

BASW Accreditation scheme for providers of continuing professional development for social workers

Overview Guide

Authors: Maggie Challis and Kate Johnson
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Background

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (CPD) is essential for all professions to ensure individuals' knowledge, skills and wider capabilities remain current and relevant in the context in which they are working. Professional and regulatory bodies set specific requirements for each profession. When these requirements or conditions are met, the practitioner may remain on the register which allows them to practise legally within their own area of work. This is core to CPD, but CPD extends beyond regulatory and other statutory requirements. It is about the ongoing development of the profession, often in specialist areas, and it is linked to the evidence and research base for practice. This Accreditation Scheme is for providers of CPD to meet both regulatory standards, post-qualifying statutory standards in specialisms, and non-statutory requirements for good practice and effective services, across the UK.

The initial focus of the scheme will be England and Wales but we will accept applications from anywhere in the UK. Please contact accreditation@basw.co.uk to discuss your requirements.

Legislative, policy and regulatory context in relation to CPD

England

In May 2011 the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) published its framework for CPD in England. It recognised that CPD should encompass the whole range of learning activities, including professional supervision and peer group learning, training programmes and higher-level qualifications. Thus, professionals can maintain and develop their skills and knowledge in ways that enable flexibility and choice in how CPD needs are to be met.

Since that time, further action has been taken to enhance the quality and consistency of continuing professional development for social workers.

The College of Social Work developed the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social work which is now hosted and recently updated by BASW, which has driven social work education and ASYE and other aspects of CPD in recent years. Picking up on concerns to develop and maintain an effective and appropriately prepared workforce, the two Chief Social Workers for children and families and adult social work have produced 'Knowledge and Skills Statements' (KSS) which form a new framework within which best practice, and therefore, CPD may be developed. Recently, BASW has agreed a joint statement on how the PCF and KSS interrelate.

Regulation – and the future of CPD – is in flux in England. The Health and Care Professions Council is the current regulatory body for social work in England, and as such sets the CPD requirements for registered social workers. However, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 will result in a new social work specific regulatory body, Social Work England (SWE) from late 2019. SWE will cover both children's and adults' social work and will have a role in defining both qualifying and some post-qualifying standards. BASW is working with SWE on this.

[The Policy Statement](#) on Regulating Social Workers, published in June 2016 by the Department for Education and the Department for Health, sets out 8 functions of the intended new regulatory body, four of which relate to post-qualification education and training. They are:

- *Set new, social work specific, standards for continuous professional development;*
- *Approve post qualifying courses and training in specialisms such as Approved Mental Health Professionals and Best Interest Assessors;*
- *Oversee the proposed new assessment and accreditation system for child and family social workers;*
- *Oversee the required arrangements for successfully completing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).*

Wales/ Cymru

Social Care Wales requires registrants to complete 90 hours of CPD every 3 years and requires social workers to submit evidence of CPD to re-register. It provides a toolkit to help and guide registrants to invest in and plan their professional development.

Scotland

In Scotland, a review of social work education, at qualifying and post-qualifying levels, is currently in progress, and will result in the setting of a new Standard for Continuing Professional Learning.

Accreditation of CPD providers

In order to address the issue of assuring the quality of those providing CPD opportunities, BASW has established an accreditation scheme whereby providers of learning opportunities for social workers are able to demonstrate that they themselves meet a set of nationally agreed and rigorously applied quality criteria.

The scheme is derived from and builds on existing quality regimes (such as QAA and Ofsted, and the earlier CPD endorsement scheme of The College of Social Work) and adds to them a set of values reflecting those which underpin social work practice, which are contained within the BASW Code of Ethics. In this way, the scheme sets a baseline of education and training practice for all those who offer CPD learning and development opportunities to social workers.

The scheme has been designed to enable social workers, the public and BASW members to have confidence that where they engage with people, products or organisations bearing BASW's accreditation logo, that these will have been through a rigorous process to ensure they meet explicit quality criteria relating to their CPD provision.

Seeking accreditation is entirely voluntary. BASW hopes, however, that committed providers of CPD for social workers will take this opportunity to demonstrate how their practice meets standards which will help to ensure that social work CPD meets the needs of the sector, its users, and the regulatory bodies.

Benefits of accreditation

Accreditation offers a cost-effective way for providers to demonstrate, and customers to judge, the quality of CPD provision.

