Education and Training Committee, 9 June 2011

Consultation on draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

Last year, The Department of Health published 'Liberating the NHS: Report of the arm's-length bodies review'. That report said:

'[…] we intend to abolish the General Social Care Council and move the regulation of social workers out of the arm's-length bodies sector to make it financially independent of government. We believe that in future, the most appropriate model for the ongoing regulation of the social care workforce is to transfer responsibility for these functions to the Health Professions Council, a well established and efficient regulatory body currently regulating over 200,000 registrants from fifteen professions. (DH, 2010, p22)

We currently anticipate that the Register will transfer in July 2012. As part of our preparations for the transfer, we set up a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) to help to prepare draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England. The PLG included key stakeholders and met on four occasions.

This paper brings to the Committee the draft standards of proficiency prepared by the PLG and a draft consultation paper on our proposals. The Committee is invited to discuss these papers and recommend them to Council.

Decision

The Committee is invited to:
- discuss the attached consultation paper; and
- recommend to Council the text of the attached consultation paper (subject to minor editing amendments).

Background information

Department of Health 'Liberating the NHS: Report of the arm's-length bodies review':
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_117691

Resource implications

The resource implications include writing up the outcomes of the consultation document and type-setting the final version of the standards.

Financial implications

The costs of producing and mailing the consultation document and type-setting and publishing the new standards of proficiency are funded by a grant from the Department of Health to cover the transitional costs of the transfer.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

27 May 2011

Consultation on standards of proficiency for social workers in England

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1   We are the Health Professions Council (the HPC). This paper presents for consultation our draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

About this consultation

1.2   The standards of proficiency are the standards necessary for safe and effective practice for each part of the Register. The standards outline what an individual must know, understand and be able to do when they enter the Register and begin practising their profession.

1.3   The Government has announced that the regulation of social workers in England will transfer from the General Social Care Council to the HPC. Our proposals only relate to social workers in England. Social workers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will continue to be regulated by the relevant Care Council and are not directly affected by these proposals.

1.4   In this consultation document we set out draft standards of proficiency which will apply to social workers in England once they are regulated by us.

1.5   This consultation will run from **date** to **date**.

1.6   The consultation document has been sent to stakeholders with an interest in our work, including professional bodies, education providers and other groups.

1.7   You can download copies of this consultation document from our website here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/

1.8   You can find out how to respond to this consultation in paragraphs 1.14 – 1.18.

About the Health Professions Council

1.9   We are a regulator and were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of professionals who meet our standards for their professional skills and behaviour. Individuals on our Register are called 'registrants'.

1.10   We currently regulate 15 professions:

– Arts therapists
– Biomedical scientists
– Chiropodists / podiatrists
– Clinical scientists
– Dietitians
– Hearing aid dispensers
– Occupational therapists

– Operating department practitioners
– Orthoptists
– Paramedics
– Physiotherapists
– Practitioner psychologists
– Prosthetists / orthotists
– Radiographers
– Speech and language therapists

About this document

1.11 This document is divided into four sections which are summarised below:

1. Section one provides an introduction to the consultation document.
2. Section two provides an outline of the external policy context relevant to the work we are undertaking.
3. Section three provides information about the standards that we set.
4. Section four presents the draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

Consultation questions

1.12 We would welcome your response to our consultation and have listed some questions to help you. The questions are not designed to be exhaustive and we would welcome your comments on any related issue. Please provide reasons alongside your answers where possible.

1.13 The questions are incorporated alongside our proposals in section four of this document. However, they are also listed below.

1. Do you think the standards are at a threshold level necessary for safe and effective practice?
2. Do you think any additional standards are necessary?
3. Do you think there are any standards which should be reworded?
4. Do you have any comments about the language within the standards?
5. Do you have any other comments on the standards?

