

# **Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) Requirements**

**Guidance notes for social service workers**

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## **Introduction**

### **Guidance about training and learning activity for social service workers**

Social service workers must meet their personal and professional responsibility for maintaining and developing their knowledge, skills and values and their employers have a key role in supporting them in meeting this responsibility.

This guidance sets out important information about SSSC registration requirements and will assist you to consider how you might meet your PRTL requirements.

You should also refer to [our website](#) to make sure you are aware of the role your employer is expected to play in supporting you through your professional learning and development.

### **Requirements and responsibilities of social service workers**

Our Registration Rules set out PRTL requirements that all registered social service workers must meet in order to continue their suitability for registration.

The Registration Rules state:

- i) Every social service worker registered with the Council shall, within the period of registration, complete a specified number of hours of study, training, courses, seminars, reading, teaching or other activities which could reasonably be expected to advance the social worker's professional development, or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole.
- (ii) Every social service worker registered with the Council shall keep a record of Post Registration Training and Learning undertaken.
- (iii) Failure to meet the foregoing Post Registration Training and Learning requirements may be considered misconduct by the Council.

### **The purpose of PRTL**

The SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers requires workers to take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills. The PRTL requirements set out above are set as a condition of registration to make sure all registered social service workers carry out a

**minimum** amount of training and learning within each registration period.

We expect your training and learning to contribute to your professional development, inform your practice and assist you to meet your roles and responsibilities in an informed, competent and confident manner.

### **How much PRTL is required?**

The letter we sent to you confirming your registration stated the amount of training and learning you are required to complete. You can view the PRTL requirements which apply to different parts of the Register on [our website](#).

The amount of training and learning is in days and hours to show that the time does not have to be made up of full days of activity. For the purpose of PRTL one day equals six hours.

You must complete your PRTL within your registration period. We cannot accept any submissions with dates out with your registration period.

Unless a specific training condition has been applied to your registration as a result of a Fitness to Practise decision you may decide how to spread your PRTL across the training period. It is acceptable for registrants to complete all of their training and learning in one year of the registration period.

The required PRTL is a minimum rather than a maximum requirement.

### **Recording your PRTL**

You must meet your PRTL requirements within each registration period.

When renewing your registration you must sign your PRTL declaration form and submit it to us.

Although you are not required to submit your PRTL declaration until the end of your registration period, we recommend that you record your PRTL activities and your analysis and reflection throughout your registration period.

You can record your PRTL online through your MySSSC account. You should record each new training and learning activity in a new PRTL claim under the Registration section.

To add a new PRTL record, you should select **Add claim**. You need to provide the date of the training and learning activity, the number of hours

completed, the details of the activity and a full explanation of how the training activity has contributed to your professional development and informed your practice.

When you have entered all the information you must select **Save** so it is added to your PRTL record. For the purposes of PRTL one day equals six hours. If your training and learning activity takes place over more than one day, you must record both the start and end date for this activity.

To monitor registrants' PRTL we randomly select a sample of PRTL records. If we choose to sample your PRTL we will write to you to request your PRTL submission when you are due to renew your registration.

When you submit your completed PRTL declaration, we will check to make sure you have completed the required number of days or hours and you have signed the declaration.

An SSSC Learning and Development Adviser will then assess your PRTL submission. They will consider the explanations you have provided about your training and learning and how it has contributed to your professional development, informed your practice and enhanced your ability to protect children and adults from harm.

If you have met your PRTL requirements we will tell you in writing. If you have not met your PRTL requirements we will write to you with clear guidance about what additional evidence is required and the timescale in which you must submit it.

Although completion of PRTL is compulsory, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances, such as an extended period of sick leave that would leave you unable to fully complete your PRTL. In such circumstances you should provide a full explanation in writing to us to explain your failure to complete the PRTL. We will consider the explanation and will ask your employer to comment on it before deciding whether to extend the period to complete your PRTL.

### **What activities count as PRTL?**

We expect that in discussions with your employer you will select training and learning activities on the basis of:

- the nature of your current employment
- your plans for career progression
- your preferred learning style
- the learning and training opportunities available to you.

