

2023

Adult Social
Care

Career-progression scale guidance

Social Work



Milton Keynes
City Council

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INTRODUCTION

The Social Work Progression Scale has been implemented to support Social Workers at Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) by providing a structured career pathway which focuses on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and attitudes and values in line with the professional standards outlined by Social Work England (SWE). The progression scale applies to all non-management Social Work roles.

YOUR FEEDBACK

Social Workers were asked for feedback regarding what they felt was important when considering career development. Respondents mostly answered that a blended approach of extra studies and experience were crucial to determine progression within the profession. So, in line with the feedback the application of formal learning is encompassed throughout the progression scale via self-evaluation to evidence practice experience, attitudes and values.

SCALE DESIGN

It is acknowledged that the landscape for Social Work education is overcrowded. Due to the Social Work progression scale being concerned with development across a career span, the **British Association of Social Workers Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW PFC)** has been adopted as the central framework, with self-evaluation questions conceptualised by the **Key Skills Statement (KSS)** to make it relevant to adults' Social Work and allow for a greater depth of reflection. The scale is designed to ensure that Social Workers are also fulfilling the professional standards outlined by Social Work England (SWE).

MKCC's Social Worker Progression Scale is underpinned by Social Work England's (SWE's) professional standards and the Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) for Adults, which was developed by the Chief Social Worker for Adults. This was done in partnership with key stakeholders such as Skills for Care and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

Social Work England (SWE)

SWE became the regulatory body for Social Workers in England in 2019. Due to the PCF and KSS already being commonly adopted frameworks for Social Work career development and CPD, they advise their professional standards are mapped against these key pieces of guidance, with the intention of providing greater detail around common themes.

The professional standards set the threshold for safe and effective practice. Social Workers must continue to meet the professional standards to maintain their registration. The standards apply to all registered Social Workers in all roles and in all settings.

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS STATEMENTS (KSS) FOR ADULTS

The KSS for Adults is the foundation for the introduction of a post-qualification specialist career pathway for Social Workers working with adults. It is crucial for adult Social Work education, recruitment and career development.

As well as providing a clear framework of expectations for the ASYE, the knowledge and skills statements describe "*what Social Workers should know and be able to do at the end of their first year in practice*" in the context of the setting they work in (British Association of Social Workers, 2015).

The PCF and the KSS are aligned with one another. The knowledge and skills statements do not reiterate all of the PCF capabilities because they were designed to contextualise, not replicate the PCF. The parameters of legislation, including the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 are referenced throughout the knowledge and skills statement for Social Workers working with adults.

This places an emphasis on statutory health and wellbeing outcomes, whilst the PCF remains an overarching capability framework applicable to all Social Workers, in both children's and adult services, across a wide variety of organisations and settings.

The BASW PCF sets out 9 common domains of capability, grouped under 3 super headings of **Purpose, Practice** and **Impact**. It outlines how Social Workers should expect to develop throughout their career and what others can expect of Social Workers from pre-qualifying to strategic Social Work level.



The PCF offers a framework for CPD by outlining generic Social Work capabilities, on which knowledge and skill can be built.