For providers of CPD, key benefits of BASW accreditation will include:

- Use of the BASW accreditation logo on publications and marketing to demonstrate your engagement with the social work professional association
- Increasing business by use of the quality mark
- A robust method of internal quality assurance for your/your organisation's CPD provision
- Being able to demonstrate your commitment to continuing professional development for social workers
- Showing social workers, commissioners, employers and the public that they can have confidence in your CPD provision

For employers, accreditation will:

- Enable you to have your own training departments or trainers accredited, so showing the value of your in-house expertise
- Enable you to select external education and training providers that you know will understand and meet the needs of the social work profession
- Offer you a list of endorsed providers which may extend your range of training partners

Social workers will be able to see that:

- The trainers or educators you are working with have met criteria which relate to education and training standards, including currency of skills and knowledge
- The providers themselves demonstrate that they apply the values which underpin social work practice in their own work as educators

People who use services, and carers, will be assured that:

- Accredited education and training providers have demonstrated that they listen to the needs of people who use services and carers in developing and evaluating their CPD provision
- Accredited providers themselves reflect social work values in the way they develop and offer their CPD provision

Strands of accreditation

CPD takes place in a range of settings, supported by a range of learning facilitators and education and training providers. BASW's accreditation scheme tries to capture this diversity by offering two strands of accreditation for:

- Individuals offering CPD provision for social workers
- Organisations offering CPD provision for social workers

In due course, BASW may develop a further strand for individual courses, programmes or learning events.

Each of the two current strands has a number of dimensions each broken down into a number statements which make up the accreditation criteria. These have been extensively consulted on and tested and are set out in Appendix 1.

Underpinning values of the accreditation scheme

BASW has produced a [Code of Ethics](#) to which all its members are expected to subscribe. The BASW Code of Ethics comprises statements of values and ethical principles relating to human rights, social justice and professional integrity, followed by practice principles that indicate how the ethical principles should be applied in social work practice. The Code of Ethics links to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) [Statement of ethical principles](#).

The accreditation scheme equally expects all applicants to show that their work reflects the values enshrined in the Code of Ethics in the way they work with learners, partners, and people who use services, and carers. These underpinning principles must be demonstrated alongside the strand specific criteria that relate to the planning, delivery, evaluation and continuous quality development of teaching and learning activities.

Applicants will be asked to state in which of the UK countries they offer CPD, and to show that they work effectively within the legal and regulatory context of each country.

The remaining criteria in each strand relate specifically to how provision is planned, delivered and evaluated. There is also the opportunity for those who work with inter-professional groups to demonstrate how their practice takes account of working across professions in terms of preparation, facilitation and evaluation.

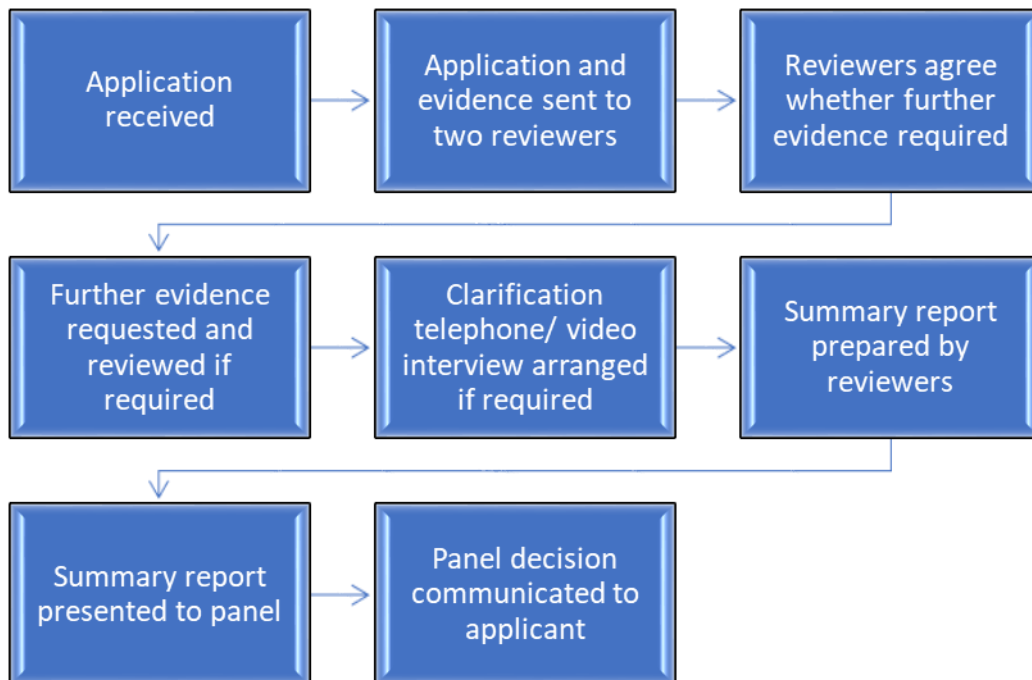
The accreditation process

The accreditation process is intended to be supportive and help applicants to recognise their own strengths as well as indicating where further development might take place to improve CPD provision further.

The process of applying for accreditation is the same for both Individual Provider and Organisation strands, and consists primarily of a self-evaluation, with supporting evidence, showing how all the criteria are met. A proforma and additional guidance on evidence will be available on the BASW website to support applicants in preparing their application.

