Student Social Worker Level Professional Capabilities

This document presents the Entry to Last Placement/Qualifying Level Professional Capabilities for social workers in table form – so that it is easier to see the progression from one level to the next. This is intended to help people to think about their learning and development.

The capabilities should be read in conjunction with the level descriptors – the details of the capability statement at each level are intended to be used diagnostically to help identify strengths and areas for development, rather than as a list of areas for which evidence must be produced.

The nine domains are interactive – they work together to describe the knowledge, skills and values that social workers need to practise effectively. As a student, they demonstrate how your knowledge, values and skills should develop during initial training.

PCF Capability Statements: Readiness for practice – First placement – Qualifying level				
1. Professionalism: Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development				
Readiness for practice	**End of first placement**		**Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement**	
		1.1	Be able to meet the requirements of the professional regulator	
Describe the role of the social worker	Recognise the role of the professional social worker in a range of contexts	1.2	Be able to explain the role of the social worker in a range of contexts, and uphold the reputation of the profession	
Describe the mutual roles and responsibilities in supervision	Recognise the important role of supervision, and make an active contribution	1.3	Demonstrate an effective and active use of supervision for accountability, professional reflection and development	
Describe the importance of professional behaviour	Demonstrate professionalism in terms of presentation, demeanour, reliability, honesty and respectfulness	1.4	Demonstrate professionalism in terms of presentation, demeanour, reliability, honesty and respectfulness	
	With guidance, take responsibility for managing your time and workload effectively	1.5	Take responsibility for managing your time and workload effectively, and begin to prioritise your activity including supervision time	
		1.6	Recognise the impact of self in interaction with others, making appropriate use of personal experience	
Describe the importance of personal and professional boundaries	Be able to show awareness of personal and professional boundaries	1.7	Be able to recognise and maintain personal and professional boundaries	
	With guidance, recognise your limitations, and how to seek advice	1.8	Recognise your professional limitations and how to seek advice	

Demonstrate ability to learn, using a range of approaches	Recognise and act on own learning needs in response to practice experience	1.9	Demonstrate a commitment to your continuous learning and development
Describe the importance of emotional resilience in social work	Show awareness of own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience and seek advice as necessary	1.10	With support, take steps to manage and promote own safety, health, wellbeing and emotional resilience
	Identify concerns about practice and procedures and how they can be questioned	1.11	Identify concerns about practice and procedures and, with support, begin to find appropriate means of challenge

2. Values and Ethics: Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice

Readiness for practice	End of first placement		Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement
Understand the profession's ethical principles and their relevance to practice	Understand and, with support, apply the profession's ethical principles	2.1	Understand and apply the profession's ethical principles and legislation, taking account of these in reaching decisions
	Recognise and with support manage the impact of own values on professional practice	2.2	Recognise and, with support, manage the impact of own values on professional practice
Demonstrate awareness of own personal values and how these can impact on practice	Identify and, with guidance, manage potentially conflicting values and ethical dilemmas	2.3	Manage potentially conflicting or competing values, and, with guidance, recognise, reflect on and work with ethical dilemmas
	Elicit and respect the needs and views of service users and carers and, with support, promote their participation in decision-making wherever possible	2.4	Demonstrate respectful partnership work with service users and carers, eliciting and respecting their needs and views, and promoting their participation in decision-making wherever possible

	Recognise and, with support, promote individuals' rights to autonomy and self-determination	2.5	Recognise and promote individuals' rights to autonomy and self-determination
	Promote and protect the privacy of individuals within and outside their families and networks, recognising the requirements of professional accountability and information sharing	2.6	Promote and protect the privacy of individuals within and outside their families and networks, recognising the requirements of professional accountability and information sharing

3. Diversity: Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice

Readiness for practice	End of first placement		Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement
Recognise the importance of diversity in human identity and experience, and the application of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in social work practice	Understand how an individual's identity is informed by factors such as culture, economic status, family composition, life experiences and characteristics, and take account of these to understand their experiences	3.1	Understand how an individual's identity is informed by factors such as culture, economic status, family composition, life experiences and characteristics, and take account of these to understand their experiences, questioning assumptions where necessary
	With reference to current legislative requirements, recognise personal and organisational discrimination and oppression and identify ways in which they might be challenged	3.2	With reference to current legislative requirements, recognise personal and organisational discrimination and oppression and, with guidance, make use of a range of approaches to challenge them