BASW Professional capabilities framework

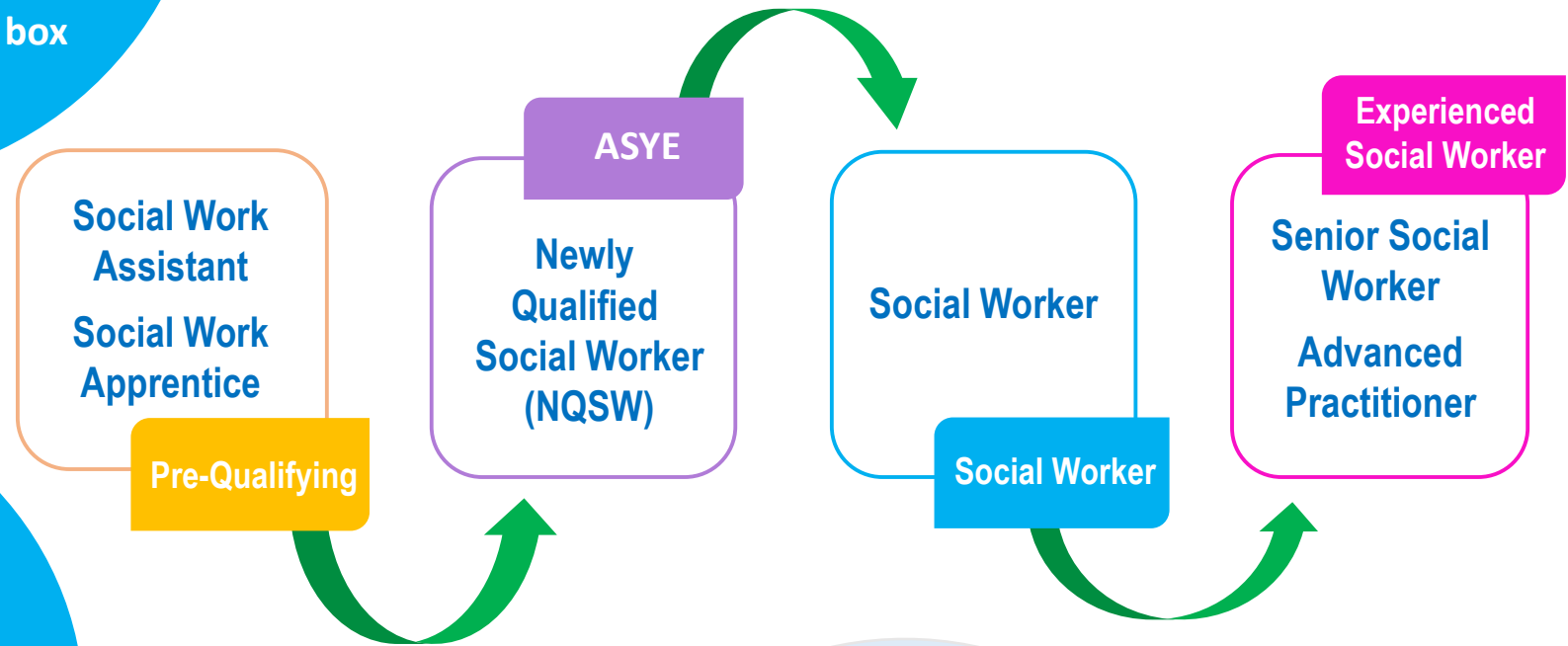
It's recognised that Social Workers may develop in some domains more quickly than others due to practice requirements, career choices and pathways. Using the PCF to inform Social Work progression guides Social Workers to critically reflect on their professional journey across all 9 domains, which are equally important in defining the profession.

BASW defines the 9 capabilities as *“An integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities, behaviour, understanding and values used appropriately, effectively and confidently, not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but in response to new, complex and changing circumstances”* (Stephenson 1992, cited by BASW, 2018)

MKCC Social Work Progression Scale

How the BASW PCF maps directly on to the Social Work progression scale is shown below. The PCF level descriptors are outlined in the coloured boxes, and MKCC job roles are demonstrated inside the box