Where possible you should refer to the SSSC's [Continuous Learning Framework](#) when planning your learning and development and include this reference where appropriate in your completed form. The Continuous Learning Framework is made up of four areas.

- Qualifications and training.
- Knowledge, skills, values and understanding.
- Personal capabilities.
- Organisational capabilities.

The Registration Rules state that the required PRTL can be met through the following.

- Attending specific training courses. These could be accredited or non-accredited and cover a range of areas relevant to your role including opportunities for networking and inter/multi professional training and passing on knowledge you have gained to others in your organisation or beyond.
- Reading across a range of areas including:
  - appropriately referenced legislation and government policies which inform current practice and service development
  - research to inform practice from texts, professional journals or the internet
  - reports from regulatory agencies such as the Care Inspectorate.
- Other self-directed learning including:
  - independent study
  - online research/study
  - discussion with experienced colleagues/advisors/managers.
- Supervision, team meetings, development time, work, seminars which demonstrate a reflective approach to learning. It is not sufficient to record that you have attended supervision sessions. You must demonstrate how supervision has contributed to your professional development and informed your practice.
- Experiential learning as a result of practice you have carried out where you can identify specific examples of where you have enhanced your professional development and informed your practice. For example, taking on new or additional responsibilities or having a period of secondment in another context.
- Teaching, assessment or contributing to learning opportunities for individuals or staff group.

- Shadowing the work of a colleague in a related team or profession.
- Learning about and using the latest policy and good practice developments in your field of practice.
- Carrying out a piece of research related to your practice.
- Learning to use electronic case management methods.
- Preparing and presenting a training or development session on an aspect of practice or new legislation.
- Accessing career advice and identifying what training or work experience you need to carry out to be in a position to apply for the type of job you are interested in.
- Learning about and practising stress reduction and relaxation techniques.
- Consider and respond to consultations on social services and related matters.
- Other activity which could reasonably be expected to advance a registrant's professional development, or contribute to the development of the profession as a whole.

You are not required to carry out all these activities or a specific amount of certified learning but you are expected to use a range of learning methods and it would not be acceptable, for example, for all your PRTL to be accounted for by reading. It is helpful to achieve a balance between formal learning, work experience, research, self-directed learning, supervision and experiential learning.

The type of activities stated as acceptable are deliberately general because we recognise that there are a variety of ways for registered social service workers to continue to learn and develop. For that reason the training and learning required does not have to be formally certified.

However, if you are working towards formal certificated registration qualifications and/or further or higher education awards in subjects relevant to your practice you may include these studies as evidence of meeting PRTL requirements.

If registered with a condition to meet the qualification requirements of registration, any studies you carry out to complete a qualification to meet the conditions on your registration may count towards your PRTL.

However you may only count study activities which you have carried out after the date you were registered. You must demonstrate how your studies have contributed to your professional development and informed your practice.

### **How do I demonstrate that I have contributed to my professional development and informed my practice?**

The PRTL claim form asks you to record how your learning has contributed to your professional development and informed your practice. What we mean by this is that you need to demonstrate **how** what you have learned has helped you to put into practice, or has built on, or has reinforced your professional practice and **how** you have used that in working practice.

You can demonstrate this professional development and informed practice in a variety of ways. The following list, which is not exhaustive, gives some examples of how you can do this.

- Demonstrate how you have used supervision to reflect on and contribute to your professional development and to enhance your practice.
- Demonstrate by brief, specific examples how you have put the learning into practice. For example, describe a piece of work with people who use services and how your learning helped your work with them. For example you could write 'This led me to consider how attachment issues were impacting on the behaviour of this child and how I might address that.' To protect the confidentiality of people who use services all examples should be anonymous.
- Demonstrate how you have reflected on your learning within the context of the [Continuous Learning Framework](#).
- Demonstrate how your learning relates to the professional standards that you apply to your work, in particular the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers.
- Explain the links between your learning and your current role, organisational policies/procedures, or external policy documents and legislation. If you attend a briefing on new legislation you could relate this to your current case load, your organisations procedures and other relevant legislation.
- Explain how you have made changes to your practice as a result of what you have learned. For example, by learning more about a specific disability, you have been able to provide more appropriate



support to people who use services.

