

SCDSW4

Exercise professional judgement in social work



Overview

This standard is for social workers working with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities. At the heart of social work practice is the need to make judgements that will impact on the lives of others, sometimes in challenging circumstances or with extreme effects. Independent judgements must be made even when working in person centred ways and in close partnership with others. The standard expresses how social workers must bring to the decision-making process a rigorous and thoughtful analysis of information and its implications, leading to judgements that can be asserted with confidence to ensure that the best interests of those involved are being served.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 analyse a range of information that will inform professional decisions about specific complex situations
- P2 develop a range of options for addressing the situation
- P3 evaluate the implications of different options for the **people** involved
- P4 exercise professional judgement to make evidence-based decisions
- P5 present both verbally and in writing the rationale for your professional judgements
- P6 justify your professional judgements where others disagree or challenge them
- P7 challenge judgements of others that appear to conflict with the evidence or to work against people's best interests
- P8 consider the need to modify your own judgement where new evidence is presented

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 national legislation, its relationship to **policies** and social work practices
- K2 statutory and professional codes, standards, frameworks and guidance; their relationship to social work policy and practice
- K3 the characteristics of the home nation, its language, culture, geography and institutions
- K4 theories underpinning our understanding of human development and factors that affect it
- K5 theories underpinning our understanding of social issues from psychological, sociological and criminological perspectives
- K6 theories of discrimination in contemporary society
- K7 theories of discrimination in contemporary society
- K8 theoretical and research based critiques of the relationships between legislation, policies and social work practice
- K9 the nature, role and mandate of the social work relationship, including professional and ethical boundaries
- K10 principles, theories, methods and models of social work intervention and practice
- K11 **factors** commonly associated with social work involvement
- K12 your own background, experiences and practices that may have an impact on your social work practice
- K13 principles of risk assessment and risk management
- K14 principles of positive risk-taking
- K15 techniques for problem solving and innovative thinking
- K16 working in your organisation: principles, procedures and professional practices
- K17 assessment and planning tools and frameworks
- K18 formal requirements for legal and other external processes
- K19 the purpose of working with other professionals and agencies
- K20 the remit, functions, ethos and responsibilities of disciplines and organisations involved in multi-disciplinary work

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You need to know and understand:

- K21 local multi-disciplinary and organisational procedures for investigating harm or abuse
- K22 indicators of potential harm or abuse
- K23 common features of perpetrator behaviour
- K24 indicators of hostility, resistance or disguised non-compliance
- K25 legal and statutory powers and responsibilities that may be exercised in order to safeguard individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- K26 the potential of individuals to use their personal strengths and resources to achieve change
- K27 how to express written information with accuracy, clarity, relevance and an appropriate level of detail
- K28 legal and organisational requirements for recording information and producing reports
- K29 legal requirements, policies and procedures for the security and confidentiality of information
- K30 principles of reflective practice, critical thinking and learning
- K31 how and when to access informal support in the course of practice
- K32 sources of feedback that may inform reflection on practice and critical thinking

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Additional Information

Scope/range

Social work practice with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities in a wide range of contexts including statutory and non-statutory social services, community development, criminal justice and educational welfare.

Scope/range related to performance criteria

People may be individuals, families, carers, groups or communities

Scope/range related to knowledge and understanding

Policies may include those relating to social care, safe-guarding, re-settlement/community re-integration, criminal justice, migration and asylum, education, health, housing, welfare benefits, diversity, discrimination and promoting the independence and autonomy of adults, children, families, groups and communities

Factors may include substance misuse; mental health; frailty; physical ill health; physical disability; learning disability; sensory needs; migration and asylum; poverty; adults or children at risk of harm or abuse; children in need; difficulties around schooling; ethnic or other minority group status; offending behaviour; public protection

Values

Adherence to the regulatory codes of practice applying to social workers, and the values embedded in them.

Skills

- 1 Plan courses of action to achieve identified outcomes
- 2 Manage demands on your own time to prioritise what is important as well as what is urgent
- 3 Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- 4 Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- 5 Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- 6 Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- 7 Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change

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- 8 Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- 9 Analyse and synthesise complex information
- 10 Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- 11 Make professional judgements about complex situations
- 12 Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- 13 Apply person centred approaches
- 14 Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- 15 Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- 16 Produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- 17 Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- 18 Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
- 19 Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
- 20 Synthesise knowledge and practice

Links to other NOS

This NOS underpins all other Social Work NOS.

External Links

This NOS links with regulatory codes of practice applying to social workers.

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