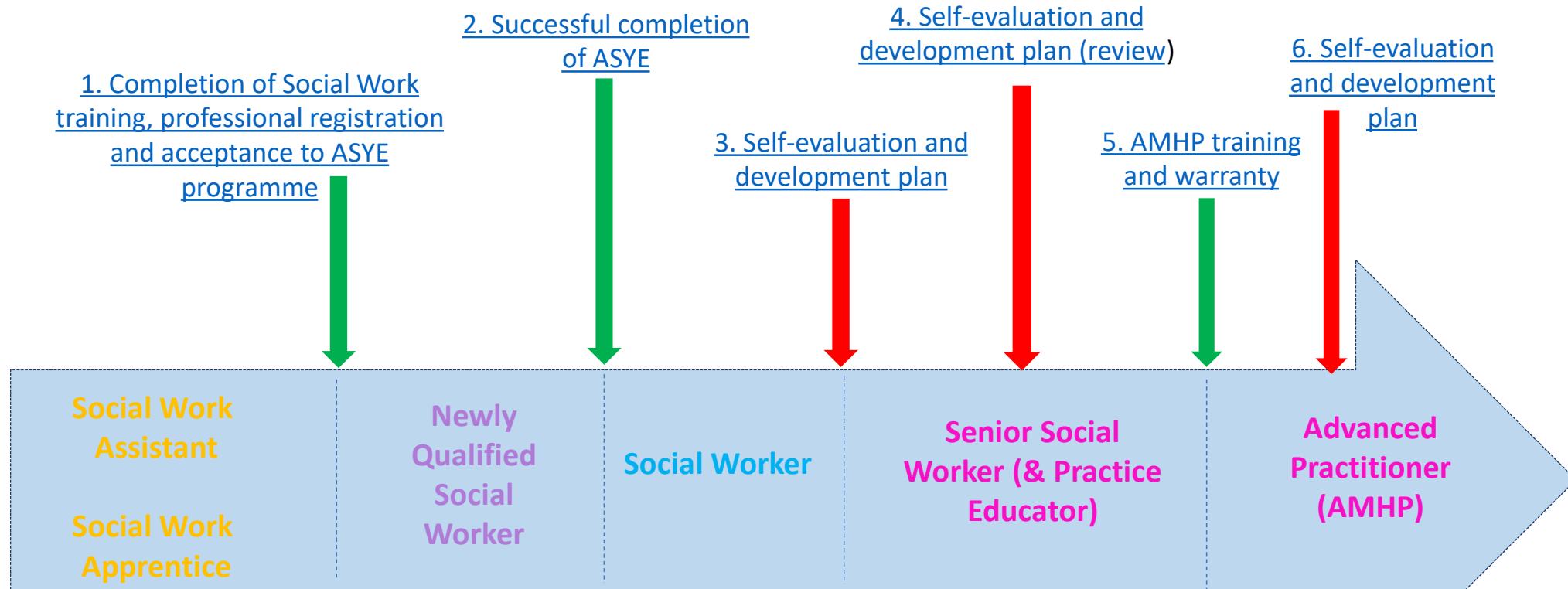
The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is described by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW, 2018) as *'the profession-owned backbone of Social Work education and professional development in England'*



For more information of the PCF including the 9 domain descriptors and the level descriptors, please refer to: [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\) | www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

MKCC Social Work Progression Scale Points 1-6

There are 6 points across the Social Work progression scale at which development is reviewed to inform progression



The green arrows represent progression based on accredited programmes

The red arrows demonstrate opportunities at which self-evaluation will be utilised in conjunction with management oversight to demonstrate professional capability, to inform Social Work career progression

Progression point 1: NQSW

Progression Point 1

COMPLETION OF
SOCIAL WORK DEGREE,
PROFESSIONAL
REGISTRATION, AND
ACCEPTANCE TO ASYE
PROGRAMME

For colleagues occupying pre-qualifying posts, who are not yet undertaking Social Work training but have a desire to do so, expressions of interest should be made via their supervisor. Advice, guidance and CPD opportunities can then be tailored around the person's needs, to support them towards undertaking the training. The pre-qualifying pathway for people interested in a career in Social Work is currently under review.

PROCESS FOR PROGRESSION FROM PRE-QUALIFYING POST (SUCH AS SOCIAL WORK APPRENTICE) TO NQSW:



If final reports don't evidence a readiness to practice at ASYE level this will indicate the SW qualification will not be awarded and therefore progression to ASYE can't be facilitated and the person will remain at pre-qualifying level

Progression point 2: Successful Completion of ASYE Programme

Progression Point 2

When reviewing final ASYE documentation in order to authorise progression to a Social Worker post, Service Managers and Heads of Service will need to be satisfied that there is evidence of the following:

- Adherence with professional standards (SWE)
- Readiness to work at Social Worker level (PCF)
- Practice in line with the KSS for Social Worker's working with adults (Department for Education)

If the relevant Managers have any queries or concerns regarding the person's progression following review, a development meeting should be arranged. The NQSW, the ASYE programme lead, and the Managers will discuss any support requirements the person may have to ensure they're supported with CPD in order to progress to a Social Work post.

