Social Work England

# Readiness for professional practice guidance (2026)



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# About this guidance

This guidance sets out how course providers should use the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) to inform:

- curriculum design
- placement planning
- assessment of students throughout their course

It should support course providers to map their course to the KSBs. A student who does not demonstrate achievement of the KSBs must not progress through the final award board until they have done so.

Social work students are working towards becoming registered with Social Work England and gaining the protected title of 'social worker'. This is through successfully completing a programme of approved study and demonstrating their ability to meet the professional standards. As part of this, pre-registration courses will put students in contact with people accessing social work services, people with lived and learned experience of social work, and members of the public who may be vulnerable. Because of this, we expect education and training providers to ensure that social work applicants, students and graduates can demonstrate professional knowledge, skills and behaviours appropriate to their stage of learning and development.

In demonstrating the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in this guidance, there will be confidence that social work graduates can meet Social Work England's professional standards.

We expect that, as students' progress through a pre-registration course, their competency will develop through academic learning, placement and work-based learning opportunities and reflective practice.

# Definitions

## Student(s)

We use the term 'student(s)' throughout this guidance. We use this to mean anyone learning, studying or training on a course that will lead to them being eligible to apply to join our register. The term includes:

- trainees
- apprentices
- practitioners in training or work-based learning

We do not use 'student social worker', 'apprentice social worker' or any other variation due to the title of social worker being protected.

## Knowledge

'Knowledge' refers to the theoretical and practical understanding of the discipline of social work. We expect social work courses to prepare students to demonstrate that

they have the necessary knowledge and understanding of all of the following, to meet the professional standards:

- legal frameworks
- relevant theories
- models and methods of social work practice

## Skills

'Skills' refers to the transferable skills developed during a social work course. We expect social work courses to prepare students to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to meet the professional standards. We expect that during their studies, social work students will develop and demonstrate these skills through experience of practice-based learning and any taught elements of the course.

## Behaviours

'Behaviours' underpins the values, ethics, principles and professional expectations required for social work. All social work graduates must be able to demonstrate the necessary behaviours to meet the professional standards.

## People

'People' includes all individuals who social workers work with, including:

- children
- young people
- adults
- families
- professionals
- communities

## Professional values and ethics

We expect social work education and training to affirm the values, ethics and principles that apply across all fields of social work in England and relate to the UK and global values and ethics in the International Federation of Social Work's Global Definition of Social Work and the British Association of Social Work's Code of Ethics.

# Using this guidance

This guidance is for course providers who are (either one of the following):

- delivering approved social work education and training courses
- preparing to apply for approval of a new social work qualifying course

The guidance will also be useful for practice education providers and others who work with and alongside course providers.

This document should be read in conjunction with our education and training standards and guidance and the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements. Each of the documents play a key role in promoting effective pre-qualifying social work education and training, therefore they should not be viewed in isolation. It is these documents together that provide an integrated education framework.

This guidance should inform curriculum planning and development and the assessment strategy for pre-qualifying social work courses. We expect all social work course curriculums to show when and how students are assessed on their learning against the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs).

People joining a qualifying social work course will have different levels of professional experience and knowledge, and we recognise they will progress at different rates. There are also different routes into social work which adopt a variety of models, lengths and structures. As a result, we are not prescriptive as to exactly how and when students should achieve competency in each of the statements. Instead, we have developed 4 progressive thresholds at which course providers and placement partners should consider capability, progress and competency against the KSBs.

## Education and training framework infographic

This image shows the framework that underpins the regulation, quality and consistency of all qualifying social work education and training courses across England.

The 3 parts of the framework are:

- the education and training standards and guidance
- the knowledge, skills and behaviours
- readiness for professional practice guidance

It enables course providers to ensure students and apprentices are capable and able to meet the professional standards when they apply to join the social work register.




## Progressive thresholds

Course providers must be able to demonstrate how they assess student competence across all of the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements set out in this guidance. Your course curriculum and design, alongside practice learning opportunities, should demonstrate that you have considered how to support student learning and progression in all areas.

We recognise that course providers will have a variety of approaches to monitoring students' progress towards meeting the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements. Any approach should ensure that they are able to meet Social Work England's professional standards and be eligible to apply for registration. We have already mapped the knowledge, skills and behaviours to our professional standards (see annex 1). We expect that course providers will map their learning outcomes to the knowledge,

skills and behaviour statements. This will provide assurance that their approach ensures graduates can meet the professional standards.

In line with the requirements of our education and training standards, you should consider applicant's and student's capability or progress at the following thresholds:

## Application

Applicants demonstrate that they have the capability to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours.

## Assessed preparation for direct practice

Students demonstrate the necessary behaviours for safe practice, with emerging development relating to knowledge and skills. This should align to your requirements in line with standard 2.5 of our education and training standards.

## End of 200 days in practice learning environments

Students should demonstrate that they competently gained all of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that you have deemed necessary within the practice learning environment. This should be considered in line with your final arrangements for confirming that students have successfully completed 200 days of practice.

## Prior to award board

This is the final opportunity for you to ensure that students have gained all knowledge, skills and behaviours through engagement in practice and modules. Students should not progress to award board without the course provider being assured of this.

# Professional behaviours

## Why our behaviour statements are important

The behaviour statements reflect, as a minimum, how social work graduates should act and apply what they know after they have completed their qualifying training. This is regardless of their future role or setting. They reflect the fact that the professional standards are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice.

We expect applicants, students and graduates, to understand that their behaviour must always demonstrate, that they:

- are suitable to register as a social worker
- meet the professional standards

This applies to both in the learning environment and outside of their studies.

In addition to assessing the behaviours demonstrated by students, course providers must also ensure that they have formally assessed their suitability throughout their time on the course (education and training standards 1.4 and 5.3). This includes:

- carrying out criminal record checks
- assessing conduct and health
- ensuring organisational fitness to practise processes are in place on an ongoing basis

All students should demonstrate an understanding of these processes and the need to engage fully and transparently.

Course providers must ensure that there is positive evidence available to support their judgement that students have developed (or are in the process of developing) the necessary behaviours. It is not enough to rely on an absence of a behaviour or circumstantial evidence when assessing competence.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent, that a student can demonstrate all of the behaviours outlined below.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will model professional behaviour that is consistent with the expectations of a registered social worker.

- 1.1: Demonstrate professional integrity and appropriate use of self when working with others; including the ability to recognise any potential or actual conflicts of interest.
- 1.2: Work with integrity in an open and transparent way; assert and justify actions within ethical and professional standards.
- 1.3: Demonstrate awareness of bias and prejudice and reflect on the potential impact of this on their decision making.
- 1.4: Acknowledge the identities, beliefs, values and lifestyles of people, their families and their communities.
- 1.5: Practise in a manner that respects ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and values difference.
- 1.6: Demonstrate a commitment to learning about the different perspectives and lived experiences of other people.
- 1.7: Embed the principles of anti-discriminatory practice.
- 1.8: Demonstrate an ability to receive feedback from people and other professionals; reflect on and use this to develop practice.
- 1.9: Demonstrate they are able to meet the professional standards, upholding the reputation of the profession and acting in accordance with the values and principles of the profession at all times (including in work and private life)
- 1.10: Recognise that people have a right to complain or raise concerns, including about conduct or fitness to practise; proactively support people to exercise this right.

- 1.11: Engage in critical reflection on social work practice and demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional development, as part of their professional identity.
- 1.12: Use professional supervision and support to improve their practice; and be accountable for their practice.
- 1.13: Recognise and communicate when and how health and wellbeing might impact on their practice, taking steps to seek support, to ensure safe and effective practice.
- 1.14: Identify and access tools, information and resources to maintain their wellbeing; understanding the importance of reflection and self-care.

# Examples of how thresholds might be applied in relation to behaviour statements

## Application

Your application and admissions processes should provide opportunities to assess whether candidates have the capability to develop the required behaviours. Stakeholders involved in interviews or admissions tasks should be able to discuss ways in which applicants demonstrate their potential.