How to respond to the consultation

1.14 The consultation closes on **date.**

1.15 We have prepared a consultation response form which you are invited to use to submit your response. You can find the consultation response form and further copies of the consultation document on our website.[1]

1.16 Please send your response to:

Consultation on standards of proficiency for social workers in England
Policy and Standards Department

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[1] There is more information about consultations on our website here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/

Health Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU

1.17   You may also email responses to consultation@hpc-uk.org or send a fax to +44 (0)20 7820 9684.

1.18   Please note that we do not normally accept responses by telephone or in person. We normally ask that consultation responses are made in writing to ensure that we can accurately record what the respondent would like to say. However, if you are unable to respond in writing please contact us on +44 (0)20 7840 9815 to discuss any reasonable adjustments which would help you to respond.

Please contact us to request a copy of this document in an alternative format, or in Welsh.

1.19   Once the consultation period is completed, we will analyse the responses we have received. We will then publish a document which details the comments received and explains the decisions we have taken as a result. This will be available on our website.

1.20   If you would prefer your response not to be made public, please indicate this when you respond.

1.21   We look forward to receiving your comments.

2. Background

Regulation of social workers in England

2.1 In July 2010 The Department of Health published 'Liberating the NHS: Report of the arm's-length bodies review'. That report said that the regulation of social workers in England would move from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the Health Professions Council.[2]

2.2 We are therefore working to bring about the transfer of regulatory functions from the GSCC to ourselves. A key part of this work is to set the standards which social workers in England must meet once they are registered with us.

2.3 We anticipate that our Register for social workers in England will open in July 2012. The necessary legislation to allow this to happen has not yet been passed so the exact date of transfer may change. However, it was important to start the work at an early stage so that we could ensure that the standards were subject to wide consultation and were published prior to our Register opening.

The Social Work Reform Board

2.4 The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) was set up to take forward the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force for the reform of social work.[3]

2.5 The SWRB is developing an overarching standards framework, the 'Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers in England' (PCF). This framework comprises nine capabilities relevant to social workers throughout their career and sets out how these can be developed for professional learning and career progression.

2.6 The PCF will sit alongside the standards that we are developing for social workers in England. The SWRB argue that the PCF will '…enable the profession to articulate its purpose and practise in a more sophisticated and coherent way' and plays a different role from that played by the standards that we set.[4]

2.7 We recognise that the PCF and the standards of proficiency have different roles to play in setting standards for social workers (see paragraphs 3.35 – 3.38). However, we have been working with members of the SWRB to ensure that, where possible, there is consistency between the PCF and the standards of proficiency.

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[2] Liberating the NHS: Report of the arm's-length bodies review, page 22
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_117691

[3] The Social Work Reform Board http://www.education.gov.uk/swrb

[4] 'Building a safe and confident future: One year on', paragraph 2.14,
http://www.education.gov.uk/swrb/a0074268/proposals-for-social-work-reform

3. About the standards of proficiency

Legal background

3.1   Whenever we regulate a profession, we set standards of proficiency for that profession. The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards for safe and effective practice.

3.2   Article 5(2) (a) of the Health Professions Order 2001 (the **Order**) says that we must:

"…establish the standards of proficiency **necessary** to be admitted to the different parts of the Register being the standards [the Council] considers **necessary** for **safe and effective practice** under that part of the Register" (emphasis added).

3.3   This means that we must publish standards for each of the professions which are the 'necessary' or 'minimum' that we consider to be required for safe and effective practice. The standards must therefore set out what is absolutely essential or indispensable for practice, they cannot be aspirational.

3.4   The standards of proficiency have to be relevant and applicable to prospective registrants applying to come on to the Register for the first time, as well as existing registrants and their practice. We use verbs such as 'be able to' rather than 'must' to ensure that standards are applicable to prospective registrants (those who are not yet practising) and existing registrants.

Why do we set standards of proficiency?

3.5   As a regulator, our role is to protect the public. One of the ways in which we do this is by setting standards which individuals must meet to start practising and to continue to practise. We set standards which set out the ethical behaviours we expect of registrants, called the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (see paragraphs 3.30 – 3.34).

