



Safer and Effective Staffing in social work

Safer and Effective Staffing in social work requires having enough staff with the right knowledge, experience and skills, workload capacity and flexibility, to respond to service user needs in an efficient, effective and timely manner. Safer staffing requires regular supportive, reflective supervision and sufficient time to deliver the highest standards of care. This includes having effective and compassionate line management and a supportive team with adequate skill mix and knowledge to support the wellbeing of all team members, in particular, early career social workers. (McFadden et al 2024)



Principles



Principle 1
Workforce Capacity
Funding adequate workforce capacity



Principle 2
Workload within Capacity
Team and individual social worker workload within capacity ensuring trust, integrity, transparency, fairness and equity



Principle 3
Skill-mix
Skill-mix, knowledge and experience



Principle 4
Compassionate Leadership
Compassionate and effective leadership



Principle 5
Wellbeing
Staff wellbeing and psychological safety



Principle 6
Camaraderie
Team camaraderie and support



Principle 7
Governance
Good governance including corporate governance, supervision and waiting list management



Principle 8
Interventions
Timely flexible efficient and effective social work interventions in line with professional Codes of Conduct as set by Northern Ireland Social Care Council



Principle 9
Regular Review
Regular review of workloads during supervision



Principle 10
Closure
Closure of cases in a timely manner



Key Concept 1
Capacity
Principles 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10

This means time to complete all aspects of the job within the parameters of working time available and having enough staff to meet the demands of service user needs in line with professional Codes of Conduct as set by Northern Ireland Social Care Council.



Key Concept 2
Communication
Principles 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (multi-directional from front line social workers to managers and the wider organisation)

This refers to open and transparent multi-directional communication between social workers and managers about workload allocation, ensuring that principles of equity, fairness and trust underpin the workplace culture.



Key Concept 3
Connection
Principles 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

This conceptualises the need for positive connection through relationships with individuals and teams so that workers feel connected to each other, management, the wider organisation and the social work profession.

