

How to Return to Social Work Practice in Wales

A Guide for Social Workers

March 2016

Contents

<u>Background to the Requirements</u>	2
<u>Why the Requirements are being introduced</u>	2
<u>The Requirements for social workers' return to practice</u>	3
<u>Appendix 1</u>	6
<u>Key roles and National Occupational Standards for Social Work</u>	6
<u>The Compendium of Knowledge and Understanding</u>	7
<u>The Compendium of Skills</u>	9

Background to the Requirements

The Register of Social Care Workers (Register) was established under the Care Standards Act 2000. The aim of the Register is to make sure that all social workers and social care workers eligible for registration with the Care Council are suitable for work in social care. The Care Council for Wales (Registration) Rules are formally approved by the Welsh Government and form the legal basis for registration of the social care workforce.

To practise as a social worker in Wales or call yourself a social worker while working in Wales, you must be registered with the Care Council and the title 'Social Worker' has been protected in the UK since April 2005.

For more information about the Register including the current Registration Rules, please follow the link: www.ccwales.org.uk/registration/

The Care Council for Wales (Care Council) is introducing specific registration requirements for social workers who are not currently registered as a social worker and who have not been practising as a social worker for a period of time.

Why the Requirements are being introduced

The Care Council wants to enable social workers who are not currently registered to be able to apply for registration and enter the social work workforce with up to date knowledge and understanding of contemporary practice. In doing so it wants to ensure applicants meet the Care Council standards required for registration. Employers will also want to be confident of an applicant's suitability for a post before making an appointment.

Whenever a social worker decides to return to professional registration and social work practice after a break, they are going to face changes in the workplace and in social work practice. Social work draws on a wide range of knowledge and skills which may change as a result of research or changes in legislation or policy. The requirements set out below aim to ensure social workers have a framework through which to update their knowledge and understanding of contemporary social work.

Employers find it harder to recruit experienced rather than newly qualified social workers. By providing a broad framework for updating knowledge and understanding, employers may find experienced social workers not currently in employment more keen to return to practice and should enable applicants to feel more confident about their abilities when they decide to return.

Return to practice requirements can also support the further professionalisation of social work by ensuring registration requirements reflect standards of fitness to practise.

Setting requirements for social workers returning to the Register and social work practice can therefore have an impact on the quality of social work practice for individuals using services.

The Requirements for social workers' return to practice

This section describes the registration requirements for social workers who have not maintained their professional registration in the UK and wish to apply for registration onto Part 1 of the Care Council's Register to practise as a social worker.

The requirements apply to situations where:

- a social worker has post-qualifying experience of social work practice but is no longer registered and has been out of practice for a period of time;
- a social worker has never practised as a social worker since qualifying.

The Requirements

- 1 All applicants to the Register of Social Care Workers must provide evidence of the following:
 - good character, as it relates to their fitness to practise in a way expected of a social worker;
 - their good conduct;
 - physical and mental fitness to practise in social work;
 - competence in social work practice.
- 2 All applications will need to be endorsed in accordance with Care Council guidance, details of which are available on the Care Council website.
- 3 To return to Part 1 of the Register of Social Care Workers after a period of absence, applications must be made as set out on the Care Council website at [Returning to social work practice](#) and must demonstrate the following:
 - If you are applying for registration or to return to the register following a period of **less than three years** in which you have not been registered in the social worker part of the register or an equivalent register, you must provide evidence of updating your knowledge and understanding that would meet the normal Post-Registration Training and Learning requirement (PRTL). This is currently 90 hours or 15 days in the three years prior to the application. See [PRTL requirements for social workers](#);
 - If you are applying for registration or to return to the register following a period of **between three and six years** in which you have not been registered in the social worker part of the register or an equivalent register, you will need to be able to demonstrate through a portfolio of evidence, 30 days or 180 hours of updating your professional knowledge and understanding within the three years prior to the application;
 - If you are applying to return to the register following a period of **over six years** since your previous registration lapsed and you have not been on an equivalent register

during that period, you will need to demonstrate through a portfolio of evidence, 60 days or 360 hours of updating of professional knowledge and understanding within the three years prior to the application;

- If you have **never been registered** on Part 1 of the Register or an equivalent register and you qualified as a social worker over six years before the date of application, you will need to demonstrate 60 days or 360 hours of updating of professional knowledge and understanding within the three years prior to the application. In such situations the application will be referred to the Care Council's Registration Committee.
- If your social work qualification was gained outside of the UK, the Care Council will assess the qualification gained using the procedure outlined at [Register as a social worker qualified outside the UK](#)

You must contact the Care Council before starting the application process to ensure that you meet the criteria to apply.

