

NQSW Supported Year: overview and guidance

January 2024

Table of Contents

Part one – overview and guidance.....	5
1. Background	5
2. Overview of the NQSW Supported Year	6
Figure 1. Employer support.....	6
Figure 2. NQSW Supported Year approach.....	7
Figure 3. Core learning elements for social workers	8
3. Principles of the NQSW Supported Year	9
4. Key stakeholder responsibilities	11
4.1 Newly qualified social worker responsibilities	11
4.2 Employer responsibilities.....	13
4.3 Supervisor responsibilities.....	15
4.4 Scottish Social Services Council responsibilities	17
4.5 Social work course provider responsibilities.....	18
5. Planning professional development – meeting continuous professional learning requirements.....	19
5.1 Core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors.....	19
5.2 SSSC registration - continuous professional learning requirements.....	19
5.3 Mandatory learning activity.....	20
5.4 Planning NQSW professional development activity	21
Figure 4. Overview core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors	22
6. Professional development review process	24
6.1 Overview.....	24
6.2 Success criteria	25
Figure 5. NQSW Supported Year success criteria	26
Figure 6. Summary of key tasks	27
6.3 Initial professional development discussion	28
6.4 Mid-year professional development discussion and IDP review	30
6.5 End of year professional development discussion and IDP review	32
6.6 Validation and endorsement process.....	35
6.7 SSSC sign off.....	37
7. Evidencing progress during the NQSW Supported Year.....	38
7.1 Sources of evidence	38

7.2 Collecting and sharing evidence.....	38
7.3 Recording progress - NQSW continuous professional learning review template.....	39
7.4 Developmental feedback.....	40
7.5 Individual development plans	41
7.6 Multi-source feedback	41
7.7 End of year structured professional discussions.....	42
Figure 7. Sources of evidence	43
8. Quality assurance arrangements - sampling.....	44
8.1 Mid-year sampling in first year of delivery	44
8.2 Sampling as part of the validation and endorsement process	44
8.3 SSSC end of year sampling.....	45
9. Extension and Non-Completion.....	46
9.1 Extension to timescale	46
9.2 Additional time beyond end of NQSW Supported Year.....	46
9.3 Non-completion.....	47
10. Role of line managers, mentors and peer support in the NQSW Supported Year	49
10.1 Line managers	49
10.2 Mentors.....	49
10.3 Peer support	49
11. Change of supervisor, post or employer	50
11.1 Change of supervisor or post.....	50
11.2 Change of employment	50
11.3 Moving to or from an area not involved in the NQSW Supported Year.....	51
Part two – templates.....	52
T1 -individual learning plan.....	53
T2 – NQSW continuous professional learning review template	59
T3 -end of year professional development discussion questions.....	77
T4 – NQSW validation and endorsement form 2024.....	79
T5 - changing supervisor/ employer checklist.....	83
T6 – NQSW extension request form	83
Optional template – Feedback from people who use services, their family and carers.....	86
Optional template – Feedback from professionals.....	87

Appendix 1: Related documents	89
Appendix 2: Identifying NQSWs within my organisation.....	90
Appendix 3: Temporary process for confirming NQSWs involved in the NQSW Supported Year.....	95

Acronyms

Common acronyms used in this document:

ILP – Individual learning plan

IDP - Individual Learning Plan

CPL – continuous professional learning

NQSW – newly qualified social worker

NQSW CPL review template - NQSW continuous professional learning review template

SSSC – Scottish Social Services Council

Part one – overview and guidance

1. Background

The Scottish Government is committed to the national implementation of a mandatory supported first year in practice for newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) from October 2024. This is part of the ambition to create a strategic framework from qualifying education through to advanced practice for all social workers and social work employers in Scotland.

The NQSW Supported Year will improve consistency in the support available to all NQSWs working as registered social workers in Scotland. It is aligned to SSSC registration and the responsibilities and entitlements that are afforded to registered social workers.

The NQSW Supported Year will support learning and professional development and enhance how NQSWs meet the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) registration requirements as set by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Overall, the aim of the approach is to nurture and retain the next generation of social work leaders and ensure an increasingly confident and competent workforce for people, families and carers.

The NQSW Supported Year is relevant to all newly qualified social workers registered for the first time with the SSSC as a social worker and have not completed CPL for a NQSW or been registered with another care council for at least 12 months.

This document is intended to support clarity and promote consistency of the approach. It will be updated as appropriate to reflect any arrangements relevant to national implementation that result from Scottish Government's work to develop a strategic framework from qualifying education through to advanced practice for all social workers and social work employers in Scotland.

The NQSW website provides the information and documentation relevant to the NQSW Supported Year.

Key partners in the NQSW Supported Year

The NQSW Supported Year builds on the existing responsibilities of NQSWs, employers, supervisors, course providers and the SSSC. We are currently in a period of transition as we move towards a new approach to how NQSWs meet the continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements and employers begin to make necessary arrangements to embed the NQSW Supported Year.

2. Overview of the NQSW Supported Year

The NQSW Supported Year is relevant to all NQSWs¹ registered on the social worker part of the Register with the SSSC. It is aligned with the NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements and timescale² for completion by newly qualified social workers.

It is intended as a national approach to ensure that all NQSWs entering the workforce have access to support and development opportunities which consolidate social work education and develop professional identity and social work practice.

Employers will aim to provide the support outlined in figure 1 to all NQSWs within their workforce. Further detail is provided in [Definitions of employer support: an employer's commitment to NQSWs](#)

Figure 1. Employer support



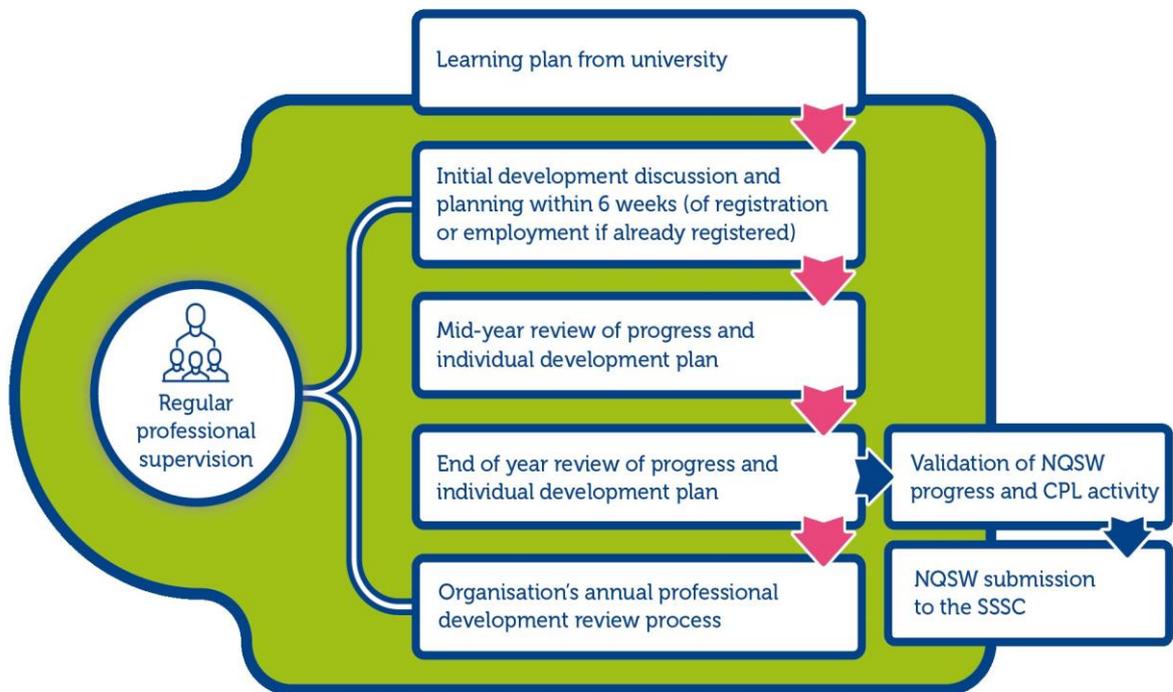
¹ Newly qualified social workers are those registered for the first time with the SSSC as a social worker and have not completed CPL for a NQSW or been registered with another care council for at least 12 months.

² Timescales -12 months if working 35 hours or more per week, 18 months if working less than 35 hours per week.

The approach creates a link between social work education and workplace learning and places supervision and professional development at the centre of the NQSW Supported Year. It provides a structured approach to discussing and reviewing professional development at fixed points during the NQSW Supported Year in addition to discussion as part of regular supervision (figure 2).

As a minimum, it is expected that formal professional development discussions, reviews and individual development planning will happen within the first six weeks of commencing employment (if registered) or confirming SSSC registration, and at the mid and end of NQSW registration.

Figure 2. NQSW Supported Year approach.



The core learning elements for social workers (figure 3) provide the framework to plan and review professional development. The SSSC has set the mandatory learning activity for NQSWs to meet their registration requirements and employers will identify additional learning to meet organisation, service and team specific needs. Progress is validated and endorsed by the employing organisation and is intended to align with existing supervisor responsibilities and the organisation's professional development review process or support the creation of one.

Figure 3. Core learning elements for social workers



NQSWs will fulfil their responsibilities as registrants by completing, as a minimum, the SSSC mandatory learning activity within 12 or 18 months of registration. They must maintain a record of continuous professional learning and submit the required documentation to the SSSC.

Further detail on the approach is provided in sections five, six and seven.

3. Principles of the NQSW Supported Year

The NQSW Supported Year is:

- **Developmental in nature.** The NQSW Supported Year is a developmental approach, it is not a pass or fail assessed year. It recognises that every professional development journey is unique and will continue beyond this formative stage. This is reflected in the success criteria. It provides a structure to ensure that newly qualified social workers are supported to recognise strengths and areas for development across the core learning elements for social workers. NQSWs will continue to have professional development needs beyond the NQSW Supported Year which will be captured on their Individual Development Plan (IDP) and taken forward as part of the organisation's professional development review process.
- **Promotes professional identity.** Registered social workers with supervisory experience are integral to the approach to maximise the development of a strong sense of professional identity and an understanding of the unique contribution of social work within a diverse range of settings.
- **Values ways in which social workers learn.** Professional development is looked at holistically and NQSWs will be given time and opportunity to engage with, reflect on and evidence their learning from a range of formal, informal, and naturally occurring workplace learning and development opportunities that arise within their professional role or are created to meet a specific need.
- **Supports supervisors.** Employers will ensure supervisors are supported and equipped to understand and fully engage with their role in the NQSW Supported Year. Supervisors are best placed to understand how NQSWs are progressing and to guide professional development during their NQSW Supported Year. Validation of progress will be located with supervisors and their decision endorsed by employers.
- **Transparent.** NQSWs must meet the minimum continuous professional learning requirements set by the SSSC to maintain their social work registration. The NQSW Supported Year is designed to focus on continuous professional development and will likely include learning opportunities to meet organisation and team specific needs in addition to the SSSC continuous professional learning requirements. The approach enhances the learning opportunities available to NQSWs by their employer.

The approach is not intended to replace an employer's performance management process which can encompass matters of a wider nature. Any performance management issues will be highlighted to the NQSW at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting to the end of their NQSW Supported Year and appropriate steps will be taken to address them. The NQSW may have development needs that require additional time and support to be addressed, either through an extension of the

NQSW Supported Year or ongoing as part of the organisation's professional development review process.

It is the NQSW's responsibility to meet the continuous learning requirements to maintain their registration with the SSSC. Non-completion of the NQSW Year approach, will not, in itself, mean a referral has to be made to the SSSC regarding the worker's fitness to practise. A referral to SSSC Fitness to Practise would only need to be considered if, during the NQSW Supported Year, there have been identified areas of deficient professional practice that the employer has been unable to address through performance management processes and/or there have been other concerns about the worker's fitness to practise safely and effectively which meet the thresholds for referral to the SSSC. Further information relating to referring a NQSW to SSSC Fitness to practise can be found here: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practise/>

If a NQSW is the subject of a fitness to practise referral they are still expected to meet the NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements within the agreed timescale unless they are suspended from the Register. This is because the process associated with a fitness to practise referral may be longer than the first 12 or 18 months of registration and the outcome may not require the person to be removed from the register.

