

Guidance for newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) on consolidating and continuing to develop their social work knowledge, skills, and values

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Introduction

NQSWs must meet their personal and professional responsibility for consolidating and continuing to develop their social work knowledge, skills and values. Their employers have a key role in supporting them to meet this responsibility.

This guidance sets out important information about how you, as a NQSW, can meet the registration requirements. It will also help you to plan your learning and consider how you might evidence the stated requirements, including how you contribute to the protection of children and adults from harm.

You should also refer to our website www.sssc.uk.com to make sure you are aware of the role your employer is expected to play in supporting you through your early professional learning and development.

NQSWs requirements and responsibilities

Our Registration Rules set out the requirements that all registered NQSWs must meet to make sure they continue to be suitable for registration.

The Registration Rules state:

1. Every registered social worker must undertake post registration training and learning consisting of study, training, courses, seminars, reading, teaching or other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance the social worker's professional development, or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole.
2. The amount of training and learning to be undertaken is:
 - a. in the case of a newly qualified social worker, 24 days (144 hours)
 - b. in any other case, 15 days (90 hours).
3. At least 5 days (30 hours) of this training and learning activity shall focus on working effectively with colleagues and other professionals to identify, assess and manage risk to vulnerable groups. This is in order to ensure that they are assisted to meet their primary responsibility of protecting children and adults from harm.
4. The training and learning must be completed:
 - a. in the case of a newly qualified social worker contracted to work 35 or more hours per week, within 12 months of the date of registration
 - b. in the case of a newly qualified social worker contracted to work less than 35 hours per week, within 18 months of that date
 - c. in the case of any other social worker, within the period of registration.
5. A newly qualified social worker must submit to the SSSC, on the approved form, details of the training and learning undertaken, how it has assisted the social worker to consolidate their social work knowledge skills and values and how, in particular, it has developed their ability to contribute to child protection and adult protection.



6. The form must be submitted:

- a. in the case of a newly qualified social worker contracted to work 35 or more hours per week, within 14 months of the date of registration;
- b. in the case of a newly qualified social worker contracted to work less than 35 hours per week, within 20 months of that date.

7. In each of years 2 and 3 of a newly qualified social worker's registration period the social worker must complete 5 days (30 hours) of study, training, courses, seminars, reading, teaching or other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance the social worker's professional development or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole.

13. Every worker must keep a record of the training and learning undertaken.

14. Failure to comply with this Schedule may be treated by the SSSC as impairment of fitness to practise.

- Training and learning requirements are set out in the Registration Rules in days (24) and hours (144) to show that the time does not have to be made up of full days of activity.
- There must be a focus on protecting both child and adults from harm.
- Training and learning will be recorded on or attached to the Record of Achievement Declaration Form.
- Your line manager must review and confirm your Record of Achievement Declaration Form before submission

Employer support for NQSWs to meet the requirements

Under the SSSC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers, we expect employers of NQSWs to support staff to meet our eligibility criteria for registration and requirements for continuing professional development.

The focus should be on providing learning and development opportunities that will help NQSWs understand the objectives and responsibilities of their organisation, to meet the requirements of their post and to grow in confidence in applying and consolidating their social work skills, knowledge and values.

Continuous professional learning

Continuous professional learning and development of practice can take many forms, including formal and informal learning. It is important to achieve a balance between formal learning, work experience, shadowing, research, self-directed learning, supervision, and experiential learning when evidencing the stated requirements.

There must be at least five days (30 hours) which focus on working effectively with colleagues and other professionals to identify, assess and manage risk to vulnerable groups in order to make sure all social workers are helped to meet their primary responsibility of protecting children **and** adults from harm.

- Any training or learning activity should help you to consolidate your social work knowledge, skills, and values.
- Alongside you employer find a range of formal and informal learning opportunities to effectively consolidate your knowledge, skills, and values rather than relying on one method of learning.