This may be demonstrated through (either or both of the following):

- their acknowledgement of people's different identities, beliefs, values
- their commitment to learning about the different perspectives and lived experiences of people

## Assessed preparation for direct practice

Your arrangements for assessing readiness for direct practice should ensure that you consider the behaviours students have demonstrated since joining the course. The design of your curriculum and early programme experiences should support their development in this area. You must have evidence of how students have shown their commitment to developing their professional behaviour.

## End of 200 days in learning environments

You should expect to see development of students' professional behaviour throughout their time in practice. This may be supported by feedback from practice educators, work-based supervisors or people with lived experience. Initial practice learning should demonstrate that students are starting to reflect upon their own behaviours, identifying strengths and areas for development.

As students move towards the end of their time in practice learning environments, they should demonstrate that they have developed competency across the behaviour statements. This may be supported through their engagement in supervision, observations of practice and reflective pieces. Students will go beyond showing a basic understanding of the importance of professional behaviour and begin to provide examples of the impact upon their own social work practice. There should be a focus on strengthening professional behaviour in all areas of practice.

## Prior to award

Ahead of award board, final year assessment must confirm that students have met all behaviours competently and consistently through engagement with (both of the following):

- practice-based learning
- academic components of the course

Course providers will have assessed students' integration of professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to demonstrate their readiness for professional practice as a social worker.

## Development of behaviours throughout the course

Our expectation is that the behaviours demonstrated are appropriate to the stage of students' learning and development. We do not expect professional behaviours to be assessed at a single point in isolation, but rather they should develop and be assessed throughout the student journey.

As students' progress through the course, we expect that their professional behaviour will continue to develop as a result of their academic and placement learning experiences. This may be evidenced through their interactions during placement-based learning, supervision, written work and engagement in group-based activities.

Students should also demonstrate an understanding of the need to (do both of the following):

- uphold the reputation of the profession at all times, including in their personal life
- act in accordance with social work values and principles

If they are in doubt whether any behaviour would undermine the reputation of the profession, they should seek guidance from a senior social worker or member of academic staff.

Students will know that 'social worker' is a protected title and demonstrate a clear understanding of professional regulation. They will understand how registration with Social Work England demonstrates their adherence to the professional standards and how this maintains public trust in the profession.

It is important that course providers demonstrate a holistic, multi-dimensional approach to developing and assessing students' behavioural competencies, allowing this to be supported by the views of experienced professionals, alongside opportunities for this to be demonstrated in practice.

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these behaviours, please see annex 2.

# Introduction to knowledge and skills

## Why our knowledge and skills statements are important

The knowledge and skills statements reflect what all social work graduates should know, understand and be able to do after they have completed their qualifying training. This is regardless of their future role or setting. They reflect the fact that the professional standards are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice.

The statements are organised under 6 themes:

- builds and maintains impactful relationships and communicates effectively with people
- undertakes effective assessments to develop a purposeful plan, adapting approach as needed
- delivers interventions to support people to make positive change, build resilience and support effective life transitions
- explores identity to deliver anti-discriminatory practice
- works collaboratively and effectively with other professionals
- reflects on and develops professional practice

Alongside our behaviour statements, we expect that course providers should be able to use the knowledge and skills statements to underpin and inform curriculum planning for qualifying social work courses. Course providers should also be clear how they will assess students' ability to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills formatively and summatively throughout the course. This will ensure that students are prepared for practice and can meet Social Work England's professional standards at the point of applying to join the Social Work England register.

## Examples of how thresholds might be applied in relation to knowledge and skills statements

### Application

In line with the requirements of our education and training standards (1.1), your admissions processes should confirm, via a holistic/multidimensional assessment process, that applicants have the potential to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to meet the professional standards. Your assessment of applicants' capability to meet the academic standards of the course should contribute to providing assurance of this potential.

### Assessed preparation for direct practice

Prior to starting their first placement, you should assess the students' ability to practice safely. In additional to this, you should consider where you are beginning to see

students' development of early knowledge and skills in key areas. You may wish to include a focus upon the knowledge and skills statements that you have identified as being necessary to support early practice through your curriculum content and mapping.

### End of 200 days in practice learning environments

Students should develop the knowledge and skills associated with practice learning throughout their 200 days in practice. You may wish to consider their progression at key points within their placement journey. For example, at the end of individual placements, using feedback from practice educators and other professionals involved in placements.

You may see that students show competency in different areas and at different rates as a result of their placement environment or experiences. For example, students who have worked in a multidisciplinary setting may have a stronger understanding of multi-agency working. Students may have also had more opportunities to practise specific skills earlier in their practice experiences which could be different to others in their cohort. You should ensure that the assessment of competency is specific to the individual and considers their own learning journey.

At the end of 200 days in practice, you should ensure that all students are assessed as being competent across the knowledge and skills statements associated with practice learning. This should be supported by contrasting placement experiences, exposure to statutory social work tasks and engagement with different professionals, services and people with lived experience. Students should have also received a greater variety of academic teaching to support their increased knowledge, understanding and application of skills.

### Prior to award

Following completion of practice learning, your curriculum content will have ensured that any gaps in knowledge and skills have been addressed. Ahead of award board, final year assessment must confirm that students have met all knowledge and skills competently and consistently through engagement with (both of the following):

- practice-based learning
- academic components of the course

Course providers will be assured that students can meet the professional standards in order to apply to join the Social Work England register.

## Practice domain 1 – Builds and maintains impactful relationships and communicates effectively with people

The ability to develop and maintain effective professional relationships is central to the role of a social worker. Without appropriate interpersonal skills, the ability to

communicate with a range of audiences and the skills to support others to share their views, it would not be possible for social workers to lead effective interventions which ensure the safety and wellbeing of people. As a result, the following knowledge and skills statements form an essential part of being fit to practise as a social worker.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent, that a student can demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined within this practice domain.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will:

- build and maintain positive relationships, recognising that they underpin almost all aspects of social work practice and are a mechanism through which meaningful change occurs
- understand the importance of working in partnership with people prioritising family, carers (including unpaid) and community connections, to promote their well-being and achieve positive outcomes
- be able to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills for a range of audiences using different communication methods, placing people at the heart of all interactions
- understand that relationships can be complex and must be handled with skill
- begin to demonstrate specific skills in practice to ensure relationships are managed effectively to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people

### To be able to do this, social work students need to know and understand:

- 2.1: The role of a social worker and a social worker's responsibility to empower, advocate, value, assist, facilitate change, safeguard and protect people.
- 2.2: Social workers can affect and improve the well-being and motivation of others by repeated identification of personal strengths, hopes and aspirations.
- 2.3: How to work in partnership with people while recognising them as experts in their own lives, and how to build professional relationships founded on respect, honesty and integrity.
- 2.4: The need to value each person as an individual, recognising their strengths and abilities, and the support available within their networks and support systems.
- 2.5: There are a range of communication techniques and methods available to build positive relationships which are adaptable based on the person’s level of understanding.
- 2.6: Individuals experiencing stress, fear or limited capacity from domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental ill health or learning disability often need persistent, adaptive and creative communication to share and absorb information.

- 2.7: That relationship-based practice is a key mechanism to drive positive change and that deeper and more meaningful engagement with people is more likely to result in sustained improvements.
- 2.8: That impactful relationships require time, careful thought, consideration of past experiences, clarity of purpose, deliberate focused practice and frequent opportunities for honest feedback.

### To be able to do this, social work students need to develop skills which allow them to:

- 3.1: Demonstrate effective, professional and appropriate interpersonal skills, in verbal and written communication for a range of audiences.
- 3.2: Communicate the role of a social worker and the purpose of social work clearly, accurately and sensitively.
- 3.3: Communicate with and actively listen to others being respectful, inclusive, engaging, accessible, motivating and effective.
- 3.4: Use adaptive techniques to demonstrate emotional intelligence, empathy and understanding.
- 3.5: Support people to express their expectations, aspirations, strengths and limitations and to understand and fully realise their rights, entitlements and responsibilities.
- 3.6: Demonstrate an ability to balance empathy and authority by maintaining constructive relationships through transparency and honesty.
- 3.7: Begin to manage challenging situations by learning techniques which support de-escalation.
- 3.8: Demonstrate effective, ethical and appropriate use of digital tools, technologies, spaces and platforms.

