Scottish Social Services Council

Codes of Practice

for Social Service Workers and Employers



Revised 2016

About the Codes

We first published the Codes in 2003, setting out the national standards of conduct and practice that apply to all social service workers. The 2016 revised Codes is the second edition and takes account of developments in social services policy and practice.

Introduction

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice (the Codes) 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.

In setting out these standards, the Codes are a tool for employers and for workers to use to think about how they can continually improve their practice. The Codes let people who use social services and carers know what they can expect from the workers who support them.

The Codes are in two parts

The two Codes are presented together because they are complementary and mirror the joint responsibilities of both employers and workers in meeting the standards.

1. Code for Employers of Social Service Workers

If you are an employer, the Code for Employers of Social Service Workers sets out your responsibilities for making sure your workforce is trusted, skilled and confident. You have a responsibility to support your workers to achieve the standards set out in the Code for Social Service Workers and should use both parts of the Codes as a tool for continuous improvement.

2. Code for Social Service Workers

If you work in social services, the Code for Social Service Workers sets out clear standards that you are expected to meet. It is your responsibility to meet these standards and you should use the Code to reflect on your practice and identify how you can continually improve.

Why are the Codes important?

Public protection and regulating the workforce

The Codes, along with the National Care Standards, are an important part of regulating and improving the quality of care experienced by people using social services.

All employers and workers must make a commitment to work in line with the Codes of Practice.

The SSSC regulates the workforce and aims to make sure that the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

The Care Inspectorate regulates organisations which employ workers and provide registered care services. The Care Inspectorate also provides advice and promotes good practice to improve standards across the social service sector.

When a registered worker or employer does not meet the expectations set out in the Codes, action may be taken by the SSSC (for workers), or by the Care Inspectorate (for employers). The SSSC can take action against workers through our fitness to practise process. The Care Inspectorate gives advice to care service providers on following the Codes and, if necessary, can take action against employers.

Supporting good practice every day

The Codes are a tool for continuous improvement and improving practice. For example you can use them:

- to support regular Codes discussions at team meetings
- during induction and for staff learning and development
- to reflect on current practice.

Resources and ideas to support improvement are online at **www.sssc.uk.com**

Scottish Social Services Council

Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers



1 **As a social service employer, you must make sure people are suitable to be social service workers and that they understand their roles and responsibilities.**



You will

1.1 Use thorough recruitment processes to make sure that only suitable people with appropriate attitudes and values, and the potential to gain the necessary knowledge and skills, enter the workforce.

1.2 Check criminal records and registers and follow relevant guidance when assessing whether a person is capable of carrying out the duties of the job they have been selected for. You must do this before you appoint them.

1.3 Ask for and provide accurate and appropriate references to share information relating to a person's suitability to work in social services.

1.4 Give workers clear information about their roles and responsibilities, relevant legislation and the policies and procedures they must follow in their work.

2

As a social service employer, you must have the culture and systems in place to support social service workers to meet their Code of Practice.



You will

2.1 Put into action and monitor written policies and procedures, particularly about reporting allegations of harm or abuse to the relevant authority.

2.2 Effectively manage and supervise social service workers to promote best practice and good conduct and support staff to continuously improve their performance and make sure they are fit to practise.

2.3 Have systems in place to listen to and consider feedback from people who use services, carers and other relevant people, to shape and improve services and the performance of social service workers.

2.4 Have systems in place for social service workers to report inadequate resources or difficulties which might have a negative effect on the delivery of care. Work with social service workers and relevant authorities to tackle such problems.

2.5 Have systems in place to support workers to whistleblow when they feel that working practices are inappropriate or unsafe for any reason.

2.6 Support social service workers to meet the standards in their Code of Practice and not require them to do anything that might prevent that from happening.

2.7 If you employ workers from other professions, support them to meet their own professional codes.

2.8 Report workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired to the relevant authority.

3

As a social service employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable social service workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge.



You will

3.1 Provide good quality induction, learning and development opportunities to help social service workers do their jobs effectively and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities.

3.2 Contribute to providing social care and social work education and learning, including effective workplace assessments and practice learning.

3.3 Support staff who need to be registered with us to meet the conditions for registration and the requirement for continuing professional development.

3.4 Respond appropriately to social service workers who need support because they do not feel able to, or well enough prepared to, carry out their work.

3.5 Provide effective, regular supervision to social service workers to support them to develop and improve through reflective practice.

4

As a social service employer, you must have written policies and procedures in place to protect people who use services and carers, and to support social service workers.



You will

4.1 Make it clear to social service workers that bullying, harassment or any form of discrimination is not acceptable and take action to deal with such behaviour.

4.2 Have procedures in place for social service workers to report:

- when a colleague's fitness to practise may be impaired
- exploitation or any dangerous, discriminatory or abusive behaviour or practice
- when care has caused, or may have caused, physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss.

4.3 Deal with reports and allegations from social service workers promptly, effectively and openly.

4.4 Make it clear to social service workers, people who use services and carers that violence, threats or abuse are not acceptable. Have clear policies and procedures for reducing the risk of violence and managing violent incidents.

4.5 Support social service workers who experience trauma or violence in their work.

4.6 Put into action written policies and procedures that promote the wellbeing and equality of workers and respect diversity.

4.7 Provide appropriate support to social service workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired and give clear guidance about any limits on their work while they are receiving support or treatment. While doing this you must make sure that the care and safety of people who use services is your priority.

