



# General Guidance Notes

for social workers trained and qualified outside the UK.

Applications should be completed, if possible, on the Social Care Council portal.

## General Information: Registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council

:

- the Social Care Register;
- the duty of the Social Care Council;
- the qualifications you need for registration;
- your suitability to work in social work;
- payment of your application fee;
- the registration and renewal process; and
- maintaining your registration, including annual fee payments

## Registration helpline

You can contact the registration team for help with any section of the application.

Email: [registration@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:registration@niscc.hscni.net)

Website: [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)

# About the Social Care Register and the Social Care Council

## The Social Care Register

The Social Care Register (SCR or 'Register') was established by the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001. The aim of the Register is to make sure that all social workers, social care workers and student social workers are suitable for work in social care.

A change in the law from June, 2005 means that you need to be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, (Social Care Council), if you wish to work as, or describe yourself as, a social worker in Northern Ireland. This is called 'protection of title'.

As part of our remit, the Social Care Council has developed a set of Registration Rules. You can find a copy of the rules on our website at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).

To be accepted onto the Register as an internationally qualified social worker, you must provide evidence that you are suitable for registration by satisfying the Social Care Council that you:

- have a social work qualification in your country of training that is equivalent to the social work degree in Northern Ireland;
- are physically and mentally fit;
- are of good character and conduct;
- are competent; and
- agree to comply with the 'Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers' which can be found on our website at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).

**Please do not apply /pay a fee until you have read the full guidance document and are satisfied that you have the required level of qualification and training, and meet the English language skill requirements. The application fee is non-refundable.**

## Which Council should I register with?

There are four social work regulatory councils in the UK. Each maintains a register in its own country.

The Councils are:

- The Northern Ireland Social Care Council;
- Social Work England;
- Scottish Social Services Council; and
- Social Care Wales.

**You should apply to the Council in the country where you plan to work.** If you plan to work in more than one country in the UK that includes Northern Ireland, and have already been assessed by another UK regulator, you will still need to apply through our Internationally Qualified Social Worker application route. You need to register in whatever country you plan to work.



## The Public Register

This is the information about registered social workers that is available to members of the public, including employers.

When you are registered, the Public Register will show the following information about you:

- your full name and title;
- your Social Care Register (SCR) number;
- the postal town relating to the address where you are employed or self-employed in the UK; and
- any effective conditions we have imposed on your registration.

You can check who is currently registered by accessing the Public Register at <https://portal.niscc.org/Public-Facing-Register>

## Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers

Under the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001 the Social Care Council is required to be satisfied that an applicant is of good character and conduct, competent, appropriately qualified and physically and mentally fit to work in all or selected social work environments.

The Social Care Council Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers provide the workforce with a core regulatory framework.

- The Standards of Conduct describe the values, attitudes and behaviours expected of workers in their day to day work
- The Standards of Practice outline the knowledge and skills required for competent practice

Every registrant will receive a link to a copy of the Standards when their registration application is approved. PDF copies of the Standards in various formats are available from the <https://niscc.info/standards-and-guidance/>

## Suitability to work in social work

We will undertake a suitability assessment if there is any evidence that calls into question your suitability to work in social work. The criteria used for our suitability assessment are based on our statutory duty to make sure that we register only those people who are of good character and conduct, and who are physically and mentally fit to perform social work. We may ask the Registration Committee to consider the application. The Registration Committee has the power to refuse to register anyone who is not suitable or to impose conditions on registration.

Once registered, social workers are responsible for making sure that their conduct does not fall below the Standards, and that no action or omission on their part harms the well-being of people using social care services.

The Social Care Council expects all social workers to meet the Standards, and may take action if they fail to do so. The Social Care Council will take into account the Standards when considering issues of fitness to practise and decisions as to whether a registered social worker should remain on the Register.

# Qualifications needed for registration

To register, social workers who have trained outside the United Kingdom need to demonstrate that the qualification they hold is of a similar standard to the Northern Ireland social work degree.