PROCESS FOR PROGRESSION FROM NQSW (ASYE) TO SOCIAL WORKER



Progression point 3: Social Worker & Senior Social Worker

Progression Point 3

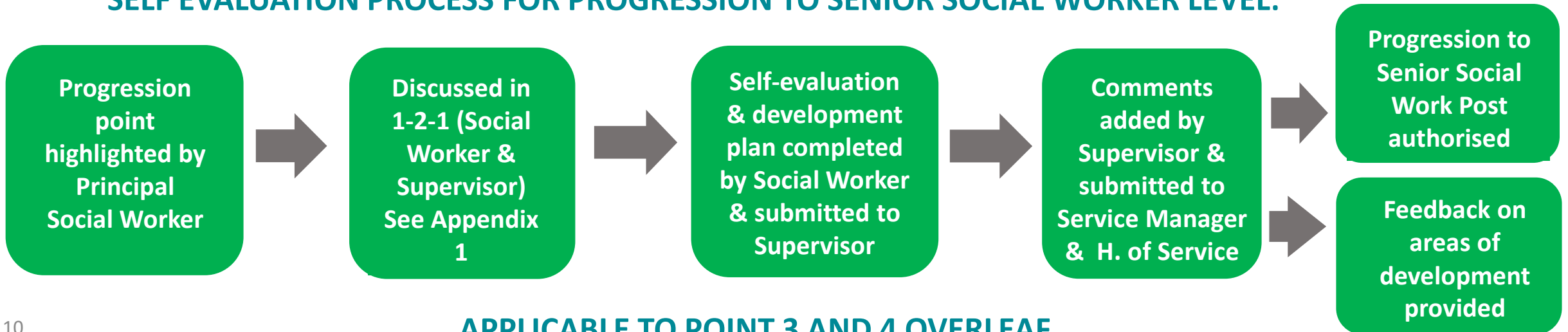
Self-evaluation and development plan: Social Worker, Senior Social Worker

A self-evaluation process has been introduced to support Social Workers to progress to a Senior position. The self-evaluation will focus on capabilities at 'Experienced Social Worker' level of the PCF. By directly relating the 9 domains to their practice, Social Workers will demonstrate the confidence, autonomy and ability to manage risk and complexity expected of Senior Social Workers at MKCC.

The process for progression from Social Worker to Senior Social Worker is shown below. Social Workers will automatically be offered the opportunity to complete the self-evaluation process when they reach pay point [G4](#), however can request to complete their self-evaluation when they have completed 2 years of practice post qualification.

[See Appendix 1 for more detail.](#)

SELF EVALUATION PROCESS FOR PROGRESSION TO SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER LEVEL:



APPLICABLE TO POINT 3 AND 4 OVERLEAF

Progression point 4: Senior Social Worker

Progression Point 4

Self-evaluation and
development plan (review)
Senior Social Worker

A commitment to maintaining 'Experienced Social Worker' level of practice is a pre-requisite of the Senior Social Worker role. So, after 2 years at Senior Social Worker level, a review of the original self-evaluation and development plan will be completed. The review will support Senior Social Workers with their CPD, by appraising capability at the 'Experienced Social Worker' Level of the PCF and refreshing support required to progress under the domains highlighted as development areas. Where applicable, this will also be another good opportunity for Senior Social Workers to explore a CPD pathway regarding:

- Practice Education
- AMHP Practice
- Managerial Roles

Due to the Senior Social Work role being underpinned by Social Work attitudes and values, autonomy and leadership skills, there is no requirement for Senior Social Workers to pursue any of the options listed above at the 2-year review. They must however be able to demonstrate well rounded capability at 'Experienced Social Worker' Level of the PCF, as well as an ability to fulfil the 'Senior Social Worker' expectations outlined in the role's profile.

