

SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers

What has changed in the 2024 Codes?

Most people who took part in the Codes of Practice review told us they liked the simple and clear wording of the Codes. As a result, we've been careful to only make changes where necessary. We identified some duplication, which we have removed.

- **Updated wording and a more positive, empowering tone**

We have refreshed some of the wording which felt outdated. For example, changing 'people who use services' to 'individuals'. You asked us to think about tone as well as wording. The revised Codes aim to take a more empowering tone and use positive language.

- **Kindness and compassion**

The revised Codes make clearer links to the Health and Social Care Standards, support our commitment to The Promise and more strongly reflect the importance of kindness, compassion and involvement in decision making.

- **Greater focus on relationships, trauma and risk enablement**

The revised Codes reflect the importance of positive relationships as well as maintaining appropriate boundaries. We've added a new Code on working in a way that is informed by an understanding of the impact of trauma.

The table below compares the 2016 Codes with the 2024 Codes, which are in effect from 1 May 2024.

Code for Social Service Workers

	Original Code (2016)		Revised Code (2024)
1	As a social service worker, I must protect and promote the rights and interests of people who use services and carers. I will	1	I must protect and promote the rights and interests of individuals and carers. I will
1.1	Treat each person as an individual.	1.1	Work with kindness, compassion and respect and treat each individual as unique.
1.2	Respect and, where appropriate, promote the views and wishes of people who use services and carers.	1.2	Respect and promote the rights and, where appropriate, the views, wishes and choices of individuals and carers
1.3	Support the rights of people who use services to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they use	1.3	Promote the rights of individuals to have control over their lives and make informed choices about their care or support.
		1.4	Work with individuals and carers to communicate using their preferred method and language.
1.4	Respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of people who use services	1.5	Respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of individuals.
1.5	Work in a way that promotes diversity and respects different cultures and values.	1.6	Promote diversity and respect all identities, values and cultures.
2	As a social service worker, I must create and maintain the trust and confidence of people who use services and carers. I will	2	I must build and maintain the trust and confidence of individuals and carers. I will
2.1	Be truthful, open, honest and trustworthy.	2.1	Be truthful, open, honest and trustworthy.
2.2	Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.	2.2	Communicate in a respectful, open, accurate and straightforward way.
2.3	Respect confidential information and clearly explain my employer's policies about confidentiality to people who use services and carers.	2.3	Respect confidential information and clearly explain policies about confidentiality to individuals and carers.
2.4	Be reliable and dependable	2.4	Be reliable and dependable.
2.5	Honour work commitments, agreements, and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to people who use services, carers and my employer.	2.5	Honour work commitments, agreements, and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to individuals, carers and my employer.

2.6	Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure they do not influence my judgement or practice.	2.6	Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure they do not influence my judgement or practice.
2.7	Keep to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from people who use services and carers.	2.7	Follow policies and procedures about exchanging gifts and money with individuals and carers.
		2.8	Form open, positive relationships and maintain professional boundaries with individuals, colleagues or carers that respects their dignity, wellbeing and safety.
3	As a social service worker, I must promote the independence of people who use services while protecting them, as far as possible, from danger and harm. I will	3	I must promote the wellbeing and independence of individuals and carers while protecting them, as far as possible, from harm. I will
3.1	Promote the independence of people who use services and empower them to understand and exercise their rights.		
3.2	Use established processes and procedures to report allegations of harm and challenge and report exploitation and any dangerous, abusive or discriminatory behaviour or practice.	3.1	Report allegations of harm, challenge and report any dangerous, abusive or discriminatory behaviour using established systems within appropriate timescales.
3.3	Follow practices and procedures designed to keep me and other people safe from violent and abusive behaviour at work.	3.2	Follow practices, procedures and policies designed to keep me and other people safe at work.
3.4	Tell my employer, or the appropriate authority, about any resourcing or operational difficulties that might get in the way of providing care.	3.3	Tell my employer, or the relevant authority, about any resourcing or operational matter that might get in the way of providing care or support.
3.5	Tell my employer, or an appropriate authority, when a colleague's fitness to practise may be impaired.	3.4	Tell my employer, or a relevant authority, when a colleague's fitness to practise may be impaired.
3.6	Be open and honest with my employer, people who use services and carers when care has or may have caused physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss.	3.5	Be open and honest with my employer, individuals and carers when practice has or may have caused harm or loss.