You can apply for registration once you:

- have completed your course;
- have been awarded your social work qualification; and
- can provide documentary evidence from the university where you studied and qualified that confirms the date of award.
- can meet English language skills requirements

**If you cannot provide this evidence, you should not apply for registration until you can.**

**Your qualification will be assessed according to the following criteria:**

- Social work in other countries may be a qualification that focuses more on social care, social pedagogy or community education. These generally do not meet the requirements to register as a social worker in Northern Ireland. Regardless of the title of your qualification, your qualification will be compared against the knowledge skills and values required for social work education in Northern Ireland. You can see the Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work 2015 by logging onto our website at [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).
- Supervised and assessed practice in a social work role  
The total minimum period of assessed practice placements in a social work role, which needs to have been supervised and assessed by a qualified Social Worker, completed during your training, should be 130 days (a day is at least six hours).  
If you have completed less than 130 days, the Social Care Council will consider post **qualification** experience in a social work role as part of the assessment process as long as it ensures that the 130-day minimum is met or exceeded.
- The level, length and mode of study of your course  
If you wish to seek advice from UK ECCTIS about the academic level of your training before applying for registration, please see their website: [www.ecctis.com](http://www.ecctis.com)  
While ECCTIS can provide confirmation of whether your qualification is of an academic equivalent, it will not guarantee that it meets our standards as a social work qualification.
- Eligibility to be registered or licensed as a social worker  
You should be eligible to be registered or licensed as a social worker in your country, state or province of training where such a system of registration or licensing exists. If you are registered or licensed, you must provide details in your application.
- Accreditation of your qualification  
Your qualification must be accredited by a recognised social work accrediting body in your country of training, where such a body and accreditation exists. Where such a body does not exist in your country of training, the education institution that awarded your qualification must have been accredited to deliver training by the appropriate authorities.
- **English Language Skills**

Find out what the Social Care Council requires **here** ([add hyperlink to https://nisc.co.uk/english-language-skills-what-the-social-care-council-requires/](https://nisc.co.uk/english-language-skills-what-the-social-care-council-requires/) **please**).  
The ability to communicate effectively in English is essential to working safely and effectively in social work. The Social Care Council need to be confident that you can speak and write in English to a sufficient standard.

### **Documents you shall need to provide with your application:**

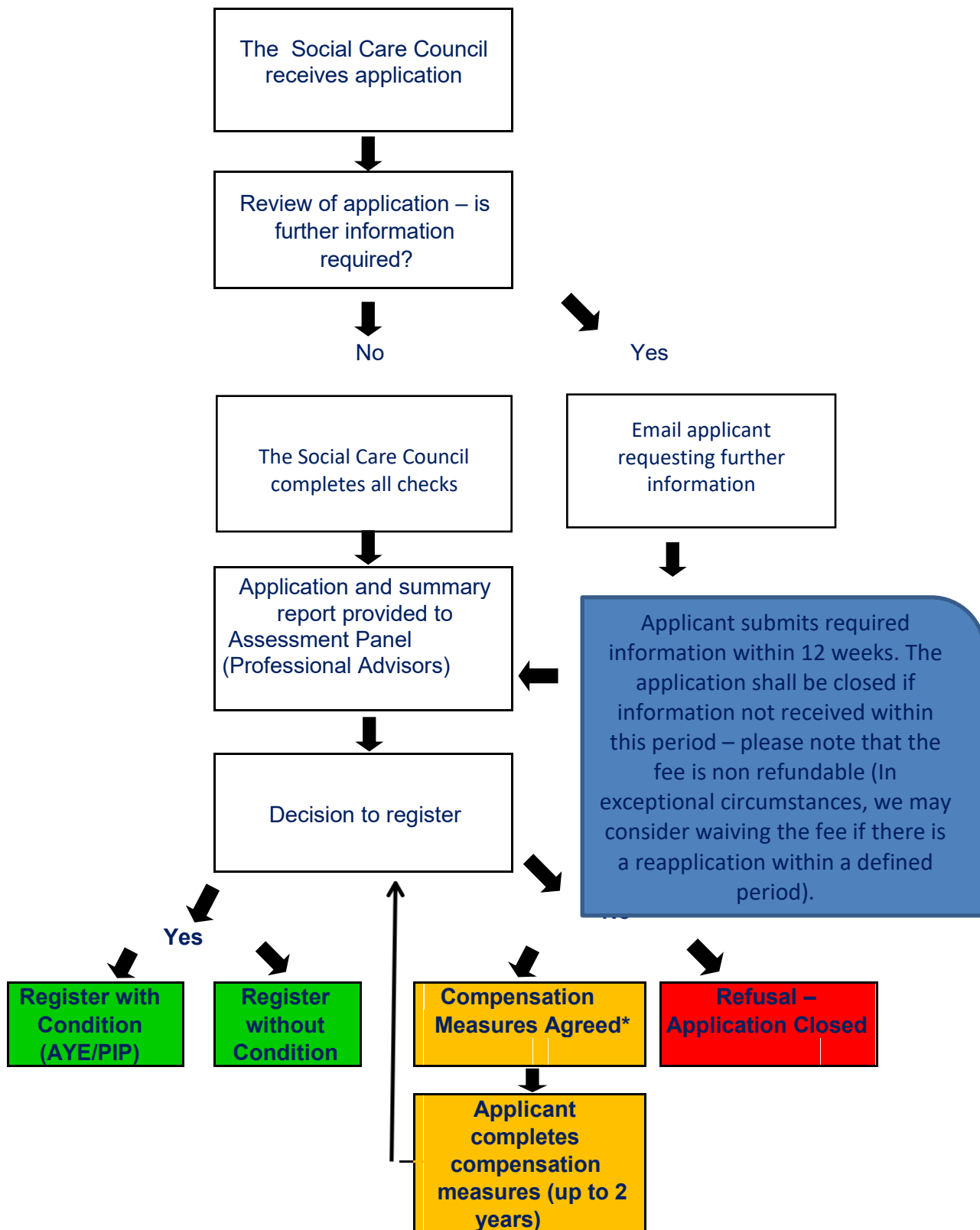
To apply for registration as an internationally qualified social worker you shall need to submit the following documents, along with your application form and the fee:

