

# Returning to social work practice

What you need to do if you're returning to social work practice.

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If you've not been registered as a social worker or haven't been practising as a social worker for a while, you might need to provide us with extra evidence that you're fit to practise if you want to return to work as a social worker.

This applies if you're:

- a social worker who's had experience of social work since qualifying, but hasn't been registered for three years or more
- a social worker who hasn't practised since qualifying over three years ago.

## What you need to do

You'll need to:

- [apply to register with us](#), and ask the appropriate person to endorse your application
- put together a [portfolio of evidence](#) to show you're fit to practise.

If you have to submit a portfolio, you'll need to pay a £200 fee to have your portfolio assessed, plus your application fee.

If you qualified after 1 April 2016, you'll also need to complete (or have completed) the [Consolidation programme for newly qualified social workers](#).

If you qualified outside of Wales, you can use an equivalent qualification such as the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) programme.

## How much evidence you need to show us

The amount of evidence you need to show us will depend on how long you've been off the Register:

- if it's been **less than three years** since you were registered as a social worker, you don't need to provide evidence to return to practice, only apply to register
- if it's been **between three and six years** since you were registered as a social worker, your portfolio needs to show 180 hours of professional knowledge and understanding
- if it's been **more than six years** since your registration expired and you haven't been registered since, your portfolio needs to show you've spent 360 hours updating your professional knowledge and understanding
- if you've **never been registered and you qualified as a social worker more than six years ago**, your portfolio needs to show you've spent 360 hours updating your professional knowledge and understanding.

We'll look at your evidence and use the criteria to decide if it shows appropriate current knowledge and understanding for us to process your application.

If we need more evidence, we'll let you know. You'll have a year to provide more evidence and we'll assess if it makes up the shortfall.

## What evidence you can use to build a portfolio

### Activities

If you need to put together a portfolio, you can include examples of:

- formal study or training through courses or accredited programmes

- private study, including research and relevant reading
- seminars
- teaching
- other activities, which could reasonably be expected to advance the professional development of a social worker
- supervised or shadow practice, including project work, shadowing social work, relevant voluntary work, and reflection and analysis of social work practice

If you decide to include supervised or shadow practice, you need to have an agreement in place with your employer. This is a formal agreement, which should:

- describe which activities you'll be doing
- include the period of time the agreement and the placement covers
- make sure there's a supervisor to oversee your placement
- make sure you're properly supervised and have opportunities to reflect on your learning
- make sure no unsupervised contact with people who use care and support or carers would be allowed
- include confirmation by your employer of your placement and activities.

If you've worked as a qualified social worker before, you can use private study for up to 50 per cent of your portfolio.

If you've never worked as a qualified social worker, you can use private study for up to 25 per cent of your portfolio.

## **Documents**

Your portfolio should include:

- certificates to show you've completed or attended courses

- testimonies or brief evaluations from shadow practice or other practice
- a list of the books you've read for work to develop your practice.

Your portfolio needs to show your learning is relevant to current social work practice. You'll also need to show how your learning takes into account:

- the [key roles and national occupational standards for social work](#)
- [the knowledge and understanding](#) you need as a social worker
- the skills you need to have as a social worker
- current legislation, policy and social work practice.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about returning to practise, email our registration team: [enquiries@socialcare.wales](mailto:enquiries@socialcare.wales).