Any additional requirements relating to a Return to Practice under this guidance will then be considered.

- 4 In updating your knowledge and understanding in social work, you can draw on study, training, courses, seminars, reading, teaching or such other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance the professional development of the social worker or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole. These may include:
 - Formal study through courses or accredited programmes;
 - Private study which may include for example research, relevant reading;
 - Supervised or shadow practice which may include project work, shadowing social work, relevant voluntary work and reflection and analysis of social work practice¹.
- 5 Applicants will need to provide evidence of fitness to practise in the form of a portfolio. The portfolio will be assessed by a panel of at least two people drawn from appropriate

¹ **Supervised or Shadow Practice**

A supervised or shadow practice agreement would be negotiated between an employer and the applicant and should ensure:

- The type of activities the applicant would be engaged in are described;
- The period of time the agreement and the placement covers;
- The agreement includes the provision of a supervisor to oversee the placement;
- Some supervision and opportunity for reflection was provided;
- No unsupervised contact with individuals who use services or carers would be allowed
- The employer provides a brief confirmation of the placement and activities undertaken.

Care Council officers and social workers involved in social work education or leadership of practice. All panels will include a registered social worker. The portfolio will need to demonstrate the following:

- That the applicant completed the requisite period of updating in the period specified;
- That the applicant has reflected on the period of updating and how the learning and practice relates to the Social Work National Occupational Standards and related knowledge and skills (see appendix 1);
- That where the applicant has experience of working as a qualified social worker, that private study accounted for no more than 50 per cent the required period of updating;
- That where the applicant has no experience of working as a qualified social worker, no more than 25 per cent of the updating is drawn from private study;
- That the updating appears to be relevant to current social work practice;
- That the evidence indicates knowledge of current legislation, policy and social work practice and indicates competence in social work to the standard expected of a registered practitioner;
- Any other information relevant to considering the person's application for registration.

6 Portfolios will need to include

- Certificates of completion or attendance for any courses attended
- Testimonies or brief evaluations from shadow practice or other practice
- Bibliography of your reading

7 The applicant will need to pay a fee of £125² for assessment of the portfolio of evidence in addition to the ordinary registration fee.

8 Once received the Care Council will assess your evidence and decide either:

- That the evidence indicates appropriate current knowledge and understanding and that the application to register with the Care Council can go ahead;
- That there is a shortfall of evidence of current knowledge and understanding.

² Fees may be subject to change in the future

Where a shortfall is identified you have 12 months to make up the shortfall and submit for further assessment.

Appendix 1

Key roles and National Occupational Standards for Social Work

Key role 1	Maintain professional accountability
Standard 1	Maintain an up to date knowledge and evidence base for social work practice
Standard 2	Develop social work practice through supervision and reflection
Key role 2	Practise professional social work
Standard 3	Manage your role as a professional social worker
Standard 4	Exercise professional judgement in social work
Standard 5	Manage ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts
Standard 6	Practise social work in multi-disciplinary contexts
Standard 7	Prepare professional reports and records relating to people
Key role 3	Promote engagement and participation
Standard 8	Prepare for social work involvement
Standard 9	Engage people in social work practice
Standard 10	Support people to participate in decision-making processes
Standard 11	Advocate on behalf of people
Key role 4	Assess needs, risks and circumstances
Standard 12	Assess needs, risks and circumstances in partnership with those involved
Standard 13	Investigate harm or abuse
Key role 5	Plan for person centred outcomes

Standard 14	Plan in partnership to address short and longer term issues
Standard 15	Agree risk management plans to promote independence and responsibility
Standard 16	Agree plans where there is risk of harm or abuse
Key role 6	Take actions to achieve change
Standard 17	Apply methods and models of social work intervention to promote change
Standard 18	Access resources to support person centred solutions
Standard 19	Evaluate outcomes of social work practice
Standard 20	Disengage at the end of social work involvement