4.8 Make sure that where care has or may have caused physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss, this is reported to the appropriate authorities.

5

As a social service employer, you must publicise and promote the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers to people who use services and carers and cooperate with us in our proceedings.



You will

5.1 Inform social service workers about this Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers and your responsibility to keep to it.

5.2 Inform social service workers about the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and their responsibility to keep to it.

5.3 Make people who use services and carers aware of the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and inform them how to raise issues relating to the Codes, including how to contact us and cooperate with any proceedings resulting from this.

5.4 Take account of the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers when making any decision that relates to a worker's fitness to practise.

5.5 Follow guidance on making a referral to the SSSC about a worker whose fitness to practise may be impaired. If appropriate, tell the worker that you have made a referral.

5.6 Cooperate with SSSC investigations and those of other authorities, including providing documents, attending hearings and responding to the findings and decisions.

5.7 Enable and support social service workers to cooperate with SSSC investigations and those of other authorities (for example, to provide witness statements, documents or other information and, where appropriate, attend hearings).

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Code of Practice for Social Service Workers

1 **As a social service worker, I must protect and promote the rights and interests of people who use services and carers.**



I will

1.1 Treat each person as an individual.

1.2 Respect and, where appropriate, promote the views and wishes of people who use services and carers.

1.3 Support the rights of people who use services to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they use.

1.4 Respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of people who use services.

1.5 Work in a way that promotes diversity and respects different cultures and values.

2 **As a social service worker, I must create and maintain the trust and confidence of people who use services and carers.**



I will

2.1 Be truthful, open, honest and trustworthy.

2.2 Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.

2.3 Respect confidential information and clearly explain my employer's policies about confidentiality to people who use services and carers.

2.4 Be reliable and dependable.

2.5 Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to people who use services, carers and my employer.

2.6 Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure they do not influence my judgement or practice.

2.7 Keep to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from people who use services and carers.

3

As a social service worker, I must promote the independence of people who use services while protecting them, as far as possible, from danger and harm.

I will

3.1 Promote the independence of people who use services and empower them to understand and exercise their rights.

3.2 Use established processes and procedures to report allegations of harm and challenge and report exploitation and any dangerous, abusive or discriminatory behaviour or practice.

3.3 Follow practices and procedures designed to keep me and other people safe from violent and abusive behaviour at work.

3.4 Tell my employer, or the appropriate authority, about any resourcing or operational difficulties that might get in the way of providing care.

3.5 Tell my employer, or an appropriate authority, when a colleague's fitness to practise may be impaired.

3.6 Be open and honest with my employer, people who use services and carers when care has or may have caused physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss.

3.7 Cooperate with any investigations by my employer, the SSSC or another authority into my fitness to practise or the fitness to practise of others. This may include attending hearings and providing witness statements, documents or other information.

3.8 Keep to my employer's health and safety policies, including those relating to substance misuse.

3.9 Enable people who use services and carers to make complaints. Take complaints seriously and either respond to them or pass them to the appropriate person. Take appropriate action when there is an allegation of harm.

3.10 Recognise and use responsibly the power and authority I have when working with people who use services and carers.

4 **As a social service worker, I must respect the rights of people who use services, while striving to make sure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.**



I will

4.1 Recognise that people who use services have the right to take risks and support them to work positively with potential and actual risks to themselves or others.

4.2 Follow risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of people who use services presents a risk of harm to themselves or others.

4.3 Take necessary steps to reduce the risks of people who use services harming themselves or other people.

4.4 Make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.

5

As a social service worker, I must uphold public trust and confidence in social services.



I will not

5.1 Abuse, neglect or harm people who use services, carers or my colleagues.

5.2 Exploit people who use services, carers or my colleagues.

5.3 Abuse the trust of people who use services or carers, or the access I have to personal information about them or their property, home or workplace.

5.4 Form inappropriate relationships with people who use services or carers.

5.5 Discriminate against people who use services, carers or my colleagues.

5.6 Condone any discrimination by people who use services, carers or my colleagues.

5.7 Put myself or other people at unnecessary risk.

5.8 Behave, while in or outside work, in a way which would bring my suitability to work in social services into question.

6

As a social service worker, I am accountable for the quality of my work and will take responsibility for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills.



I will

6.1 Meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way.

6.2 Maintain clear, accurate and up-to-date records in line with procedures relating to my work.

6.3 Tell my employer or the appropriate authority about any personal difficulties that might affect my ability to do my job competently and safely, and tell the SSSC about anything that may affect my fitness to practise.

6.4 Ask for assistance from my employer or the appropriate authority if I do not feel able to, or well enough prepared to, carry out any part of my work or if I am not sure about how to proceed.

6.5 Work openly with and cooperate with colleagues and treat them with respect.

6.6 Recognise that I remain responsible for the work that I have delegated to others.

6.7 Recognise and respect the roles and expertise of workers from other professions and work in partnership with them.

6.8 Respect the responsibilities of colleagues who follow different professional codes.

6.9 Undertake relevant learning to maintain and improve my knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.

6.10 Listen to feedback from people who use services, carers and other relevant people and consider that feedback to improve my practice.

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These Codes apply from 1 November 2016 and replace all previous versions.

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The Codes give examples of practice, conduct and behaviour but will not include every possible type of behaviour you may come across.

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