4. Key stakeholder responsibilities

The following provides an overview of the responsibilities of key stakeholders in the NQSW Supported Year.

4.1 Newly qualified social worker responsibilities

When the SSSC is notified by a university that a social work student has completed the Degree in Social Work, they are removed from the student part of the Register. If they wish to work as a social worker, they will:

- ✓ **Join the social worker part of the Register.**
Graduates should apply to the SSSC for registration on the social worker part of the Register as soon as possible on confirming a start date or commencing a post requiring a social work qualification. Registration must be complete within three months of commencing a role³. The NQSW Supported Year is aligned to the SSSC registration and associated NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements.
- ✓ **Share completed individual learning plan.**
NQSWs will share a copy of their individual learning plan (ILP) with the supervisor in advance of the initial professional development discussion. The ILP should be completed during the social work qualifying programme as it creates a link between social work education and workplace learning. It is acknowledged that a minority of NQSWs will not have completed an ILP at university and in these circumstances where possible, the NQSW should self-complete this document prior to starting the social work post and share it with their supervisor.
- ✓ **Keep registration details up to date.**
NQSWs should keep contact and employment details up to date and advise the SSSC of any changes to employment, working hours or leave of absence such as maternity leave.
- ✓ **Meet SSSC registration requirements.**
NQSWs must be accountable for the quality of their work and meet relevant standards of professional practice including operating to the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers. They must meet the NQSW CPL registration requirements within the first 12 or 18 months of registration by completing and maintaining a record of CPL. The required documentation must be submitted to the SSSC within the following two months⁴.
- ✓ **Engage in the NQSW Supported Year.**
NQSWs should actively engage with the supports available through their employer and be prepared to raise issues or concerns with the NQSW Supported Year implementation lead or Organisational Development/Human Resources if they do not

³ Proposed Registration Rule change from 3 June 2024 subject to legislative change in place.

⁴ CPL timescales are 12 months if working 35 hours or more per week, 18 months if working less than 35 hours per week.

have access to the full range of employer support including frequency and quality of professional supervision.

They must take responsibility for meeting the NQSW CPL registration requirements and maintaining a record of CPL across the core learning elements as agreed with supervisor and employer. This includes as a minimum:

- critical reflection and self-assessment across the core learning elements at the initial, mid and end of year stages.
- completion of the SSSC mandatory learning activity associated with the core learning elements.
- preparation and participation in supervision and professional development discussions.
- reviewing and updating their Individual Development Plan (IDP) along with supervisor on an ongoing basis.

Further detail is provided in section six.

✓ **Maintain and submit evidence of progress.**

It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure that they maintain evidence of CPL and this remains accessible if the NQSW has a change in supervisor, moves post or is asked to submit for sampling. Some employers have arrangements in place to support this such as a specific Microsoft Teams channel. Employers may request to see progress to date as part of the local sampling strategy prior to endorsement and the SSSC retains the right to sample evidence of mandatory learning activity and progress across the core learning elements.

✓ **Confirm registration requirements have been met.**

The NQSW is responsible for submitting completed validation and endorsement form to the SSSC along with the NQSW Continuous Professional Learning Review template when requested. Failure to submit the completed forms may be an impediment to ongoing registration.

If necessary, a NQSW can request an extension. Further detail is provided in section nine.

4.2 Employer responsibilities

Employers have a critical role in the successful implementation and delivery of the NQSW Supported Year in Scotland. They will:

✓ **Show commitment to the SSSC Codes.**

Employers will demonstrate a commitment to the [SSSC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers](#) and a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. They will work to reduce the barriers NQSWs face in seeking support or accessing support, particularly NQSWs with protected characteristics or who are neurodivergent.

✓ **Establish processes and systems.**

Employers will have a process in place to:

- identify NQSWs joining their organisation.
- support the timely completion of applications to the SSSC for registration on the social worker part of the Register for posts requiring a social work qualification.
- complete the validation and endorsement process.
- review non-completions and requests for extensions.
- ensure employees understand the NQSW Supported Year and any associated responsibilities.
- align the NQSW Supported Year process with the organisation's annual professional development review process.
- have an identified point of contact with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the NQSW Supported Year, support for NQSWs and supervisors as well as linking with the SSSC and national NQSW project.

✓ **Provide consistent and accessible support to NQSWs.**

When implementing the NQSW Supported Year employers should ensure that the following support is accessible to all NQSWs within their workforce:

- A formal induction programme that provides the NQSW with an understanding of the expectations of their employer, their responsibilities as a registered social worker and the context in which they are working.
- Professional development planning and review which includes:
 - An initial professional development discussion no later than 6 weeks from registering and starting a social worker role.
 - A mid-year professional development discussion at no later than six (nine) months.
 - An end of year professional development discussion at 12 (18) months.
 - Creating and reviewing an Individual Development Plan (IDP) throughout and beyond the NQSW Supported Year.
- Professional supervision with a registered social worker no less than four-weekly or more frequently if needed, particularly in the initial stages of the NQSW Supported Year.
- Continuous professional learning (CPL) opportunities agreed between the NQSW and supervisor including formal, informal and naturally occurring workplace learning.

- A protected caseload that reflects the NQSW's level of professional development and does not include undertaking a lead role in child or adult protection investigations.
- Protected learning and development time to allow NQSWs to fully engage in their identified learning needs as agreed in their IDP.
- Have arrangements in place to ensure NQSWs have access to and are encouraged to access regular peer support with an identified peer(s) and/or access a mentoring scheme if available.

Agreed definitions are available in [Definitions of employer support: an employer's commitment to NQSWs](#).

✓ **Review policy.**

- Employers will review current organisational policies to ensure that NQSW support is reflected in organisational policy and procedure.
- The roles and responsibilities of those providing professional supervision, line management and mentoring will be agreed and communicated.

✓ **Workforce considerations.**

Employers will consider how best to maximise support and opportunities to NQSWs, supervisors and wider teams. They will work to have contingency arrangements in place to minimise the impact of supervisor, peer or mentor absence or changes to these roles.

✓ **Support for supervisors.**

Employers will recognise the central role of supervisors in the NQSW Supported Year and acknowledge the need to support and equip supervisors to understand and fully engage with their role in the approach. This will include addressing the professional development needs of supervisors and workload consideration.

✓ **Quality assurance.**

Employers will have local arrangements in place to sample the quality of NQSW learning activity and endorse the supervisor's decision at the end of the NQSW Supported Year. They will also develop processes to understand how consistently the NQSW Supported Year is implemented within their organisation.

4.3 Supervisor responsibilities

Supervisors are central to the process as they are uniquely placed to understand strengths and areas for development as they engage with the NQSW in a variety of day-to-day settings as well as discussions through supervision. Supervisors will:

- ✓ **Understand their contribution to the NQSW Supported Year.**
Become familiar with all aspects of the NQSW Supported Year including:
 - the principles, responsibilities and timescales.
 - the core learning elements for social workers and mandatory learning activity.
 - sources of evidence and success criteria.
 - local arrangements for the coordination of employer support, validation and endorsement process.
- ✓ **Work with employers to establish processes and systems.**
Supervisors will work with employers to embed a systematic approach to NQSWs joining the organisation, including:
 - encouraging timely applications to the SSSC for registration on the social worker part of the Register.
 - being aware of local arrangements for the coordination of the NQSW Supported Year.
 - creating an induction programme and linking the NQSW to any organisational NQSW forums or facilitated peer group support.
 - identifying a peer and/ or mentor and agreeing parameters of role.
 - access local arrangements to equip supervisors to understand and fully engage with their role in the approach.
 - be prepared to discuss any support/ capacity concerns with a line manager including their professional development needs as a supervisor.
 - be clear about role of a line manager in the NQSW Supported Year if they are not a registered social worker. Further detail is provided in section 10.
- ✓ **Plan engagement in the NQSW Supported Year.**
Supervisors will set aside dedicated time for formal professional development discussions, reviews and individual development planning within the first six weeks of registration, at the mid-year and end of NQSW Supported Year.
- ✓ **Plan and review professional development regularly.**
Request a copy of the completed Individual Learning Plan (ILP) from the NQSW so learning in employment can link to social work education.

Provide regular supervision which encourages discussion about wellbeing, critical reflection, professional development and learning, in addition to case management and organisational issues.

Prepare for the professional development reviews by considering the NQSW's development, self-assessment, own observations and feedback from others.

- ✓ **Be transparent.**

At each professional development review, provide clear feedback on strengths and areas for development.

Use the core learning elements and SSSC mandatory learning activity to plan professional development along with the NQSW and record on the individual development plan (IDP). Review and update the IDP on a regular basis.

Complete and sign off the initial, mid and end of year professional development discussions and return to the NQSW within the agreed timeframes (10 working days) and ensure they are updated prior to any change to the supervisory relationship.

Raise any performance management issues with the NQSW at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting until the end of their NQSW Supported Year and take appropriate steps to address them including employers' performance management procedures if necessary.

Complete the supervisor's role in the validation and endorsement process as outlined in section six. Engage with any local sampling and quality assurance arrangements as required.

✓ **Manage changes to supervisory relationships.**

If a NQSW joins the team, establish if they have been part of the NQSW Supported Year in their previous role. If so, ask the NQSW for a copy of the NQSW supported year review template and evidence of learning activity in the first week of starting in this post. If the NQSW is joining from an area not currently involved in the NQSW Supported Year, consider whether the professional development discussions can be introduced in a meaningful way.

If there is to be change in the supervisory relationship, ensure that all paperwork is up to date and a handover is facilitated as outlined in section 11.

4.4 Scottish Social Services Council responsibilities

The role of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is to protect the public by registering this workforce, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. The SSSC will:

- ✓ **Registration**
Ensure all those admitted to the part of the Register for social workers meet the requirements for registration.
- ✓ **Continuous Professional learning**
Set and publish Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) requirements for NQSWs. They must maintain a record and complete mandatory learning activity to meet the NQSW CPL registration requirements and continue registration as a social worker. The purpose of the CPL registration requirements is to ensure NQSWs evidence the consolidation and advancement of professional practice against core learning elements for social workers. Supervisors and employers will be asked to validate and endorse the NQSW's progress on completing the mandatory learning activity and the NQSW will submit the required evidence to maintain registration.
- ✓ **Quality assurance**
Maintain a sampling strategy of NQSW submissions to be satisfied that the quality of NQSW CPL submissions is of high quality and the validation and endorsement processes and decision making is rigorous and consistent across all settings. Provide feedback on areas of strength and recommended improvements to local implementation leads and feedback themes through national quality assurance arrangements.

Capture and analyse data via the validation and endorsement process to contribute to national quality assurance arrangements, highlighting key themes in promoting local, regional and national consistency in the implementation and ongoing delivery of the NQSW Supported Year.

4.5 Social work course provider responsibilities

The transition from student to employment as social worker involves supporting the NQSW to be able to act effectively in demanding circumstances and often complex settings. It also involves supporting the NQSW to understand the unique contribution of social work, the power and authority afforded to the protected title and how to respond to ethical dilemmas that arise. Social work course providers will:

✓ **Deliver a transition curriculum.**

To support a successful transition from student to NQSW, course providers will deliver a transitions curriculum in social work programmes and involve external stakeholders as appropriate. The transitions curriculum should contain the following elements:

- Reflection on the journey so far and development of professional identity – completion of Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Self-care
- Graduate experience
- Employability
- Interview preparation
- Consideration of post registration Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) requirements.

✓ **Ensure Individual Learning Plans (ILP) are completed.**

Course providers will ensure social work students complete the ILP during their social work programme so that strengths and learning needs are taken forward into their role as an NQSW.

