



# TRAFFORD COUNCIL

## **CAREER PROGRESSION POLICY FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE**

Written September 2013

# PART ONE

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This policy relates to all social workers in both Adults and Children's teams in the Children, Families and Wellbeing directorate and those social workers in Mental Health teams not undertaking the AMHP training. Social workers in Mental Health teams who are undertaking the AMHP training should refer to the Mental Health Part 2 of the policy available from the Social Care Lead.

The policy details the criteria and processes to be followed in order for qualified social workers in the teams detailed above whose current job roles require them to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to progress from Pay Band 7 into Pay Band 8 and be recognised as a Level 3 social worker or Experienced Social Worker as per the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

The policy is written in 2 parts. Part 1 of the policy details generic information for all social workers excluding social workers in the mental health teams who are undertaking the post qualifying AMHP training programme. Part 2 of the policy contains service specific information according to whether the social worker works in children's services, adult services or mental health services and social workers and managers looking at progression should make sure they have the version of the policy relevant to the service they work in.

Level 3 workers are expected to work with the more complex situations, with more autonomy and less frequent supervision. This does not remove the need for accountability on the social worker's part and regular formal supervision and informal support from a team manager/supervisor.

The term team manager/supervisor is used throughout the policy in order to acknowledge the different ways in which social workers are managed and supervised in the services and the different levels of responsibility.

**Progression is not a right and does not automatically happen after a set period of post qualifying experience. There are some social workers who will take a number of years in practice before they are considered ready to apply for progression. There may also be a number of social workers who will not be allowed to progress and will remain at Level 2.**

A social worker's readiness to be considered for progression will be decided by their team manager/supervisor in conjunction with the social worker and through the PDR process. This policy details the stages that follow the decision by a team manager/supervisor that a social worker is ready to be considered for progression.

## WHAT IS LEVEL 3?

The PCF provides a framework for a social worker's progress during their career and identifies the level of capability that can be expected of them and their practice at each stage. From the point of qualifying the career stages are:

- Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (Newly Qualified Social Worker)
- Social Worker
- Experienced Social Worker
- Professional Social Work Educator / Advanced Social Work Practitioner / Social Work Manager
- Strategic Social Work Educator / Principal Social Worker / Strategic Social Work Manager

This policy relates **only** to career progression between the Social Worker and Experienced Social Worker levels.

The PCF contains 9 domains or areas:

- Professionalism
- Values and Ethics
- Diversity, Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing
- Knowledge
- Critical Reflection and Analysis
- Intervention and Skills
- Contexts and Organisations
- Professional Leadership

A diagram of the PCF structure can be found at:

[http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/CollegeLibrary/Reform\\_resources/PCFfancolour.pdf](http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/CollegeLibrary/Reform_resources/PCFfancolour.pdf)

The nine domains work together to describe the knowledge, skills and values that social workers need to practice effectively at a particular level of the framework and what they need to achieve to be considered to be operating at or moving towards a higher level of the framework.

Each domain of the PCF contains a number of capability statements at each level of the framework. These can be used to understand each of the domains as well as be used diagnostically to help identify strengths and areas for development, rather than as a tick list of areas where competence has to be evidenced. The detail of the PCF can be found at <http://www.tcsw.org.uk/resources/reform-resources/?cm=rr#pcf>

The College of Social Work (TCSW) describes the progression between the levels of the PCF as follows:

*“Progression between levels* is characterised by development of people’s ability to manage complexity, risk, ambiguity and increasingly autonomous decision making across a range of situations.

Particular issues to think about are as follows:-

Level of confidence, underpinned by practice experience, reflection and deepening understanding

The increasing ability to work independently and to collaborate on equal terms with members of other professions

The quality of the judgements made, and the level of ability to explain and justify them

Efficacy of the work undertaken and the outcomes achieved, including opportunities for preventive work

The ability to take initiative, form constructive alliances and to act as a change agent

The ability to engage effectively with situations of increasing complexity and challenge, for example those with

- multi-agency input
- complex family / organisational dynamics
- serious hostility and conflicts of interest
- multiple problems / disadvantages
- multiple / significant risk factors
- need to take into account the public interest

The appropriate use of authority and challenge

The ability and commitment to educate and provide professional supervision to others

Demonstration of leadership, management and research.”

