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.
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
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
### You need to know and understand:

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

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.
### SCDSW4
Exercise professional judgement in social work

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</tr>
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