

Conclusion

National Occupational Standards will help develop a skilled workforce and a better quality of service. This will benefit the people who use services and those who provide them.

For further information about National Occupational Standards for social care workers contact:

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Occupational Standards

Information Leaflet

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Social care workers* become involved in the lives of people at points in their life when they need help to deal with either short-term or longer term challenges. This ranges from parents caring for children, to those requiring personal care to assist them to live independently in their own homes.

Peoples' experiences of social services can be very different across the country. This is further complicated by a lack of understanding about what social care workers do and the services they can provide. At times this has led to unclear expectations about the roles and responsibilities of workers. It is for these reasons the Government is introducing new ways of working which promote partnership and improved communication with people who use social services.

There is also a growing emphasis on agreeing the standards people can expect from social services irrespective of where they live. These new ways of working are taking place in other jobs as well e.g. nursing and teaching and have resulted in the development of what are called National Occupational Standards.

*Social care workers: this includes social workers; direct care workers, (e.g. home-helps) and managers.

National Occupational Standards

What are they?

Occupational Standards describe best practice and provide the information to help people to:

- Be clear about what social care workers are expected to do
- Make informed judgments about the worker's competence and conduct
- Make informed judgments about the service received

As these are national standards, social care workers in Portsmouth, Sterling, Cardiff, Birmingham, Belfast or Enniskillen will be working to the same standards.

How will they be used?

Occupational Standards will be used to improve the quality and consistency of the service.

They will be used to:

- Ensure standards of practice are the same in each part of the country
- Promote partnership and communication
- Define how tasks should be carried out
- Supervise staff
- Recruit staff

Occupational Standards and you?

Occupational Standards have the potential to affect users of services, carers, staff, managers, the public and other professionals in a variety of ways.

Users of service and Carers: will know what to expect of the service, which enables them to give feedback about the quality of the service received.

Staff: will be clear about their roles and responsibilities, which enables them to work in a purposeful and focused way.

Managers: will have agreed standards to monitor and evaluate individual practice, which enables them to improve the quality and consistency of practice.

The Public: will be clear about what social care workers are expected to do, which will promote clarity and understanding.

Standards for all?

Northern Ireland Social Care Council was established in October 2001 to register all social care workers. The Council, is responsible for making sure that staff are working to the agreed Occupational Standards. There will be a phased registration process. Staff who are registered with the Council will be expected to work to the appropriate Occupational Standards.