SEE PREVIOUS PAGE FOR PROGRESSION POINT PROCESS

Progression Point 5: AMHP Training and Warranty

Progression Point 5

On successful completion of AMHP training, Social Workers will apply for warranty which is overseen by the AMHP Team Manager. Receipt of warrant and active AMHP practice consistently for 2 years will inform progression to Advanced Practitioner, authorised by the AMHP Team Manager.

To note: active AMHP practice and capability at 'Experienced Social Worker' Level are pre-requisite to the Advanced Practitioner job role and so warranty in itself, does not guarantee permanency at this scale point. Advanced Practitioners will be required to engage with progression [point 6](#) to maintain the position. They are required to notify their Supervisors, Service Manager, Head of Service and HR if they are no longer practicing as an AMHP.

Progression Point 6: Advanced Practitioner

Progression Point 6

Self-evaluation and development plan - Advanced Practitioner

Advanced Practitioners share their knowledge and skills with others, particularly by leading on the application of the Mental Health Act 1983 across Adult Services. After 2 years of practice at Advanced Practitioner level, a self-evaluation and development plan is introduced to offer a platform to formally reflect on these aspects of the role. As well as contributing to the person's CPD journey, the purpose of the self-evaluation is to:

- *Ensure Advanced Practitioners are being supported to practice AMHP work autonomously*
- *Demonstrate how they share their knowledge and skills with colleagues who are not practicing AMHPs*
- *Appraise that they are working at the capability of the 'Experienced Social Worker' level descriptor of the PCF*

Where areas for progression are highlighted with regards to the above, the development plan will work to support Advanced Practitioners by enhancing their CPD. The development plan is also a good opportunity for Advanced Practitioners to express an interest in either Practice Education or Managerial roles, in order to receive support to access the relevant pathway. A record of CPD in keeping with MKCC's re-approval policy is required upon submission of the self-evaluation and development plan.

SELF EVALUATION PROCESS TO MAINTAIN ADVANCED PRACTITIONER LEVEL:

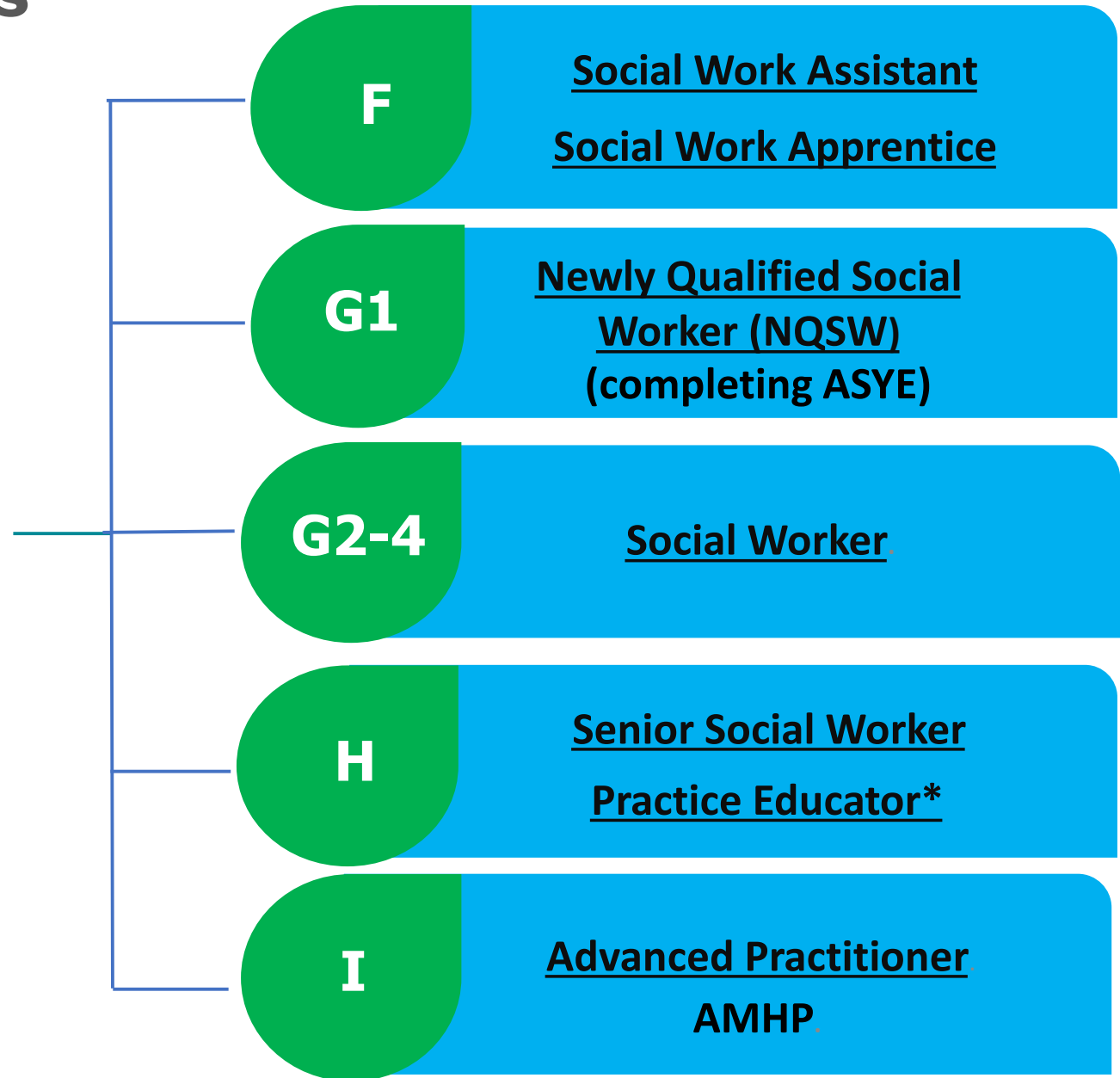


Progression and pay grades

Job roles outlined in the Social Work progression scale and pay grades are in accordance with MKCC's salary scales. For key expectations and duties for each role, please refer to the relevant job profile

*Practice Educators receive individual payments per student that they support, in addition to their salaried earnings.

scale pay grades



RESOURCES LINKS

1. [BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS \(BASW\) PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES FRAMEWORK \(PCF\)](#)
2. [KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENT \(KSS\)](#)
3. [SKILLS FOR CARE](#)
4. [SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE \(SCIE\)](#)
5. [SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND \(SWE\) PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS](#)

ACRONYMS

AMHP	Approved Mental Health Professional
ASYE	Approved and Supported Year in Employment
KSS	Knowledge and Skills Statement/s
MKCC	Milton Keynes City Council
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
PCF	Professional Capabilities Framework
SWE	Social Work England

APPENDIX 1

Progression point 3: Social Worker & Senior Social Worker

Readiness for the self-evaluation process will initially be discussed in the Social Worker's 1:1 and a record of feedback and comments made. When completed, the Supervisor will be required to comment if the self-evaluation accurately reflects the Social Workers capabilities. When the Social Worker and their Supervisor agree, the self-evaluation and development plan will be submitted for review by the relevant Service Manager and Head of Service. Social Workers should note they will be required to provide evidence of their CPD in line with the requirements of SWE at the point of submitting their completed self-evaluation.

The development plan should focus on aiming to achieve 'Experienced Social Worker' Level capability across all 9 domains of the PCF. It is also an opportunity for Social Workers to express an interest in either AMHP practice, Practice Education and to agree a pathway to work towards these post-qualifying accreditations.

More guidance on completing the self-evaluation and development plan can be found in Appendix 1.1 (For Social Workers) and Appendix 2 (for managers) of this document.

The Service Manager and Head of Service will authorise progression from Social Worker to Senior Social Worker, or in cases where they feel further development is required, make suggestions for CPD to be considered by the Social Worker and their Supervisor. If there is an on-going difference of opinion between Service Manager, Head of Service, Supervisor and the Social Worker, then a development meeting should be arranged.