3.7	Cooperate with any investigations by my employer, the SSSC or another authority into my fitness to practise or the fitness to practise of others. This may include attending hearings and providing witness statements, documents or other information.	3.6	Cooperate with any investigations by my employer, the SSSC or a relevant authority into my fitness to practise or the fitness to practise of others. This may include attending hearings and providing witness statements, documents or other information within appropriate timescales.
3.8	Keep to my employer's health and safety policies, including those relating to substance misuse.		
3.9	Enable people who use services and carers to make complaints. Take complaints seriously and either respond to them or pass them to the appropriate person. Take appropriate action when there is an allegation of harm.	3.7	Work with individuals and carers to give and receive feedback, raise concerns and complaints, take these seriously and act upon them.
3.10	Recognise and use responsibly the power and authority I have when working with people who use services and carers	3.8	Recognise and use responsibly the power and authority I have when working with individuals, carers and colleagues.
4	As a social service worker, I must respect the rights of people who use services, while striving to make sure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people. I will	4	I must recognise that individuals have the right to take risks and will work with them to understand and manage those risks. I will
4.1	Recognise that people who use services have the right to take risks and support them to work positively with potential and actual risks to themselves or others.	4.1	Work with individuals to make informed choices about potential and actual risks to themselves or others.
4.2	Follow risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of people who use services presents a risk of harm to themselves or others.	4.2	Follow risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of individuals presents a risk of harm to themselves or others.
4.3	Take necessary steps to reduce the risks of people who use services harming themselves or other people	4.3	Take necessary steps to reduce the risks of individuals harming themselves or others.
4.4	Make sure that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.	4.4	Make sure that individuals, relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the findings and implications of risk assessments.
PLEASE NOTE - The original section 5 has been moved to section 6 in the 2024 revision. This is to keep all the positive 'I will...' statements together and keep the 'I will not...' statements at the end of the document. (The following sections from the original Codes have been reversed so that they read across for comparison).			

6	As a social service worker, I am accountable for the quality of my work and will take responsibility for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills.	5	I must be accountable for the quality of my work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills. I will
6.1	Meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way.	5.1	Meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way.
6.2	Maintain clear, accurate and up-to-date records in line with procedures relating to my work.	5.2	Maintain clear, accurate and up-to-date records in line with policies and procedures relating to my work.
6.3	Tell my employer or the appropriate authority about any personal difficulties that might affect my ability to do my job competently and safely and tell the SSSC about anything that may affect my fitness to practise.	5.3	Tell my employer or the relevant authority about any personal circumstances or experiences that may affect my ability to do my job competently and safely and tell the SSSC about anything that may affect my fitness to practise.
6.4	Ask for assistance from my employer or the appropriate authority if I do not feel able to, or well enough prepared to, carry out any part of my work or if I am not sure about how to proceed.	5.4	Ask for support from my employer or the relevant authority if I do not feel able to, or well enough prepared to, carry out any part of my work or if I am unsure about how to proceed.
		5.5	Prepare for and engage in supervision to reflect on my development, learning needs, wellbeing and practice.
		5.6	Maintain my continuous professional learning to improve my knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.
6.5	Work openly with and cooperate with colleagues and treat them with respect.	5.7	Cooperate and work inclusively and openly with colleagues and others and treat them with respect.
		5.8	Work in a way that is informed by an understanding of the impact that trauma may have on individuals, carers and colleagues.
6.6	Recognise that I remain responsible for the work that I have delegated to others.	5.9	Be responsible for the work that I delegate to others.
6.7	Recognise and respect the roles and expertise of workers from other professions and work in partnership with them.	5.10	Respect the roles and expertise of colleagues from other professions, who may follow different professional codes, and work in partnership with them.
6.8	Respect the responsibilities of colleagues who follow different professional codes.	5.11	Recognise and respect the roles, expertise and experience of carers, families and relevant others and work in partnership with them as appropriate.

