
Overview

This standard is for social workers working with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities. Investigating harm or abuse is a complex and demanding activity which has at its heart the safe-guarding of a vulnerable adult, young person or child. It involves working closely with other disciplines and agencies; exercising professional assertiveness in situations where there may be overt or covert hostility; making difficult judgements; and developing options for action which may have far-reaching consequences. All this must be done in the context of legal, organisational and other binding requirements. The standard covers these aspects and highlights the need to maintain a focus on the person who is at risk, whatever others needs or issues may come to light during the investigation process

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 identify behaviours and environments that present potential risk of **harm or abuse**
- P2 work within organisational procedures and in **partnership with others** to plan an investigation into suspected harm or abuse
- P3 maintain a focus on safeguarding the person at risk throughout the investigation process
- P4 use **persistence and assertiveness** to gather direct evidence about the harm or abuse
- P5 co-ordinate other evidence from a variety of sources and disciplines to assess the level of risk
- P6 make a professional judgement in partnership with others on the level and nature of intervention required
- P7 develop options for achieving immediate and longer term outcomes
- P8 make recommendations in partnership with others about the intervention required
- P9 record information relating to the investigation accurately and in accordance with organisational and other requirements

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 international legislation, its relationship to UK **policies** and social work practices
- K2 UK legislation, its relationship to national **policies** and social work practices
- K3 national legislation, its relationship to **policies** and social work practices
- K4 statutory and professional codes, standards, frameworks and guidance; their relationship to social work policy and practice
- K5 the characteristics of the home nation, its language, culture, geography and institutions
- K6 theories underpinning our understanding of human development and factors that affect it
- K7 theories underpinning our understanding of social issues from psychological, sociological and criminological perspectives
- K8 theories of discrimination in contemporary society
- K9 theoretical and research based critiques of the relationships between legislation, policies and social work practice
- K10 social work as a profession, including historical accounts and contemporary issues
- K11 the nature, role and mandate of the social work relationship, including professional and ethical boundaries
- K12 principles, theories, methods and models of social work intervention and practice
- K13 **factors** commonly associated with social work involvement
- K14 your own background, experiences and practices that may have an impact on your social work practice
- K15 principles of risk assessment and risk management
- K16 principles of positive risk-taking
- K17 principles of conflict management
- K18 the nature of conflict and post-conflict impact on society
- K19 working in your organisation: principles, procedures and professional practices
- K20 assessment and planning tools and frameworks
- K21 formal requirements for legal and other external processes
- K22 the purpose of working with other professionals and agencies
- K23 the remit, functions, ethos and responsibilities of disciplines and organisations involved in multi-disciplinary work
- K24 the cultural and language context of the individual, family, group or community

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- K25 local multi-disciplinary and organisational procedures for investigating harm or abuse
- K26 types of harm or abuse
- K27 indicators of potential harm or abuse
- K28 common features of perpetrator behaviour
- K29 indicators of hostility, resistance or disguised non-compliance
- K30 legal and statutory powers and responsibilities that may be exercised in order to safeguard individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- K31 the value and role of family networks, communities and groups in achieving positive outcomes, and ways to develop them
- K32 the range of resources available within informal networks, within the wider community, through formal service provision and through innovation
- K33 how to express written information with accuracy, clarity, relevance and an appropriate level of detail
- K34 legal and organisational requirements for recording information and producing reports
- K35 legal requirements, policies and procedures for the security and confidentiality of information
- K36 principles of reflective practice, critical thinking and learning
- K37 processes and requirements for formal supervision within your own organisation
- K38 how and when to access informal support in the course of practice
- K39 sources of feedback that may inform reflection on practice and critical thinking

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Additional Information

Scope/range

Social work practice with individuals, families, carers, groups and communities in a wide range of contexts including statutory and non-statutory social services, community development, criminal justice and educational welfare.

Scope/range related to performance criteria

Harm or abuse may relate to circumstantial harm, self neglect, or abuse inflicted by omission or commission whether deliberate or not

Partnership with others may involve taking the lead role or contributing to the process

Persistence and assertiveness may be needed to address situations of non-compliance, whether overt or disguised; hostility; aggression

Scope/range related to knowledge and understanding

Policies may include those relating to social care, safe-guarding, re-settlement/community re-integration, criminal justice, migration and asylum, education, health, housing, welfare benefits, diversity, discrimination and promoting the independence and autonomy of adults, children, families, groups and communities

Factors may include substance misuse; mental health; frailty; physical ill health; physical disability; learning disability; sensory needs; migration and asylum; poverty; adults or children at risk of harm or abuse; children in need; difficulties around schooling; ethnic or other minority group status; offending behaviour; public protection

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Values

Adherence to the regulatory codes of practice applying to social workers, and the values embedded in them

Skills

- 1 plan courses of action to achieve identified outcomes
- 2 communicate in an open, accurate and understandable way
- 3 adapt communication for a range of audiences
- 4 facilitate each person's use of language and chosen form of communication
- 5 maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- 6 work effectively with those whose views or values conflict with your own
- 7 challenge others when necessary, in ways likely to achieve change
- 8 apply critical thinking to information from a range of sources
- 9 analyse and synthesise complex information
- 10 apply creative thinking to resolve complex problems
- 11 make professional judgements about complex situations
- 12 use your own interpersonal and other skills and knowledge as a resource
- 13 apply person centred approaches
- 14 balance person centred outcomes and the well-being of others
- 15 exercise assertiveness, power and authority in ways compatible with social work values
- 16 produce records and reports that meet professional standards
- 17 access and use information and communications technology systems for the collection, storage and dissemination of information
- 18 access and use professional supervision and support in situations beyond your own knowledge or experience

Links to other NOS

This NOS links closely with:

SCD SW 12 Assess needs, risks and circumstances in partnership with those involved

SCD SW 16 Agree plans where there is risk of harm or abuse

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External Links

This NOS links with regulatory codes of practice applying to social workers.

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