The supporting evidence is likely to be predominantly documentary material – for example, minutes of meetings, policy statements, evaluations of CPD provision. However, it is likely also to include audio or video material, or links to other material which shows how relevant criteria are met in practice.

The approximately nine week process through which review and accreditation will be carried out is as follows:



Each application will be reviewed by suitably qualified and trained reviewers who are appointed by BASW on the basis of their appropriate skills and experience in social work and/or education and training.

Two reviewers will assess each application self-assessment and associated evidence. One – the Lead Reviewer - may be a member of BASW staff and will have knowledge of the country/countries in which the applicant offers CPD provision; the other will be an external independent reviewer. The two reviewers will independently undertake a review of the application. They will then discuss the application and come to a joint position. At this point, reviewers may feel they require further evidence to support the application where it is not clear that all criteria have been met. This will be requested by the Lead Reviewer. Once this has been scrutinised, the Lead Reviewer may carry out a follow-up telephone/video interview with the applicant. This will give the opportunity, if needed, to seek clarification or amplification on points of fact or evidence. This is not, however, an opportunity for further or new evidence to be presented in support of the application. There may be many applications which do not require further evidence or a follow-up interview to be requested.

In order to gain accreditation, the applicant will be required to satisfy the reviewers on each and every one of the accreditation criteria. Each piece of evidence provided is likely to address several criteria – a separate piece of evidence for each criterion is not needed.

Based on the written application and evidence, and the follow up telephone conversation, where used, reviewers will jointly make a recommendation on whether the application meets the accreditation criteria. This recommendation will then be presented to the Accreditation Review Panel for scrutiny.

A range of stakeholders with an interest in CPD for social workers will be invited to join the Accreditation Review Panel to perhaps include an employer; local authority; higher

education institution; private provider of CPD; service user and carer representatives.

Full application timetables for the BASW Accreditation scheme will be published on the BASW website with guidance on when applications should reach BASW in order for applications to be considered at specific Accreditation Review Panel dates. This will include when applicants will be expected to submit further evidence (if required) and/or be available for an interview with their Lead Reviewer.

The Application Review Panel will make one of four decisions:

- Accredit
- Defer decision, pending receipt of further information/evidence
- Provisional accreditation, allowing time for further development
- Not accredit

Where the reviewers' recommendation is that accreditation should be deferred at this point, as not all criteria have been met, and this recommendation is agreed by the Accreditation Review Panel, the Panel Chair will tell the applicant what further information or evidence would be needed to bring the application up to accreditation standard and set a timescale for this to be submitted. If this information is provided within the agreed timescale, and found to be sufficient, accreditation will be awarded. If the further information is not considered to be sufficient, or is not provided within the agreed timescale, the Accreditation Review Panel will not award accreditation. In this case, the applicant will be advised that a re-application can be submitted at a later date.

Provisional accreditation may be awarded to individuals or organisations which have recently set up in practice, and where there has not been sufficient time to gather evaluative evidence.

Accreditation normally lasts for three years. In the intervening years, accredited providers will need to supply BASW with an annual update on their CPD provision, noting in particular any responses to the comments made by reviewers, and noting any changes

that have taken place in terms of learners, provision, or the context in which CPD is made available.

In certain limited circumstances there may be an opportunity to Appeal against the decision of the Accreditation Review Panel. An Appeals Form will be available on the BASW website.

Applicants who fail to gain accreditation are welcome to reapply. We suggest that this should not be earlier than 6 months after the decision of the Review Panel in order to give time to make adjustments that will enable them to meet the criteria. A re-application will constitute a new application and will attract a further fee.

Fees for accreditation.

Fees will be charged at the point of application, and will be non-refundable, regardless of the outcome of the accreditation application. The accreditation process has been designed to encourage improvement and ideally enable applicants to meet requirements without compromising the scheme's standards. The basis for fees chargeable is that they will cover the cost of administration and review and will be approximately in line with the perceived benefit of accreditation to the individual or organisation.

Appendix 1 Accreditation Criteria

Accreditation criteria for Individuals offering continuing professional development opportunities for social workers

DIMENSION 1 - UNDERPINNING CRITERIA

- a) You can demonstrate how your development and delivery of continuing professional development (CPD) provision for social workers is consistent with the BASW Code of Ethics
- b) You can demonstrate how your development and delivery of CPD for social workers fits into the relevant professional and regulatory frameworks for social work in the UK country/countries for which you offer your provision

DIMENSION 2 - FACILITATING LEARNING

- a) You understand your own role and responsibilities and the boundaries of your role in relation to facilitating learning
- b) You have access to, and use, appropriate learning and other resources to deliver high quality CPD
- c) You use session planning skills appropriately
- d) Your facilitation of learning is inclusive for all participants and meets individual learners' needs
- e) You use a range of appropriate techniques to motivate and support learners within your CPD sessions
- f) You employ a range of appropriate methods to assess participants' learning throughout the duration of the learning event/programme, which may, but is not required to, include formal assessment