3.6   The standards of proficiency describe what registrants should know, understand and be able to do at the time they apply to join the HPC Register. They set out what a registrant must be able to do when they start practising a particular profession.

3.7   These standards in combination set out both the ethical framework within which registrants work and the competencies or proficiencies which registrants must be able to demonstrate. In this way, we ensure that registrants have clearly articulated standards for both their behaviour and their professional skills and knowledge.

How we use the standards of proficiency

Approval of education programmes

3.8   The primary role of the standards of proficiency is in articulating the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to become registered for the first time.

3.9   We conduct approval visits to education providers to ensure that the programmes meet the standards. Our standards of education and training cover areas such as admissions, assessment and practice placements, and we approve programmes using these standards. A programme which meets the standards of education and training will also allow a student who successfully completes that programme to meet the standards of proficiency.

3.10   We are also consulting on the threshold level of qualification for entry to the social workers part of the Register. This level is the level of qualification necessary to deliver the standards of proficiency proposed in this document.[5]

Registration and renewal

3.11   The standards of proficiency play a central role in how someone becomes and remains registered with us.

3.12   Most applicants complete their study within the UK and apply for registration through our UK approved programme route. We assess all approved programmes to ensure that students who successfully complete them meet the standards of proficiency and are therefore eligible for registration.

3.13   International applications are also assessed against the standards of proficiency. Each application is assessed by assessors from the relevant profession to determine whether the applicant's education, training and experience mean that they meet the standards.

3.14   Every time a registrant renews their registration, we ask them to sign a declaration to confirm that they continue to meet the standards of proficiency which apply to them.

Fitness to practise

3.15   If a registrant's competence is called into question we may look at the standards of proficiency in deciding whether we need to take any action. This does not mean that we will take action if a registrant does not meet all of the standards (see paragraph 3.19). However, we may use the standards to determine whether a registrant is practising safely and effectively within their scope of practice.

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[5] The consultation document can be found on our website here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/

Scope of practice

3.16 As outlined above, when registrants renew their registration they must sign a declaration to state that they meet the standards which apply to them.

3.17 Once someone becomes registered, we recognise that their scope of practice may change. We define scope of practice as the area or areas of a registrant's profession in which they have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, in a way that meets our standards and does not pose any danger to the public or to them.

3.18 A registrant's scope of practice may change over time and we recognise that the practice of experienced registrants often becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly registered colleagues. This might be because of specialisation in a particular area of practice or with a particular group, or a movement into roles in management, education or research.

3.19 A registrant's particular scope of practice may mean that they are unable to continue to demonstrate that they meet all of the standards of proficiency that apply for the whole of their profession. As long as they make sure that they are practising safely and effectively within their given scope of practice and do not practise in the areas where they are not proficient to do so, this will not be a problem.

English language proficiency and language testing

3.20 We consider applications for registration from individuals who have trained outside of the UK via the international process.

3.21 Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, have to provide evidence that they meet a set standard of English language proficiency. These requirements are outlined in standard 8 of the standards of proficiency.

3.22 Applicants must currently achieve an overall score in the academic test of the International Language Testing System (IELTS) of at least 7.0, with no element below 6.5. A number of other tests are also approved at levels equivalent to the IELTS.

3.23 We propose that the level of English language proficiency for social workers should be set at level 7.0 of the IELTS with no element below 6.5 or equivalent. This is consistent with the recommendation made by the SWRB in their recent report.[6]

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[6] 'Building a safe and confident future: One year on – Detailed proposals from the Social Work Reform Board, paragraph 3.14,
http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00602-2010#downloadableparts

3.24 This level only applies to applicants who qualified outside the UK whose first language is not English and who are not EEA nationals. As outlined above in paragraphs 3.8 – 3.10, we approve education programmes so that individuals who complete these programmes are eligible to apply for HPC registration. The approvals process looks at various areas of the education programme, including admissions. The admissions process must include checking that applicants to the programme can evidence a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.[7]

3.25 In this way, individuals who successfully complete a course we have approved can also meet the level of English language proficiency by its conclusion.