5. Planning professional development – meeting continuous professional learning requirements

5.1 Core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors

The core learning elements for social workers describe the knowledge, skills and values common to all professional social work practice. They provide a framework to support NQSWs to understand and articulate the unique contribution of social work, the power and authority afforded to the protected title and responses to ethical dilemmas that arise. They are intended to be used within legislative and policy contexts including Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), integrated health and social care for adults, community justice, The Promise, the Review of Adult Social Care and developing a trauma informed and responsive nation and workforce.

The core learning elements build on and consolidate learning accessed through social work education and advance the professional development that NQSWs as registered social workers. They are underpinned by the ethical framework and promote the overarching responsibility of contributing to the wellbeing and safety of people, including families and carers.

5.2 SSSC registration - continuous professional learning requirements

It is a requirement of Registration that all registered workers maintain evidence of continuous professional learning (CPL).

NQSWs must complete as a minimum the mandatory learning activity set by the SSSC within the first 12 or 18 months of registration. Employers will identify any additional specific learning to meet the requirements of the team, service or organisation.

Figure 4 below provides an overview of the core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors and the mandatory learning activity for each core element. Full detail of the SSSC mandatory learning activity is provided in [Core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors and mandatory learning activity](#).

There is an expectation that all social workers are aware of their responsibility and contribution to the protection of vulnerable children and adults from harm. The 'promoting wellbeing, support and protection' core learning element will require NQSWs to evidence completion of mandatory learning activity relevant to protecting both children and adults from harm regardless of their work setting.

The SSSC mandatory learning activity for NQSWs:

- ✓ is based on the core learning elements for social workers.
- ✓ has ethics, values and rights-based practice at the centre.
- ✓ builds on the generic social work education approach in Scotland.
- ✓ supports the consolidation and advancement of professional practice from qualifying education into early career social work.
- ✓ provides an understanding of the unique contribution social work makes in a range of settings and supports professional development relevant to specific role.
- ✓ value the importance of how social workers learn in the workplace.
- ✓ requires evidence of learning from a variety of sources including work-based examples and formal, informal and self-directed learning.
- ✓ requires NQSWs to use a variety of techniques to demonstrate learning including reflection, research and presentation skills.
- ✓ needs to be planned and recorded on the IDP to ensure NQSWs can complete within the timescale.
- ✓ includes learning activity that already happens in organisations.

The validation and endorsement process outlined in section six will confirm a NQSW has met the SSSC CPL registration requirements.

5.3 Mandatory learning activity

The mandatory learning activity draws on research which supports our understanding of how social workers learn⁵ and where possible evidence is linked to practice experiences and examples of work.

Activity includes:

- self-directed learning: undertaking your own learning such as reading, research or visits.
- formal learning: attending organisational induction and training relevant to your role or a lecture or a training event.
- active learning practice: navigating tasks – learning through doing, working out problems.
- learning through reflection on experience: thinking about what happened, what you learned and what you need to do next.
- learning through others: using practice wisdom, expertise of colleagues, a conversation you are involved in, listening to, shadowing or working with different professionals, listening and talking to people with lived experience.
- learning from lived experiences: using knowledge from the experience of people who use services, their families and carers.
- learning by chance: recognising learning from unexpected opportunities that happen in practice.

⁵ Ferguson, G (2022) [The importance of workplace learning for social workers](#). Iriss

The mandatory learning activity requires NQSWs to capture their learning in a variety of ways including reflective writing, audio recordings, visual representation such as mind maps, presentations and reflection on examples from practice. NQSWs are also expected to lead discussions with colleagues, research and share learning with others. The range of learning activity reflects the skills that social workers need to develop during the early career stage within different social work settings. Some resources are specified but most of the learning activity is general to encourage research and creativity.

5.4 Planning NQSW professional development activity

NQSWs, supervisors, managers and others involved in supporting NQSWs must be familiar with [Core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors and mandatory learning activity](#).

The core learning elements are relevant to all social work practice, regardless of setting. They describe the characteristics of professional practice expected to develop during this early career stage and how NQSWs can demonstrate them through their practice. They should be considered holistically with ethics, values and rights-based practice at the centre.

Meaningful professional development planning will include:

- ✓ using the core learning elements as a framework to ensure the breadth of professional practice is considered.
- ✓ developing a shared understanding of the NQSW's areas of strength and areas for further development throughout the year through the professional development review process.
- ✓ collaboration between the NQSW and supervisor to identify and access a range of formal, informal and self-directed learning opportunities relevant to role, service and organisation.
- ✓ using the Individual Development Plan (IDP) as a working tool to discuss, plan and review professional development on a regular basis.
- ✓ encouraging the NQSW to prioritise learning opportunities including the SSSC mandatory learning activity throughout the NQSW Supported Year.
- ✓ encouraging a culture of learning and the [importance of workplace learning for social workers](#).

Figure 4. Overview core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors

	<p>Ethics, values and rights-based practice – develop an understanding of and apply ethical principles and values to all aspects of professional practice. Recognise sources and impact of social inequality and systemic oppression. Take action to protect and advocate for human rights and social justice, including development of an anti-racist, intersectional approach.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersectionality and anti-discriminatory practice • Rights based practice • Applying knowledge of social inequality and systemic oppression
	<p>Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice – demonstrate knowledge and skills to support effective communication, collaboration and relationship-based practice in a range of settings. Use trauma responsive approaches to actively involve and support the involvement of people, including families and carers to plan, implement and evaluate interventions.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-informed practice • Communication, engagement and empowerment • Relationship-based practice
	<p>Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making - develop competence and confidence in applying critical thinking, analysis, research, and best practice to inform professional judgement and decision making in all areas of practice including assessment and review.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking and analysis • Decision making
	<p>Promoting wellbeing, support and protection – demonstrate and apply understanding of responsibility to actively promote the wellbeing, support and protection of children and adults at risk of harm, regardless of setting or context.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection • Adult Support & Protection

	<p>Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts - develop competence and confidence in managing complexity, risk, and uncertainty in professional decision making.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with risk • Working with conflict • Professional curiosity and challenge
	<p>Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice - Develop knowledge and confidence in applying relevant research, policy and legislation to role. Demonstrate commitment to continuous professional learning and inquiry which supports evidence informed practice and a wider culture of learning.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using evidence to inform practice • Applying knowledge of approaches and interventions
	<p>Self-awareness and reflexivity – recognise how the demands of professional social work practice affect self and others. Develop the use of reflexivity to consider what has been learned and how this learning can contribute to personal wellbeing and effective and sustainable practice.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience and wellbeing • Critical reflection and reflexivity
	<p>Professional leadership - develop personal and professional authority as a social worker including when working collaboratively across agency and professional boundaries.</p> <p>Focus of mandatory learning activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional identity • Leadership

6. Professional development review process

6.1 Overview

The NQSW Supported Year provides a structured approach to discussing and reviewing the professional development of NQSWs across the core learning elements at fixed points during the NQSW Supported Year.

It is developmental in nature and supervisors are central to the process as they are uniquely placed to understand the NQSW's strengths and areas for development. They will see the NQSW in a variety of day-to-day settings as well as discuss development through supervision and professional development reviews. Where professional supervision and line management are separate roles, the line manager is expected to contribute to the professional development process.

As a minimum, it is expected that professional development discussions, reviews and individual development planning will happen within the first six weeks of registering and starting a social worker role, at the mid and at the end of the NQSW period. Both NQSWs and supervisors will require time to prepare in advance of the reviews and meet their respective responsibilities as participants in the NQSW Supported Year.

The NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template) will be used to record progress. This template includes the individual development plan (IDP). Part one and two of the form capture information and set out practical arrangements for the NQSW Supported Year. These sections can be populated in advance of the initial review.

Professional development discussions will be informed by:

- the Individual Learning Plan completed at university (initial review only).
- NQSW self-assessment against the core learning elements.
- feedback from a range of sources.
- engagement with and reflection on agreed and mandatory learning opportunities.
- examples of work and critical reflection on practice.
- review of the agreed individual development plan.

NQSWs should expect and be provided with regular developmental feedback from their supervisor on their progress, areas of strength and areas for development. The IDP section of the NQSW CPL review template will be reviewed and updated to reflect the identified areas for development.

The NQSW will be expected to maintain an agreed body of evidence throughout the NQSW Supported Year and share this with their supervisors at regular intervals to inform discussions about their development on an ongoing basis.

By the end of the NQSW period, the NQSW will be able to confidently articulate the consolidation and advancement of their progress across the core learning elements through a structured professional discussion.

Following the end of year professional development review, the supervisor will follow the validation and endorsement process and have this decision endorsed within the organisation prior to the NQSW submitting evidence of meeting registration requirements to the SSSC. Further information is available in section six.

Where additional time is needed, the supervisor will follow the extension, non-completion process as outlined in section nine.

6.2 Success criteria

The approach is designed to draw together several sources of evidence, including examples of work that provide an understanding and evidence of the professional development and advancement of the NQSW's practice.

Supervisors will determine if the NQSW is demonstrating professional practice appropriate to this early career stage as a registered social worker and will consider the success criteria in figure 5 at the mid and end of year review.

Progress will be discussed as part of the professional development reviews and plans to address developmental needs identified and recorded on the IDP and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The approach is not intended to replace an employer's performance management process which can encompass matters of a wider nature. Any performance management issues will be highlighted to the NQSW at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting to the end of their NQSW Supported Year and appropriate steps will be taken to address them.

The NQSW may have development needs that require additional time to be addressed either through an extension of the NQSW Supported Year or ongoing as part of the organisation's professional development review process.

Figure 5. NQSW Supported Year success criteria.

- ✓ Demonstrate consolidation and advancement within practice and across the core learning elements appropriate to early career stage to the satisfaction of the employer.
- ✓ Demonstrate clear progress in meeting the agreed areas for development detailed in the Individual Development Plan (IDP) including SSSC mandatory learning activity.
- ✓ Prepare and engage in supervision and reflect on learning in a consistent and meaningful way.
- ✓ Self-assessment and professional development discussions represent clear and critically reflective analysis of practice, demonstrating consolidation and advancement in carrying out the professional role and managing ethical dilemmas.
- ✓ Maintain and share a range of evidence to meet learning agreed with supervisor/ organisation and mandatory SSSC learning activity.

Figure 6. Summary of key tasks

Responsibility	Task	Timescale
NQSW	Confirm SSSC registration details	On starting role
Supervisor/ employer	Identify peer support and/or mentor	Before/ on starting role
Supervisor	Set timeline and dates for initial, mid and end of year professional development reviews	On starting role
Supervisor/ NQSW	Orientation into approach	As part of initial induction - within first 4 weeks
Supervisor	Supervision sessions arranged	No less than 4-weekly
NQSW	Maintain a record and evidence of mandatory CPL activity	Ongoing
NQSW	Collect feedback from minimum five people	Ongoing
NQSW	NQSW share individual learning plan with supervisor	Share with supervisor a minimum of 5 working days in advance of initial review
NQSW	Complete self-assessment against core learning elements	Share with supervisor 5 working days in advance of reviews
NQSW/ supervisor	Initial professional development discussion and agreeing IDP	no later than 6 weeks from registering/ starting post
NQSW/ supervisor	Mid-year professional development discussion and IDP review	at 6 (9) months
NQSW/ supervisor	End of year professional development discussion and IDP review	at 12 (18) months
NQSW/ supervisor	Agree and sign initial and mid-year sections of NQSW Continuous Professional Learning review template	Within 10 working days of professional development discussion
Supervisor	Agree and sign copies of completed end of year section of NQSW Continuous Professional Learning review template Validation by supervisor	Within 10 working days of end of year professional development discussion
Employer	Endorsement by employer	Within 20 working days of receiving documentation
NQSW	Submission of required forms to the SSSC by NQSW	Within 2 months of end of Supported Year

6.3 Initial professional development discussion

Timing The initial review should happen within 6 weeks of commencing employment as a registered social worker. The NQSW and the supervisor should discuss the process in advance and have time to prepare for the discussion.

