

The Standards for employers of Social Workers in England



What should you expect as a social worker?

What are the Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England?

The standards for employers set out shared core expectations of employers which will enable social workers in all employment settings to work effectively. These expectations are being incorporated within self regulation and improvement frameworks for public services and used by service regulators (Ofsted, CQC).

This document sets out what social workers should expect from their employers and the diagram below represents an overview of the eight standards, grouped into three focal areas.

1. **Enabling employers to provide a well led professional environment**
2. **Enabling social work professionals to maintain their professionalism**
3. **Enabling them to practice more effectively.**



A well led professional environment



Standard 1 - Accountability Framework

As a social worker you should expect to:

- know who is the principal social worker responsible for implementing the standards in your workplace
- have your feedback and views taken into account in how services are planned and organised
- participate annually in a workplace health-check process and see the results published
- have career development opportunities and support for involvement in the profession wherever possible

Standard 2 - Workforce Planning

As a social worker you should expect to:

- work in teams which are adequately staffed to meet service need
- know what the employer's workforce planning system is and contribute to it in whatever ways your role allows
- have systems which ensure that future supply of social workers will be of the right quantity and quality
- be able to exchange staff and expertise with the social work education sector

Standard 3 - Workload management

As a social worker you should expect to:

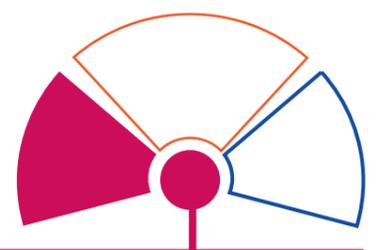
- have benchmarks for safe workloads set for your area
- have your workload regularly assessed in agreed/planned reviews taking account of its complexity, your individual capacity and time needed for supervision
- have your work allocated transparently and with prior discussion
- have your professional judgement about workload capacity issues respected
- have your workload adjusted where demand exceeds staffing capacity

Standard 8 - Partnerships

As a social worker you should expect to:

- know who is the key link person responsible for partnership with HEIs/other organizations
- have access to networks where best practice can be shared and joint research can be developed

Enabling professionals



Standard 4 - Managing Risks/Resources

As a social worker you should expect to:

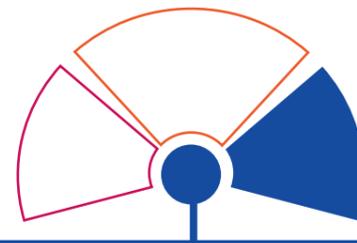
- have access to suitable quiet space for meetings, supervision and confidential interviews
- feel confident to raise concerns about resources and practice conditions without fear
- be protected from risk and harm in the course of your work
- have access to employee welfare services, counselling and debriefing
- have access to professional support including legal advisors, translators and interpreters
- have a safe means of transport for field work
- have the practical tools you need to do the job including effective case recording, IT and mobile communications systems
- have good administrative support
- have help to maximise the time you can spend with adults, children and families

Standard 5 - Supervision

As a social worker you should expect to have:

- monthly supervision for at least an hour and half uninterrupted time
- supervision from a registered social worker (if necessary separate from your line manager) which includes opportunities to engage in reflective practice and review your learning and development needs

Enabling practice



Standard 6 - CPD

As a social worker you should expect to:

- have a clear entitlement to formal and informal Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- have the space to plan, reflect on and record CPD activity
- be able to access and use research and evidence to inform your practice
- be able to contribute to research and practice development activities working with others

Standard 7 - Professional Registration

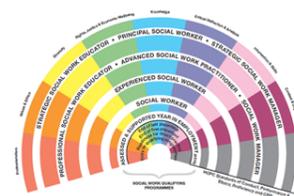
As a social worker you should expect to:

- get support to maintain your professional registration/re-registration and meet the regulator's requirements
- have a clear understanding of your "scope of practice" in line with HCPC standards

In addition

How do the standards link to the Professional Capabilities Framework?

All aspects of the Standards are equally important, just as the Professional Capabilities Framework is holistic in nature in order to effectively set out the expectations of social workers themselves. The Professional Capabilities Framework is intrinsic to the implementation of these Standards for Employers.



NQSWs - Effective induction

As a newly qualified social worker you should expect a tailored programme of support including protected development time, a managed workload, tailored supervision and personal development plans. You should have frequency of supervision at least weekly for the first six weeks of employment, at least fortnightly for the first six months, and a minimum of monthly supervision thereafter.

Students

As a student you should expect high quality practice placements with support from well-trained and supported practice educators, funding for travel while undertaking duties on behalf of the organization, and frequent supervision as agreed with the HEI and workplace.

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The eight Employer Standards for employers

1

Clear Social Work Accountability Framework

Employers should have in place a clear social work accountability framework informed by knowledge of good social work practice and the experience and expertise of service users, carers and practitioners.

2

Effective Workforce Planning

Employers should use effective workforce planning systems to make sure that the right number of social workers, with the right level of skills and experience, are available to meet current and future service demands.

3

Safe Workloads and Case Allocation

Employers should ensure social workers have safe and manageable workloads.

4

Managing Risks and Resources

Employers should ensure that social workers can do their jobs safely and have the practical tools and resources they need to practice effectively. Assess risks and take action to minimise and prevent them.

5

Effective and Appropriate Supervision

Employers should ensure that social workers have regular and appropriate social work supervision.

6

Continuing Professional Development

Employers should provide opportunities for effective continuing professional development, as well as access to research and-relevant knowledge.

7

Professional Registration

Employers should ensure social workers can maintain their professional registration.

8

Effective Partnerships

Employers should establish effective partnerships with higher education institutions and other organisations to support the delivery of social work education and continuing professional development.

Published by LGA on behalf of the Social Work Reform partners.
For more information visit www.local.gov.uk/workforce