## Development of this range of knowledge and skills throughout the course

From the point of application to a social work course, you will begin to assess applicants' ability to communicate and work effectively with others. All who join a pre-registration course will have differing past experiences, both personally and professionally, which will impact upon their capabilities in relation to building and maintaining relationships. As a result, there may be a range of starting points. As students' progress through the course, we expect that all students are given sufficient opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to communication and interaction.

As highlighted within our education and training standards guidance, the assessment of communication skills is a key element of the admissions processes to social work courses. The activities used to inform selection will frequently include assessing applicants:

- speaking and listening skills
- interpersonal skills
- ability to communicate as part of a group

Therefore, you are likely to begin observing students' skills in this area from the start of the course.

As students prepare for their first placement experience, they will need additional input to ensure that they understand the role and remit of a social worker, as well as how to work in partnership with people. This will include how social workers should work with people to identify strengths, hopes and aspirations as this is most likely to affect positive change. You should assess the development of their competency in this area since joining the course.

While on placement, students should have opportunities to practise implementing a range of communication strategies in real life scenarios. They should know the range of tools available to support communication with people and exercise their professional judgement, under supervision, to determine which is the most appropriate. For example:

- where virtual communication may be more appropriate than face to face for some or vice versa
- where a person's learning needs impact their ability to communicate
- how people experiencing stress or fear are likely to need adaptive techniques to absorb information

Adaptive techniques are likely to look different in different practice settings. Therefore, course providers should ensure that placement settings are equipped to support developments in this area.

Students should demonstrate a developing awareness of how to balance empathy and autonomy during difficult conversations. This includes navigating a person's wishes and feelings alongside communicating why things may need to happen because of their care needs. For example, in the context of an adult with social care needs, this may relate to changes in their circumstances such as moving from independent to supported living.

Some interactions should be observed by experienced individuals with constructive feedback offered to improve practice.

Placements will also offer the opportunity for students to develop communication skills which are relevant to specific areas of social work practice. For example, within a children and families setting, students should learn the importance of repairing relationships with parents where there may be fears about social work intervention, ensuring the voice of the child remains central. While in adult services the focus may be on repairing relationships with people who have lost trust in services as a result of being subject to social work intervention against their wishes.

Students should also be supported to develop knowledge and skills relating to interactions with people who may find social work intervention stressful or have an impairment which impacts their ability to understand and process information. Professionals supporting placement should be prepared to support students to persevere and find ways to overcome such challenges, using a range of strategies.

Further opportunities during placement should be used to assess a students' progress in communication in a range of settings and circumstances. This includes situations which may be challenging.

As students move through their course, they should be able to effectively implement a range of techniques to support people with lived experience of social work to share their views effectively. This should include adopting alternative communication methods where people struggle to communicate verbally or via conventional methods.

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these knowledge and skills, please see annex 2.

# Practice domain 2 – Undertakes effective assessments to develop a purposeful plan, adapting approach as needed

Supporting people to share their views and feelings is an important part of social work practice, and decision making should include a strong focus on what matters to the individual person. Despite this, there are times when social workers will have to assess and balance individual wishes and feelings against the need to act in a person's best interests in order to promote, or ensure, their safety.

To do this effectively, social workers must demonstrate a good understanding of expected human development, the range of factors that can influence health outcomes and potential signs of harm. They should also recognise the range of indicators for different types of abuse and their impacts.

When working with people, social workers must demonstrate an ability to make decisions which balance the needs and wishes of people alongside potential risk and harm. Where social workers identify potential or actual harm, they must be able to intervene to ensure safety and promote positive change.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent, that a student can demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined within this practice domain.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will:

- understand how to undertake an assessment of need which considers factors such as:
    - children and adults' family history and lived experience,
    - expected human development,
    - physical and mental health
    - potential and actual signs of harm, and
    - recognition that change is rarely linear.
- use their professional judgement to respond effectively to risk and harm
- demonstrate an ability to coproduce purposeful plans and adapt where necessary

## To be able to do this, social work students need to know and understand:

- 2.9: Assessment of need, eligibility, likelihood of harm and protective factors when working with people, their families, carers (including unpaid) and communities.
- 2.10: The social determinants of physical and mental health, including the impact of child and adult mental health issues, physical disability and learning disability.
- 2.11: Signs of harm, exploitation, neglect, abuse, domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour, recognising their impact on people, families and communities.
- 2.12: Signs of substance use and dependency, recognising their impact on people, families and communities.
- 2.13: Neurodiversity and how this can impact people and families.
- 2.14: Human development across the life span, inclusive of child and adolescent development, and adult life stages.
- 2.15: The impact of trauma, loss and change on human development across a person's life and factors contributing towards vulnerability and likelihood of harm.
- 2.16: The importance of identifying and obtaining information and perspectives from a range of evidence sources, including other social workers and professionals from other disciplines.
- 2.17: The range of legislative frameworks that social workers operate within.

## To be able to do this, social work students need to develop skills which allow them to:

- 3.9: Build genograms and chronologies to identify critical events in people's lives, patterns of relevant relationships, and the effectiveness of previous professional interventions.
- 3.10: Observe interactions, reaction and relationship dynamics considering the influence of the environment and identify both social need and behaviours that may indicate harm.

- 3.11: Begin to identify and address discrepancies and gaps in information provided by people and their networks.
- 3.12: Provide a critical analysis which moves beyond description, towards explanation and possible solutions, drawing a conclusion which logically flows from the evidence.
- 3.13: Remain agile, continually balancing and reviewing information, adapting proposed plans as necessary to ensure meaningful impact.
- 3.14: Recognise and respond to behaviour that may indicate a lack of co-operation, and take action, when necessary, particularly where this is linked to safeguarding concerns to the individual or others, to overcome this.
- 3.15: Demonstrate an ability to promote positive and planned change with people and their support systems.

## Development of this range of knowledge and skills throughout the course

Applicants should understand that social workers have a responsibility to promote positive outcomes, to respond to need and to keep people safe. Applicants should recognise that the role requires an in depth understanding of need, risk and harm, alongside an ability to intervene effectively to promote safety. You should begin to explore applicants' knowledge of the needs of those requiring social work intervention, risk and harm through interview tasks and questions.

Students will be exposed to direct teaching on topics such as:

- human development
- types of harm and abuse
- the social determinants of physical and mental health within the curriculum

Therefore, their understanding of need, risk and harm should develop throughout the course. They should be supported to understand the range of tools available to understand people's life stories. This will allow them to identify any events or patterns which may inform their interventions.

Through their placement learning experiences, students should learn that agencies have different assessment processes or thresholds for intervention and therefore hold varying information about people. People may present differently to the range of agencies involved which is likely to result in differences in professional understanding. Students should understand that it is the role of the social worker to observe people, their reactions and relationships, and balance available information to keep the persons needs at the heart of their assessment.

Prior to their final placement, students should be able to talk confidently about these topics and identify roles, responsibilities and when to take action. Supervision or observations of practice may provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability make professional judgements, as could assessments for academic modules.

Through supervised placement experiences, students should have developed skills in relation to critical analysis which support them to suggest solutions or draw conclusions based on available evidence.

Prior to award board, students should be able to demonstrate that they can recognise the different types of harm and levels of need that they may encounter in social work practice and understand the impact these can have on people's lives. There should be tangible evidence of where this knowledge has informed their practice to enable them to make professional judgements. This should include when to propose next steps, or re-evaluate previous hypotheses, for people requiring social work intervention. Students should also be able to critically reflect upon their role and responsibility in delivering interventions safely, identifying when they would seek additional advice and support.

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these knowledge and skills, please see annex 2.