If you think you're ready to complete progression point 3 please contact Poppy Tomalin (poppy.tomaline@milton-Keynes.gov.uk) or Sharon Young (sharon.young@milton-Keynes.gov.uk).

APPENDIX 1.1

Guidance for Social Workers and Senior Social Workers regarding completion of Progression point 3:

Self-evaluation and development plan At MKCC, Social Workers progressing from Social Worker to Senior Social Worker will be able to demonstrate that they are practicing mostly within the 'Experienced Social Worker' Level Descriptor outlined by the PCF. It is recognised that Social Workers will likely develop more quickly or intensively in some domains than others, and so the development plan is designed to support Social Workers with planning for how to develop their capabilities in targeted areas, which the self-evaluation has highlighted might need more attention. The PCF underpins CPD by mapping how to learn through different stages of a Social Work career. It identifies how Social Workers should act and approach their work through common capabilities related to Purpose, Practice and Impact in working with people who use services.

Guidance on completing the Self Evaluation (before getting started)

- Discuss with your supervisor when you can take 4 hours CPD time to work on your self-evaluation.
- Familiarise yourself with the PCF, with particular attention to the 'Social Worker' and 'Experienced Social Worker' Level Descriptors for each of the 9 Domains, which can be found [here](#).
- Read through the self-evaluation and reflect on your capability across the 9 domains.
- Familiarise yourself with the Knowledge and skills statement for adults.
- Discuss with your supervisor in a 1:1, identify your readiness to undertake the self-evaluation process, or where appropriate you will receive guidance on areas for development in the first instance.

In question 2, you should refer to the safeguarding section of the knowledge and skills statement for Social Workers working with adults and in question 4, you should refer to the mental capacity section.

- The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers working with adults can be found [here](#).
- The self-evaluation has been designed to cover the professional standards of SWE. You can find them [here](#).

When you have completed the self-evaluation

- Complete the self-evaluation and development plan (sections 1- 3 of the document) and submit to your supervisor. Don't forget to attach your CPD record.
- Your supervisor will add any comments, and then submit the plan to the relevant Service Manager. The Service Manager and relevant Head of Service will review your self-evaluation directly in relation to the 'Social Worker' and 'Experienced Social Worker' level descriptors of the PCF. They will document their review in section 5 of your self-evaluation and provide you with feedback.
- Feedback will include a decision on if overall, they are of the view that you meet the capabilities of the 'Experienced Social Worker' level of the PCF, meaning they support your progression to a Senior Social Worker role.
- If the relevant managers are of the opinion you need to provide further evidence to demonstrate your capability at 'Experienced Social Work' level, they will provide you with feedback for your development plan
- For any queries, please contact the Principal Social Worker Poppy Tomalin at poppy.tomalin@milton-keynes.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

Guidance for Managers regarding completion of Progression point 3 for Social Worker and Senior Social Workers.

- Review Social Worker's self-assessment against the 'Social Worker' and 'Experienced Social Worker' Levels of the PCF which can be found [here](#).
- Consider notes from 1:1's and evidence found in the Social Worker's practice, if further evidence is needed.
- Managers should complete Section 5 of self-evaluation document. The feedback grid in the form should be used to structure your review. The coloured bands in the grids refer to the colours of the questions in the self-evaluation.
- The statements in the grid relate explicitly to the PCF. Statements in **blue** reference capability at the 'Social Worker' level descriptor. Statements in **pink** reference capability at the 'Experienced Social Worker' level descriptor.
- Social Worker's aiming to progress to Senior Social Worker level should be able to demonstrate capability within the 'Experienced Social Worker' level descriptor as a majority.
- The grid is not exhausted, it gives examples of expected capabilities lifted from the PCF. For full detail of the level descriptors, refer to the PCF and guidance notes.
- In your feedback, you will be asked to comment on the Social Worker's ability to meet the standards set out in the [Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers working with adults](#).
- The self-evaluation has been designed to cover the [Professional Standards of SWE](#).
- For any queries, please contact the Principal Social Worker Poppy Tomalin at poppy.tomalin@milton-Keynes.gov.uk