	Recognise and, with support, manage the impact on people of the power invested in your role	3.3	Recognise and manage the impact on people of the power invested in your role

4. Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing: Advance human rights, and promote social justice and economic wellbeing

Readiness for practice	End of first placement		Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement
	Understand and, with support, apply in practice the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality	4.1	Understand, identify and apply in practice the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality
	Understand how legislation and guidance can advance or constrain people's rights	4.2	Understand how legislation and guidance can advance or constrain people's rights and recognise how the law may be used to protect or advance their rights and entitlements
	Work within the principles of human and civil rights and equalities legislation	4.3	Work within the principles of human and civil rights and equalities legislation, differentiating and beginning to work with absolute, qualified and competing rights and different needs and perspectives
Understand the principles of rights, justice and economic wellbeing, and their significance for social work practice	Recognise the impact of poverty and social exclusion and promote enhanced economic status through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits	4.4	Recognise the impact of poverty and social exclusion and promote enhanced economic status through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits
	Recognise the value of independent advocacy	4.5	Recognise the value of, and aid access to, independent advocacy

5. Knowledge: Apply knowledge of human growth and development, psychological, social sciences, law and social work practice theory

Readiness for practice	End of first placement		Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement
Demonstrate an initial understanding of the application of research, theory and knowledge from sociology, social policy, psychology, health and human growth and development to social work	With guidance, apply research, theory and knowledge from sociology, social policy, psychology, health and human growth and development to social work practice	5.1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the application to social work of research, theory and knowledge from sociology, social policy, psychology and health
Demonstrate an initial understanding of the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice	Understand the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice, relevant to placement setting	5.2	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice, recognising the scope for professional judgment
		5.3	Demonstrate and apply to practice a working knowledge of human growth and development throughout the life course
		5.4	Recognise the short and long term impact of psychological, socio-economic, environmental and physiological factors on people's lives, taking into account age and development, and how this informs practice
		5.5	Recognise how systemic approaches can be used to understand the person-in-the-environment and inform your practice
		5.6	Acknowledge the centrality of relationships for people and the key concepts of attachment, separation, loss, change and resilience

	Understand forms of harm, their impact on people, and the implications for practice	5.7	Understand forms of harm and their impact on people, and the implications for practice, drawing on concepts of strength, resilience, vulnerability, risk and resistance, and apply to practice
Demonstrate an initial understanding of the range of theories and models for social work intervention	Apply knowledge from a range of theories and models for social work intervention with individuals, families, groups and communities, and the methods derived from them	5.8	Demonstrate a critical knowledge of the range of theories and models for social work intervention with individuals, families, groups and communities, and the methods derived from them
		5.9	Demonstrate a critical understanding of social welfare policy, its evolution, implementation and impact on people, social work, other professions, and inter-agency working
		5.10	Recognise the contribution, and begin to make use, of research to inform practice
		5.11	Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methods
	Value and take account of the expertise of service users and carers and professionals	5.12	Value and take account of the expertise of service users and carers and professionals

6. Critical Reflection and Analysis: Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making

Readiness for practice	End of first placement		Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement
	Recognise the importance of applying imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice	6.1	Apply imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice
	Inform decision-making through the identification and gathering of information from more than one source and, with support, question its reliability and validity	6.2	Inform decision-making through the identification and gathering of information from multiple sources, actively seeking new sources
		6.3	With support, rigorously question and evaluate the reliability and validity of information from different sources
Understand the role of reflective practice and demonstrate basic skills of reflection	With guidance, use reflection and analysis in practice	6.4	Demonstrate a capacity for logical, systematic, critical and reflective reasoning and apply the theories and techniques of reflective practice
Understand the need to construct hypotheses in social work practice	With guidance, understand how to evaluate and review hypotheses in response to information available at the time and apply in practice with support	6.5	Know how to formulate, test, evaluate, and review hypotheses in response to information available at the time and apply in practice
Recognise and describe why evidence is important in social work practice	With guidance, use evidence to inform decisions	6.6	Begin to formulate and make explicit, evidence-informed judgments