Language used in the standards

3.26 We write the standards in a way that means they are relevant to all our registrants, regardless of practice. We also use language that can take into account changes in the law, technology or working practices which might take place over time.

3.27 We have used the term 'service user' within the draft standards of proficiency for social workers. We define a service user as 'anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants'.

3.28 We recognise that identifying social workers' 'service users' may vary depending upon the context in which they are working and those that they are working with. The use of the phrase 'service user' was discussed by the working group which we established to help us to draft the standards (see paragraph 3.39). We would welcome your comments on whether you feel the term 'service user' is appropriate and on the language used within the standards more broadly.

Structure of the standards

3.29 The standards of proficiency are divided into generic standards (which apply to all the professions) and standards specific to each of the professions regulated. The purpose of the generic standards is to recognise commonality across all the professions that we regulate. The purpose of the profession-specific standards is then to set out additional standards for each profession relevant to the generic standard.

3.30 We consulted on changes to the generic standards of proficiency between July and October 2010.[8] The working group we established to prepare draft standards of proficiency for social workers had the opportunity to comment on the revised generic standards before they were finalised.

3.31 The new generic standards have now been agreed by our Council and are not the subject of this consultation process.

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[7] Standards of education and training, standard 2.2
[8] You can find more information about the consultation on our website here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed/index.asp?id=110

Other standards published by the HPC

3.32 The standards of proficiency should be looked at alongside the other standards that we set. These are the:

- standards of conduct, performance and ethics;
- standards for continuing professional development; and
- standards of education and training.[9]

3.33 There is some degree of overlap between the content of the standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics. For example, the standards of proficiency say that registrants must 'be able to maintain confidentiality' whilst the standards of conduct, performance and ethics say that registrants 'must respect the confidentiality of your service users'.

3.34 The standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics perform inter-related but different roles.

3.35 The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards for entry to the Register. They are written in such a way to apply to people who are applying to come on to the Register and have not yet started practising.

3.36 The standards of conduct, performance and ethics are the standards expected for the continuing attitudes and behaviour of someone who is on the Register. They cover standards such as the need to act in the best interests of service users, protect confidentiality and behave with integrity and honesty. These standards are similar to the Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers produced by the General Social Care Council.[10]

The standards of proficiency and the Professional Capabilities Framework for social workers in England

3.37 As outlined above (paragraphs 2.4 – 2.7), the Social Work Reform Board is developing a 'Professional Capabilities Framework' (PCF) which will set out expectations of social workers in terms of both their conduct and competence.

3.38 The standards of proficiency which the PLG has developed are different to the PCF. The standards of proficiency are threshold standards which set out the proficiencies which registrants must meet on entry to the Register. The PCF sets out expectations both below and above the threshold standards and is designed to support social workers throughout their career.

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[9] Copies of all the standards can be found on our website here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/

[10] Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers, General Social Care Council, http://www.gscc.org.uk/codes/

3.39 The PCF will therefore set out expectations related to career levels, throughout a social worker's career. By contrast, the standards of proficiency set out the threshold necessary for entry to the Register, at the point where individuals start their career.

3.40 As a result, there will be some differences between the standards of proficiency and the PCF. However, there will also be some similarities, particularly in relation to the capabilities set for social workers at the point of qualification. This is because the standards are the threshold standards for entry to the Register, at the point where an individual is entering their profession. We are working with the Reform Board to ensure consistency where appropriate.

Putting the draft together

3.41 We established a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) to help to prepare the draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England. A PLG is a working group set up by the Council to provide advice on a discrete project, particularly where the Council would benefit from outside expertise.