6.9	Undertake relevant learning to maintain and improve my knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.	5.12	Invite and listen to feedback from individuals, carers and others and use this to improve my practice.
5	As a social service worker, I must uphold public trust and confidence in social services. I will not	6	I must uphold public trust and confidence. I will not
5.1	Abuse, neglect or harm people who use services, carers or my colleagues.	6.1	Abuse, harm, neglect or exploit individuals, carers or colleagues.
5.2	Exploit people who use services, carers or my colleagues.		
5.3	Abuse the trust of people who use services or carers, or the access I have to personal information about them or their property, home or workplace.	6.2	Abuse the trust of individuals, carers or colleagues, or misuse the information I hold about them and their personal circumstances.
5.4	Form inappropriate relationships with people who use services or carers.	6.3	Form unprofessional or harmful relationships with individuals or carers.
5.5	Discriminate against people who use services, carers or my colleagues.	6.4	Discriminate against individuals, carers or colleagues.
5.6	Condone any discrimination by people who use services, carers or my colleagues.	6.5	Condone any discrimination by individuals, carers or colleagues.
5.7	Put myself or other people at unnecessary risk.	6.6	Put myself or other people at unnecessary risk.
5.8	Behave, while in or outside work, in a way which would bring my suitability to work in social services into question.	6.7	Behave, while in or outside work, in a way that would bring my suitability to work in social services into question.

Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers

	Original Code (2016)		Revised Code (2024)
1	As a social service employer, you must make sure people are suitable to be social service workers and that they understand their roles and responsibilities. You will	1	Make sure people you recruit are suitable to be social service workers and that they understand their roles and responsibilities. I will
1.1	Use thorough recruitment processes to make sure that only suitable people with appropriate attitudes and values, and the potential to gain the necessary knowledge and skills, enter the workforce.	1.1	Use thorough and safe recruitment processes to make sure that people with appropriate attitudes and values, and the potential to gain the necessary knowledge and skills enter the workforce.
1.2	Check criminal records and registers and follow relevant guidance when assessing whether a person is capable of carrying out the duties of the job they have been selected for. You must do this before you appoint them.	1.2	Follow relevant safe recruitment guidance to check criminal records, registers and gaps in employment as part of assessing whether a person can carry out the duties of the job.
1.3	Ask for and provide accurate and appropriate references to share information relating to a person's suitability to work in social services.	1.3	Request and provide accurate and appropriate information or references relating to a person's suitability to work in a specified role.
1.4	Give workers clear information about their roles and responsibilities, relevant legislation, and the policies and procedures they must follow in their work.	1.4	Give workers clear information about their roles and responsibilities, relevant legislation, and the policies and procedures they must follow in their work.
		1.5	Provide clear information to workers about line management, communication and support.
2	As a social service employer, you must have the culture and systems in place to support social service workers to meet their Code of Practice. You will	2	Maintain a culture and have systems in place to support social service workers to meet their Code of Practice. I will
		2.1	Lead, manage and supervise workers in a way that promotes kind and compassionate practice.
		2.2	Lead in a way which values diversity, inclusion and equality and upholds individual rights.
2.1	Put into action and monitor written policies and procedures, particularly about reporting allegations of harm of abuse to the relevant authority.	2.3	Lead workers in a way that makes sure individuals and carers, where appropriate, are involved in decisions about their care or support.