# Practice domain 3 – Delivers interventions to support people to make positive change, build resilience and support effective life transitions

Social workers are required to make decisions which may be based on brief interactions with people or following an in-depth assessment of need and risk. To make decisions that are fair, proportionate and ethical, social workers must adopt an evidence informed approach. This includes using evidence from:

- research
- academic literature and theory
- other multi-agency teams
- local guidance
- the views and wishes of people they work with

Social workers should be able to effectively evidence why they have made decisions, or proposed specific interventions, and articulate this clearly through written records. It is also essential for all social workers to critically reflect upon their practice, both independently and alongside other colleagues, to ensure ongoing development of their practice.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent**,** that a student can demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined within this practice domain.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will:

- understand that interventions are most likely to be successful when:
    - they are designed in partnership with people
    - they are rooted in evidence and draw upon appropriate social work theories
- work collaboratively with people when planning interventions to identify strengths, networks, and community resources, ensuring interventions promote wellbeing and positive personal outcomes
- begin to demonstrate an ability to adapt their approach to interventions where they are not successful or where there may be a lack of engagement

### To be able to do this, social work students need to know and understand:

- 2.18: Interventions are more likely to result in sustained positive change when they are designed alongside the person affected by the intervention, as the expert in their own lives.
- 2.19: The use of self in social work, and how social workers may work creatively to apply different skills and interventions.
- 2.20: The need for clear communication with other professionals to ensure that everyone understands their individual responsibilities.
- 2.21: The importance of developing good subject knowledge and an up to date understanding of social work theory and best evidence to inform intervention planning.
- 2.22: The importance of preventative intervention, responding quickly and adapting their approach where necessary to promote independence and ensure the protection of people accessing social work services.

### To be able to do this, social work students need to develop skills which allow them to:

- 3.16: Undertake a range of evidence informed interventions safely under supervision, which generate positive change, recognising when intervention is not working, harmful or no longer necessary.
- 3.17: Demonstrate an evidence-informed approach when making decisions.
- 3.18: Communicate the theory behind interventions when working with people.
- 3.19: Write accurate, clear, objective, and up-to-date records and reports which document assessments, decisions and actions.

## Development of this range of knowledge and skills throughout the course

Education and training should seek to develop professionally curious, research-minded social workers.

As students' progress through the course, the development of evidence informed practice may be achieved through student centred and independent learning and teaching and assessment strategies. Students should demonstrate an emerging

understanding of the ways in which social workers use evidence to inform practice and begin to name some of the interventions that may be used.

In preparation for placement learning opportunities, students should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of prevention in social work. For example, they will recognise prevention as a key principle of the Care Act 2014 for adult social care and the importance of early help and intervention for children and families. Students will understand how people can be supported to access preventative interventions to promote positive health and wellbeing and as a mechanism to prevent escalating need or risk.

Students will also learn that it is unlikely that a single intervention by itself can provide a sustained and long-term solution for serious problems. Using a range of interventions in collaboration with other sources of emotional and practical support is more likely to succeed where people experience complex adversity.

With experience, students should be able to provide examples of how they have used their knowledge of social work theories, models, methods and approaches in practice. They should be able to talk with increasing confidence about the value of evidence informed intervention, recognising the strengths and limitations of different forms of evidence. Students should begin to develop their awareness of the need to adapt interventions when they are not successful or if people begin to demonstrate a lack of engagement.

Evidence informed practice is achieved through combining different forms of knowledge such as:

- research
- theory
- local information (including local resources)
- lived experience

Therefore, time spent in academic study and practical experience acquired through placement is needed to refine skills in this area.

Prior to award board, students should have examples from practice of where evidence has been used to inform decisions. Course assessments should evidence their ability to balance, synthesise and analyse complex knowledge, evidence and information from multiple sources.

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these knowledge and skills, please see annex 2.

# Practice domain 4 – Explores identity to deliver anti-discriminatory practice

Anti-discriminatory practice is fundamental to all areas of social work practice and is at the core of social work values and inclusive practice.

In line with the professional standards, all social workers are expected to embrace individuality and diversity. They are required to demonstrate a sound understanding of how people's backgrounds and identities impact upon their lives and the communities within which they live.

The social work profession, with its values and principles of anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive practice and inclusive practice, is uniquely placed to lead the way in promoting equality in all aspects of society.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent, that a student can demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined within this practice domain.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will:

- understand the principles of anti-discriminatory practice and recognise the importance of applying these principles in social work practice
- understand how to apply an intersectional understanding of identity through professional interactions with people
- regularly reflect upon their own practice, seeking to promote social justice and confront issues of inequality and inclusion

### To be able to do this, social work students need to know and understand:

- 2.23: How to positively explore the cultural identities and beliefs of the people, families and communities that social workers work with.
- 2.24: The social context in which people live and how multiple and intersecting oppressions and disadvantages impact people, families and communities.
- 2.25: The impact of poverty and economic disadvantage, including the cumulative impact of intergenerational poverty on people, families and communities.
- 2.26: The role of social work in promoting social justice and pursuing positive change in partnership with people who are vulnerable to, or at risk of, harm.
- 2.27: The importance of inclusive practice from both historical and contemporary perspectives.
- 2.28: How to recognise the impact of individual, organisational and structural discrimination and oppression.

- 2.29: That social work is an international and global profession, and how social work practice can vary based on national or regional contexts, including within the UK.

### To be able to do this, social work students need to develop skills which allow them to:

- 3.20: Reflect on personal biases and prejudices, and apply the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion to practice.
- 3.21: Advocate for people at risk of disadvantage, addressing barriers and seeking support from a range of agencies.
- 3.22: Demonstrate appropriate use of power and professional authority whilst upholding people's human and equality rights, advocating where appropriate.

## Development of this range of knowledge and skills throughout the course

Social workers are expected to champion people's rights and support those that are often marginalised. Anyone choosing to pursue a career in social work should be able to demonstrate a commitment to addressing social inequality. You may begin to explore applicants' motivations for choosing social work as a career through your admission process, for example by asking values-based questions. While responses to such questions may offer an indication of an applicant's commitment and suitability, we expect that their knowledge and understanding of the variety of influences on people's lives and how to practice inclusively will strengthen as students' progress through their course.

Students' knowledge of anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive, anti-racist and inclusive practice should develop as they begin their study. We expect that they will be exposed to its key principles from the start of the course. We would expect that students are able to articulate their understanding of issues, such as the overrepresentation of certain groups to health and social care and associated key principles, more confidently as they approach readiness for practice and their first placement. This in turn will offer opportunities to demonstrate relevant skills in practice such as reflecting on their own and others potential bias.

We do not expect that students' knowledge and skills will be assessed at a single point or in isolation. But they should develop throughout the student journey before reaching competency.

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these knowledge and skills, please see annex 2.

# Practice domain 5 – Works collaboratively and effectively with other professionals

There are an increasing number of social workers who work within multidisciplinary teams. Even where social workers are not part of a dedicated multidisciplinary team, it is important that they are able to collaborate with colleagues from other professions, and their own profession.

All social workers should recognise the value and purpose of working in partnership with those with lived and learned experience and with other disciplines to improve the quality of care and outcomes for people who are receiving health and social care services.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent, that a student can demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined within this practice domain.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will:

- work collaboratively with professionals from a range of disciplines
- understand the importance of multi-disciplinary working and be able to apply their knowledge to a range of social work contexts
- work collaboratively with professionals from other disciplines whilst maintaining and promoting their social work identity
- know how and when to share information legally and ethically

### To be able to do this, social work students need to know and understand:

- 2.30: The importance of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working, recognising the value and purpose of partnership working with other professionals to achieve better outcomes for people, families and communities.
- 2.31: How to maintain and advocate for their professional identity as a social worker in multi-disciplinary and multi-agency contexts.
- 2.32: The principles, origin and evidence-based value of co-production and how to use and promote it within social work practise.
- 2.33: The contrasting contexts of social work practice and how contemporary social care, health, education, and specialist providers deliver services.
- 2.34: Data protection, privacy and confidentiality including information rights, appropriate access of data, use of communicative technology and knowing when and how to share information, with consideration of the potential impacts of disclosure.

