

PCF



Professional Capabilities Framework

Advanced social worker

BASW
England

The professional association for
social work and social workers

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...

- meet the requirements of the professional regulator
- model the social work role, promote social work and decision-making within and outside the organisation
- promote awareness that social work is an international profession with a global definition that supports my professional identity, ethics, evidence base and practice with diverse communities in England
- model and use critical reflective skills in leadership, management, practice or organisational supervision settings to enhance my own and others' practice
- model and demonstrate professionalism, ensuring professional social work standards are maintained throughout my area of responsibility
- model and take responsibility for the positive use of workload tools, using workload data to inform the organisation's workload management and risk management approaches
- model and help others to maintain professional/personal boundaries and the skilled use of self in more complex situations
- maintain awareness of own professional limitations, knowledge gaps and conflicts of interest, actively seeking to address issues for self and others

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- develop and maintain a network of internal and external colleagues, with whom to seek and share advice, expertise and new developments in social work
- foster and support an environment that promotes learning and practice development within the workplace, providing social work supervision as appropriate
- foster and maintain a work environment which promotes health, safety and wellbeing and self-care for self and others
- identify and collaborate to resolve concerns about practice, following procedures as appropriate
- contribute to the development and implementation of procedures that are fit for purpose, enhance best practice and contribute to better outcomes.
- take responsibility for seeking, planning and undertaking ongoing professional development and use diverse platforms and opportunities within and outside my organisation/work setting.

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...

- model and promote confident and critical application of professional ethics to decision-making, using a legal and human rights framework, and support others to do so
- model and promote a culture which encourages reflection on the influence and impact of own values on professional practice
- demonstrate confident leadership, management and arbitration of ethical dilemmas, providing guidance and opportunities for the professional development of others
- ensure my practice is underpinned by commitment to working in partnership with people who use services, carers, families, communities and networks, wherever possible. I negotiate and establish boundaries to underpin such partnership, using transparency and honesty, providing guidance, clarity and reasoning when this approach is not appropriate/possible
- promote people's rights to autonomy and self-determination, supporting, challenging and guiding others as appropriate
- provide support and leadership when dealing with the sensitive exploration of issues of confidentiality, privacy and information sharing in complex or risky situation.

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...

- promote positive approaches to diversity, identity and equality in my area of responsibility, providing guidance and challenge as required. I contribute to and implement policy development and decision-making
- create and sustain an environment where people feel supported to challenge on issues of discrimination and oppression
- provide or seek out expert professional advice to ensure legal compliance. I contribute to the development of relevant organisational and professional practices and procedures
- model and contribute to the development of best practice in use of power and authority within my sphere of influence. I ensure situations where power is used inappropriately or ethics are transgressed are appropriately challenged.

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...

- monitor, review and evaluate practice to ensure application of the principles of social justice, social inclusion and equality to decision-making. I lead on and contribute to policies and development opportunities to support these principles
- ensure that practice is compliant with the law through the provision of or access to expert professional social work advice. I challenge situations where the interpretation or application of the law is unjust/unethical or disproportionate
- model best practice, provide or seek out expert professional social work/legal advice, applying human and civil rights understanding in complex situations where there are competing issues
- model and guide others on accessing appropriate opportunities that may enhance economic status and income. I advocate and use influencing skills to increase access to opportunities for people within my sphere of influence
- offer professional social work consultation and liaison to independent advocacy. Support others to identify when independent advocacy is appropriate, and advocate for necessary resources. I provide review and challenge as necessary

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- develop organisational and practice strategies to promote strengths, agency, hope and self-determination in people using services, carers, families and communities. Support people in raising their own challenges and finding solutions to inequality, social injustice and rights violations.

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...