2.2	Effectively manage and supervise social service workers to promote best practice and good conduct and support staff to continuously improve their performance and make sure they are fit to practise.	2.4	Lead workers to continuously improve their practice and professional development, while ensuring their fitness to practise.
		2.5	Promote an open culture where workers are supported to discuss ethical practice and professional boundaries.
2.3	Have systems in place to listen to and consider feedback from people who use services, carers and other relevant people, to shape and improve services and the performance of social service workers.	2.6	Have systems in place to seek and use feedback from individuals, carers and others to shape and improve services and practice.
2.4	Have systems in place for social service workers to report inadequate resources or difficulties which might have a negative effect on the delivery of care. Work with social service workers and relevant authorities to tackle such problems.	2.7	Have systems in place for workers to report resourcing or operational difficulties that might have an impact on care or support and work to address such problems with relevant authorities where necessary.
2.5	Have systems in place to support workers to whistleblow when they feel that working practices are inappropriate or unsafe for any reason.	2.8	Enable a culture which supports workers to whistleblow when they feel that working practices are discriminatory, inappropriate or unsafe for any reason and take appropriate action to respond to concerns.
2.6	Support social service workers to meet the standards in their Code of Practice and not require them to do anything that might prevent that from happening.	2.9	Support workers to meet the standards in their Code of Practice and not require them to do anything that might prevent that from happening.
2.7	If you employ workers from other professions, support them to meet their own professional codes.	2.10	Support workers employed from other professions to meet their own professional codes.
2.8	Report workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired to the relevant authority.	2.11	Report workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired to the relevant authority.

3	As a social service employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable social service workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge. You will	3	Provide learning and development opportunities to enable workers to strengthen and maintain their skills, knowledge and practice. I will
3.1	Provide good quality induction, learning and development opportunities to help social service workers do their jobs effectively and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities.	3.1	Provide good quality accessible induction and learning and development opportunities to support workers to carry out their role safely and effectively.
		3.2	Support and prepare workers for new and changing roles, responsibilities, and developments in practice including digital.
3.2	Contribute to providing social care and social work education and learning, including effective workplace assessments and practice learning.	3.3	Contribute to education and learning, providing effective workplace placements, assessments and practice learning opportunities.
3.3	Support staff who need to be registered with us to meet the conditions for registration and the requirement for continuing professional development.	3.4	Support workers who need to be registered with the SSSC to meet and maintain their conditions for registration and the requirement for continuous professional learning and development.
		3.5	Make sure that all newly qualified social workers are provided with the required level of professional learning and development during the mandatory supported year to fully meet their continuous professional learning requirements.
3.4	Respond appropriately to social service workers who need support because they do not feel able to, or well enough prepared to, carry out their work.	3.6	Respond appropriately to workers who need support because they do not feel able, or well enough prepared, to carry out their work.
3.5	Provide effective, regular supervision to social service workers to support them to develop and improve through reflective practice.	3.7	Provide effective and regular supervision that enables workers to develop and improve practice through reflection and feedback.