The following are examples of the range of opportunities that may support the consolidation of your learning.

- Induction to build knowledge about your employing organisation and its policies, procedures and governance and consolidate your understanding of the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers.
- Exploring/visiting local services to learn about them and meet staff.
- Attending specific training courses. These could be accredited or non-accredited and cover a range of areas relevant to your role as a NQSW, including opportunities for networking and inter/multi professional training, post-qualifying training in areas such as child protection work and passing on knowledge you have gained to others in your organisation or beyond.
- Shadowing colleagues in your employing organisation or in related services, to better understand roles and relationships.
- Reading across a range of areas including:
 - appropriately referenced legislation and government policies which inform current practice and service development
 - research to inform practice from texts, professional journals or the internet
 - reports from regulatory agencies such as the Care Inspectorate
 - relevant literature to improve knowledge of applied professional practice.
- Other self-directed learning including independent study, online research/study and discussion with experienced colleagues/advisors/managers.

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- Supervision, team meetings, development time, work, seminars which demonstrate a reflective approach to learning.
- Experiential learning as a result of practice you have carried out where you can identify specific examples of where you have enhanced your knowledge, skills or values. For example, in taking on new or additional responsibilities or having a period of secondment in another context.
- Open badges¹.
- Self-evaluation and critical reflection processes.
- Experiential, action or enquiry-based learning.
- Professional dialogue with colleagues, other professionals and people who use services.
- Focused professional reading and research.
- Leading or engaging in practitioner enquiry/action research.
- Critical analysis of reading, learning and impact on professional practice.
- Peer support, for example coaching or mentoring.
- Peer observation.
- Online learning/blogs/ documentaries.
- Participation in collaborative activity.
- Leading or participating in a working or task group.
- Masters study and qualifications.
- Accredited courses or activity related to achieving National Occupational Standards (NOS).
- Professional conferences.

¹ Open Badges are digital certificates recognising learning and achievement. If you can demonstrate that you have learned from materials produced by the SSSC you can earn an Open Badge. Read more at: <http://badges.sssc.uk.com>



Planning your learning

The purpose of the requirement is to support the continuous learning, consolidation and advancement of the knowledge, skills and values required to carry out the professional social work role over the NQSW period.

- Plan your learning with your supervisor by reflecting on and discussing the individual learning plan you completed at the end of your professional qualifying programme, particularly the learning needs identified.

Make sure you can account for at least the required 144 hours or 24 days, including 30 hours or five days specifically related to **both** protection of children and adults from harm, and that your training and learning has been carried out after your date of registration as a social worker.

Reflect on how to evidence the SSSC Codes of Practice which set out:

- the standards of practice and behaviour expected of everyone who works in social services in Scotland
- the standards expected of employers of social service workers in Scotland.

Refer to the [SSSC NQSW website](#) which has lots of information and resources for newly qualified social workers and their supervisors.

Refer to the [Continuous Learning Framework](#) when planning your learning and development. The Continuous Learning Framework is made up of four elements: qualifications and training; knowledge, skills, values and understanding; personal capabilities; organisational capabilities.

Refer to the Leadership Capabilities for Frontline Workers as set out in the [Step into Leadership](#) resource. The six leadership capabilities are: vision, self-leadership, motivating and inspiring, empowering, creativity and innovation and collaborating and influencing. The capabilities show the different elements that make up effective leadership in social services.

Become familiar with the range of learning resources on the SSSC [Learning Zone](#) website to develop your skills.

Revisit your learning needs on a regular basis and identify what you have consolidated and where the gaps are.

What is reflection

Throughout your recent training to achieve your professional qualification in social work you will have learned how to think, write and act reflectively. This continues into your professional career and it is worth reiterating what the term **reflection** means now that you are likely to be working in a more pressurised context.

Knott and Scragg (eds, 2007) (p5) seek to clarify reflection. They refer to the earlier writing of John Dewey in the 1930s who thought that 'reflection is the continual re-



evaluation of personal beliefs, assumptions and ideas in the light of experience and data and the generation of alternative interpretations of those experiences and data’.