1. A copy of your Passport (mandatory)
2. A copy of **one** of the following:
  - Birth Certificate
    - A copy of the entry of birth in a register
  - Armed Forces Identify Card
  - Certificate of British Nationality
  - Naturalisation Certificate
  - Marriage or Civil Partnership Certificate
  - Secondary School Certificate (India)
  - Adoption Certificate
  - European National identify Card
3. **Other documents you will need to provide for the application process:**
  - Qualification Certificate
  - Course Transcript
  - Diploma Supplement
  - Job Description/s
  - Language test certificate or confirmation of completion of social work qualification in English or practised as a social worker in the medium of English for a minimum of two years in the last five.

**Please note:** If a work permit or visa is required to work in the UK, a copy of this must be provided to your employer.

## Application Process

We aim to complete the application process within 16 - 20 weeks from receipt of **all** information required. Timescales shall be affected by not having the required information in a timely manner.



\* In circumstances where there has been shortfall identified in either supervised placements or qualified work experience, compensation measures may be agreed up to a certain number of days.





# Registration and renewal

## Application fee

Your application fee of £435 must be paid at point of application.

**If difficulties in making payment online, please contact [registration@nisc.hscni.net](mailto:registration@nisc.hscni.net)**

## After Confirmation of Registration

Depending on your individual training and employment experience, you may be asked to complete either an Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) or two requirements of the Professional in Practice Framework. You can obtain more information on our website [nisc.info](http://nisc.info)

## Post registration training and learning (PRTL)

Once registered, you must maintain your professional learning and development. You are required to complete a minimum of 90 hours of post registration training and learning (PRTL) within a three year period. You can find more details about PRTL on our website.

# Maintaining your registration

## What should I do if any information I give changes?

It is very important that you let us know straight away about any changes to any of the information you give us. This will help us to make sure that we keep the Register up to date and protect the users of social care services.

The changes may include:

- your name, including by marriage or civil partnership;
- your contact details (including email and telephone numbers) in the UK and in your home country (if applicable);
- your employment, as a result of changing employer or taking up paid or voluntary work in social care, for example.
- changes to your registration with another regulatory body;
- new disciplinary or criminal proceedings taken against you.
- new significant health issue

**Please remember to make sure that we always have up-to-date contact details for you.**

## Annual payment and renewal

You are required to pay an annual fee for each year that you remain on the Register. We will contact you each year to request your annual payment.

It is your personal responsibility to ensure your registration is up to date and accurate; this can be managed through your online portal account.

## Removal from the Register

If you fail to pay your annual fee or renew by the due date, you will be removed from the Register and cannot work as a social worker in Northern Ireland.

If you decide that you no longer wish to be on the Social Care Register, you must tell us by email or via your online account. The communication must state that you wish to be removed from the Register and that you no longer intend to practise as a social worker in Northern Ireland. We will confirm when you are removed from the Register.

## How and where do I send information?

This can be done by:

- ☐ uploading documents via your online account at <https://niscconline.hscni.net/>