Resources

- ✓ Core learning elements document
- ✓ University Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- ✓ NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template)

In advance of the review

NQSWs	<p>Become familiar with the professional development planning and review process, core learning elements and associated NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Complete the initial self-assessment drawing on the learning from university and other relevant experience and learning. Populate any other relevant areas of the template.</p> <p>Share with supervisor five working days in advance of professional development review along with ILP from university (or self-completed).</p>
Supervisors	<p>Become familiar with the professional development planning and review process, core learning elements and NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Review NQSW self-assessment and university ILP and plan developmental feedback for discussion.</p> <p>Populate any other relevant areas of the NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Consider relevant learning opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational induction requirements and associated timescales. • team specific learning requirements. • SSSC mandatory learning activity.

At the review	<p>Complete part one and two of the NQSW CPL review template if not already done.</p> <p>Use the self-assessment to inform a discussion to develop a shared understanding of the NQSW's strengths and development requirements across the core learning elements.</p> <p>Supervisors (and line managers where appropriate) will provide developmental feedback, including relevant information from day-to-day practice and feedback from others. It is intended to support ongoing</p>
----------------------	---

	<p>development and the NQSW should be clear about areas of strength and priorities for development.</p> <p>Discuss how multi-source feedback will be gathered and collated.</p> <p>Agree areas for development across the core learning elements and SSSC mandatory learning activity.</p> <p>Complete the individual development plan section capturing short and longer-term objectives, responsibilities and noting any areas requiring specific arrangements to be made, such as shadowing/ completing duties in another team or setting.</p> <p>Any areas of disagreement will be captured in the appropriate section and the plan towards resolution or escalation to the nominated person.</p> <p>Confirm dates for mid and end of year reviews.</p>
--	---

After the review	<p>Supervisor records a short summary of the developmental feedback and finalises the IDP. The NQSW CPL review template is returned to the NQSW within 10 working days of the review to agree and both signs.</p> <p>NQSW retains a copy of the NQSW CPL review template. The IDP will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals to revisit as part of supervision and professional development review process.</p> <p>It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure evidence of learning relating to the NQSW Supported Year and mandatory learning activity is retained and made available for sampling if necessary.</p>
-------------------------	---

6.4 Mid-year professional development discussion and IDP review

Timing This review will happen at the mid-year in the NQSW registration period; for those working full-time this will be six months post registration and at nine months for those working less than 35 hours per week.

Resources

- ✓ Core learning elements document
- ✓ NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template).
- ✓ Feedback

In advance of the review

NQSWs	<p>Complete self-assessment - this should show a progression from previous self-assessment and consider areas of strength as well as development needs.</p> <p>Update any other relevant areas of the NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Share with supervisor five working days in advance of professional development review along with any multi-source feedback.</p>
Supervisors	<p>Consider the NQSW self-assessment, progress on individual development plan, multi-source feedback and relevant evidence of consolidation and advancement.</p> <p>Plan developmental feedback for discussion by identifying areas of strength and how to address identified areas of development.</p> <p>Update any other relevant areas of the NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Consider relevant learning opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any remaining organisational induction requirements • team specific learning requirements. • SSSC mandatory learning activity. • success criteria. <p>Think about relevant learning opportunities for NQSWs, priorities for learning and how to address gaps in the provision of relevant learning opportunities.</p>

At the review	<p>Use the self-assessment to inform a discussion to develop a shared understanding of the NQSW's strengths and development requirements across the core learning elements.</p> <p>Supervisors (and line managers where appropriate) will provide developmental feedback, including relevant information from day-to-day</p>
----------------------	--

	<p>practice and feedback from others. It is intended to support ongoing development and the NQSW should be clear about areas of strength and priorities for development.</p> <p>Discuss how additional multi-source feedback will be gathered and collated.</p> <p>Agree areas for development across the core learning elements and SSSC mandatory learning activity.</p> <p>Complete the individual development plan section capturing short and longer-term objectives, responsibilities and noting any areas requiring specific arrangements to be made, such as shadowing/ completing duties in another team or setting.</p> <p>Any areas of disagreement will be captured in the appropriate section and the plan towards resolution or escalation to the nominated person.</p> <p>Confirm date for next review if not already done.</p>
--	--

After the review	<p>Supervisor records a short summary of the developmental feedback and finalises the IDP. The NQSW CPL review template is returned to the NQSW within 10 working days of the review to agree and both signs.</p> <p>NQSW retains a copy of the NQSW CPL review template. The IDP will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals to revisit as part of supervision and professional development review process.</p> <p>It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure evidence of learning relating to the NQSW Supported Year and mandatory learning activity is retained and made available for sampling if necessary.</p>
-------------------------	---

6.5 End of year professional development discussion and IDP review

Timing This review will happen at the end of the NQSW registration period; 12 months from registration for those working full-time and 18 months for those working less than 35 hours per week.

The SSSC will contact the NQSW to advise that the NQSW period has ended, and request agreed documentation be submitted via MySSSC account within a two-month period.

This notification should prompt confirmation of date for final review if this has not already been arranged.

Resources

- ✓ Core learning elements document
- ✓ NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template).
- ✓ Feedback
- ✓ Structured professional discussion questions.
- ✓ NQSW validation and endorsement form
- ✓ NQSW extension request form

In advance of the review

Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the end of year review process. • Read through end of year professional development discussion questions (T3 template) • Agree practice situations to be used as part of structured professional discussion. • Ensure all SSSC mandatory learning activity is met.
NQSWs	<p>Complete self-assessment – this should show a progression from previous self-assessment and consider areas of strength as well as development needs.</p> <p>Update any other relevant areas of the NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Share with supervisor five working days in advance of professional development review along with any multi-source feedback.</p> <p>Prepare for structured professional discussion by critically reflecting on agreed pieces of work and how they demonstrate practice in line with the core learning elements.</p> <p>Consider areas for ongoing development.</p>

Supervisors	<p>Consider the NQSW self-assessment, progress on individual development plan, multi-source feedback and relevant evidence of consolidation and advancement.</p> <p>Update any other relevant areas of the NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>Plan developmental feedback for discussion by identifying areas of strength and how to address identified areas of development.</p> <p>Consider relevant learning opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational requirements and associated timescales • team specific learning requirements. • SSSC mandatory learning activity. • engagement with the supports and learning opportunities available. • success criteria. <p>Consider if the NQSW is demonstrating professional practice appropriate to this early career stage as a registered social worker. What are the next steps in professional development?</p>
--------------------	--

At the review	<p>Use the structured professional discussion questions as a framework for the NQSW to speak to their professional practice. The NQSW can refer to any notes prepared in advance; this is a developmental process not an exam.</p> <p>The supervisor will provide developmental feedback on how well the NQSW has consolidated and advanced across the core learning elements in their practice during the NQSW Supported Year.</p> <p>This feedback will be based on evidence from a range of sources including the structured professional discussion, progress across the IDP; supervision; feedback from others; engagement with formal, informal, and naturally occurring learning opportunities and completion of SSSC mandatory learning activity.</p> <p>The supervisor (and line manager where appropriate) will provide feedback to the NQSW confirming whether they have successfully consolidated and progressed their IDP and completed mandatory learning activity, or they require further time to evidence this. Further detail on requesting additional time is provided in section nine.</p> <p>In either case, the supervisor and NQSW will review the IDP and agree a new IDP to be achieved in the next period, in line with organisational arrangements.</p>
----------------------	--

	<p>Any areas of disagreement will be captured in the appropriate section and the plan towards resolution or escalation to the nominated person.</p>
<p>After the review</p>	<p>Supervisor records a short summary of the developmental feedback NQSW CPL review template and finalises the IDP.</p> <p>The NQSW and supervisor will follow the agreed validation and endorsement process to agree and sign the NQSW CPL review template.</p> <p>It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure evidence of learning relating to the NQSW Supported Year and mandatory learning activity is retained and made available for sampling if necessary.</p>

6.6 Validation and endorsement process

Who can endorse the decision?

Each organisation will identify a nominated person(s) to review and endorse the supervisor's decision regarding the NQSW's progress in the NQSW Supported Year. This is likely to be the person(s) leading on the implementation of the Supported Year and/ or a nominated person who is a registered social worker with sufficient seniority and understanding of the core learning elements and intended approach.

The person(s) leading on the implementation of the NQSW Supported Year will have a detailed understanding of the approach and have been involved with both NQSWs and supervisors. The implementation lead will have carried out some random sampling at various stages across the cohort of NQSWs involved in the NQSW Supported Year.

Timing

The validation and endorsement process will be completed within 20 working days of the end of year development discussion.

<p>Validating progress</p>	<p>The supervisor will share the decision with the NQSW at the end of year professional development discussion.</p> <p>The final part of the NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template) will be agreed and signed by the supervisor and NQSW within 10 working days of the end of year professional development review.</p> <p>Any areas of disagreement will be captured in the appropriate section and the plan towards resolution or escalation to the nominated person.</p> <p>The NQSW and supervisor will also complete and sign the relevant sections of the NQSW validation and endorsement form when the NQSW has been successful or an extension request form on grounds that further time and support to evidence progress is needed.</p>
<p>Endorsing decision</p>	<p>The NQSW will forward the completed NQSW CPL review template to the nominated person for endorsement, copying in the supervisor.</p> <p>They will also include the NQSW validation and endorsement form, or an extension request form if the decision is to extend the NQSW Supported Year on grounds that further time and support to evidence progress is needed.</p> <p>The nominated person will sign the form(s) to confirm they endorse the decision and return to the NQSW copying in the supervisor within 10 working days.</p>

	<p>Prior to endorsing the decision, the nominated person may request to sample the NQSW's evidence of mandatory learning activity and other relevant learning. They will agree or determine a plan to resolve any recorded disagreement.</p>
--	--

<p>Submitting evidence to the SSSC</p>	<p>It is the NQSWs responsibility as a registrant to maintain a record of evidence they have met the continuous professional learning registration requirements or request additional time to meet the requirements.</p> <p>NQSWs must submit the following documentation to the SSSC via their MySSSC account when requested to do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed and signed NQSW CPL review template. • Completed and signed NQSW validation and endorsement form or the NQSW extension request form as appropriate. <p>If a NQSW has requested an extension, they will be expected to submit the completed and signed NQSW validation and endorsement form within the agreed extension timeframe.</p> <p>Failure to submit the NQSW validation and endorsement form may impact on the NQSW's registration.</p> <p>Retention</p> <p>It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure evidence of learning relating to the mandatory learning activity is retained and made available if selected for sampling. The NQSW must retain a copy of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the completed and signed NQSW CPL review template. • evidence relevant to completion of the mandatory learning elements. • the signed NQSW validation and endorsement form.
---	---

6.7 SSSC sign off.

On receipt of the required documentation, the SSSC will complete the process to update the NQSW registration record to show NQSW CPL registration requirements have been met. The NQSW will receive email confirmation that this has happened.

Failure to submit the required documentation may impact on the ability to renew registration as there will be no official record of NQSW CPL requirements being met.

If there are any issues with the information submitted, the SSSC will contact the NQSW in the first instance.

It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure evidence of mandatory learning activity is retained and made available if selected for sampling.

The SSSC will sample submissions to be satisfied that the quality of NQSW CPL submissions is high and the validation and endorsement process is rigorous and consistent across all settings.

The SSSC will provide relevant general feedback to local implementation leads to support implementation and embedding best practice in using the approach.

Thematic feedback will be shared to support national quality assurance and governance arrangements

7. Evidencing progress during the NQSW Supported Year

The NQSW Supported Year requires active participation by both the NQSW and their supervisor. During the NQSW Supported Year, it is the responsibility of the NQSW to ensure they access a range of workplace and self-directed learning opportunities which address the following:

- ✓ organisational learning requirements
- ✓ service/ team specific learning requirements, and
- ✓ SSSC continuous professional learning registration requirements.

Supervisors and NQSWs will work together to plan and review professional development opportunities across the core learning elements and record this on the individual development plan (IDP) part of the NQSW CPL review template, which will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

As registered workers, all NQSWs, regardless of setting must complete, as a minimum, the SSSC mandatory learning activity described in [Core learning elements for social workers – NQSW descriptors and mandatory learning activity](#).