### To be able to do this, social work students need to develop skills which allow them to:

- 3.23: Work effectively with others, identifying the opportunities and challenges associated with working with others from differing settings, services, teams and professions.
- 3.24: Work in collaboration with others, acknowledging the knowledge and skills that they bring to decision-making, and recognising the boundaries of social work practice.
- 3.25: Recognise when it is appropriate to offer constructive challenge towards agencies or professionals when their actions or decisions could result in detriment and know when to escalate concerns.
- 3.26: Prepare effectively for meetings and participate in a co-productive, respectful and inclusive manner.
- 3.27: Constructively manage disagreements and conflict with others.
- 3.28: Actively seek and share information with others as appropriate, taking into consideration relevant governance and legislation.
- 3.29: Appropriately use relevant information and communication technologies, platforms, or software to work in line with confidentiality and privacy principles.

## Development of this range of knowledge and skills throughout the course

Applicants may bring a range of past professional experiences to the course which demonstrate their ability to work successfully with other professions. As a result, they may demonstrate a baseline understanding of multidisciplinary working and the contrasting contexts of social work practice through their admission to the course. This may also be where applicants first articulate their commitment to partnership working.

Part of your assessed preparation for direct practice may include exploration of students' knowledge and skills in relation to multi-agency working. Students should understand the different professionals they are likely to encounter in social work practice and the roles they play. As a result, you may wish to offer dedicated teaching on this topic to prepare students effectively.

Through their engagement in placement-based learning, students should gain a range of experiences of multi-agency and multidisciplinary working. This may include experience of perceived differences of authority between agencies (such as police, health or education) and students understanding of how to raise concerns where necessary.

They will have also received teaching about professional identity, co-production and the context of current social work practice through the course curriculum. You may also have examples of formative or summative assessments which support competency in this area.

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these knowledge and skills, please see annex 2.

# Practice domain 6 – Reflects on and develops professional practice

It is essential that all social workers understand, and can articulate, what is required to ensure safe and professional practice. This includes understanding (all of the following):

- the role of 'social worker' as a protected title
- the requirement to uphold the professional standards as a regulated professional
- the role of Social Work England (education and training standard 5.5)

Social workers must also understand the legislation in which they operate and other policy areas which underpin their practice.

To maintain their ability to practise safely, social workers should be prepared to engage in critical reflection and supervision. Where there is a concern that practice has the potential to negatively impact upon those receiving services, social workers must know how to respond to maintain their safety.

To achieve the outcome below, course providers must be assured, at the point immediately prior to progressing through a final year award board or equivalent, that a student can demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined within this practice domain.

## Outcome

By the end of their pre-qualifying training, social work graduates will:

- have a thorough understanding of legislation and policy relevant to social work practice and recognise the significance of 'social worker' as protected title
- demonstrate an ability to critically reflect upon their practice, using supervision to inform their professional development
- recognise when to escalate concerns or challenge decisions to promote the safety and wellbeing of people
- begin to demonstrate a range of skills under pressure, including:
    - self-awareness
    - emotional intelligence
    - adaptability
    - professionalism

### To be able to do this, social work students need to know and understand:

- 2.35: How social workers use data and evidence to critically inform their practice, and the strengths and limitations of different forms of evidence.

- 2.36: How social workers use theory to critically inform their practice and the interventions and models they use.
- 2.37: How to maintain their professional identity as a registered social worker, recognising the accountability and responsibility of the role, both in private and public life.
- 2.38: Legal literacy of relevant legislation and policy areas including human rights, equality rights, and statutory guidance that underpins social work practise.
- 2.39: How to recognise organisational wrongdoing and cultures of unsafe practice, knowing when to whistle blow, raise concerns and seek support.
- 2.40: The role and value of differing models of supervision in enabling a social worker's professional development, accountability and responsibility to reflect upon, scrutinize and challenge their practice.
- 2.41: The political and social context of social work in England, including the relationships between agencies and the impact of government policy.
- 2.42: The role of Social Work England as the regulator for social work, the status of 'social worker' as a protected title, the responsibility to meet the professional standards, and engage in continuing professional development as a registered social worker.

### To be able to do this, social work students need to develop skills which allow them to:

- 3.30: Critically use social work theories, models, methods, approaches, and research methodologies in practice.
- 3.31: Critically reflect upon and analyse their practice, seeking support where necessary.
- 3.32: Synthesise and analyse complex knowledge, evidence, data and information from multiple sources and apply this in practice.
- 3.33: Maintain, develop and promote their professional identity as a social worker, applying social work principles, codes of practice, ethics, and the values of social work in practice.
- 3.34: Maintain and reflect upon personal and professional boundaries in all situations.
- 3.35: Demonstrate reflective practice and an ability to think critically about their work.
- 3.36: Engage in supervision to support practice.
- 3.37: Manage time and prioritise workload using available resources; seeking support when required.
- 3.38: Challenge decisions, actions or behaviours which are not in the best interests of people receiving services.
- 3.39: Promote the safety and wellbeing of people, including families, communities and other professionals.

## Development of this range of knowledge and skills throughout the course

You should explore applicants' motivation to become a social worker through your admissions process. This should include exploring their understanding of the profession.

Prior to starting their first placement, students must undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to ensure the safety of people with lived experience who they will meet during placement. While you may have started to informally assess understanding of safe and effective practice through engagement with module content, it is likely that this will be the first time that students' knowledge and skills are formally assessed.

Students should also understand the accountability and responsibility of a social worker and statutory guidance that underpins the role. They will recognise the value of ongoing supervision and support to maintain their ability to practise safely.

Following engagement with placement experiences, there should be evidence that students are developing legal literacy of relevant legislation. They should have demonstrated their ability to practise safely within a placement environment, with supervision supporting their ability to reflect upon and scrutinise practice. They may also begin to apply these experiences through critical reflection in their academic writing as they progress through the course.

Graduates should demonstrate a robust understanding of the role of a social worker and be able to promote their own professional identity. In preparation for applying to join the Social Work England register, graduates should know that 'social worker' is a protected title and understand that this title, or any variation of it, cannot be used until they are successfully registered. They should understand their responsibility to meet the professional standards and the requirement to engage in continuing professional development (CPD).

For further information and support on how course providers could support the development of these knowledge and skills, please see annex 2.

# Assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements

As outlined in our education and training standards, it is important that your course assessments are designed to ensure that students can meet the professional standards to be eligible to apply to register with us. By demonstrating the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in this guidance, course providers can be assured that students can meet the professional standards.

The knowledge, skills and behaviour statements set out our expectations of what a social work student should be able to demonstrate upon completing their initial education and training. The values, ethics and professional expectations of social work outlined in the professional standards are embedded across these 3 areas. We expect that they will underpin and inform the design of the programme's assessment tasks and strategy.

Students must understand that the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements are a core part of their initial education and training and how they relate to the professional standards. They should be clear about how and when the different aspects of the statements are assessed and the methods used to do so. There should be opportunities for students to explore their progress towards meeting the statements within each of the themes. This may be provided through:

- reflective peer discussions
- supervision
- critical reflection
- tutorials
- reviews
- feedback on assessed work

We expect that students will be assessed in a variety of ways throughout the course and that there will be opportunities for them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in both formative and summative contexts. It is not necessary to have a dedicated assessment for each individual knowledge, skill or behaviour statement. Instead, it is possible for multiple knowledge, skills and behaviours to be assessed through a range of assessment methods. Course providers should be assured of the integration of students' knowledge, skills and behaviours by the end of the course.

Assessment methods may include (but is not limited to):

- presentations
- essays
- case studies
- exams
- vivas
- evidence of engagement in reflective supervision
- feedback mechanisms used during placement-based learning (for example, portfolios, observation forms)
- feedback received from people with lived experience in relation to student conduct on placement
- observations of student engagement in class-based discussions, tutorials and group work

This is not an exhaustive list but intended to illustrate that a wide range of assessments can be used to assess competency in the knowledge, skills and behaviours.

