

# Your career in social work

## Career Progression Handbook 2022



**‘Road to Excellence’** - Making a difference  
for children, young people and their families.

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# Foreword

Dear colleague,

We want to make Leicestershire the best place for children and families and for this we need highly effective, creative and skillful practitioners. We value our social workers and understand the importance of supporting your learning and development to deepen your practice over time and to strengthen your knowledge and confidence in applying this in 'real life'. We are committed to providing a really good learning offer to our social workers and we want to create the best possible environment we can for you to become a highly skilled professional. It is our belief that investing in our staff and providing a clear progression pathway is the best way to ensure that vulnerable children and families in Leicestershire receive a social work service that really makes a difference to their lives. Our continuous improvement plan **'The Road to Excellence'** shows where we want to get to and what we all need to do to get there. Our progression pathway is part of this journey to excellence and it is key that you understand your role in this.

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This booklet outlines how we want social workers to progress from Level 2 to Level 3, and then on to Advance Skills panel and further progression into leadership roles. We are eager to understand how the Independent Children's Social Care Review will support social work career and skills development in the future and so this progression pathway will develop into the future. We are proud to have you as part of our team and want you to do well in Leicestershire. We look forward to hearing about your second year in practice and your hopes for your future career in Leicestershire.

Kind Regards

Head of Service Practice Excellence

Assistant Director

## Section 1

# Introduction & Background

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)<sup>1</sup> sets out the profession's expectations of what a Social Worker should be able to do at each stage of their career and professional development. It is the overarching framework of social work education and professional development in England. This was reviewed and refreshed during 2017 and 2018. This most recent work has aligned the PCF with the Knowledge and Skills Statements and has introduced three new 'super domains': Purpose, Practice, Impact.



The framework is helpful in guiding our judgments about readiness to practice/progress in relation to each capability and in supporting progressing from one career stage to another. Progression between levels is characterised by development in terms of:

- Level of confidence, underpinned by practice experience, reflection and deepening understanding.
- The increasing ability to work independently and to collaborate on equal terms with members of other professions.
- The quality of the judgments made, and the level of ability to explain and justify them.
- Efficacy of the work undertaken and the outcomes achieved, including opportunities for preventative work.
- The ability to take the initiative, form constructive alliances and to act as a change agent.
- The ability to engage effectively with situations of increasing complexity and challenge, for example those with:
  - Multi-agency input;
  - Complex family/organisational dynamics;
  - Serious hostility and conflicts of interest;
  - Multiple problems/disadvantages;
  - Multiple/significant risk factors; or
  - Need to take into account the public interest.
- The appropriate use of authority and challenge.
- The ability and commitment to educate and provide professional supervision to others, and
- Demonstration of leadership, management and use of research.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.basw.co.uk/pcf/capabilities/>

In Leicestershire we are already using this framework as part of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme and newly qualified social workers are being assessed at the 3, 6 and 9 month stages with a final recommendation at 12 months. Our career framework has been in place for a number of years and has been reviewed and refreshed in 2022 to introduce the Advanced Skills Panels.

The pathway is linked closely to our learning offer for social workers with a core and developmental program available on the learning hub which is revised and refreshed each year. All learning is linked to the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSS) to support workers in building their portfolio of evidence. The KSS have been developed by the Chief Social Workers to set out:

*'...what a social worker should know, and be able to do, in specific practice settings, in specific roles and at different levels of seniority. The KSS map onto the Practice domains of the PCF (Knowledge, Critical Reflection and Analysis, Interventions and Skills) and should help guide everyday practice.'*

*Together, the PCF and KSS provide the foundation for social work education and practice in England at qualifying and post-qualifying levels and are used to inform recruitment, workforce development, performance appraisal and career progression.'*

It is expected that social workers will be able to demonstrate that they are progressing through the core learning programme. **An additional three days of CPD time taken over the year should ensure that workers have the time to build their portfolio of evidence for progression and for professional development and learning.**

This evidence will be presented to the Progression Panel alongside their team manager's endorsement. The Team Manager has responsibility for deciding if and when the Social Worker is ready to submit to the progression panel, alongside the minimum requirements set out in the guidance.

## Section 2

# Progression Process

This handbook outlines what is expected of the social work practitioner and how they will be supported in achieving and demonstrating the appropriate work-based learning which is required to progress.

The agreed process for progression is part of the mandatory supervision and appraisal system. Preparation for social work progression should be part of the on-going professional development of a social worker after completing their social work qualification and throughout their practice.

The Annual Performance Review should be used to be utilized to formally review progress, identify any necessary support and opportunities to develop skills and support progression.

The line manager and the social worker are jointly responsible for continuing professional development. The line manager undertakes their responsibilities through supervision, appraisal and performance management. The social worker undertakes their responsibilities by making good use of supervision and ensuring that they regularly participate in developmental opportunities as their career progresses.

We believe this progression process will make a positive contribution to the recruitment and retention of our staff. It helps the Local Authority to demonstrate Local Government objectives in ensuring that social workers are appropriately skilled, trained and qualified, and to promote the uptake of training at all levels.