- pursue and encourage in others a culture of professional curiosity and continuous learning
- refresh and maintain a relevant knowledge that informs my practice, leadership, supervisory, educational and/or management role
- maintain self-awareness of my knowledge limits and my need for continuous learning
- continue to develop knowledge in one or more specialist areas of practice. I continue to expand and consolidate this knowledge and understand the connections between my specialisms and other fields of knowledge and practice
- access and make critical use of knowledge and evidence from a variety of sources
- use knowledge to hypothesise and make complex judgements in uncertain and ambiguous situations, supporting and challenging others to do the same
- enable and challenge others to develop their knowledge base and make evidence-informed judgements

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- have a good understanding of team and organisational dynamics and resources, and I understand how to fulfil my role effectively in organisational context
- develop and maintain my expertise, informed by knowledge base and evidence, in both established and emergent areas relevant to my field of practice
- support others to apply knowledge and evidence to practice and learning
- demonstrate a critical understanding of research and evaluation methods and develop skills in using these
- routinely integrate the expertise and knowledge of service users, carers and professionals into my role and seek service user and carer feedback on my practice/roles
- demonstrate specialist knowledge, understanding and application of the opportunities and risks of new technologies, digital resources, online communications, virtual environments and social media in social work.

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

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

I...

- maintain an environment where critical reflection and analysis is valued and supported
- provide critical reflection, challenge and evidence-informed decision-making in complex situations. I support others in developing these capabilities and finding their own solutions
- model good practice and reflective supervision skills
- develop and maintain a system within which all social workers (including me) are able to access professional supervision from appropriately experienced social workers
- ensure protected time is available for professional social work supervision
- routinely provide professional social work opinion, based on clear rationale and advanced professional knowledge
- support and empower others to develop the confidence and skills to provide professional opinion.

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...

- model and promote a culture of clear communication, supporting the development of effective communication skills in others
- communicate effectively in highly charged, complex or challenging circumstances to a wide range of audiences, for different purposes and at different levels, including public speaking and presenting
- model effective engagement with a wide range of people in challenging situations, and support others to develop and maintain effective engagement, including in situations of hostility and risk
- promote a culture which supports empathetic compassionate relationships with other professionals, people who use services and those who care for them
- am able to gather, analyse and review complex and/or contradictory information quickly and effectively, using it to reach informed professional decisions
- support and encourage professional decision-making in others. I identify when more strategic/expert advice or decision-making is needed

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- maintain and provide expertise in specialist assessment and intervention, acting as a resource to others within the organisation, supporting social workers to develop.
- engage in and facilitate research and/or evaluation of practice and/or outcomes.
- develop and maintain a culture that supports social/professional networks, for individuals, communities and professionals
- evaluate and analyse recording and the use of information systems. Use evidence gained to inform good practice and maintain a focus on positive outcomes for service users, families, carers and communities.
- advise, model and support others to share information appropriately and in timely ways, including in complex situations where there are competing or contradictory rights involved
- lead organisational change and development, supporting others to do so in ways which maintain a focus on positive outcomes for people who use services, families, carers and communities
- model the appropriate use of authority across a range of situations, supporting others to understand and work with the authority inherent in their positions.

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...

- maintain an awareness of changes in national and local contexts and their impact on practice and communicate this effectively within and outside of the organisation. I positively influence developments that affect social work practice
- provide professional leadership and facilitate collaboration within a multi-agency context as appropriate
- maintain a sophisticated knowledge of the law relevant to my area of practice, advise others and facilitate access to and dissemination of more specialist advice where necessary
- contribute to and provide professional leadership of organisational change and development, including the identification of gaps in service
- influence organisational development, proactively using feedback from your areas of responsibility
- address and oversee performance and practice issues that arise, supporting people to positively resolve difficulties where possible, taking action within the organisation or with the regulator where necessary

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- promote positive working relationships in and across teams, using strategies for collaboration and contribute to a supportive organisational culture
- develop and contribute to liaison across agencies at a local and regional level, maintaining a collaborative working approach, resolving dilemmas actively where necessary.

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...

- promote and develop professional leadership within my area of responsibility
- promote a culture of professional curiosity embracing and promoting the involvement of social workers in research and evaluation
- contribute to the identification, planning and meeting of staff development needs within the workplace, informed by the PCF and other relevant policy and practice guidance (eg the KSS).
- take responsibility for ensuring individual and workplace practice is informed by and informs research and current professional knowledge
- promote, articulate and support a positive social work identity within my organisation and through external collaboration with social workers
- understand the requirements of the standards for employers of social workers and promote these within the workplace

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- ensure systems are in place to provide high quality professional supervision using critical reflection and a range of other supervisory techniques
- ensure high quality professional supervision is provided within your area of responsibility
- provide professional, reflective supervision, appraisal and support to others as appropriate
- identify and develop potential within other staff.