**FACT SHEET 2**

Continuing your professional development

Ongoing learning is key to your professional development. This fact sheet explores some of the options for your CPD.

The International Federation of Social Workers’ (IFSW) Charter of Rights for Social Workers states that social workers should have the right to access lifelong learning and ‘career progression routes, which maintain practice’. It is every social worker’s personal and professional responsibility to pursue learning activities ensuring they have the relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes to do their job and progress their careers. They should also expect to be supported by their employer who should ensure they have protected time for supervision and learning. Walsall Adult Social Care has made the commitment to supervision, supporting reflective practice, and exploring different routes to enabling Continuing Professional Development . CPD is a registration requirement for every social worker so they continue to be aware of changes in practice and research and actively incorporate this new knowledge into their daily practice.

**The new deal for England**

From August 2012 the Health and Care Professions Council became the registering body for all qualified social workers who want to practice in England. A memorandum of understanding was agreed between HCPC, the Care Council for Wales (CCW), the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). This means that social workers registered with one of the other councils are eligible to apply for registration with HCPC. All social workers will be required to pursue their continuing professional development, using, amongst others similar methods that could be used to gain their post-registration training and learning (PRTL) hours.

However, the HCPC do not set a number of hours of CPD that must be completed. The General Social Care Council (GSCC) had previously requested a minimum of 90 hours PRTL to be completed over a 3 year period. This new approach by the HCPC focuses on the outcomes for the individual practitioner. Social workers will be required to record their learning activity to provide evidence of the benefit this had made to their practice and to the service users, carers and colleagues who are part of their team. It has been suggested by HCPC that social workers focus on 4 key instances of learning, clearly listing what the CPD activity was, how this had benefited their practice and what difference they feel this had made to one or more service users. When renewing registration, social workers will be required to sign a professional declaration to confirm that their knowledge and skills are up-to-date. The first audits for social workers in England will take place in September, 2014 – for full details [www.hcpc.org.uk](http://www.hcpc.org.uk)

**Definition of CPD**

Continuing Professional Development or CPD is an ongoing planned learning and development process which improves practice, contributes to lifelong learning and enables career progression. CPD is the process through which professionals maintain and develop their knowledge and skills throughout their career to ensure that they retain their capacity to practice safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice.

CPD encompasses all learning as a social worker and values the whole spectrum of learning activities, including professional supervision, peer group learning (such as Action Learning Sets or Communities of Practice), placements (including shadowing or mentoring), training/learning programmes and higher level qualifications. It may also include personal research such as reading, web search, or direct observation. This enables flexibility and choice about how to meet individual learning needs. CPD incorporates the requirements for, but is more than, a re-registration as a social worker in each country.

Reflection is a central aspect of ongoing learning and development. IFSW states that social workers have a right to work ‘critically, effectively and reflectively’. Munro describes reflection as the learning to be gained by engaging in deliberate practice, built on reviewing prior experience to derive new insights and lessons and on feedback that is accurate, diagnostic and timely. Reflective practice requires time, (acknowledged within the priority given in Walsall’s new social work Supervision policy [2013]). Professional development is more effective if undertaken within a learning culture and evaluated in terms of outcomes for the social worker and people who use social work services. Source BASWA – British Association of Social Workers.

**The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)**

The Professional Capabilities Framework is owned by the College of Social Work on behalf of the profession.

This was developed by the Social Work Taskforce as a new CPD framework which would be more flexible and link CPD to an individual’s professional development and career structure. Alongside the CPD framework, the Reform Board also developed the Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework, setting out the role of employers to support the learning and development of the social workers in their employment.

**The PCF has nine domains**

1. **Professionalism** – Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development
2. **Values and Ethics** – Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice
3. **Diversity** – Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice
4. **Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing** – Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic wellbeing
5. **Knowledge** – Apply knowledge of social sciences, law and social work practice theory
6. **Critical Reflection and Analysis** – Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision making
7. **Intervention and skills** – Use judgement and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse
8. **Contexts and Organisations** – Engage with, inform and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional settings
9. **Professional Leadership** – Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management **for more details visit** [**www.collegeofsocialwork.org/pcf.aspx**](http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org/pcf.aspx)

**Achieving your CPD requirements –** within identified learning & development needs, attending conferences can be an excellent way of meeting colleagues and networking with organisations and professionals you would not have met in your own workplace. In-house learning and development opportunities advertised on the Adult Social Care Workforce Development Website will also enable you to meet your CPD requirements – visit [www.walsallsocialcareworkforce.co.uk](http://www.walsallsocialcareworkforce.co.uk)

As well as face to face networking, social media now forms a new kind of networking and is seen as part of everyday life on a personal and professional level. This form of communication can provide many benefits to those working in social work and social care such as keeping updated with current news and local and national events and there are also forums to discuss professional issues. This can also be a valuable way to signpost online resources to share with colleagues. Go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com), the networking site for professionals. Other CPD activities include arranging to shadow the work of a colleague in a related team or profession. Social Workers should and will be supported in their CPD by Walsall Council by allowing protected time to research the latest policy in a specialist area or looking at good practice developments in a specific field of practice. It could also mean studying a piece of research related to practice or contributing an article to a peer-reviewed journal.

CPD activity – examples

**Attending conferences, workshops and seminars**

**Shadowing/work experience**

**Online webinars/debates**

**Attendance on formal training courses**

**Participating in action learning sets or communities of practice**

**The need for evidence**

Whatever activity you undertake, it is essential that you keep evidence of it, in order to meet the regulatory bodies’ re-registration requirements. This means making sure that a file of records of attendance, workshop presentation slides, supervision notes, appraisal notes and details of research projects are kept for submission if requested by the HCPC. Alongside this record of activity, it is now also essential that you document how attendance / participation in each instance has benefited your practice/made a difference to service users.

**What works for you?**

Keeping up to date with CPD will need some planning but there are plenty of opportunities once you start to explore. Ensure you go through your learning requirements with your manager (and, if helpful, a learning and development consultant). This can be done during supervision and at your annual Appraisal. It would be useful to find out what your learning style is and go through the different ways that will work for you. Whether it’s a new research project, attending a conference or learning event, following up on new information, learning from colleagues or others, there are plenty of ways that CPD will enhance your professional skills and practice.