They also list a range of possible outcomes from the reflective process, identified by Moon in 2004.

- Learning, knowledge and understanding.
- Some form of action.
- A process of critical review.
- Personal and continuing professional development.
- Reflection on the process of learning or personal functioning.
- The building of theory from observations in practice situations.
- The making of decisions and resolution of uncertainty, the solving of problems, empowerment and emancipation.
- Unexpected outcomes (for example images, ideas that could be solutions to dilemmas or seen as creative activity).
- Emotion (that can be an outcome or can be part of the process).
- Clarification and the recognition that there is a need for further reflection.

What is consolidation

When recording your learning, we ask that you **‘state how the recorded training and learning has consolidated your social work knowledge, skills and values’**.

What we mean by consolidate is that you need to demonstrate **how** what you have learned has helped you to put into practice, or has built on, or has reinforced, the knowledge, skills and values you have learned and developed, either at university or through other forms of training or learning.

You can demonstrate this consolidation of your knowledge, skills and values in a variety of ways. The following list, which is not exhaustive, provides some examples of how you can do this.

- Give brief, specific examples of how you have put the knowledge, skills and values into practice, for example describe a piece of work about people who use services and how your learning helped your work with them, for example ‘this led me to consider a different means of communicating with a young man with autism’. To protect the confidentiality of people who use services all examples should be anonymous.
- Relate your learning to previous learning, for example by reading your organisation’s child protection procedures. You can refer to the child protection modules and inputs in your qualifying course and explain how your recent learning has helped you to make more sense of the theory as you apply it to your practice.
- Demonstrate the links between your learning and your current role, organisational policies and procedures or external policy documents and legislation, for example if you attend a briefing on new legislation you could relate this to your current case load, your organisation’s procedures and other

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relevant legislation. The links you make, and how, will depend on your individual circumstances and professional context.

- Demonstrate how your learning relates to the professional standards that you apply to your work, particularly the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers.
- Demonstrate how you have reflected on your learning in the context of the Continuous Learning Framework and the Leadership Capabilities (Step into Leadership).
- You may reflect on changes you have made to your practice as a result of what you have learned, for example by learning more about a specific disability, you may be able to provide more appropriate support to people who use services than you have before.
- Demonstrate how your learning has led you to challenge and further develop your values and practice, for example you may recall an incident where you spoke to someone in a particular way, but attending a communication skills training session has helped you reconsider the appropriateness of what you said or how you said it.
- Describe how your learning from reading a professional journal or research has had a direct impact on your practice.
- Demonstrate how you have passed on knowledge you have gained to others, for example by attending a conference or workshop and disseminating the information in a meaningful way to relevant colleagues.
- Demonstrate how carrying out a specific and new task has improved existing knowledge, skills and values.
- Demonstrate how you have used supervision to reflect on and improve the knowledge skills and values you use in your practice.

You can use the above examples as a guide when recording your learning and we advise you to draw your learning from a range of methods.

Essentially what you are doing is reflecting on:

- what you have learned
- how the learning has enabled you to consolidate your social work knowledge, skills and values
- how you have put this learning into practice in your job
- how your learning has contributed to and advanced your professional development as a social worker.

The role of supervision in learning

Supervision provides an ideal opportunity for you to reflect on and discuss issues with your line manager, although you may reflect on your learning at any time. Similarly, having an appraisal can provide appropriate learning. It may be useful for you to note down your thoughts as you go and then refer to them when completing your declaration. We recommend doing this throughout the year rather than waiting until you must submit your completed declaration.

Protection of both children and adults from harm

It is the primary responsibility of social workers, including NQSWs, to protect adults and children from harm.

