;
- 4.4 Supporting registrants to meet the Social Care Council eligibility criteria for registration and its requirements for post registration training and learning;
- 4.5 Responding appropriately to registrants who seek assistance because they do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspects of their work;
- 4.6 Supporting and enabling registrants to take responsibility for quality improvement and safety in line with their job role.

**As a social work and social care employer, you must promote the Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers and Social Care Workers to registrants, service users and carers and co-operate with Social Care Council proceedings.**

## **This includes:**

5.1 Informing registrants about your responsibilities within the Standards for Employers of Social Workers and Social Care Workers;

5.2 Informing registrants about Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice and their personal responsibility to meet those standards;

5.3 Making service users and carers aware of the Standards for Employers and the Standards of Conduct and Practice and informing them about how to raise issues through your policies and, if necessary, how to contact the Social Care Council in relation to the Standards;

5.4 Having procedures in place that facilitate and promote registrants to report unsafe, discriminatory or abusive behaviour or practice;

5.5 Ensuring that where care has or may have caused physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss, this is reported openly and honestly to the appropriate authorities in accordance with Duty of Candour requirements;

5.6 Taking account of the Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice in making any decision that relates to the fitness to practise of registrants;

## **This includes:**

5.7 Informing the Social Care Council about any fitness to practise issues that would call into question a registrant's registration in line with the Social Care Council's Standard of Acceptance and informing the registrant involved that a report has been made to the Social Care Council ;

5.8 Co-operating with the Social Care Council investigations and hearings, including providing requested documents or information in a timely manner and responding appropriately to the findings and decisions of the Social Care Council;

5.9 Enabling and supporting registrants to co-operate with the Social Care Council investigations and hearings, including providing witness statements and attending hearings where required.

# Glossary

## **Duty of Candour**

Is an expectation that employers and workers are open and transparent with people who use services (and those who are acting on their behalf) in relation to their care and will take appropriate action when things go wrong, including providing truthful information and an apology.

## **Fitness to Practise**

Means that a registrant has the skills, knowledge and character to practise their profession safely and effectively and in a way that upholds public confidence in the social work and social care workforce.

## **Standard of Acceptance**

means the criteria used by NISCC to determine whether information they receive meets the threshold for investigation.

## **Values-led Care**

is care that is guided in every aspect by principles of respect, dignity, compassion and inclusion and which recognises the inherent worth of every individual.

## **Workload Management System**

is a process for determining the proper workload distributions for staff and the resources they require to enable them to undertake their work role safely and effectively.



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Web: [rqia.org.uk](http://rqia.org.uk)