7. Intervention and Skills: Use judgment and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse				
Readiness for practice	**End of first placement**			**Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement**
Demonstrate core communication skills and the capacity to develop them	With guidance, use a range of verbal, non-verbal and written methods of communication relevant to the placement		7.1	Identify and apply a range of verbal, non-verbal and written methods of communication and adapt them in line with people's age, comprehension and culture
	With guidance, communicate information, advice, instruction and opinion so as to advocate, influence and persuade		7.2	Be able to communicate information, advice, instruction and professional opinion so as to advocate, influence and persuade
Demonstrate the ability to engage with people in order to build compassionate and effective relationships	Demonstrate the ability to build and conclude compassionate and effective relationships appropriate to the placement setting		7.3	Demonstrate the ability to engage with people, and build, manage, sustain and conclude compassionate and effective relationships
	With guidance, demonstrate an holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks		7.4	Demonstrate an holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks
Demonstrate awareness of a range of frameworks to assess and plan intervention	Identify and use appropriate frameworks to assess, give meaning to, plan, implement and review effective interventions and evaluate the outcomes		7.5	Select and use appropriate frameworks to assess, give meaning to, plan, implement and review effective interventions and evaluate the outcomes, in partnership with service users
	With guidance, use a planned and structured approach, informed by at least two social work methods and models		7.6	Use a planned and structured approach, informed by social work methods, models and tools, to promote positive change and independence and to prevent harm

	Recognise the importance of community resources, groups and networks for individuals	7.7	Recognise how the development of community resources, groups and networks enhance outcomes for individuals
Demonstrate basic ability to produce written documents relevant for practice	Demonstrate skills in recording and report writing appropriate to the setting	7.8	Maintain accurate, comprehensible, succinct and timely records and reports in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines, to support professional judgment and organisational responsibilities
	With guidance, demonstrate skills in sharing information appropriately and respectfully	7.9	Demonstrate skills in sharing information appropriately and respectfully
	Demonstrate awareness of the impact of multiple factors, changing circumstances and uncertainty in people's lives	7.10	Recognise complexity, multiple factors, changing circumstances and uncertainty in people's lives, to be able to prioritise your intervention
	With guidance, understand the authority of the social work role	7.11	Understand the authority of the social work role and begin to use this appropriately and confidently as an accountable professional
Demonstrate initial awareness of risk and safeguarding	With guidance, identify the factors that may create or exacerbate risk to individuals, their families or carers, to the public or to professionals, including yourself	7.12	Recognise the factors that create or exacerbate risk to individuals, their families or carers, to the public or to professionals, including yourself, and contribute to the assessment and management of risk
	With guidance, identify appropriate responses to safeguard vulnerable people	7.13	With support, identify appropriate responses to safeguard vulnerable people and promote their wellbeing

8. Contexts and Organisations: Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional partnerships and settings			
Readiness for practice	**End of first placement**		**Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement**
Demonstrate awareness of the impact of organisational context on social work practice	With guidance, recognise that social work operates within, and responds to, changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts	8.1	Recognise that social work operates within, and responds to, changing economic, social, political and organisational contexts
		8.2	Understand the roles and responsibilities of social workers in a range of organisations, lines of accountability and the boundaries of professional autonomy and discretion
	With guidance, understand legal obligations, structures and behaviours within organisations and how these impact on policy, procedure and practice	8.3	Understand legal obligations, structures and behaviours within organisations and how these impact on policy, procedure and practice
	With guidance, work within the organisational context of your placement setting and understand the lines of accountability	8.4	Be able to work within an organisation's remit and contribute to its evaluation and development
	Understand and respect the role of others within the organisation and work effectively with them	8.5	Understand and respect the role of others within the organisation and work effectively with them
	Take responsibility for your role and impact within teams and, with guidance, contribute positively to team working	8.6	Take responsibility for your role and impact within teams and be able to contribute positively to effective team working
	Understand the inter-agency, multi-disciplinary and inter-professional dimensions to practice and, with guidance, demonstrate partnership working	8.7	Understand the inter-agency, multi-disciplinary and inter-professional dimensions to practice and demonstrate effective partnership working

9. Professional Leadership: Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management

Readiness for practice	End of first placement		Qualifying level demonstrated in the context of the last placement
Demonstrate awareness of the importance of professional leadership in social work	Identify how professional leadership in social work can enhance practice	9.1	Recognise the importance of, and begin to demonstrate, professional leadership as a social worker
	Recognise the value of sharing and supporting the learning and development of others	9.2	Recognise the value of, and contribute to, supporting the learning and development of others