Additional activity to evidence consolidation and advancement will be identified locally to meet an organisational or service/ team specific need and added to the IDP.

7.1 Sources of evidence

As a minimum, evidence will include:

- preparation and participation in supervision and professional development discussions.
- critical reflection and self-assessment across the core learning elements at the initial, mid and end of year stages.
- developmental feedback from supervisor.
- progress against the IDP.
- multi-source feedback from other professionals and people, including families and carers who use services.
- end of year structured professional discussion.
- completion of the SSSC mandatory learning activity associated with the [core learning elements](#).
- examples of day-to-day work activity.

7.2 Collecting and sharing evidence

It is the NQSWs responsibility to ensure that the record of evidence is accessible and easily shared with their supervisor throughout the NQSW Supported Year. Employers may also request to see progress to date as part of the local sampling strategy prior to endorsement.

Evidence of learning will be available via three main sources:

- NQSW continuous professional learning review template
- Digital folder
- Employer system

The NQSW continuous professional learning review template will capture:

- ✓ Self-assessment and developmental feedback on professional practice
- ✓ IDP
- ✓ Progress against mandatory learning activity
- ✓ List and/or link to relevant evidence

Where evidence is being drawn from data already stored on the organisation's management system such as examples of assessments/ reports, supervision discussions, or corporate learning, it is sufficient to note the location or hyperlink to the relevant examples on the NQSW continuous professional learning review template as the supervisor will be able to access these secure links or areas.

The NQSW could use a digital solution such as the SSSC MyLearning app or an identified secure folder on Microsoft Teams to store and share additional evidence. Some employers have arrangements in place to support NQSWs to collate and share evidence such as a specific Microsoft Teams channel for NQSWs and will share arrangements as part of induction.

The NQSW must ensure that the evidence remains accessible if the NQSW has a change in supervisor, moves post or employment. Evidence contained within supervision records or pertinent to people, families or carers should not be copied or removed from the organisation's system. Further detail can be found in section 11.

7.3 Recording progress - NQSW continuous professional learning review template

The NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template) is the primary source for capturing evidence of progress. This template includes the individual development plan (IDP). Part one and two of the form capture information and set out practical arrangements for the NQSW Supported Year. These sections can be populated in advance of the initial review.

The NQSW CPL review template is a working tool, coproduced by the NQSW and supervisor. For this reason, there are no specific word counts associated with the self-assessment or developmental feedback sections. When complete it should provide an overview of the NQSWs professional development and learning activity during their first 12 or 18 months of registration as a social worker.

It is expected that the NQSW will complete a self-assessment across the core learning elements before the initial, mid and end of year discussions. The self-assessment will be critically reflective in nature and consider the areas of strength and areas for development across the breadth of the core learning elements.

The supervisor will record developmental feedback that provides the NQSW with an understanding of the areas of strength, consolidation of knowledge and skills and any areas for development incorporating, where appropriate, evidence from other sources ie feedback from others.

NQSWs and supervisors are expected to sign the relevant section of the template after each professional development review.

If there is a difference of opinion in relation to progress, this should be captured on the form and shared with NQSW lead/ nominated person immediately if differences cannot be resolved.

7.4 Developmental feedback

Supervisors are uniquely placed to provide a view on whether a NQSW is progressing across the core learning elements expected of them.

Evidence of progress towards achieving the core learning elements is likely to be incremental and individual to each NQSW. They may be practising in a new setting with greater responsibility and autonomy and while they will have developed transferable knowledge and skills, successful transitions require support and induction to new processes, legislation and agency procedures.

As the NQSW progresses, it is likely their confidence will develop, they will achieve more autonomy in undertaking social work practice and in making professional judgements. The NQSW's developing confidence and professional identity will provide valuable evidence of progress towards meeting the core learning elements.

Supervisors have access to a range of evidence including:

- NQSW's quality of engagement with people who use services, families and carers and other professionals.
- assessment and report writing.
- naturally occurring observations of day-to-day practice.
- participation in meetings and formal settings.
- feedback from others.

Supervisors must provide the NQSWs with a clear understanding of their areas of strength and areas for development. In preparation for professional development feedback, supervisors should consider whether the NQSW is demonstrating practice appropriate to the early career stage and what needs to be put in place to support their professional development.

Using examples from practice will be an effective tool in helping NQSWs to recognise their stage of professional development. Supervisors must revisit the core learning elements document to ensure they are considering all aspects and provide feedback in relation to the following:

- ✓ increasing and advancing practice competence and confidence.
- ✓ ethics and social work values.
- ✓ use of knowledge and research.
- ✓ increasing ability to manage complexity.
- ✓ appropriate use of support and supervision.
- ✓ positive response to development feedback.
- ✓ evidence of meeting the success criteria.

7.5 Individual development plans

The individual development plans (IDP) section will be used to record, and review identified development needs and planned learning and development opportunities. It is essential that NQSWs have a plan that is clear and specific, ensuring timescales are realistic for reviewing progress. Discussion about professional development will be an integral part of ongoing supervision and professional development processes. Reflective and reflexive supervision will also help identify and analyse learning and consolidation of knowledge, skills and values.

Supervisors will help NQSWs to prioritise and meet organisational, service/ team specific and SSSC mandatory learning activity in a planned manner by working together to create an IDP. The IDP will be unique to the NQSW and will set out clear SMART⁶ objectives linked to learning. It will be used to record and review the identified development needs and progress in line with the core learning elements for social workers.

The IDP will include agreement of formal, informal and naturally occurring workplace learning opportunities provided by employers or identify how employers will support NQSWs to access them. NQSWs and supervisors are encouraged to revisit [how social workers learn in the workplace](#) and to value and use naturally occurring learning opportunities.

7.6 Multi-source feedback

Multi-source feedback is an important tool in the NQSW Supported Year. It provides a good opportunity to receive and reflect on feedback from a range of sources including people who use services, their families and carers, other professionals and team members.

⁶ SMART – is a common acronym used in goal setting. It means specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

The NQSW and supervisor will identify and invite feedback from a minimum of five individuals across a range of settings over the course of the year.

It is important that discussions about collecting feedback begins at an early stage in the NQSW Supported Year. The NQSW and supervisor will agree how multi-source feedback will be gathered and collated. They will identify naturally occurring opportunities to gather feedback in addition to requesting formal feedback and record on the NQSW CPL review template.

Special consideration will be given to the most effective means of gathering meaningful feedback from people who use services, their families and carers. There may already be existing tools and processes within the service or organisation that will support this to happen.

7.7 End of year structured professional discussions

A structured professional discussion between the supervisor and NQSW provides the NQSW with the opportunity to reflect on how their practice has developed across the core learning elements using examples from their practice.

The NQSW should prepare beforehand by identifying and discussing relevant practice situations (max. two) in supervision and consider how the chosen practice situation(s) relate to the core learning elements and evidence consolidation and advancement of professional practice.

NQSWs have access to the end of year professional development discussion questions in part two of this document to help preparation. The NQSW can, if they choose, prepare and bring notes to the end of year discussion as this is a developmental process not an exam. The supervisor will then lead the NQSW through the agreed questions and use this as the basis for the professional discussion.

NQSWs and supervisors are not expected to record the detail of the professional discussion. It is intended as a professional exchange. The developmental feedback recorded on the NQSW continuous professional learning review template will reference the structured professional development discussion as appropriate.

The professional development discussion along with the self-assessment and any other relevant learning will form the basis for the supervisor's verbal feedback on how well the NQSW has demonstrated consolidation and advancement across the core learning elements during the NQSW Supported Year.

Figure 7. Sources of evidence



8. Quality assurance arrangements - sampling

8.1 Mid-year sampling in first year of delivery

The Implementation Lead and SSSC will sample at the mid-year stage in the first year of delivery. The sampling will be arranged around clusters of NQSWs, so it may happen on more than one occasion. The Implementation Lead will arrange for the NQSW to share their NQSW continuous professional learning review template with them. This may be managed through setting up a file on Microsoft SharePoint. The NQSW implementation lead will agree with the nominated SSSC representative how best to access and sample at the arranged time.

The Implementation Lead and SSSC will sample the completed NQSW continuous professional learning review templates with the aim of providing feedback to NQSWs and supervisors on the areas of strength and areas for improvement in applying the approach. Sampling is a useful tool to look at both process and content. In broad terms it is possible to build a picture of whether the templates are being used as intended to provide developmental feedback, to get an understanding of the range of learning opportunities available and identify themes for future development sessions such as completion of an IDP.

The Implementation Lead will arrange to provide feedback collectively or individually as appropriate to the NQSWs and supervisors so learning can be applied in the end of year review. It is not intended that the work completed to date is amended. Mid-year sampling can be arranged beyond the first year of delivery if this is beneficial to the implementation and delivery of the NQSW Supported Year.

8.2 Sampling as part of the validation and endorsement process

There is an expectation that some level of sampling will be carried out by the Implementation Lead or identified others with sufficient understanding of the core learning elements and intended approach. The purpose of this is to ensure that the NQSWs and supervisors continue to build the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in the NQSW Supported Year. Sampling will be proportionate to the resource available in areas and beyond first year of delivery and is likely to focus on supervisors who are new to the approach or requiring additional support. This will give the Implementation Lead an oversight of where to target support and strengthen induction.

At the end of the NQSW Supported Year, prior to endorsing the decision, the nominated person may request to sample the NQSW's evidence of consolidation and advancement against the core learning elements.

8.3 SSSC end of year sampling

The SSSC will continue to sample all NQSW Supported Year submissions to be satisfied that NQSWs are meeting CPL requirements and the quality of NQSW CPL submissions is of a sufficiently high standard. The sampling will also provide intelligence on how consistent the validation and endorsement processes is being applied across all settings.

In addition, the sampling process will enable the SSSC to understand how the process is working and to provide data on key themes to promote local, regional, and national consistency in the implementation and ongoing delivery of the NQSW Supported Year.

9. Extension and Non-Completion

NQSWs must meet the continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements within the stated timescales, currently 12 months if working 35 hours or more per week and 18 months if working less than 35 hours per week and submit the completed documentation to the SSSC within the following two months. The validation and endorsement form cannot be submitted to the SSSC unless all SSSC mandatory learning activity is complete, this is a registration requirement.

On occasion, a NQSW may require more time to achieve the SSSC mandatory learning activity due to absence during the initial 12 or 18 months of registration or because additional support and time is needed to evidence the mandatory learning activity.

9.1 Extension to timescale

NQSWs can request additional time to submit the mandatory learning activity by completing the extension request form as soon as the need for an extension is identified.

Reasons to request an extension could include:

- an interruption to the completion of the requirements within the timeframe such as a period of absence.
- periods of planned absence such as maternity leave or carers leave.

The extension request must be agreed and signed by the supervisor and/ or Implementation Lead or nominated person.

It is the NQSWs responsibility to email the extension request form to the SSSC at registration@sssc.uk.com for consideration and approval.

The SSSC will confirm the length of the extension and the revised submission date by email to the NQSW using contact details on the SSSC system.

9.2 Additional time beyond end of NQSW Supported Year

At the end of year professional development review, the supervisor may decide that the NQSW requires additional time and support to evidence their progress and meet the mandatory learning activity. They may have decided that the best way to achieve this is by extending the NQSW Supported Year timeframe rather than advancing to the organisation's professional development review process.

If additional support and time is needed, the supervisor will provide the NQSW with a clear understanding of the following, at the end of year professional development discussion:

- the specific areas of development,
- the support available,
- the evidence required including any remaining SSSC mandatory learning activity,
- what success looks like, and
- the timescale for review.

This information will be recorded on the NQSW Supported Year template and signed by both the NQSW and supervisor within 10 working days.

Any areas of disagreement will be captured in the appropriate section and the plan towards resolution or escalation to the nominated person.

An extension request form will also be completed.