The Compendium of Knowledge and Understanding³

Policy and legislation

1. International legislation, its relationship to UK policies and social work practices
2. UK legislation, its relationship to national policies and social work practices
3. National legislation, its relationship to policies and social work practices (scope: 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)
4. Statutory and professional codes, standards, frameworks and guidance; their relationship to social work policy and practice
5. The characteristics of the home nation, its language, culture, geography and institutions

Theory

6. Theories underpinning our understanding of human development and factors that affect it
7. Theories underpinning our understanding of social issues from psychological, sociological and criminological perspectives
8. Theories of discrimination in contemporary society
9. Theoretical and research based critiques of the relationships between legislation, policies and social work practice

Social work practice

10. Social work as a profession, including historical accounts and contemporary issues
11. The nature, role and mandate of the social work relationship, including professional and ethical boundaries
12. Principles, theories, methods and models of social work intervention and practice
13. Factors commonly associated with social work involvement (scope: substance misuse; mental health; frailty; physical ill health; physical disability; learning disability; sensory needs;

³ Taken from the National Occupational Standards for Social Work 2011, [National Occupational Standards \(NOS\) | CCWales](#)

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)

14. Demographic and social trends
15. Your own background, experiences and practices that may have an impact on your social work practice
16. Principles of risk assessment and risk management
17. Principles of positive risk-taking
18. Techniques for problem solving and innovative thinking
19. Principles of conflict management
20. The nature of conflict and post-conflict impact on society

Processes and procedures

21. Working in your organisation: principles, procedures and professional practices
22. Assessment and planning tools and frameworks
23. Formal requirements for legal and other external processes

Multi-disciplinary working

24. The purpose of working with other professionals and agencies
25. The remit, functions, ethos and responsibilities of disciplines and organisations involved in multi-disciplinary work

Partnership working

26. The cultural and language context of the individual, family, group or community
27. Principles of partnership working with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
28. The systems, processes and procedures of your own and other organisations in which individuals, families, groups or communities may participate
29. The range of support that may be needed to promote participation

Safe-guarding

30. Local multi-disciplinary and organisational procedures for investigating harm or abuse
31. Types of harm or abuse
32. Indicators of potential harm or abuse
33. Common features of perpetrator behaviour
34. Indicators of hostility, resistance or disguised non-compliance
35. Legal and statutory powers and responsibilities that may be exercised in order to safeguard individuals, families, carers, groups and communities

Personalisation and resources

36. The potential of individuals to use their personal strengths and resources to achieve change
37. The value and role of family networks, communities and groups in achieving positive outcomes, and ways to develop them
38. The nature of personalisation and personalised services, including self directed support; and the role of the social worker in relation to these in the context of national policy
39. The range of resources available within informal networks, within the wider community, through formal service provision and through innovation

Commissioning and funding

40. The eligibility criteria for services or funding streams
41. The opportunities afforded by different funding mechanisms including individual budgets and direct payments
42. The commissioning cycle for provision including opportunities for the commissioning of services by those using them
43. The brokerage role in securing services

Handling information

- 44. How to express written information with accuracy, clarity, relevance and an appropriate level of detail
- 45. Legal and organisational requirements for recording information and producing reports
- 46. Legal requirements, policies and procedures for the security and confidentiality of information

Reflective practice

- 47. Principles of reflective practice, critical thinking and learning
- 48. Processes and requirements for formal supervision within your own organisation
- 49. How and when to access informal support in the course of practice
- 50. Sources of feedback that may inform reflection on practice and critical thinking

The Compendium of Skills⁴

Planning 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

Communication skills

- 3. Communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- 4. Adapt communication for a range of audiences
- 5. Facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication

Interpersonal skills

- 6. Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- 7. Work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- 8. Negotiate with others to achieve agreement in complex situations
- 9. Challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change

Thinking skills

- 10. Apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- 11. Analyse and synthesise complex information
- 12. Apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems

Professional skills

- 13. Make professional judgements about complex situations
- 14. Use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- 15. Apply person centred approaches
- 16. Balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- 17. Exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values

Information-handling skills

- 18. Produce records and reports that meet professional standards

⁴ Taken from the National Occupational Standards for Social Work 2011, [National Occupational Standards \(NOS\) | CCWales](#)

19. Access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information

Learning skills

20. Access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience
21. Use study skills to plan and undertake learning
22. Use research skills
23. Apply critical thinking to reflect on your own practice
24. Synthesise knowledge and practice