# Annex 1: Mapping of knowledge, skills and behaviours to professional standards

## Behaviours

| **Knowledge, skills and behaviours statement** | **Professional standard** |
|---|---|
| 1.1: Demonstrate professional integrity and appropriate use of self when working with others; including the ability to recognise any potential or actual conflicts of interest. | • 1.7<br>• 2.1, 2.7<br>• 3.1, 3.7<br>• 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6<br>• 6.6, 6.7 |
| 1.2: Work with integrity in an open and transparent way; assert and justify actions within ethical and professional standards. | • 1.7<br>• 2.1, 2.7<br>• 3.1, 3.7, 3.11<br>• 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5<br>• 6.1 |
| 1.3: Demonstrate awareness of bias and prejudice and reflect on the potential impact of this on their decision making. | • 2.7<br>• 3.5, 3.7 |
| 1.4: Acknowledge the identities, beliefs, values and lifestyles of people, their families and their communities. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6<br>• 2.2, 2.4, 2.5<br>• 3.7, 3.14, 3.15<br>• 4.4. 4.8 |
| 1.5: Practise in a manner that respects ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and values difference. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7<br>• 2.2, 2.6<br>• 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.7, 3.13<br>• 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8<br>• 5.1, 5.2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.6: Demonstrate a commitment to learning about the different perspectives and lived experiences of other people. | • 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 2.4, 2.5<br>• 3.2, 3.3, 3.6<br>• 4.1, 4.3. 4.4 |
| 1.7: Embed the principles of anti-discriminatory practice. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6<br>• 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.13, 3.14<br>• 4.1, 4.4<br>• 5.1, 5.2, 5.5<br>• 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 |
| 1.8: Demonstrate an ability to receive feedback from people and other professionals; reflect on and use this to develop practice. | • 3.2, 3.6<br>• 4.2, 4.5 |
| 1.9: Demonstrate they are able to meet the professional standards, upholding the reputation of the profession and acting in accordance with the values and principles of the profession at all times. | • All professional standards |
| 1.10: Recognise that people have a right to complain or raise concerns, including about conduct or fitness to practise; proactively support people to exercise this right. | • 5.5<br>• 6.3 |
| 1.11: Engage in critical reflection on social work practice and demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional development, as part of their professional identity. | • 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 |
| 1.12: Use professional supervision and support to improve their practice; and be accountable for their practice. | • 3.2, 3.5<br>• 4.2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.13: Recognise and communicate when and how health and wellbeing might impact on their practice, taking steps to seek support, to ensure safe and effective practice. | • 6.6, 6.7 |
| 1.14: Identify and access tools, information and resources to maintain their wellbeing; understanding the importance of reflection and self-care. | • 4.2, 4.6, 4.8 |

## Knowledge

| **Knowledge, skills and behaviours statement** | **Professional standard** |
|---|---|
| 2.1: The role of a social worker and a social worker's responsibility to empower, advocate, value, assist, safeguard and protect people. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7<br>• 3.1, 3.3<br>• 4.4<br>• 5.1 |
| 2.2: Social workers can affect and improve the well-being and motivation of others by repeated identification of personal strengths, hopes and aspirations. | • 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 |
| 2.3: How to work in partnership with people while recognising them as experts in their own lives, and how to build professional relationships founded on respect, honesty and integrity. | • 1.1,1.2,1.3<br>• 2.3, 2.4<br>• 5.1 |
| 2.4: The need to value each person as an individual, recognising their strengths and abilities, and the support available within their networks and support systems. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 2.2<br>• 3.8, 3.14 |
| 2.5: There are a range of communication techniques and methods available to build positive relationships which are adaptable based on the persons level of understanding. | • 1.3<br>• 2.4, 2.5 |
| 2.6: Individuals experiencing stress, fear or limited capacity from domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental ill health or learning disability often need persistent, adaptive and creative communication to share and absorb information. | • 2.4, 2.5<br>• 3.3, 3.4 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2.7: That relationship-based practice is a key mechanism to drive positive change and that deeper and more meaningful engagement with people is more likely to result in sustained improvements. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 2.1, 2.2 |
| 2.8: That impactful relationships require time, careful thought, consideration of past experiences, clarity of purpose, deliberate focused practice, and frequent opportunities for honest feedback. | • 1.5, 1.7<br>• 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 |
| 2.9: Assessment of need, eligibility, likelihood of harm and protective factors when working with people, their families, carers (including unpaid) and communities. | • 1.1, 1.2 ,1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 |
| 2.10: The social determinants of physical and mental health, including the impact of child and adult mental health issues, physical disability and learning disability. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6<br>• 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.14<br>• 4.4 |
| 2.11: Signs of harm, exploitation, neglect, abuse, domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour, recognising their impact on people, families and communities. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.14<br>• 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.12: Signs of substance use and dependency, recognising their impact on people, families and communities. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.14<br>• 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.13: Neurodiversity and how this can impact people and families. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.14<br>• 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.14: Human development across the life span, inclusive of child and adolescent development, and adult life stages. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.6<br>• 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.15: The impact of trauma, loss and change on human development across a person's life and factors contributing towards vulnerability and likelihood of harm. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.14<br>• 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.16: The importance of identifying and obtaining information and perspectives from a range of evidence sources, including other social workers and professionals from other disciplines. | • 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2.17: The range of legislative frameworks that social workers operate within. | • 3.1<br>• 4.4 |
| 2.18: Interventions are more likely to result in sustained positive change when they are designed alongside the person affected by the intervention, as the expert in their own lives. | • 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 |
| 2.19: The use of self in social work, and how social workers may work creatively to apply different skills and interventions. | • 1.7<br>• 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7<br>• 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.12<br>• 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8 |
| 2.20: The need for clear communication with other professionals to ensure that everyone understands their individual responsibilities | • 3.6, 3.8, 3.9 |
| 2.21: The importance of developing good subject knowledge and an up to date understanding of social work theory and best evidence to inform intervention planning. | • 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.22: The importance of preventative intervention, responding quickly and adapting their approach where necessary to promote independence and ensure the protection of people accessing social work services. | • 3.12, 3.15 |
| 2.23: How to positively explore the cultural identities and beliefs of the people, families and communities that social workers work with. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7<br>• 3.7 |
| 2.24: The social context in which people live and how multiple and intersecting oppressions and disadvantages impact people, families and communities. | • 1.4, 1.5, 1.6<br>• 3.3, 3.5, 3.14<br>• 4.4 |
| 2.25: The impact of poverty and economic disadvantage, including the cumulative impact of intergenerational poverty on people, families and communities. | • 1.5, 1.6<br>• 3.3, 3.5, 3.14, 3.15<br>• 4.4 |
| 2.26: The role of social work in promoting social justice and pursuing positive change in partnership with people who are vulnerable to, or at risk of, harm. | • 1.6, 1.7<br>• 3.4, 3.9, 3.14<br>• 4.4<br>• 6.1 |
| 2.27: The importance of inclusive practice from both historical and contemporary perspectives. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.5,1.6,1.7<br>• 3.1, 3.7, 3.14, |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8<br>• 6.2, 6.5 |
| 2.28: How to recognise the impact of individual, organisational and structural discrimination and oppression. | • 1.5, 1.6<br>• 4.5<br>• 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5 |
| 2.29: That social work is an international and global profession, and how social work practice can vary based on national or regional contexts, including within the UK. | • 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.30: The importance of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working, recognising the value and purpose of partnership working with other professionals to achieve better outcomes for people, families and communities. | • 1.3<br>• 2.4, 2.5, 2.6<br>• 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.13<br>• 4.5 |
| 2.31: How to maintain and advocate for their professional identity as a social worker in multi-disciplinary and multi-agency contexts. | • 1.7<br>• 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6<br>• 4.2, 4.3, 4.4<br>• 6.2 |
| 2.32: The principles, origin and evidence-based value of co-production and how to use and promote it within social work practise. | • 1.1, 1.3<br>• 4.1, 4.4 |
| 2.33: The contrasting contexts of social work practice and how contemporary health and social care providers deliver services. | • 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.13<br>• 4.4 |
| 2.34: Data protection, privacy and confidentiality including information rights, appropriate access of data, use of communicative technology and knowing when and how to share information, with consideration of the potential impacts of disclosure. | • 2.2, 2.6<br>• 3.1, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11<br>• 4.3<br>• 5.6<br>• 6.2, 6.5 |
| 2.35: How social workers use evidence to critically inform their practice, and the strengths and limitations of different forms of evidence. | • 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6<br>• 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 |
| 2.36: How social workers use theory to critically inform their practice and the interventions and models they use. | • 3.2, 3.3, 3.4<br>• 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 |
| 2.37: How to maintain their professional identity as a social worker; recognising the accountability and responsibility of the role, both in private and public life. | • 1.7<br>• 2.1, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7<br>• 3.8, |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • 4.8<br>• All 5<br>• All 6 |
| 2.38: Legal literacy of legislation, human rights, equality rights, statutory guidance and policy that underpins social work practise. | • 1.2<br>• 3.1<br>• 4.3, 4.4 |
| 2.39: How to recognise organisational wrongdoing and cultures of unsafe practice, knowing when to whistle blow, raise concerns and seek support. | • 6.2, 6.5 |
| 2.40: The role and value of differing models of supervision in enabling a social worker's professional development, accountability and responsibility to reflect upon, scrutinize and challenge their practice. | • 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6<br>• 6.2 |
| 2.41: The political and social context of social work in England, including the relationships between agencies and the impact of government policy. | • 4.4<br>• 6.1,6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7 |
| 2.42: The role of Social Work England as the regulator for social work, the status of 'social worker' as a protected title, the responsibility to meet the professional standards, and engage in continuing professional development as a registered social worker. | • 2.3<br>• 4.7<br>• 5.2<br>• All 6 |