Both documents will be shared with the nominated person as per validation and endorsement process to endorse the decision to extend the NQSW Supported Year on grounds that additional time and support is needed to meet the mandatory learning activity. Prior to endorsing the decision, the nominated person may request to sample the NQSW's evidence of consolidation and advancement against the core learning elements. They will also agree or determine a plan to resolve any recorded disagreement.

It is the NQSWs responsibility to email the extension request form to the SSSC at registration@sssc.uk.com for consideration and approval.

The SSSC will confirm the length of the extension and the revised submission date by email to the NQSW using contact details on our system.

9.3 Non-completion

Non-completion of the NQSW Supported Year may have an impact on SSSC Registration and/or employment.

Impact on SSSC Registration

NQSWs must meet the continuous professional learning (CPL) requirements set by the SSSC to maintain their social work registration. Failure to submit evidence that the SSSC NQSW CPL requirements have been met or to provide a legitimate reason for not meeting the NQSW CPL requirements will impact on continued registration. The employer will be notified and the NQSW may be removed from the Social Worker part of the Register. If a person is removed from the social worker part of the Register and wishes to apply to rejoin, they will need to meet the SSSC Return to Practise requirements which may include completing the NQSW CPL requirements.

Impact on employment

The NQSW Supported Year is designed to focus on continuous professional development and likely includes learning opportunities to meet organisation and team specific needs in addition to the SSSC mandatory NQSW CPL requirements. If a NQSW meets the NQSW CPL requirements their registration will continue. A NQSW's inability or unwillingness to engage with the broader elements of the NQSW Supported Year approach is an employment matter.

The approach is not intended to replace an employer's performance management process which can encompass matters of a wider nature. The SSSC expect any performance management issues will be highlighted to the NQSW at the earliest opportunity rather than waiting until the end of their NQSW Supported Year and appropriate steps will be taken to address them. Non-engagement with the supports and opportunities available through the NQSW Supported Year may be indicative of other issues.

Non-completion of the NQSW Year could have an impact on employment depending on contractual arrangements. If a NQSW is removed from the Social Worker part of the Register due to non-completion of mandatory NQSW CPL requirements, this will impact on their ability to carry out the duties associated with the protected title and their employer will be informed.

A referral to SSSC Fitness to Practice would only need to be considered if, during the NQSW Supported Year, there have been identified areas of deficient professional practice that the employer has been unable to address through performance management processes and/or there have been other concerns about the worker's fitness to practise safely and effectively which meet the thresholds for referral to the SSSC. Further information relating to referring a NQSW to SSSC Fitness to Practise can be found here: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practise/>.

If a NQSW is the subject of a fitness to practise referral they are still expected to meet the NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements within the agreed timescale unless they are suspended from the Register. This is because the process associated with a fitness to practise referral may be longer than the first 12 or 18 months of registration and the outcome may not require the person to be removed from the register.

10. Role of line managers, mentors and peer support in the NQSW Supported Year

10.1 Line managers

During the NQSW Supported Year, employers will plan for professional supervision to be provided by a qualified social worker with supervisory responsibilities as part of their role. This is likely to be their line manager, however, in some settings alternative arrangements should be made in line with effective professional governance.

Where line management and professional supervision are carried out by two individuals, there should be a shared understanding of the parameters of both roles. This is often best managed through a written agreement of roles and responsibilities. The qualified social worker will lead on the professional development discussions with relevant contributions from the line manager.

10.2 Mentors

Where employers have an existing mentoring scheme, NQSWs may benefit from provision of mentoring during the NQSW Supported Year. Mentoring provides opportunities to discuss work-related issues and generate workable solutions to challenges. There are several definitions of mentoring, many evolving to suit the context and purpose of the individual setting, however, all models will have the mentee firmly at the centre, with reflective practice the cornerstone. If mentoring is used, there must be clearly defined roles for the mentor and the supervisor and an agreement of how they will work together to support the NQSW.

10.3 Peer support

Employers and supervisors will have arrangements in place to ensure NQSWs have access to and are encouraged to access regular peer support with an identified peer(s). There will be clearly defined expectations of the peer support role and identified peers will not be the NQSWs' direct line manager or supervisor.

Employers will also encourage a culture of wider informal peer and colleague support where NQSWs can learn informally from colleagues and peers through offers such as shadowing, informal debrief or general assimilation of the ethos and culture of an individual or wider team. They also have a valuable contribution to make to the learning of others through the exchange of knowledge and contribute to the development of a supportive learning environment.

11. Change of supervisor, post or employer

11.1 Change of supervisor or post

If a NQSW has a change in supervisor, both should make sure that the NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template) is up to date and signed off if necessary.

The employer should check that any exiting supervisor has updated the NQSW CPL review template to minimise interruption to the NQSWs professional development. They should also make sure any new supervisor is aware of their responsibilities as part of the NQSW Supported Year.

If the NQSW moves post within the organisation or they have a new supervisor, the NQSW will share the NQSW CPL review template with their new supervisor at as soon as possible.

The NQSW CPL review template will capture progress to date, including:

- ✓ Self-assessment and developmental feedback on professional practice
- ✓ IDP
- ✓ List and/or link to relevant evidence

In some instances, it may be possible to do a handover in addition to transferring paperwork.

Not all evidence of workplace learning may be available to the new supervisor depending on permissions and post, however the NQSW should securely share any additional evidence stored in a secure folder on Microsoft Teams or a digital solution such as the SSSC MyLearning app with the new supervisor.

11.2 Change of employment

Before leaving current employment, the NQSW should ensure the NQSW continuous professional learning review template is up to date and signed off by their existing supervisor. They should make arrangements to transfer the NQSW CPL review template and relevant evidence gathered to support completion of the SSSC mandatory learning activity to their new employment.

This may mean seeking agreement to download evidence in a secure folder; send an encrypted email to a new email address or new employer or upload to a portable digital solution such as the SSSC MyLearning app.

Evidence contained within supervision records or pertinent to people who use services, families or carers **should not be copied or removed** from the organisation's system.

The NQSW must make the NQSW CPL review template and evidence of learning available to the new supervisor in advance of, or within the first week of starting a new post to minimise disruption to learning and professional development.

11.3 Moving to or from an area not involved in the NQSW Supported Year

NQSWs must complete the SSSC mandatory learning activity regardless of whether an employer has implemented the NQSW Supported Year as it is a registration requirement. The core learning activity is designed to be accessible and achievable in any setting.

If a NQSW joins the team, a supervisor should establish if they have been part of the NQSW Supported Year in their previous role and if so, request a copy of the NQSW CPL review template and access to available evidence of mandatory learning activity from the NQSW in the first week of starting in this post.

If the NQSW is joining from an area not currently involved in the NQSW Supported Year, consider whether the professional development discussions can be introduced in a meaningful way in addition to supporting the NQSW to meet the mandatory learning activity associated with the NQSW CPL registration requirements.

Part two – templates

This section provides examples of the templates associated with the NQSW Supported Year. They have adopted the formatting of this document so will look slightly different than the templates available to download.

To ensure you have the most up to date version of the template please download from on the NQSW website www.nqsw.sssc.uk.com or by contacting nqswproject@sssc.uk.com.

Required templates:

- T1 – [individual learning plan \(ILP\)](#)
- T2 – [NQSW continuous professional learning review template 2024](#)
- T3 – [end of year professional discussion questions](#)
- T4 – [NQSW validation and endorsement form 2024](#)
- T5 – [changing supervisor or employer checklist](#)
- T6 – [NQSW extension request form](#)

Optional templates:

- T7 – [feedback from people who use services, their family and carers template](#)
- T8 – [feedback from professionals' template](#)

T1 -individual learning plan

Individual learning plan

Introduction

The individual learning plan (ILP) is part of the programme designed to support your transition from student to Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW). It was developed and agreed by the social work course providers. The process of completing the ILP will help you to capture the knowledge and experience you will bring to your first post-qualifying role and identify what you see as the key areas for development going forward. It is also a useful interview preparation tool.

You will be supported by your social work programme to complete the ILP as part of the transition's curriculum. The ILP asks you to do the following:

- Reflect your journey through your programme.
- Consider how you learn most effectively.
- Identify the key actions that will be required to assist you in meeting your ILP.

All students should leave their qualifying programme with an Individual Learning Plan, this is an expectation of the Framework for Social Work Education. We are collaborating with employers to raise awareness of the importance of the completed ILP in discussing and planning your ongoing professional development as a Newly Qualified Social Worker. You are encouraged to share your ILP with your supervisor once in employment.

Resources to support the preparation of your ILP.

As well as resources and support provided by your programme, you will find a range of resources on the dedicated web page <https://www.nqsw.sssc.uk.com/> and the Carer Development Toolkit <https://lms.learn.sssc.uk.com/course/view.php?id=12>

Part 1: Audit of Progress

Thinking about your progress from joining your course until now, assess your strengths and areas of development across the six Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE). Note your assessment below. You could draw on academic feedback, placement reports, reflective logs as sources of evidence.

Standard 1: Prepare for practice and work in partnership with individuals, children, parents, families and extended families, carers, groups and communities, professionals and organisations.

Self-evaluation of strengths:	Knowledge	Skills	Values/Ethical practice
Areas for further development:			

Standard 2: Plan, undertake, review and evaluate social work practice with individuals, children, parents, families and extended families, carers, groups and communities, professionals and organisations.

Self-evaluation of strengths:	Knowledge	Skills	Values/Ethical practice
Areas for further development:			

Standard 3: Assess and manage risk to individuals, children, parents, families and extended families, carers, groups, communities, self and colleagues.

Self-evaluation of strengths:	Knowledge	Skills	Values/Ethical practice
Areas for further development:			

Standard 4: Demonstrate professional confidence and competence in social work practice.

Self-evaluation of strengths:	Knowledge	Skills	Values/Ethical practice
Areas for further development:			

Standard 5: Manage and be accountable, with supervision and support, for own social work practice within the organisation.

Self-evaluation of strengths:	Knowledge	Skills	Values/Ethical practice
Areas for further development:			

Standard 6: Work in partnership with individuals, children, parents, families and extended families, carers, groups and communities to address and manage their needs, views and circumstances.

Self-evaluation of strengths:	Knowledge	Skills	Values/Ethical practice
Areas for further development:			

Part 2: How I learn most effectively

Over the course of your social work programme, you will have gained insight into how you learn most effectively. For example, you may have completed a learning style questionnaire, or developed your thinking in discussion with fellow students or practice educators. This is a space for you to briefly capture the *how* of your learning.

Part 3: Learning goals, strategy and measures of success.

In this section, identify your learning goals and consider how you will work towards achieving these. Try to work to a SMART model (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound). This might be within supervision or involve further study, training courses, seminars, reading, shadowing colleagues or accessing online resources.

Learning Goal ("I want to learn...")	Action Plan (your strategy for achieving this goal) ("I will learn by...")	Timeframe (set a realistic target)	Measure of Success ("I will know I have been successful when....")
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			

T2 – NQSW continuous professional learning review template

Overview

This form will provide an overview of the NQSW's professional development and learning activity during their first 12 or 18 months of registration as a social worker.

The NQSW must submit the completed document to the SSSC along with the validation and endorsement form within the following two months to evidence meeting their NQSW CPL registration requirements.

Full detail on the approach is available in [NQSW Supported Year: overview and guidance](#)

Completing the form

This form is intended as a working document coproduced by the NQSW and supervisor during the NQSW Supported Year. All sections should be completed.

Before the initial, mid and end of year development discussions, the NQSW will complete the self-assessment section. The self-assessment will be critically reflective in nature and identify areas of strength and areas for development.

The supervisor will record a summary of the developmental feedback they shared with the NQSW during the review. The record will briefly capture areas of strength, consolidation and areas for development. The purpose is to support NQSW to continue to learn, consolidate and apply their learning in practice. The summary will include, where appropriate, reference evidence from other sources, ie feedback from others, observations through day-to-day practice and examples of work.

The IDP section must include identified development opportunities including SSSC mandatory core learning activity. The IDP should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals during the NQSW Supported Year.