3.42 The PLG consisted of 12 members, four from our Council and eight drawn from key stakeholders in the field of social work in England.

3.43 The members and their organisations are listed below.

Maurice Bates[11]	The College of Social Work
John Boggan	Unison
Andrew Brunt	Association of Directors of Children's Services
Malcolm Cross	HPC Council member (Registrant)
Sheila Drayton	HPC Council member (Lay)
Pat Higham	Association of Social Work Professors
Jeff Lucas (Chair of PLG)	HPC Council member (Lay)
Sherry Malik	General Social Care Council
John Nawrockyi	Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
Penny Renwick	HPC Council member (Registrant)
Bridget Robb[12]	British Association of Social Workers
Hilary Tompsett	Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee

3.44 In drafting the standards, the group looked at the existing standards and frameworks which apply to social workers in England including:

- the Codes of Practice produced by the General Social Care Council;
- the Requirements for Social Work Training produced by the Department of Health;
- the National Occupational Standards for social workers;

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[11] Patricia Kearney attended the PLG on behalf of Maurice Bates from the 11 February 2011 onwards.
[12] Fran McDonnell attended the PLG on behalf of Bridget Robb from the 2 March 2011 onwards.

- any relevant information from the work of the Social Work Taskforce and Social Work Reform Board; and
- the subject benchmark statement for social work produced by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

3.45 The group wanted to make sure that the draft standards were:

- set at the necessary threshold level for safe and effective practice;
- consistent with the standard content of pre-registration education and training;
- consistent with our legal obligations under the Equalities Act 2010; and
- written in clear language and with the level of detail appropriate to their role.

3.46 We would welcome your comments on whether the standards meet the group's aims set out above.

Acknowledgements

3.47 We would like to thank all of the members of the PLG for their involvement. However, we would emphasise that this document remains the property of the Health Professions Council. Any queries about its content should be directed to us; any mistakes in this document remain our responsibility.

4. Draft standards of proficiency for social workers (England)

4.1   Generic standards are shown in **bold** and are not the subject of this consultation. All other standards in the document are profession-specific standards for social workers in England.

4.2   We will publish the standards of proficiency for social workers in England before we open our Register for social workers. When we publish the standards we also publish an introduction to the standards setting out their role and function. You can find examples of the existing standards on our website here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/standardsofproficiency/.

Consultation questions

4.3   We would welcome your response to our consultation and have listed some questions to help you. The questions are not designed to be exhaustive and we would welcome your comments on any related issue. Please provide reasons alongside your answers where possible.

1. Do you think the standards are at a threshold level necessary for safe and effective practice?
2. Do you think any additional standards are necessary?
3. Do you think there are any standards which should be reworded?
4. Do you have any comments about the language within the standards?
5. Do you have any other comments on the standards?

No.	Standard
1	**be able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice**
1.1	know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
1.2	recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly
1.3	be able to undertake assessments of risk, need and capacity and respond appropriately
1.4	be able to recognise and respond appropriately to unexpected situations and manage uncertainty
2	**be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**
2.1	understand current legislation applicable to the work of their profession
2.2	understand the need to promote the best interests of service users at all times
2.3	understand the need to protect and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults
2.4	be able to manage potentially competing or conflicting interests
2.5	be able to exercise authority as a social worker within the appropriate legal and ethical frameworks and boundaries
2.6	understand the need to respect and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user
2.7	recognise that relationships with service users should be based on respect and openness
2.8	understand what is required of them by the Health and Care Professions Council[13]
3	**be able to maintain fitness to practise**
3.1	understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct
3.2	understand the importance of maintaining their own health and well-being
3.3	understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning
3.4	be able to establish and maintain personal and professional boundaries
3.5	be able to manage the physical and emotional impact of their practice
4	**be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**
4.1	be able to assess a situation, determine its nature and severity and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with it
4.2	be able to initiate resolution of issues and be able to exercise personal initiative
4.3	recognise where they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions
4.4	be able to make informed judgements on complex issues using the information available
4.5	be able to make and receive referrals appropriately

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[13] Subject to parliamentary agreement, the Health Professions Council will be renamed the Health and Care Professions Council.