<http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/PCFNOVprogression-between-levels.pdf>

The PCF can specifically be used to help understand the difference between Pay Band 7/Level 2 and Pay Band 8/Level 3 in Trafford council. Level 2 can be understood by referencing the Social Worker level of the PCF. The description of this level within the PCF is compared to the Assessed and Supported Year level and states:

***“In the Social Work role they (social workers) progress to practice effectively, exercising higher quality judgements, in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge. Through growing understanding they expect and anticipate, but do not pre-judge, the issues that may develop. They have greater confidence and independence (whilst accessing support when needed), and use their initiative to broaden their repertoire of responses; they have expertise in one or more areas of practice, be familiar with local resource networks and be recognised by peers as a source of reliable knowledge and advice”.***

Level 3 can be understood by referencing the Experienced Social Worker level of the PCF. The description of this level within the PCF is compared to the Social Worker level which is below it and states:

***“Experienced social workers are more autonomous in their role. They demonstrate expert and effective practice in complex situations, assessing and managing higher levels of risk, striking a balance between support and control, liaising with a wide range of professionals, including more senior levels. They manage complex caseloads, and offer expert opinion within the organisation and to others. They chair a range of meetings, offer expert support to case conferences, and produce high quality assessments and reports for a range of functions. They model good practice, setting expectations for others. They start to take responsibility and be accountable for the practice of others, mentoring newly qualified social workers, and supervising the work of junior staff. They undertake capacity-building with individuals, families, communities, user groups and voluntary organisations, and contribute their views on service provision to commissioners.”***

**[http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/CollegeLibrary/Reform\\_resources/PCF23LevelDescriptorsASYESocialWorkers.pdf](http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/CollegeLibrary/Reform_resources/PCF23LevelDescriptorsASYESocialWorkers.pdf)**

Social workers ready to be considered for career progression to Level 3 should be fully operating at the Social Worker level and be operating to a limited extent at the Experienced Social Worker level but are ready to take on all of the responsibilities assigned to this level.

## **SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- A social worker will not be eligible to apply for progression until they have been qualified for a **minimum of two years and have reached at least SCP 33 of Band 7** and be considered ready to work at the Experienced Social Worker level of the PCF.
- A social worker will not be eligible to apply for progression until they have successfully completed the Consolidation module as detailed below. A social worker must have a minimum of **18 months post qualifying experience** in direct social work practice and have successfully completed any probationary period (and their Assessed and Supported year in Employment where applicable) **before applying to do the Consolidation module.**

(Social workers who have gained their initial post qualifying experience with another employer but are still within Band 7 will have to successfully complete their probationary period with Trafford before being considered eligible to start the progression process regardless of how long they are post qualified).

- **Consideration of a social worker's readiness to begin the progression process must be linked to their PDR. It is a team manager's/supervisor's responsibility to decide if a social worker is ready to be considered for progression and undertake the different stages of the process.**
- Team managers/ supervisors will be expected to provide accurate, positive references and reports at the different stages outlined below in support of the social workers competence and readiness. The Consolidation module in particular should not be used to determine whether or not a social worker is ready to be considered for progression or where there are concerns about a social worker's competence in practice. Trafford's Capability procedures are more appropriate for this.

## **SECTION 3: PROGRESSION PROCESS**

There are 4 stages on the path to career progression:

### **Stage 1: Completion of Consolidation module**

This stage involves successful completion of the Consolidation Module undertaken at Salford University. This is a taught module involving a number of days of attendance at University plus completion of written work, an observation and a portfolio.

Access to this module is via the Senior Learning and Development Officer Professional Social Work Lead in the Workforce and Core Strategy Learning and Development team.

The module runs twice a year in September and January. The Senior Learning and Development Officer will email managers prior to each module inviting applications from suitably experienced social workers. All necessary application forms will be attached to the email. The Senior Learning and Development Officer will advise Team Managers/Supervisors of timescales and closing dates for applications. These need to be strictly adhered to as Salford University adhere to its own strict closing dates for applications.

### **Stage 2: Further practice experience**

After successful completion of the Consolidation module the social worker will continue to gain experience in practice until they are at least 2 years post qualified. During this time they and their team manager/supervisor need to use supervision and PDR to continue their skill development and preparation for consideration for progression.

There is no guarantee that a line manager/supervisor will support a social worker to be considered for progression as soon as they are 2 years post qualified. They may feel that the social worker needs to get further experience in practice and will use supervision, the Social Worker and Experienced Social Worker levels of the PCF and the PDR process to identify the areas the social worker needs to develop further and how this development will be achieved.

### **Stage 3: Application process**

Once a social worker has at least 2 years post qualifying experience they are eligible to be considered for progression. However, eligibility does not equal entitlement.

Once a line manager/supervisor feels able to support a social worker's progression the Application for Career Progression should be completed. This requires the manager's/supervisor's support and recommendation and to be linked to the social worker's PDR.

Two Progression interview panels will held each year in April and September (see next section). Heads of Service will email team managers/supervisors in their respective service a month before the panel inviting applications and will attach the policy and application forms to that email.