## Section 3

# Social Worker Requirements

Social Work Progression is in 2 parts:

- Level 2 social workers wishing to progress to Level 3 must have completed a minimum of two years post qualifying experience, including successful completion of their ASYE and 1 year at level 2, and be able to evidence the competency level as set out in the Professional Capabilities Framework.
  - Level 3 social workers who are able to demonstrate advanced skills are able to apply to the Advanced Skills Panel. Workers must have completed a minimum of 1 year at level. The Level 3 Advanced skills panel must review the additional payment each year.
2. Bring a piece of recent work that showcases how you have applied the Signs of Safety approach in your practice and talk us through the difference this made to the family/child/young person.
  3. Reflecting on your training and learning attended this last year - how has this impacted on your practice - please be specific. Include recent observations of your practice and your reflections on this feedback.
  4. Your manager's endorsement
  5. One practice observation
  6. Include feedback from children, families and professionals

Social Workers should submit the following, three weeks before the panel meeting:

1. For the level 2 - 3 **progression panel** - Provide a reflective statement or presentation setting out your readiness for career progression with an analysis of your learning over the year, what you are most proud of and how you have contributed to the development of others. Include some recent examples of feedback from children, Young people and their families. For the level 3 **Advanced Skills Panel**, this reflective statement or presentation is focused on a specific area of interest, how you have developed it, how you have shared it with the team and how you further plan to do this in future.

Templates are available to assist with the portfolio development, but you are not restricted to these. It is your portfolio.

For the annual endorsement of the advanced skills payment, social workers are required to return to panel and bring continued managers endorsement, and then an updating statement or presentation on their area of advanced skills (no other documents are required). This might capture some specific work that you have carried out that has contributed to team or service development; assist a child or family to have significantly improved outcomes or it might highlight a role that you have taken on such as Champion. It will set out how your skills deserve additional recognition.

Social workers should submit their portfolio to CFS. ProgressionPanel@leics.gov.uk by the end of day on the due date. This will be three weeks in advance the panel date. **Late entries will not be considered.**



## Section 4

# The Role of the Team Manager

In supervision and appraisal, it is the duty of the line manager to explore with the practitioner their individual learning needs and career aspirations.

To assist with progression, the team manager should work with the social worker to determine that over time they can meet the PCF competency descriptor. The manager must ensure that the worker has had a wide range of experiences (as far as is possible within the confines of the role) and sufficient complexity within their casework and that these can demonstrate the worker's ability to produce for example high quality reports, to effectively manage risk, and which shows their ability to work consistently to our agreed practice standards and apply our practice framework using our adopted practice methodology.

The learning offer for social workers is a three year programme. This allows social workers sufficient time to access a wide range of both core training and some developmental training. The ASYE programme is pre-set with training requirements prescribed to participants in their first year. After this workers must take responsibility for their own learning and set their own pace. The line manager should ensure that the practitioner is able to access this offer and that it is being applied to deepen and enrich practice. Once the manager is confident the worker is ready to progress they should encourage the worker to start to build their portfolio, using their additional CPD days as and when appropriate.

The Team Manager's contribution is to endorse that the worker has the skills knowledge and confidence to progress and is ready to move to Level 3. The template asks them to provide a holistic assessment of the worker's readiness to progress providing examples from practice and the impact they have had both on the team and the children they have worked with.

### PCF Capability Level Descriptor (2018)

At the social worker level (post NQSW), social workers practice effectively, exercising high quality judgements in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge, acting with confidence and considerable autonomy whilst accessing and using support and advice. They have developed their ability to assess situations effectively in their field/s, determine which interventions. Knowledge and skills should be deployed and can anticipate the possible progress of issues and options without pre-judging. They aim to integrate professional knowledge, the views of people using services and research/evaluation evidence in their practice.

They use their knowledge and skills to take more initiative and continue to broaden and deepen their repertoire of responses. They have expertise in one or more areas of practice are familiar with and linked in to local and national resource networks.

They are recognised by peers and those in other professions as a source of reliable knowledge and advice. They routinely evaluate the quality and impact (outcomes) of their own practice and that of their team/service. They apply and promote the Code of Ethics, regulatory and policy standards for practice, and continuing professional development and to deepen capability in all domains of the PCF.

## Section 5

# The Progression & Advanced Skills Panel

The progression and advanced skills panel will try to schedule meetings as requested. Panels will not be convened until members are satisfied that the portfolio meets the evidence requirements. The panel is not a 'job interview' or a performance meeting. It is a reflective learning conversation/ event.

### Membership

Membership is made up of

- Head of Service (Practice excellence)- Chair
- Learning & Development Team
- Principal Social Worker /Practice Excellence Team Member
- Service Manager Operations

Social workers should attend with their managers. Social workers will always need to be ready to present their piece of work that showcases their Signs of Safety/wellbeing/stability practice and be able to talk through the impact it has had. Panel members will

have read the portfolio and will want to talk about the past year in practice.

The Panel members will consider all the information presented and make a recommendation as to whether the Social Worker is ready to progress.

If the Social Worker successfully meets the progression requirements, they will progress to the next level of pay and will be expected to operate in practice at this level. Salary will be effective from the date of the panel decision.