- Demonstrate how your learning has led you to challenge and further develop your values and practice. For example, you may remember an incident where you spoke to someone in a particular way, but attending a communication skills training session has helped you reconsider the appropriateness of what you said or how you said it.
- Describe how your learning from reading a professional journal or research has had a direct impact on your practice.
- Demonstrate how you have passed on knowledge you have gained to others. By attending a conference or workshop and disseminating the information in a meaningful way to relevant colleagues.
- Explain how carrying out a specific and new task has informed your professional development and enhanced your practice.
- Demonstrate how completing a new qualification has contributed to your professional development and informed your practice.
- Explain how you have accessed career advice and identified what training and/or work experience you need to carry out to be in a position to apply for the type of job you are interested in.
- Demonstrate how working with a learner has contributed to your professional practice and informed your practice.

You can use these examples as a guide when recording your PRTL and you should draw from a range of learning methods and experiences in demonstrating how it has contributed to your professional development and informed your practice.

Essentially what you are doing is reflecting on:

- **what** you have learned
- **how** you have put this learning into practice in your job
- **how** your learning has contributed to, and advanced, your professional development as a social service worker.

## **The role of supervision**

Supervision provides an ideal opportunity for you to reflect on and discuss your professional development and learning with your line manager and

to plan learning experiences. Similarly, an appraisal can provide a formal opportunity for you to reflect on your learning and account for how it has helped you in your work.

It may be useful for you to note down your learning activities and thoughts and reflections about them throughout your registration period, and refer to your notes when completing your PRTL submission rather than waiting until you have to submit the completed PRTL declaration.

### **What is reflection?**

Knott and Scraggs (eds, 2007) (p5) refer to the earlier writing of John Dewey in the 1930s who thought that 'reflection is the continual re-evaluation of personal beliefs, assumptions and ideas in the light of experience and data and the generation of alternative interpretations of those experiences and data'. They also list a range of possible outcomes from the reflective process, identified by Moon in 2004.

- Learning, knowledge and understanding.
- Some form of action.
- A process of critical review.
- Personal and continuing professional development.
- Reflection on the process of learning or personal functioning.
- The building of theory from observations in practice situations.
- The making of decisions/resolution of uncertainty, the solving of problems, empowerment and emancipation.
- Unexpected outcomes (for example images, ideas that could be solutions to dilemmas or seen as creative activity).
- Emotion (that can be an outcome or can be part of the process).
- Clarification and the recognition that there is a need for further reflection.

PRTL should provide evidence that you have reflected on the learning and training opportunities in order to achieve some of the outcomes as noted.

### **Who is responsible for meeting my PRTL needs?**

You are personally responsible for making sure you meet your PRTL requirements. However, under the SSSC Code of Practice for Employers we expect employers to help registered workers meet our requirements for continuing professional development.

It is important that you use supervision and/or staff development schemes and frameworks such as the Continuous Learning Framework to discuss and plan with your employer how you will meet our PRTL requirements.

We expect the activity carried out to meet these requirements will form part of your wider professional development.

## **References**

Knott, C and Scragg, T (eds) (2007) *Reflective Practice in Social Work*. Exeter. Learning Matters Ltd.

Moon, J (2004) *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*. Abington, Routledge

Scottish Executive (2003) *The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland*. Edinburgh, Crown Office.

Scottish Social Services Council (2003) *Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers of Social Service Workers*. Dundee.

Scottish Social Services Council (2003) *Rules for Social Work Training*. Schedule 3.

Scottish Social Services Council (2008) *Continuous Learning Framework*. Dundee.

## **Contact us**

If you have any queries about completing your PRTL or recording it please contact the SSSC's Registration Team:

Telephone: 0345 60 30 891  
Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm  
Wednesday 10am – 5pm

Email: [registration@sssc.uk.com](mailto:registration@sssc.uk.com)

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