

PCF: Capabilities to be achieved by the end of the Final Placement

By the end of last placement/ the completion of qualifying programmes, newly qualified social workers should have demonstrated the Knowledge, Skills and Values to work with a range of user groups, and the ability to undertake a range of tasks at a foundation level, the capacity to work with more complex situations; they should be able to work more autonomously, whilst recognising that the final decision will still rest with their supervisor; they will seek appropriate support and supervision.

1. Professionalism: Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development

Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession, a title protected in UK law. Social workers demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for their conduct, practice and learning, with support through supervision. As representatives of the social work profession, they safeguard its reputation and are accountable to the professional regulator.

- Be able to meet the requirements of the professional regulator.
- Be able to explain the role of the social worker in a range of contexts, and uphold the reputation of the profession.
- 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 your time and workload effectively, and begin to prioritise your activity including supervision time.
- Recognise the impact of self in interaction with others, making appropriate use of personal experience.
- Be able to recognise and maintain personal and professional boundaries.
- Recognise your professional limitations and how to seek advice.
- Demonstrate a commitment to your continuing learning and development.
- With support, take steps to manage and promote own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience.
- Identify concerns about practice and procedures and, with support, begin to find appropriate means of challenge.

2. Values and Ethics: Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making, including through partnership with people who use their services. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of their profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

- Understand and apply the profession's ethical principles and legislation, taking account of these in reaching decisions.
- Recognise and, with support, manage the impact of own values on professional practice.
- Manage potentially conflicting or competing values, and, with guidance, recognise, reflect on, and work 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 individuals' rights to autonomy and self-determination.
- Promote and protect the privacy of individuals within and outside their families and networks, recognising the requirements of professional accountability and information sharing.

3. Diversity: 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 and transgender, faith and belief. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim, and are able to challenge appropriately.

- Understand how an individual's identity is informed by factors such as culture, economic status, family composition, life experiences and characteristics, and take account of these to understand their experiences, questioning assumptions where necessary.
- With reference to current legislative requirements, recognise personal and organisational discrimination and oppression and with guidance make use of a range of approaches to challenge them.
- Recognise and manage the impact on people of the power invested in your role.

4. Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic well-being

Social workers recognise the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. They ensure these principles underpin their practice. Social workers understand the importance of using and contributing to case law and applying these rights in their own practice. They understand the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty.

- Understand, identify and apply in practice the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality.
- Understand how legislation and guidance 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 through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits.
- Recognise the value of, and aid access to, independent advocacy.

5. Knowledge: Apply knowledge of social sciences, law and social work practice theory

Social workers understand psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and physical influences on people; human development throughout the life span and the legal framework for practice. They apply this knowledge in their work with individuals, families and communities. They know and use theories and methods of social work practice.

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the application to social work of research, theory and knowledge from sociology, social policy, psychology and health.
- 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.
- 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.

- Recognise how systemic approaches can be used to understand the person-in-the-environment and inform your 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, and apply to practice.
- 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 to inform practice.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methods.
- Value and take account of the expertise of service users, carers and professionals.

6. Critical Reflection and Analysis: Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making

Social workers are knowledgeable about and apply the principles of critical thinking and reasoned discernment. They identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. These include practice evidence, their own practice experience, service user and carer experience together with research-based, organisational, policy and legal knowledge. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.

- 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. Intervention and Skills: Use judgement and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse

Social workers engage with individuals, families, groups and communities, working alongside people to assess and intervene. They enable effective relationships and are effective communicators, using appropriate skills. Using their professional judgement, they employ a range of interventions: promoting independence, providing support and protection, taking preventative action and ensuring safety whilst balancing rights and risks. They understand and take account of differentials in power, and are able to use authority appropriately. They evaluate their own practice and the outcomes for those they work with.

- Identify and apply a range of verbal, non-verbal and written methods of communication and adapt them in line with peoples' age, comprehension and culture.
- Be able to communicate information, advice, instruction and professional opinion so as 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.
- Recognise how the development of community resources, groups and networks enhance outcomes for individuals.
- 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 your 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 yourself, and contribute to the assessment and management of risk.
- With support, identify appropriate responses to safeguard vulnerable people and promote their wellbeing.

8. Contexts and organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships and settings

Social workers are informed about and pro-actively responsive to the challenges and opportunities that come with changing social contexts and constructs. They fulfil this responsibility in accordance with their professional values and ethics, both as individual professionals and as members of the organisation in which they work. They collaborate, inform and are informed by their work with others, inter-professionally and with communities.

- 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.
- Be 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: Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management

The social work profession evolves through the contribution of its members in activities such as practice research, supervision, assessment of practice, teaching and management. An individual's contribution will gain influence when undertaken as part of a learning, practice-focused organisation. Learning may be facilitated with a wide range of people including social work colleagues, service users and carers, volunteers, foster carers and other professionals.

- Recognise the importance of, and begin to demonstrate, professional leadership as a social worker.
- Recognise the value of, and contribute to supporting the learning and development of others.

NB The above PCF Descriptors have been reproduced from The Social Work College website at <http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/PCF%20NOV%20Last%20Placement-QualifyingLevelCapabilities.pdf>