You must provide evidence that you have carried out at least five days, or 30 hours, training and learning which focus on working effectively with colleagues and other professionals to identify, assess and manage risk to vulnerable groups in order to make sure that you are helped to meet your primary responsibility of protecting children **and** adults from harm.

It is important to understand that this requirement applies to **both** children and adults irrespective of your current work context. For example, it is important that a NQSW working in a criminal justice team understands and is prepared to meet their responsibilities in relation to child protection. It is equally important that a NQSW working in a childcare team understands and is prepared to meet their responsibilities in relation to adult protection.

There is no set balance between child and adult protection. We recognise your present job role and specific responsibilities may mean the focus of your training and learning may be more on the protection of children or adults. However, it is essential that your evidence covers both adults and children.

This is an opportunity to make sure that as a NQSW, you are aware of, and fully understand, your employer's child and adult protection policies and procedures and your specific responsibilities in relation to these. It is important to remember that the protection of children and adults is not just about legislation. Learning about issues such as domestic abuse, mental health and drug misuse issues, for example, can also contribute to your learning and understanding of wider protection concerns.

Recording your learning

We recommend that you record your learning activities, critical analysis, and reflection throughout your registration period. This will help you to recall and authentically reflect on how that learning experience has helped consolidate your practice.

You may wish to record your learning as a reflective learning log such the [NQSW Record of Achievement declaration form](#), use [MyLearning](#) app² or both.

In all cases, when completing each learning experience, make sure you provide more than a description. It is not sufficient to record you have attended training, supervision sessions and team meetings or the learning outcomes from training. You should reflect on how this learning is helping you consolidate your social work, knowledge, skills and values, including a consideration of ethical dilemmas and use of self. This is how you will most effectively demonstrate the requirements and will also provide you with a meaningful record of your progress during the NQSW period.

Record of Achievement declaration form.

When requested you will need to submit the [NQSW Record of Achievement declaration form](#).

This form contains information about dates, learning hours and the declaration that must be signed by you and your line manager.

It is also a useful learning log template that can be used as the main way to record your learning over the NQSW period.

In addition, you may wish to use the MyLearning app to record some or all your learning. As the app is designed to capture learning on the go, please remember to revisit these entries and expand on your reflection as detailed above.

If you use MyLearning to capture your learning, you will need to provide a link to your journal on the Record of Achievement declaration form or upload a PDF version to MySSSC when you upload the Record of Achievement declaration form.

You can also include links to relevant [Open Badges](#)³ that you have completed as part of your evidence.

To make sure we are aware of the amount of learning included in your MyLearning journal you will need to include a minimum of 2 entries on the Record of Achievement declaration form, setting out the date range, hours for general learning and child and adult protection. An example is shown in Figure 1 below.

If you want to include learning from OpenBadges, please complete the dates, duration of learning, name of badge and link to badge or badges.

² Our MyLearning app is a free smartphone app to help capture learning on the go.

³ OpenBadges are digital records of achievement and skills that are tied to assessment and evidence which you can link to the Record of Achievement declaration form or link to your MyLearning journal.



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Further guidance on how to do this is available on the NQSW website and [MyLearning \(sssc.uk.com\)](https://sssc.uk.com).

Figure 1. Recording MyLearning Journal on Record of Achievement declaration form

Date		Duration in hours (1 day = 6 hours)	Details of training and learning activity (including where appropriate name of training provider or learning activity)	Please reflect on how this learning helped consolidate your social work knowledge, skills and values.
From	To	Hours		
15 March 2021	14 March 2022	136	Various – detailed in MyLearning journal	Detailed in MyLearning journal – link/ attachment below

TRAINING AND LEARNING IN RELATION TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS FROM HARM

Date		Duration in hours (1 day = 6 hours)	Details of training and learning activity (including where appropriate name of training provider or learning activity)	Please reflect on how the learning has assisted you to contribute to the protection of children <u>and</u> adults from harm
From	To	Hours		
15 March 2021	14 March 2022	57	Various – detailed in MyLearning journal	Detailed in MyLearning journal – link/ attachment below

I recorded all or part of my CPL using MyLearning app and have attached log or inserted a link here EW test CPL NQSW Journal	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
--	---

Please remember that you can have entries directly recorded onto the record of achievement form as well as noting those in you MyLearning journal and links to any relevant OpenBadges.