In rare circumstances, the panel can make the recommendation to defer progression and will need to be explicit as to why they have come to this decision. Any further work, or development required will be set out with clear timescales and an action plan for completion. An outcome report will be completed and sent to the Social Worker and Team Manager. This is completed by the chair and is a formal record of the panel. Managers are then able to use this to progress social workers to the next pay point.



## Section 6

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# Portfolio Templates

1. Portfolio front sheet
2. Reflective Statement / Presentation
3. Team managers endorsement
4. Evidence of continuous professional development
5. Observation template
6. Feedback
7. Example of your work
8. Panel Decision template
9. PCF Descriptor



# Your career in social work

## Appendix 1 - Portfolio – Progression & Advanced Skills Panel

### Personal Information

<b>Social Worker name</b>	
<b>Year qualified as SocialWorker</b>	
<b>Length of service withLeicestershire County Council</b>	
<b>Regulatory body registration number</b>	
<b>Area of Work</b>	
<b>Date of Progression Panel</b>	
<b>Name of Current Manager</b>	
<b>Type of Panel – Level 3 progression</b>	YES / NO
<b>Type of Panel – Advanced Skills Panel</b>	YES / NO

## 1. Reflective Statement / Presentation

**Progression Panel** - Please provide a reflective statement or short presentation setting out your readiness to progress with an analysis of your learning over the year what you are most proud of and how you have contributed to the development of others.

**OR**

**Advanced Skills Panel** – Please provide a reflective statement or a short presentation focused on a specific area of interest, how you have developed your skills, knowledge and experience in this area, how you have developed this area of interest in others, and how you plan to do this further within your team. This aims to showcase some specific work that you have carried out that has contributed to team or service development; assisted a child or family to have significantly improved outcomes or it might highlight a role that you taken on such as Champion. it will set out how your skills deserve additional recognition

Name (print).....

Signed.....

## 2. Team Manager's Report

### Progression & Advanced Skills

Social Worker	
Team Manager	
Area of Work	
Date of Progression or Advanced Skills Panel	

### Holistic Assessment

Please provide a holistic assessment of your worker's readiness to progress, providing examples from practice and the impact they've had on the team and the children and families they work with. Please consider and reference the PCF domains (a link to which can be found in the progression policy)

TM's signature .....

Date .....

### 3. Evidence and impact of continuous professional development

#### Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Please provide information relating to CPD undertaken. Reflecting on your learning this last year how has this impacted on your practice? What would children, young people and families notice do you think? What might they say has been the biggest impact of the training you have completed do you think?

#### 4. Observation Report:

Practitioner	
Observer (name and role)	
Area of Work	
Date of Observation	

<b>Situation</b>  Provide an overview of the observation - purpose of the meeting, who was involved  <i>To be completed by the observer</i>	
<b>Skills, Behaviour and Values</b>  Considering the competencies described above please record the skills, behaviours and values that you observed.  <i>To be completed by the observer</i>	
<b>Service User/ Participant feedback</b>  Summarise feedback from those present  <i>To be completed by the observer</i>	

**Feedback**

Provide a record of the feedback you gave to the worker including any identified learning/development needs.

*To be completed by the observer*

**Workers Reflections**

What did you take from this piece of practice? What was your learning? What would you do differently next time? How well did you cope with the feedback that was given to you?

## 5. Feedback

It is always important to reflect upon the feedback from children and families. Please include – either here, or attached to your portfolio – feedback from a minimum of one children or family, and one professional. There is no set template - you can create what you feel will work best with the child and family who is providing feedback.

## 6. An example of your work

Please include an example of direct work you have completed with a child and/or family. This should be something you are proud of and you will be asked to talk about this further in the panel. This example should also showcase how you have applied the Signs of Safety/Wellbeing/Stability/Success approach in your practice and talk us through the difference this made to the family/child/young person.

## Appendix 2 - Advanced Skills Panel Annual Review

The two following documents are required.

### 1. Advanced Skills Updating Statement or presentation

Please provide an reflective statement or a short presentation providing an update on your specific area of interest, how you have continued to develop your skills, knowledge and experience in this area, how you have developed this area of interest in others over the past year, and how you plan to do this further within your team into the future. It will include examples from the previous 12 months.

Name (print).....

Signed.....

### 2. Team Manager's Report

#### Progression & Advanced Skills

Social Worker	
Team Manager	
Area of Work	
Date of Progression or Advanced Skills Panel	

## Holistic Assessment

Please provide an updating endorsement of worker's advanced skills and what has been achieved over the past year, providing examples from practice and the impact they've had on the team and the children and families they work with. Please consider and reference the PCF domains (a link to which can be found in the progression policy)

**TM's signature .....**

**Date .....**

### Appendix 3 - Progression & Advanced Skills Panel Outcome Report

This form must be completed by the Chair of the Panel and sent to all those present at the panel.

Names of Panel Members: .....

Date of Panel .....

Social Worker	
Team Manager	
Service Manager	

**Decision of Panel:** with rationale clearly set out. Decision to defer must set out clear objectives and timescales for actions required.

Pass

Defer

## **PCF Capability Level Descriptor (2018)**

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They have developed

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