## Skills

| **Knowledge, skills and behaviours statement** | **Professional standard** |
|---|---|
| 3.1: Demonstrate effective, professional and appropriate interpersonal skills, in verbal and written communication for a range of audiences. | • 2.5<br>• 3.10, 3.11<br>• 4.5 |
| 3.2: Communicate the role of a social worker and the purpose of social work clearly, accurately and sensitively. | • 2.3<br>• 3.6 |
| 3.3: Communicate with and actively listen to others being respectful, inclusive, engaging, accessible, motivating and effective. | • 1.2, 1.3<br>• 2.4, 2.5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3.4: Use adaptive techniques to demonstrate emotional intelligence, empathy and understanding. | • 1.1, 1.2<br>• 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6<br>• 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 |
| 3.5: Support people to express their expectations, aspirations, strengths and limitations and to understand and fully realise their rights, entitlements and responsibilities. | • 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7<br>• 2.3, 2.4<br>• 3.3, 3.13<br>• 4.1<br>• 6.3 |
| 3.6: Demonstrate an ability to balance empathy and authority, by maintaining constructive relationships through transparency and honesty. | • 2.4<br>• 3.12, 3.13, 3.15 |
| 3.7: Begin to manage challenging situations by learning techniques which support de-escalation. | • 3.15 |
| 3.8: Demonstrate effective, ethical and appropriate use of digital tools, technologies, spaces and platforms. | • 1.7<br>• 3.1, 3.10<br>• 5.6 |
| 3.9: Build genograms and chronologies to identify critical events in people's lives, patterns of relevant relationships, and the effectiveness of previous professional interventions. | • 1.3, 1.4<br>• 2.5<br>• 3.2, 3.3, 3.5<br>• 4.1 |
| 3.10: Observe interactions, reactions and relationship dynamics considering the influence of the environment and identify both social need and behaviours that may indicate harm. | • 3.3, 3.4, 3.12, 3.15 |
| 3.11 Begin to identify and address discrepancies and gaps in information provided by people and their networks. | • 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.12 |
| 3.12: Provide a critical analysis which moves beyond description, towards explanation and possible solutions, drawing a conclusion which logically flow from the evidence. | • 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 |
| 3.13: Remain agile, continually balancing and reviewing information, adapting proposed plans as necessary to ensure meaningful impact. | • 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.12, 3.15 |
| 3.14: Recognise and respond to behaviour that may indicate a lack of co-operation, and take action when necessary, particularly where this is | • 2.5<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.15 |

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| linked to safeguarding concerns to overcome this. | |
| 3.15: Demonstrate an ability to promote positive and planned change with people and their systems. | • 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6<br>• 2.4<br>• 3.13, 3.14 |
| 3.16: Undertake a range of evidence informed interventions safely under supervision, which generate positive change, recognising when intervention is not working, harmful or no longer necessary. | • 3.2, 3.12 |
| 3.17: Demonstrate an evidence informed approach when making decisions. | • 3.5, 3.6. 3.7, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15<br>• 4.8 |
| 3.18: Communicate the theory behind interventions when working with people | • 2.3 |
| 3.19: Write accurate, clear, objective, and up-to-date records and reports which document assessments, decisions and actions. | • 3.11 |
| 3.20: Reflect on personal biases and prejudices, and apply the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion to practice. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6<br>• 2.1, 2.2<br>• 3.1, 3.7, 3.14<br>• 4.4<br>• 5.1, 5.2, 5.5<br>• 6.1, 6.2 |
| 3.21: Advocate for people at risk of disadvantage, addressing barriers and seeking support from a range of agencies. | • 1.2, 1.6 |
| 3.22: Demonstrate appropriate use of power and professional authority whilst upholding people's human and equality rights, advocating where appropriate. | • 1.7<br>• 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6<br>• 3.1, 3.3, 3.13, 3.14<br>• 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 |
| 3.23: Work effectively with others, identifying the opportunities and challenges associated with working with others from differing settings, services, teams and professions. | • 2.3, 2.4, 2.5<br>• 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.13<br>• 4.5<br>• 6.2 |
| 3.24: Work in collaboration with others, acknowledging the knowledge and skills that they bring to decision-making, and recognising the boundaries of social work practice. | • 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.13 |
| 3.25: Recognise when it is appropriate to offer constructive challenge towards | • 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5 |

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| agencies or professionals when their actions or decisions could result in detriment and know when to escalate concerns. | |
| 3.26: Prepare effectively for meetings and participate in a co-productive, respectful and inclusive manner. | • 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6<br>• 3.11 |
| 3.27: Constructively manage disagreements and conflict with others. | • 2.4, 2.5<br>• 3.3, 3.7, 3.12, 3.13, 3.15 |
| 3.28: Actively seek and shares information with others as appropriate, taking into consideration relevant governance and legislation. | • 2.6 |
| 3.29: Appropriately use relevant information and communication technologies, platforms, or software to work in line with confidentiality and privacy principles. | • 2.6<br>• 3.1, 3.10<br>• 5.6 |
| 3.30: Critically use social work theories, models, methods, approaches, and research methodologies in practice. | • 1.5, 1.6<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.12 |
| 3.31: Critically reflect upon and analyse their practice, seeking support where necessary. | • 3.2, 3.7<br>• 4.1, 4.2, 4.6, 4.8 |
| 3.32: Synthesise and analyse complex knowledge, evidence and information from multiple sources and apply this in practice. | • 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15<br>• 4.4 |
| 3.33: Maintain, develop and promote their professional identity as a social worker, applying social work principles, codes of practice, ethics, and the values of social work in practice. | • 3.1, 3.3, 3.6<br>• 4.4, 4.6<br>• All 5 |
| 3.34: Maintain and reflect upon personal and professional boundaries in all situations. | • 1.7<br>• 2.3, 2.7<br>• 3.1<br>• 4.8<br>• 5.2, 5.4<br>• 6.2 |
| 3.35: Demonstrate reflective practice and an ability to think critically about their work. | • 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8<br>• 6.2 |
| 3.36: Engage in supervision to support practice. | • 3.2<br>• 4.2 |