5	**be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice**
5.1	be able to reflect on and take account of the impact of inequality, disadvantage and discrimination on those who use social work services and their communities
5.2	understand the need to adapt practice to respond appropriately to different groups and individuals
6	**be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner**
6.1	be able to work with others to promote social justice
6.2	be able to use practice to challenge and address the impact of discrimination and disadvantage
7	**be able to maintain confidentiality**
7.1	be able to understand and explain the limits of confidentiality
7.2	be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users or the wider public
8	**be able to communicate effectively**
8.1	be able to use interpersonal skills and appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others
8.2	be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating advice, instruction, information and professional opinion to colleagues and service users
8.3	understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions or to understand the decisions made
8.4	understand how communication skills affect the assessment of and engagement with service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, capacity, physical ability and learning ability
8.5	be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by disability, culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
8.6	understand the need to draw upon available resources and services to support service users' communication, wherever possible
8.7	be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the international English language testing system, with no element below 6.5
8.8	be able to engage in inter-agency communication and communication across professional and organisational boundaries
8.9	be able to prepare and present formal reports in line with applicable protocols and guidelines

9	**be able to work appropriately with others**
9.1	understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships with service users and colleagues as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively with others
9.2	be able to work with service users to enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources
9.3	be able to work with service users to promote individual growth, development and independence
9.4	be able to support the development of networks, groups and communities to meet needs and outcomes
9.5	be able to work in partnership with others, including those working in other agencies and roles
9.6	be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team
9.7	be able to support the learning and development of others
10	**be able to maintain records appropriately**
10.1	be able to keep accurate, comprehensible records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
10.2	recognise the need to manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
11	**be able to reflect on and review practice**
11.1	understand the value of critical reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection appropriately
11.2	recognise the value of supervision, case reviews and other methods of reflection and review
12	**be able to assure the quality of their practice**
12.1	be able to use supervision to support and enhance the quality of their social work practice
12.2	be able to contribute to processes designed to evaluate service and individual outcomes
12.3	be able to engage in evidence informed practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
13	**understand the key concepts of the knowledge base which are relevant to their profession**
13.1	recognise the roles of other professions, practitioners and organisations
13.2	be aware of the different social contexts and settings within which social work operates
13.3	be aware of changes in demography and culture and their impact on social work

13.4	understand in relation to social work practice:
	• social work theory
	• social work models and interventions
	• the development and application of relevant law and social policy
	• the development of social work and social work values
	• human growth and development across the lifespan
	• the impact of injustice, social inequalities, policies and other issues which impact on the demand for social work services
	• the relevance of psychological, environmental and physiological perspectives to understanding personal and social development and functioning
	• concepts of empowerment
	• the relevance of sociological perspectives to understanding societal and structural influences on human behaviour
14	**be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice**
14.1	be able to gather, analyse, critically evaluate and use information and knowledge to make recommendations or modify their viewpoint
14.2	be able to select and use appropriate assessment tools
14.3	be able to prepare, implement, review, evaluate and revise plans to meet needs and circumstances
14.4	be able to use social work methods and models to achieve change and development and improve life opportunities
14.5	be aware of a range of research methodologies
14.6	recognise the value of research and analysis and be able to evaluate such evidence to inform their own practice
14.7	be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice
14.8	be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments or changing contexts
15	**be able to establish and maintain a safe practice environment**
15.1	understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
15.2	be aware of applicable health and safety legislation and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
15.3	be able to work safely in challenging environments including being able to take appropriate actions to manage risk
15.4	be able to address behaviour which presents a risk to or from service users, the public or themselves