4	As a social service employer, you must have written policies and procedures in place to protect people who use services and carers, and to support social service workers. You will	4	Maintain a culture that supports safety and protection while respecting the rights of individuals to take risks. I will
4.1	Make it clear to social service workers that bullying, harassment or any form of discrimination is not acceptable and take action to deal with such behaviour.		
		4.1	Have written policies and procedures in place to protect individuals, carers, workers and others from harm.
4.2	Have procedures in place for social service workers to report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when a colleague's fitness to practise may be impaired • exploitation or any dangerous, discriminatory or abusive behaviour or practice • when care has caused, or may have caused, physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss. 	4.2	Put into action and monitor written policies and procedures, particularly about reporting allegations of exploitation, discrimination, harm, neglect or abuse to the relevant authority within appropriate timescales.
4.3	Deal with reports and allegations from social service workers promptly, effectively, and openly.	4.3	Make sure workers know and understand signs of exploitation, discrimination, harm, neglect and abuse and the action they must take.
4.4	Make it clear to social service workers, people who use services and carers that violence, threats or abuse are not acceptable. Have clear policies and procedures for reducing the risk of violence and managing violent incidents.	4.4	Make sure that workers understand bullying, harassment or any form of discrimination is not acceptable and take action to deal with such behaviour.
4.5	Support social service workers who experience trauma or violence in their work.	4.5	Have procedures in place for a worker to report when a colleague's fitness to practise may be impaired.
4.6	Put into action written policies and procedures that promote the wellbeing and equality of workers and respect diversity.	4.6	Have procedures in place for a worker to report when practice has caused or may have caused harm or loss.
4.7	Provide appropriate support to social service workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired and give clear guidance about any limits on their work while they are receiving support or treatment. While doing this you must make sure that the care and safety of people who use services is your priority.	4.7	Deal with reports and allegations from workers promptly, effectively and openly.

4.8	Make sure that where care has or may have caused physical, emotional, financial or material harm or loss, this is reported to the appropriate authorities	4.8	Promote a culture that values everyone's safety and where violence, threats and abuse are not acceptable. Have policies and procedures in place for reducing and managing such incidents.
		4.9	Be aware of the range of impacts trauma may have on workers, and support workers who experience these
		4.10	Be aware of the impact abusive behaviour may have on workers. Support workers who experience such behaviour.
		4.11	Have policies and procedures in place that promote the health, safety, wellbeing and equality of workers and respect inclusion and diversity.
		4.12	Support workers whose fitness to practise may be impaired and provide clear guidance about any restrictions on their work.
		4.13	Report to the relevant authorities where practice has or may have caused harm or loss.
		4.14	Have risk assessment policies and procedures in place.
5	As a social service employer, you must publicise and promote the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers to people who use services and carers and cooperate with us in our proceedings. You will	5	Publicise and promote the Code of Practice for Social Service Employers and the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers to individuals and carers and cooperate with SSSC proceedings. I will
5.1	Inform social service workers about this Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers and your responsibility to keep to it.	5.1	Follow the Code of Practice for Social Service Employers and tell workers about my responsibility to comply with it.
5.2	Inform social service workers about the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and their responsibility to keep to it.	5.2	Inform workers about the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and work with them to understand their responsibilities to comply with it.
5.3	Make people who use services and carers aware of the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and inform them how to raise issues relating to the Codes, including how to contact us and cooperate with any proceedings resulting from this.	5.3	Promote the importance and connection between the Code of Practice and other relevant frameworks and standards.

5.4	Take account of the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers when making any decision that relates to a worker's fitness to practise.	5.4	Inform individuals and carers of the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and provide details of how to raise issues relating to the Codes.
5.5	Follow guidance on making a referral to the SSSC about a worker whose fitness to practise may be impaired. If appropriate, tell the worker that you have made a referral.	5.5	Take account of the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers when making any decision that relates to a worker's fitness to practise.
5.6	Cooperate with SSSC investigations and those of other authorities, including providing documents, attending hearings and responding to the findings and decisions.	5.6	Follow guidance on making a referral to the SSSC about a worker whose fitness to practise may be impaired. If appropriate, tell the worker that you have made a referral.
5.7	Enable and support social service workers to cooperate with SSSC investigations and those of other authorities (for example, to provide witness statements, documents or other information and, where appropriate, attend hearings).	5.7	Cooperate promptly with SSSC investigations and those of other authorities, including providing documents, attending hearings and responding to the findings and decisions.
		5.8	Enable and support workers to cooperate with SSSC investigations and those of other authorities.
		5.9	Take appropriate action on any SSSC findings about a worker's fitness to practise, including supporting a worker to meet any conditions on their registration.
		5.10	Take appropriate action on the findings of other standard setting bodies to improve the service provided to individuals and carers.