There is a section to record any difference of opinion in relation to progress. This should be shared with NQSW lead/ nominated person immediately if differences cannot be resolved.

NQSWs and supervisors are expected to sign the relevant section of the template after each professional development review.

Any changes to supervisor or employer should be captured in part one.

Part one

NQSW name:	SSSC registration number:	
SSSC registration date:	NQSW CPL registration requirements due date:	
Initial development discussion date:		
Mid-year development discussion date:		
End of year development discussion date:		
Employer:	Position:	
Supervisor name:	SSSC registration number:	
Please record any changes to supervision arrangements below		
Supervisor name:	SSSC registration number:	From:
Please record any changes to employment below		
Employer:	Position:	From:

Supervision arrangements

This section should be used to briefly set out expectations of supervision and the responsibilities of the NQSW and the supervisor. Link to any formal supervision agreement if one is available. Where professional supervision and line management are provided by different people, clarify the contribution made by the line manager to the development reviews.

Mentor/ peer support arrangements

This section should be used to briefly set out agreements for mentoring and/ or peer support. It will contain details of the level of support available and if a mentor is appointed the difference between supervisor and mentor role. Link to any formal mentoring agreement if available.

Workload arrangements

List the types of work being allocated, and the expected workload complexity and volume.

Protected learning time arrangements

Describe arrangements for and expectations of protected learning time including use of NQSW forums or peer support sessions if available.

Initial development discussion

Please review [Core learning elements for social workers: newly qualified social worker \(NQSW\) descriptors](#)

NQSW self-assessment

Please complete the following self-assessment and share with your supervisor in advance of the development discussion. The self-assessment will be critically reflective in nature.

Rate how confident you are that you demonstrate each core learning element in practice on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest) level of confidence.

Core learning element	 Ethics, values and rights-based practice	 Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice	 Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making	 Promoting wellbeing, support and protection	 Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts	 Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice	 Self-awareness and reflexivity	 Professional leadership
Confidence in demonstrating core element in practice on a scale of 1-10								

Use this space to critically reflect on your rating and show analysis and evaluation, for example why did you rate 3 rather than 2 on a particular core learning element. What areas of your practice are strong and what areas require further development? Make sure you consider all core learning elements and include learning from your Individual learning plan (ILP). Be honest in your self-assessment, we are all on a continuous professional learning journey.

Use this space to list or link to relevant evidence of learning relevant to your self-assessment. This could include evidence from the mandatory learning activity, formal training and/or informal learning and examples from practice.

Mid-year development discussion

Please review [Core learning elements for social workers: newly qualified social worker \(NQSW\) descriptors](#)

NQSW self-assessment

Please complete the following self-assessment and share with your supervisor in advance of the development discussion. The self-assessment will be critically reflective in nature.

Rate how confident you are that you demonstrate each core learning element in practice on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest) level of confidence.

Core learning element	 01 Ethics, values and rights-based practice	 02 Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice	 03 Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making	 04 Promoting wellbeing, support and protection	 05 Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts	 06 Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice	 07 Self-awareness and reflexivity	 08 Professional leadership
Confidence in demonstrating core element in practice on a scale of 1-10								

Use this space to critically reflect on your rating and show analysis and evaluation, for example why did you rate 3 rather than 2 on a particular core learning element. What areas of your practice are strong and what areas require further development? Make sure you consider all core learning elements. Be honest in your self-assessment, we are all on a continuous professional learning journey.

Use this space to list or link to relevant evidence of learning relevant to your self-assessment. This could include evidence from the mandatory learning activity, formal training and/or informal learning, feedback and examples from practice.

Supervisor feedback

Use this space to record a summary of the developmental feedback shared with the NQSW during the review. The record will briefly capture areas of strength, consolidation and areas for development. The purpose is to support NQSW to continue to learn, consolidate and apply their learning in practice. The summary will include, where appropriate, reference evidence from other sources ie feedback from others, observations through day-to-day practice, progress on IDP and examples of work.

Multi-source feedback discussed

yes no

If yes - who provided feedback eg people who use services, other professionals?

If no - briefly say why and plan for collecting feedback for next review

Individual development plan (IDP) section reviewed and updated

yes no

If no, why not

Any areas of disagreement: use this section to record any difference of opinion in relation to progress and how the difference will be resolved. If the differences cannot be resolved, this should be captured on the form and shared with NQSW lead/ nominated person immediately.

Areas of disagreement

How will this be resolved?

Resolved yes no **date**

Escalated to [insert name], **NQSW lead or nominated person** yes no **date**

Resolved yes no **date**

NQSW signature	Date
Supervisor's signature	Date
Line manager signature (if applicable)	Date

End of year development discussion

Please review [Core learning elements for social workers: newly qualified social worker \(NQSW\) descriptors](#)

NQSW self-assessment

Please complete the following self-assessment and share with your supervisor in advance of the development discussion. The self-assessment will be critically reflective in nature.

Rate how confident you are that you demonstrate each core learning element in practice on a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest) level of confidence.

Core learning element	 01 Ethics, values and rights-based practice	 02 Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice	 03 Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making	 04 Promoting wellbeing, support and protection	 05 Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts	 06 Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice	 07 Self-awareness and reflexivity	 08 Professional leadership
Confidence in demonstrating core element in practice on a scale of 1-10								

Use this space to critically reflect on your rating and show analysis and evaluation, for example why did you rate 3 rather than 2 on a particular core learning element. What areas of your practice are strong and what areas require further development? Make sure you consider all core learning elements. Be honest in your self-assessment, we are all on a continuous professional learning journey.

Use this space to list or link to relevant evidence of learning relevant to your self-assessment. This could include evidence from the mandatory learning activity, formal training and/or informal learning, feedback and examples from practice.

Supervisor feedback

Use this space to record a summary of the developmental feedback shared with the NQSW during the review. The record will briefly capture areas of strength, consolidation and areas for development. The purpose is to support NQSW to continue to learn, consolidate and apply their learning in practice. The summary will include, where appropriate, reference evidence from other sources ie feedback from others, observations through day-to-day practice, progress on IDP and examples of work.

Multi-source feedback discussed

yes no

If yes - who provided feedback eg people who use services, other professionals?

If no - briefly say why

Individual development plan (IDP) section reviewed and updated

yes no

If not, describe how individual professional development will be taken forward.

End of year decision. The supervisor will use this space to confirm their decision, subject to endorsement by NQSW Implementation lead or nominated person.

I am satisfied that the NQSW has progressed their IDP and completed mandatory learning activity to meet the NQSW CPL registration requirement.

Relevant section of Validation and endorsement form complete

The NQSW requires additional time and support to progress their IDP and complete mandatory learning activity to meet the NQSW CPL registration requirement.

Relevant section of request for extension form is complete

Any areas of disagreement: use this section to record any difference of opinion in relation to progress and how the difference will be resolved. If the differences cannot be resolved, this should be captured on the form and shared with NQSW lead/ nominated person immediately

Areas of disagreement

How will this be resolved?

Resolved yes no **date**

Escalated to [insert name], **NQSW lead or nominated person** yes no **date**

Resolved yes no **date**

NQSW signature	Date
Supervisor's signature	Date
Line manager signature (if applicable)	Date

Validation and endorsement checklist
<p>CPL review template and Validation and endorsement form sent to NQSW lead or nominated person for endorsement <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date sent:</p>

The grid is a useful reminder of SSSC mandatory learning activity themes required to meet NQSW CPL registration requirements. Full details is available in [Core learning elements for social workers: newly qualified social worker \(NQSW\) descriptors](#)

 <p>Ethics, values, and rights-based practice</p>	 <p>Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice</p>	 <p>Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making</p>	 <p>Promoting wellbeing, support and protection</p>	 <p>Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts</p>	 <p>Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice</p>	 <p>Self-awareness and reflexivity</p>	 <p>Professional leadership</p>
Intersectionality and anti-discriminatory practice	Trauma informed practice	Critical thinking and analysis	Child protection	Working with risk	Using evidence to inform practice	Resilience and wellbeing	Professional identity
Rights based practice	Communication, engagement and empowerment	Decision making	Adult support and protection	Working with conflict	Applying knowledge of approaches and interventions	Critical reflection and reflexivity	Leadership
Applying knowledge of social inequality and systemic oppression	Relationship based practice			Professional curiosity and challenge			

T3 -end of year professional development discussion questions

By the end of the NQSW period, the NQSW will be able to confidently articulate the consolidation and advancement of their progress across the core learning elements through a structured professional discussion.

The following questions will be used to structure a discussion drawing on current or recent examples from your practice. Please discuss and agree with your supervisor the examples you wish to discuss in advance of the end of year review and critically reflect on the questions below in preparation for the discussion. You can refer to case files, notes, etc. during the discussion. No specific note of the discussion will be recorded; however, it may be referenced in the end of year development feedback.

1. Briefly outline which piece/s of work you plan to discuss.
 - Tell me how you went about the process of assessment and what your professional judgement/ decisions were. (Core learning elements 1,2,3,4,5,6)
 - What was your rationale for these decisions?
 - Tell me how you responded to the short/mid/long term risks.
 - What were the strengths in this case?
 - What did you find easy about this case?
 - What did you find challenging?

2. How did you demonstrate ethical practice and social work values in these case examples? (Core learning elements 1,7,8)
 - What ethical dilemmas did you consider?
 - What did you learn about your value base?

3. What knowledge, research and evidence underpinned your work in these case examples? (Core learning elements 2,3,5,6)
 - What legislation were you working with and how did it apply?
 - What policies applied and how successful were they for the individual?
 - Were there any unintended consequences?

4. Who did you collaborate with and what challenges did you face? (Core learning elements 2,4,8)

- How did you manage these challenges?
- Can you comment on co-production with service users throughout this case?
- How did you feel about service users' and other professionals' feedback?
- Can you describe how you practiced with emotional intelligence in managing this case?

5. Where did you go for support? (Core learning elements 7,8)

- What feedback did you have from your mentor (if applicable) or peers in this case?
- What feedback did you have from colleagues in your team around this case?
- How did you feel about this feedback?
- What difference did the feedback make to your practice?
- What was the emotional impact of this case and where did you get support for this?

6. What did you learn from this case? (Core learning elements 1,3,7)

- What did you learn from others?
- How have you contributed to the learning of others?
- Any learning of specific relevance to this case?
- Any learning by chance which supported your learning?
- Would you do anything different if you were faced with a similar situation again?

7. In overall practice, what are your learning and development needs? (Core learning elements 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)

- How can I help you?
- How can your team help you?

T4 – NQSW validation and endorsement form 2024

This form is to confirm that you have satisfied the NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements as part of the NQSW Supported Year.

1. Please complete and sign Part 1
2. Pass to your supervisor to complete and sign Part 2
3. Then pass to the NQSW Supported Year Lead or nominated person to complete and sign Part 3 (if applicable)
4. Save the completed form and name it 'NQSW validation and endorsement Form'
5. Submit the form and supporting documents by uploading through your online MySSSC account by clicking on the 'My documents' tile. This should be done within 2 months of end of NQSW Supported Year.

We will review your documents and will confirm your NQSW CPL registration requirements have been met.

Completion of NQSW CPL is a requirement of your continued registration with the SSSC.

Part 1: to be completed by the NQSW

Name:	SSSC registration number:
Initial development discussion date:	
Mid-year development discussion date:	
End of year development discussion date:	
Personal declaration	

- I have completed the SSSC mandatory learning activity to meet my NQSW CPL registration requirement.
- I have participated in activity associated with the NQSW Supported Year including self-assessment against the core learning elements and progress against my individual development plan.
- I have attached a copy of the completed and signed NQSW continuous professional learning review template along with the completed and signed NQSW validation and endorsement form.
- I am aware that the SSSC may contact me to provide further information, if necessary.