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| 3.37: Manage time and prioritise workload using available resources; seeking support when required. | • 3.8 |
| 3.38: Challenge decisions, actions or behaviours which are not in the best interests of people receiving services. | • 1.2, 1.7<br>• 3.13<br>• 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5 |
| 3.39: Promote the safety and wellbeing of people, including families, communities and other professionals. | • 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7<br>• 2.4<br>• 3.3, 3.4, 3.13, 3.15<br>• 5.1<br>• 6.1 |

# Annex 2: Additional guidance for education and training providers

## Behaviours

### How education and training providers can support students to demonstrate and develop the behaviours outlined in this guidance

- You may be able to demonstrate how applicants show the foundations of the necessary behaviours through tasks chosen as part of the admissions process. This could include content of interview tasks and questions which encourage personal reflections and responses.
- Your teaching in relation to different identities, beliefs and values could provide evidence of how you support students to practise in a way that respects and values these differences. Teaching could also offer an opportunity to evaluate students' commitment to learning about these themes.
- Your approach to promoting anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice within the curriculum could be used to illustrate how students are supported to learn and develop within an inclusive learning community and promote inclusivity generally.
- The ways in which you teach students to reflect upon and recognise, stereotypes, generalisations and implicit bias may support students to consider the impact of this upon their own practice and decision making.
- The provision you offer students to reflect on their own values and beliefs, both on the course and through organisational initiatives, may demonstrate how you support students to draw links and consider how this interacts with their own social work practice.
- The ways you encourage students to consider their own wellbeing during their study may support their understanding of how reflection and self-care is necessary to practise safely and effectively as a social worker.

- Your taught content in relation to conduct online and use of social media may demonstrate how you support students' understanding of the importance of their professional behaviour online.
- The teaching you offer students about how and when to raise concerns about social work practice may evidence how students are taught that this as a core requirement of the professional standards.

# Knowledge and skills

## How education and training providers can support students to demonstrate and develop the knowledge and skills outlined in this guidance

### Anti-discriminatory practice

Anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and inclusive practice should be at the heart of the social work curriculum, underpinning all areas of social work practice. Your curriculum content for social work education may provide evidence of your commitment to developing practitioners who practise in an anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and inclusive way.

You should consider the variety of learning experiences provided to students which support their understanding of discrimination. Specific module content should be included on the course to explore the types of discrimination that can occur towards people with different protected characteristics, and how to challenge negative behaviours.

The range of texts or literature that you select to support learning on the programme should be suitably diverse. They should reflect differing cultures and histories and demonstrate a commitment to developing student understanding of the different forms of discrimination and how this can be addressed through social work practice.

Students' ability to practise in an anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and inclusive manner should develop through their placement experiences. Therefore, you should consider how you ensure opportunities for students to reflect on practice, personal bias or prejudices are woven into supervision arrangements.

You may have other means of promoting an inclusive learning community which sit outside the confines of the course. This might include bespoke student groups, support or services. How you promote engagement in these may provide further opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.

### Working together across organisations and disciplines

In line with the requirements of standard 4.6 in our education and training standards, course providers are required to ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions. Therefore, your planning in this area should act as a useful guide in supporting students' ability to achieve the requirements of the statements, as outlined above.

We are not prescriptive about the types of learning opportunities that course providers should offer. However, you may wish to consider the following within curriculum planning.

### Drawing on expertise from other professions help to deliver your course

You may choose to engage or employ staff from other professions to teach about their profession and their multidisciplinary work with social work. This could be as guest lecturers, to lead seminars or support small group work. They may also support the production of resources to be used in the delivery of teaching.

### Cross school/university working

Where you are part of a school or department that includes other professions from the health, care or education sector, you may decide to work with colleagues to offer cross curricular learning opportunities. Alternatively, you may wish to partner with other universities, colleges or partnerships in your local area to develop learning opportunities. Course providers may offer experiences which range from supporting students to learn about other professions, alongside opportunities to learn with and from other professions, via problem-solving or scenario-based learning.

### Simulated learning opportunities

You may wish to design simulated learning opportunities with a multidisciplinary focus. These could be facilitated via classroom-based activities or through bespoke facilities (where you have access to these) such as:

- mock court rooms
- hospital wards
- flats

### Practice placements

You may wish to consider how the documentation used to support placements outlines how and when students could undertake learning opportunities that enable them to work with other professions.

### Building and maintaining relationships

Course providers should provide an environment in which students feel safe to develop their communication skills and confidence when interacting with a range of people. This may include planning workshops or seminars in which students are required to discuss their views on certain topics. It could also include planned group discussions and assessments which require students to deliver presentations (both individually and as part of a group).

If skills days are used as part of your 200 practice days (education and training standard 2.1), you may wish to dedicate some sessions to the development of effective communication skills. This may include exploring different communication methods such as:

- face to face
- telephone
- online
- written

You may also choose to include practical opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills, for example, through role play or simulated activities.

As well as demonstrating an ability to use a range of communication methods, it is important that students understand the theory and principles of good communication. Social workers who communicate effectively will often draw upon a range of skills based upon their assessment of individual needs. This includes considering non-verbal communication, how to effectively use questioning and empathy. Therefore, it is important that course providers consider how this is included through taught content on the course.

### Safe and professional practice

Our education and training standards require course providers to provide applicants with the necessary information to make an informed decision about whether to accept a place on a course. This includes sufficient detail about the social work role and professional regulation. You may have a variety of methods for doing this which may include (but is not limited to):

- course open day information
- course provider website
- information packs
- course advertising

Course providers should ensure that curriculum planning considers how the requirements of safe and professional practice are interwoven throughout the course. Course content will include teaching about the importance of professional regulation and students will understand what this means for them in their future career. Students must have the opportunity to learn about professional conduct and to demonstrate an understanding of which types of behaviour are appropriate for a professional and which are not. This should include fitness to practise evaluations.

If you choose to deliver skills days, you may wish to use some of your allocation to develop students' understanding of the professional standards for social workers. You may also wish to consider where you test students' knowledge of the theoretical learning they have completed.

The arrangements in place to support placement, such as supervision and mid-point reviews, should also provide opportunities to review and reflect on how students' knowledge of professional practice has developed.

The information you provide to students throughout the course may also be helpful in supporting their understanding of social work as a profession and the associated

requirements of being a registered professional. This could include detail within course handbooks or online learning platforms.

### Evidence informed practice, learning and reflection

The value and importance of research should be highlighted to students from the outset of the course. Course providers may choose to highlight the research interests of staff and where there are opportunities for students to become involved in research projects through course advertising. As students' progress through the course, you may consider where there are further opportunities to develop analytical skills and an appreciation of research.

Course teaching should include opportunities for students to learn about different social work theories. This should be balanced with opportunities for students to use a theory informed approach in practice-based scenarios. The agreements you have in place with placement providers may offer details of your expectations for supervision which encourages critical reflection and use of theory and research methodologies in practice.

Course providers may also choose to use part of their skills day allocation to support with understanding different types of evidence and how it is likely to inform decision making. You may also choose to plan activities such as role plays or mock supervision sessions to encourage students to think about how they might apply different types of evidence to decision making.

Placement portfolios may also provide evidence of students' development of skills in this area. This may be through (any of the following):

- observations from their practice educator
- written evidence of their ability to maintain clear records
- reports and examples of self-reflection

### Recognising and responding to need, risk and harm

Course providers should ensure that curriculum planning includes teaching which addresses the knowledge and skills statements outlined above. Prior to placement, you should be confident that all students understand the remit of their role and know where and how to seek support and raise concerns.

Course providers should ensure that students have the opportunity to use this knowledge in different practice learning environments. This is why it is important to ensure that they have access to contrasting placement experiences where they can be exposed to different types of risk, levels of need and potential harm. Course providers should consider the information provided to staff involved in supporting placement, such as practice educators and work-based supervisors, regarding the types of experiences students should be exposed to.

The range of assessment activities on placement may also provide further opportunities for course providers to support students in consolidating their learning within the practice environment.

Throughout the course, through planned opportunities such as group discussions, written activities or examinations, students may be able to demonstrate their knowledge of key themes.