For the purpose of the requirements one day equals six hours. If the training and learning activity takes place over more than one day, you must record both the start and end date for this activity. Keeping detailed records and all certificates/attendance records to make filling in your submission easier.

Please refer to the variety of professional learning opportunities listed above, including supervision and team meetings.

Submitting evidence of your learning

At the end of your NQSW period we will send a reminder that you are due to submit the record of your learning, information on how to do this and where and when to send it.

Remember you are required to complete 144 hours or 24 days of learning in the first 12 months (for NQSWs in full time employment) or 18 months (for NQSWs not in full time employment) of your registration and submit the completed and signed Record of Achievement Declaration Form and any additional learning records (if used).

Qualified social workers must demonstrate the ability to manage and be accountable for their own social work practice, which includes the maintenance of accurate, complete and up to date records. We expect each declaration will be clear, accurate and fully completed.

You must submit your Record of Achievement Declaration Form signed by you and your line manager.

In circumstances where it is not possible to get a physical or electronic signature from a manager, an email from them stating they have read and agree the record will be enough.

Please remember to attach copies of any learning you have recorded in other formats.

What happens next?

When you submit your completed form, we will check to make sure you have completed the required number of hours and days and you have signed the declaration.

A SSSC Learning and Development Adviser will then review your submission to ensure it meets all the requirements.

If you meet your requirements, we will write to tell you, normally within eight weeks of submission.

If you haven't met your requirements, we will write to you with clear guidance about what additional evidence is required and the timescale in which you must submit it.

If your submission is deemed not to have met the requirements, you will be asked to provide a supplementary statement. The supplementary statement should provide additional reflection on the way in which the training and learning has enabled you to consolidate your social work knowledge, skills and values (or component parts of this as identified by the reviewer) and how this has enhanced your practice. It could take one of the following forms.

- An overview of the overall training and learning and how this has developed your knowledge and skills and helped you to manage value and or ethical dilemmas.

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- A reflection on specific entries that are very brief and provide only description of content of the training and learning, the reviewer will give examples of some of these.
- If the level of reflection is generally poor, you may be asked to add to each of the entries to develop the reflection across the whole Record of Achievement Declaration Form.
- If you have not met the requirement for adult and child protection, you will be asked to submit a supplementary statement to reflect on how your training and learning has helped you to protect adults or children, as both must be met.

In submitting a supplementary statement, you should reflect on how your training and learning has supported the development of your practice. It is helpful to illustrate your developments by reference to practice examples. These should be anonymised.

Although completion and submission of the Record of Achievement Declaration Form is compulsory, we recognise there may be exceptional circumstances, such as an extended period of sick leave, that would leave you unable to fully complete your record. In such circumstances you should provide a full explanation in writing to us to explain why you haven't completed the requirement. We will consider this and ask your employer to comment before deciding whether to grant an extension.

References

Knott, C and Scragg, T (eds) (2007) Reflective Practice in Social Work. Exeter. Learning Matters Ltd.

Moon, J (2004) A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice. Abington, Routledge

Scottish Executive (2003) The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland. Edinburgh, Crown Office.

Scottish Social Services Council (2016) Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers of Social Service Workers. Dundee.

Scottish Social Services Council (2003) Rules for Social Work Training. Schedule 3.

Contact us

If you have any queries about completing or recording your training and learning requirements, please contact the SSSC's Registration Team:

Telephone: 0345 60 30 891 Monday to Friday 10am – 5pm

Email: registration@sssc.uk.com

If you would like to request this document in another format, please phone us on 0345 60 30 891 or email registration@sssc.uk.com



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