DIMENSION 3 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- a) Your learning programmes are developed and delivered in collaboration with employers, commissioners, social workers, and social work organisations, as appropriate, to meet the CPD needs and aspirations of social workers
- b) Your marketing and publicity materials give full and clear information to enable social workers, and employers/commissioners to make appropriate choices of CPD activity
- c) You include the perspectives of service users and carers in your CPD provision, and co-produce and involve service users and carers in design and delivery wherever appropriate

DIMENSION 4 - QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

- a) You have a clear strategy and purpose for the CPD you offer
- b) You have in place appropriate quality assurance policies and procedures for all aspects of your CPD provision
- c) You regularly evaluate the CPD provision you offer in order to improve your service to learners
- d) You take steps to evaluate the impact of your CPD provision on the practice of your learners
- e) You take steps to evaluate the impact of your provision on the lives of people who use services, and carers

DIMENSION 5 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITATOR

- a) You have the relevant knowledge, skills and, where appropriate, qualifications to deliver your CPD provision

- b) You undertake continuous professional development to maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high quality CPD provision

DIMENSION 6 - WORKING WITH INTERPROFESSIONAL GROUPS OF LEARNERS

(You need only address these criteria if you regularly offer CPD to groups that include other professions, such as health workers, the police, or lawyers.)

- a) You have appropriate knowledge of the professional and legislative context relevant to the CPD requirements of participants who are not social workers and integrate this into the learning activities
- b) You facilitate dialogue between different professions, and understanding of each other's role, within CPD sessions

Accreditation criteria for Organisations offering continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for social workers

DIMENSION 1 - UNDERPINNING CRITERIA

- a) Your organisation can demonstrate how its development and delivery of continuing professional development (CPD) provision for social workers is consistent with the BASW Code of Ethics.
- b) Your organisation can demonstrate how its development and delivery of CPD for social workers fits into the relevant professional and regulatory frameworks for social work in the UK country/countries for which you offer provision

DIMENSION 2 - FACILITATING LEARNING

- a) People working for your organisation understand their role and responsibilities and

the boundaries of their role in relation to facilitating learning

- b) People working for your organisation have access to, and use, appropriate learning and other resources to deliver high quality CPD
- c) People working for your organisation use session planning skills appropriately
- d) People working for your organisation ensure that facilitation of learning is inclusive for all participants and meets individual learners' needs
- e) People working for your organisation use a range of appropriate techniques to motivate and support learners within CPD sessions
- f) People working for your organisation employ a range of appropriate methods to assess participants' learning throughout the duration of the learning event/programme, which may, but is not required to, include formal assessment

DIMENSION 3 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- a) Your organisation's learning programmes are developed and delivered in collaboration with employers, commissioners, social workers and social work organisations, as appropriate, to meet the CPD needs and aspirations of social workers
- b) Your organisation's marketing and publicity materials give full and clear information to enable social workers, and employers/commissioners to make appropriate choices of CPD activity
- c) Your organisation includes the perspectives of service users and carers in its CPD provision, and co-produces and involves service users and carers in design and delivery wherever appropriate

DIMENSION 4 - QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

- a) Your organisation has a clear strategy and purpose for the CPD it offers
- b) Your organisation has in place appropriate quality assurance policies and procedures for all aspects of its CPD provision
- c) Your organisation regularly evaluates the CPD provision it offers in order to improve its service to learners
- d) Your organisation takes steps to evaluate the impact of its CPD provision on the practice of learners
- e) Your organisation takes steps to evaluate the impact of its CPD provision on the lives of people who use services, and carers

DIMENSION 5 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITATORS

- a) People working for your organisation have the relevant knowledge, skills and, where appropriate, qualifications to deliver your CPD provision
- b) People working for your organisation undertake continuous professional development to maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high quality CPD provision

DIMENSION 6 – LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- a) Leaders set a clear direction for your organisation which results in high quality learning opportunities
- b) Leaders and managers communicate regularly with all stakeholders to ensure aims

and approaches are relevant to the needs of social work and social workers at relevant stages of their careers.

DIMENSION 7 – WORKING WITH INTERPROFESSIONAL GROUPS OF LEARNERS

(You need only address these criteria if your organisation regularly offers CPD to groups that include other professions, such as health workers, the police, or lawyers.)

- a) People working for you as facilitators have appropriate knowledge of the professional and legislative context relevant to the CPD requirements of participants who are not social workers and integrate this into the learning activities

- b) People working for you facilitate dialogue between different professions, and understanding of each other's role, within CPD sessions