The application consists of 4 parts:

1. An application form completed by the social worker (**see Appendix 1**) with 2 reflective statements attached:
  1. **A reflective statement (max 1000 words) analysing the work they have done and the learning achieved since qualifying, the reason they are applying for career progression and why they think they are ready for it, making reference to the appropriate levels and the 9 Domains of the PCF.**
  2. **A reflective statement (max 1000 words critically analysing a piece of work undertaken, what they did, why they did it and what they learned from it. The decision making process, the outcomes achieved and the impact of the work on the service user should also be detailed. Reference should be made to the social work theories, legislation, knowledge and values used to inform the practice.**

**This reflective statement should also have attached documents relating to the piece of work analysed in the statement and should provide evidence of the work undertaken by the applicant e.g. Assessment form, Care Plan, funding requests, case recording, records of formal meetings. See Part 2 of the respective service's progression policy for further details about the kind of evidence to be submitted. Evidence documents should be printed off electronic records where necessary.**
2. **A Statement of recommendation from the Line Manager/Supervisor (see Appendix 2)**
3. **A second reference from a colleague (see Part 2 Service specific information for who can be used to provide the reference and the format it should take).**
4. A copy of the social workers assignment completed for the Consolidation module.

**Applications must be received at least 7 working days before the interview panel and should be submitted to the relevant Head of Service.**

Following receipt of the application and prior to the interview panel Heads of Service will access the applicant's case records and sample their work.

**Stage 4: Assessment by formal interview panel**

Formal Progression interview panels will take place in April and September each year and will consist of a Head of Service from Children's services and a Head of Service from Adult services who will be the decision makers. The Senior Learning and Development Officer Social Work Lead will also attend in an advisory capacity.

The interview panel will consider both the candidate's application which includes their reflective statements and a series of questions to explore his/her level of professional competency.

**The interview questions will be sent out in advance 5 working days before the panel takes place in order to help the applicant prepare for the interview and evidence their practice and development during the discussions.**

Applicants will be informed of the Panel decision within 1 working day of the Panel meeting. The appropriate HR Business Partner will also be informed of the outcome of the panel and this will be recorded on their personnel file.

If successful, the social worker will be moved to Band 8 Spinal Column Point 35 - 38 and payment will be made from the date of the Career Progression Panel. The social worker will move up through this band on an incremental basis.

Where the application for career progression is unsuccessful verbal feedback will be given regarding the issues that need to be addressed before a re-submission can be made. Feedback may also involve the applicant meeting with their line manager and a member of the interviewing panel to discuss in more detail the issues that led to the applicant being unsuccessful and how they can address them.

## APPENDIX 1

### APPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK CAREER PROGRESSION

#### *Applicant's Details*

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Team</b>	
<b>Date Commenced with Trafford</b>	
<b>Is this your 1<sup>st</sup> application for Career Progression? If not please give date last application made to Panel</b>	

#### *Eligibility Criteria*

<b>Date Qualified</b>	
<b>Date successfully completed Probationary period</b>	
<b>Date NQSW or ASYE completed</b>	
<b>Current Salary SCP (Applicant must be at least SCP 33 before applying)</b>	
<b>Date of Successful Completion of Consolidation Module (PQ1)</b>	

#### **Statement of Applicant's Continuing Professional Development Activities undertaken since qualifying**

<b><u>Activity undertaken and date</u></b>	<b><u>Learning achieved from it</u></b>

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**Applicant's Signature:**

**Date:**

## APPENDIX 2

### LINE MANAGER/SUPERVISOR STATEMENT OF RECOMMENDATION FOR CAREER PROGRESSION

<b>Name of Team Manager</b>	
<b>Name of Applicant</b>	
<b>Length of time that you have managed applicant</b>	

#### **Areas to be covered in Recommendation:**

The Line Manager/Supervisor should comment on the applicant's ability across the 9 domains of the PCF:

- Professionalism
- Values and Ethics
- Diversity, Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing
- Knowledge
- Critical Reflection and Analysis
- Intervention and Skills
- Contexts and Organisations
- Professional Leadership

and the social worker's readiness to progress from working at the Social Worker level of the PCF to the Experienced Social Worker level. The details of what progression means in terms of the PCF is outlined in the Introductory section of the Career progression policy.

#### **Recommendation (in no more than 500 words)**

[Empty rectangular box for signature]

**Line Manager / Supervisor Signature:**

**Date:**

## **PART 2**

### **SERVICE SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

#### **EVIDENCE TO BE SUBMITTED FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The following list, whilst not exhaustive, provides examples of the kind of assessment/documents that can be submitted as evidence:-

- Care Plans
- CP or CIN Plans
- Parenting Assessment
- Statutory Review Documents
- Needs Assessment
- Single Assessment
- Graded Care Profile
- Bruce Thornton Tools
- Placement with Parent Report
- Report Evidencing Voice of the Child
- Assessment/Report for RAS (Resource Allocation System) CAN Team
- Fostering Assessment
- Foster Carer Annual Review/ Safer Caring policy
- Matching report for Fostering Panel
- Complaint record –Fostering Service
- Pathway Plan