Signature (electronic is acceptable)

Date:

Part 2: to be completed by supervisor (and line manager when applicable)

Supervisors name:

Job title:

Your SSSC registration number:

Line manager name (when applicable):

Job Title:

Supervisor validation

- I am satisfied that the NQSW has completed the SSSC mandatory learning activity to meet the NQSW CPL registration requirement.
- I am satisfied that the NQSW has participated in activities associated with the NQSW Supported Year including self-assessment against the core learning elements and progressed their individual development plan.
- I am aware that the SSSC may contact me to provide further information, if necessary.

Signature (electronic is acceptable)

Date:

Signature (electronic is acceptable)

Date:

Part 3: to be completed by the NQSW Supported Year lead or nominated person.

Name: Job title:
Implementation lead <input type="checkbox"/> or Nominated person <input type="checkbox"/>
Endorsement I am satisfied that the NQSW has completed the SSSC mandatory learning activity to meet the NQSW CPL registration requirement. YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
I have randomly sampled the NQSW continuous professional learning review template. YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, at which stage: Initial <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-year <input type="checkbox"/> End-of year <input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware that the SSSC may contact me to provide further information, if necessary.
Signature (electronic is acceptable)
Date:

T5 - changing supervisor/ employer checklist

When a NQSW has a change of supervisor or employer, please ensure the following actions have been completed to minimise disruption to professional development.

Changing supervisor

Task	Responsibility	Date completed
NQSW continuous professional learning review template (NQSW CPL review template) has been reviewed and updated.	NQSW/ current or exiting supervisor	
Check that any exiting supervisor has updated or completed the NQSW CPL review template.	employer	
Make sure new supervisor is aware of responsibilities in NQSW Supported Year	employer	
Share the NQSW CPL review template and secure link to relevant evidence with new supervisor.	NQSW	
Become familiar with the NQSW Supported Year and set review dates.	New supervisor	

Changing employer

Task	Responsibility	Date completed
NQSW CPL review template has been reviewed and updated.	NQSW/ current supervisor	
Agree what evidence to support completion of the SSSC mandatory learning activity in addition to the NQSW CPL review template can be moved to new employment.	NQSW/ current supervisor	
Seek agreement to download evidence in a secure folder; send an encrypted email to a new email address or new employer or upload to a portable digital solution such as the SSSC MyLearning app.	NQSW/ current supervisor	
Share the NQSW CPL review template and secure link to relevant evidence with new supervisor.	NQSW	
Become familiar with the NQSW Supported Year and set review dates.	New supervisor	

T6 – NQSW extension request form

NQSW must meet the NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements within 12 months if working 35 hours or more per week and 18 months if working less than 35 hours per week and submit the completed documentation to the SSSC within the following two months.

Completion of NQSW CPL is a requirement of your continued registration with the SSSC.

This form is to request additional time to meet the NQSW CPL registration requirements. This request should be made as soon as the need for an extension is identified.

1. Please complete and sign Part 1
2. Pass to your supervisor, NQSW Supported Year Lead or nominated person to complete and sign Part 2
3. Email the form to the SSSC at registration@sssc.uk.com
4. The SSSC will confirm the length of the extension and the revised submission date by email to the NQSW.

Part 1: to be completed by the NQSW

Name:	SSSC registration number:
Reason for extension (please select as appropriate):	
Planned leave of absence <input type="checkbox"/>	
Unplanned leave of absence/ personal circumstance <input type="checkbox"/>	
Interruption to supervision and support <input type="checkbox"/>	
Workload pressure <input type="checkbox"/>	
End of year professional development decision (NQSW Supported Year) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Any additional information:	
Length of extension required:	
Have you previously applied for an extension: yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
The extension should provide me with sufficient time to meet my NQSW CPL registration requirement.	

Signature (electronic is acceptable)

Date:

Part 2: to be completed by supervisor and/or NQSW Supported Year lead or nominated person

Name:

Supervisor or Implementation lead or Nominated person

Please select:

I am aware of the reason for the extension request.

End of year decision (NQSW Supported Year) – a plan is in place to provide support.

Signature (electronic is acceptable)

Date:

SSSC internal use only

Extension number -

Extension length -

CPL dates updated on D365 - yes

Confirmation email sent - yes

If refused - reason

Optional template – Feedback from people who use services, their family and carers.

This form can be used to get feedback from people who use services, their family and carers when there is no existing tool or process. Some, or all the questions may be used and the person asking the questions should rephrase, add explanations or prompts as required.

Before they start, the person asking the questions must explain the purpose and ask permission to record the responses below and to share the comments with the social worker to assist their professional development.

Did the social worker get your permission in advance for me to contact you?	
Does the social worker arrive on time? If they are delayed, do they contact you to let you know?	
Are you clear why the social worker meets with you?	
How well prepared is the social worker for their meeting with you?	
Does the social worker listen to you and take on board your views and wishes?	
Does the social worker explain their assessments/ recommendations/ decisions and why they think this?	
Does the social worker explain their written assessments and reports and help you prepare you for meetings?	
Any other comments that you would like to make?	

Optional template – Feedback from professionals

As part of my professional development can you please provide feedback on how I am demonstrating the core learning elements of social workers in my practice. Please return the form to [\[INSERT ARRANGEMENTS\]](#)

Core learning element	Feedback
<p>Ethics, values and rights-based practice – develop an understanding of and apply ethical principles and values to all aspects of professional practice. Recognise sources and impact of social inequality and systemic oppression. Take action to protect and advocate for human rights and social justice, including development of an anti-racist, intersectional approach.</p>	
<p>Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice – demonstrate knowledge and skills to support effective communication, collaboration and relationship-based practice in a range of settings. Use trauma responsive approaches to actively involve and support the involvement of people, including families and carers to plan, implement and evaluate interventions.</p>	
<p>Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making - develop competence and confidence in applying critical thinking, analysis, research, and best practice to inform professional judgement and decision making in all areas of practice including assessment and review.</p>	
<p>Promoting wellbeing, support and protection – demonstrate and apply understanding of responsibility to actively promote the wellbeing, support and protection of children and adults at risk of harm, regardless of setting or context.</p>	

<p>Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts - develop competence and confidence in managing complexity, risk, and uncertainty in professional decision making.</p>	
<p>Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice - develop knowledge and confidence in applying relevant research, policy and legislation to role. Demonstrate commitment to continuous professional learning and inquiry which supports evidence informed practice and a wider culture of learning.</p>	
<p>Self-awareness and reflexivity – recognise how the demands of professional social work practice affect self and others. Develop the use of reflexivity to consider what has been learned and how this learning can contribute to personal wellbeing and effective and sustainable practice.</p>	
<p>Professional leadership - develop personal and professional authority as a social worker including when working collaboratively across agency and professional boundaries.</p>	
<p>Any other comments that you would like to make?</p>	

Appendix 1: Related documents

[Definitions of employer support: an employer's commitment to newly qualified social workers 2023](#)

[Core learning elements for social workers: newly qualified social worker \(NQSW\) descriptors](#)

Appendix 2: Identifying NQSWs within my organisation.

The following process provides a means to identify NQSWs within your organisation who have completed registration with the SSSC. Individuals with responsibility for supporting NQSWs and/or the implementation of the NQSW Supported Year should:

- identify the individual(s) within the organisation with access to the employer's area of MySSSC.
- agree an information sharing arrangement to allow the NQSW's name, registration number and registration date to be shared with you to support planning and delivery.
- agree the intervals at which MySSSC is checked for NQSWs.
- follow the agreed process for confirming NQSW involvement in the early implementation of the NQSW Supported Year (Appendix 3).

Who can access MySSSC?

Every organisation has nominated appropriate people to access the employer's area of MySSSC.

- **Lead countersignatories** - every organisation will have a lead countersignatory as the main point of contact between the SSSC) and the organisation on all matters connected with the registration of workers employed by that organisation.
- **Additional countersignatories** - lead countersignatories can approve additional countersignatories to endorse applications and be point of contact on all matters relating to registration.
- **Employers access to MySSSC** – identified individuals who cannot endorse applications for registration but have access to the employees' data for the purpose of tracking or checking employees' registrations. These people are usually in an HR or administrative role.

How to check MySSSC for NQSWs

Step 1: Only countersignatories or people with access to the employer's area of MySSSC can see data about NQSWs. To begin, sign into MySSSC.



Step 2: Click on 'My employees' tile from your homepage. Your homepage might look different depending on the permissions you have.

MySSSC home

 **Pixie Pickles**
Registration number: 4016009

- My homepage
- My personal details
- Sign out

-  **Security**
- Change password

Welcome to your MySSSC homepage.

[Click here for some frequently asked questions](#) and to find out the web browser you will need to get the best from MySSSC.

My homepage

Important: Please complete your equality and diversity information [here](#).

Equalities data

View and manage my equalities data information

My employees

View and manage my employees' registration information.

My registration conditions

View and update my registration conditions.

Step 3: Click on the link for the organisation(s) you want to check. Some people have access for more than one organisation.

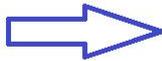
Employers area

Home / MySSSC home / Employers

Please select your organisation to continue.

Organisation name ↑

Abbeymill Childcare Ltd



Step 4: Click on the tile 'search people who are registered' it will automatically load all your employees who are registered.

Employers area

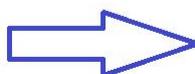
The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland.

Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

MySSSC home / Employers / Employers Area

Employer's Guidance for using the Covid-19 Recruitment Portal can be found [here](#).

Search people who are registered	Search people who are registered with conditions	Search people applying for registration	Search people who are due to renew their registration
----------------------------------	--	---	---



Step 5: Click on the link highlighted 'search people who are registered', this will give you an option to filter your workers to only show those who are NQSWs.



First Name	Last name	National Insurance Number	Registration Number	Organisation	Care Service Name	Register part	Overdue Annual Fee?
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
							<input type="button" value="Search"/>

☰ Search people who are registered ▾



First Name	Last Name	National Insurance Number	Registration Number	Register Part	Registration Date	Annual Fee Date	Registration Renewal Date	Registration Status	Overdue Annual Fee?	Removed Date	Care Service Number	Care Service Name	Organisation
------------	-----------	---------------------------	---------------------	---------------	-------------------	-----------------	---------------------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------	---------------------	-------------------	--------------

☰ Search people who are registered ▾

- Search people who are registered
- Employees where registration has been removed
- Search people who are NQSW



Appendix 3: Temporary process for confirming NQSWs involved in the NQSW Supported Year for current implementation areas until national rollout.

The identification of NQSWs involved in the NQSW Supported Year is managed manually by the SSSC until national rollout of the NQSW Supported Year on October 1, 2024. Up to October 1, 2024, the implementation lead/employer must contact the SSSC NQSW Project Team to confirm names as outlined below. From that date forward this process no longer applies.

Employer/ implementation lead responsibilities	Employer/implementation lead identifies NQSW and confirms permission to link with SSSC regarding registration information*. Employer/ implementation lead emails nqswproject@sssc.uk.com to arrange a time to confirm names.
NQSW Project Team responsibilities	NQSW Project Team will confirm email address to send names of NQSWs and registration number (if known) via encrypted email. NQSW Project Team will check register and confirm list with employer. NQSW Project Team will share names with SSSC Registration Department.
Registration Department responsibilities	Registration Department will flag on system as part of NQSW Supported Year. NQSW will receive two emails, one standard email confirming registration and another confirming part of NQSW Supported Year. Automated emails will be sent 12/18 months after registration to advise of timescale for submitting evidence of NQSW continuous professional learning (CPL) registration requirements.
NQSW responsibility	Following the validation and endorsement process, NQSWs will upload copy of completed forms to their MySSSC account using the documents tile or by email to registration@sssc.uk.com
SSSC responsibility	Sampling and sign off NQSW CPL registration requirements have been met by SSSC

*Information shared by employer/implementation lead to SSSC is NQSW name, registration number if known and occasionally date of birth.

NQSW Supported Year
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Tel: 0345 60 30 891
Email: NQSWproject@sssc.uk.com
Web: www.nqsw.sssc.uk.com

If you would like this document in another format,
Please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

© Scottish Social Services Council 2024