



Guidance notes for applications

to the Social Care Register

These guidance notes are intended to assist individuals applying to register as a social worker or a social care worker.

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Introduction

About the NISCC

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) was established in October 2001, as part of the government's quality agenda to raise standards within social care. The NISCC's mission statement is:

To protect the public by promoting and supporting confidence, competence and credibility in the social care workforce

One of the vital building blocks in achieving this mission has been the development and implementation of the Social Care Register.

About the Social Care Register

The NISCC has responsibility for building and maintaining the Social Care Register. The aim of the social care register is to make sure that all social workers and social care workers are suitable for work in social care. By completing this application process, everyone on the register will have shown that they are suitable for work in social care. Each registrant will have illustrated that they:

- Have the necessary qualifications and / or training
- Are physically and mentally fit
- Are of good character
- Agree to comply with the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers

The general public and employers have access to the Social Care Register. The public facing register will show the following limited information about registrants:

- Full name and title (including any previous names)
- Registration number
- The postal town of the registrant's work address
- Any admonishment imposed at anytime

Employers **only** will have enhanced access. If required, the following additional information will be made available to social care employers:

- Any conditions imposed on registration
- Any periods of suspension imposed at anytime
- Any qualifications

Completing the application form

Section 1 - Your details

To begin the registration process you will be asked to provide information, including your name, date of birth, address and contact details. You will be asked to provide a password so that registration staff can confirm your identity should you contact the NISCC by telephone. You should also provide a password prompt so that, if you forget your password, registration staff can provide you with your password prompt to help you. See the example below:

Password: Jones

Password prompt: mother's maiden name

Section 2 - Qualifications and Induction

Social Workers

If you use the title 'Social Worker', you must hold a recognised social work qualification. See Appendix 1 of these guidance notes for a list of recognised social work qualifications. The NISCC can verify awards of DipSW, CQSW, CSS and CSW. If you hold one of these awards, there is no need for you to send in a copy of your certificate to verify your qualification. However, the NISCC cannot verify any of the other equivalent awards - therefore a photocopy of your certificate of award should be submitted with your application.

Social Care Workers

There are **no** qualification or training requirements for registration as a Social Care Worker. However, you and your employer will have to confirm that that you have received induction into your current post. The NISCC Induction Standards are a registration requirement for new social care workers from 1st April 2008.

What is induction?

There are many jobs in social care and how you are inducted into your job will differ depending on the job you hold. In general, an induction refers to the period of introduction and training that usually takes place at the start of your job. Induction helps ensure you can carry out the job role safely and effectively.

Section 3 - Current employment

You are asked to provide details of your current job. On the application form, you will be asked to select and complete the employment circumstances most relevant to you.

It is possible that more than one of these employment circumstances will apply. If you are on secondment, you should provide details of the organisation you are seconded from, as well as details of the organisation you are seconded to.

Section 4 - Employment history

You are asked to provide details of every social care job you have held for the last 10 years.

If you have spent time working for a recruitment agency, give the name and address of the agency - you do not need to give us details of any placements.

Section 5 - Other regulatory bodies

This section is only relevant if you are, or if you have ever been, registered with one of the regulatory bodies listed in Appendix 2 of this booklet.

If you are currently, or if you have ever been, registered with another regulatory body, either in the UK or abroad, you must provide these details in section 5.

Social Workers

If you are using the title 'Social Worker', you must be registered with the NISCC, whether or not you are currently registered with any other regulatory body.

Social Care Workers

If you are a Social Care Worker, and are currently registered with one of the relevant regulatory bodies listed in Appendix 2 of these guidance notes, you do not have to register on the Social Care Register. However, should you wish, it is possible to hold dual registration. You will need to complete the application process and pay the registration fee if you decide to register with the NISCC.

Section 6 - Disciplinary record

You are asked to provide details of your current disciplinary record. This includes details of a disciplinary investigation pending against you, or a disciplinary action or finding that is currently on your Human Resources record.

You will be asked to provide information on:

- Any current disciplinary investigation about you being undertaken by an employer, either within or outside UK
- Any current disciplinary finding against you by an employer, either within or outside UK
- Any disciplinary action pending, or taken against you by any regulatory body or licensing organisation, such as the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council), either within or outside UK
- Dismissal from a social care post

Telling the NISSC about a current disciplinary action or finding taken against you, will not necessarily prevent you from being registered. The NISCC will consider the information you provide and, if necessary, may write to you for more information to help decide if you should be registered.

Section 7 - Criminal offences

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and people in social care work

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 allows some criminal offences to become spent after a fixed period. However, for occupations in social care, the Rehabilitations of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979 requires you to declare convictions even if they are spent.

Applicants must disclose all details on their application form of any caution, binding-over, conviction, or any pending charges. **Failure to do so may affect your registration.**

Telling the NISCC about a criminal record, will not necessarily prevent you from being registered. You will be asked to complete details of any criminal offences in section 7 of the application form. You will be asked to provide information on:

- Any previous conviction, regardless of the sentence you were given
- Any pending criminal proceeding against you in which you have been formally charged
- Any formal caution or binding-over you have received

For more information on what the NISCC will do with the information you provide, please see Appendix 3 of these guidance notes.

Section 8 - Verification and endorsement

In order to complete the registration process, we require that your application has been both **verified** and **endorsed** by your current social care employer, or an equivalent suitable person, to confirm that there is no reason why you should not be considered suitable for registration.

What is verification?

Verification enables the NISCC to be certain of your identity. In order to do this, you will need photocopies of your original birth certificate and one other form of photographic identification from the list below. The person verifying your application will check the photocopies against the originals and then sign the photocopies to confirm your identification. You should send the signed photocopies to the NISCC with your completed application.

The person verifying your application will check the original copies of:

- Your birth certificate

And one of the following forms of current photographic identification:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Armed forces identity card
- Photo identity card (EU countries only)
- Electoral card

What is endorsement?

Endorsement assures us that your social care employer is satisfied that there is no reason why you should not be considered suitable for registration.

Who should you ask?

The NISCC will agree with your employer the person who will act as the verifier and endorser within your organisation. The person who verifies your application (checks your birth certificate and other ID) should normally be the same person who endorses the application. Ask your employer / manager for advice on who will endorse your application. If you have any problems finding out who the endorser should be, you or your manager should contact the NISCC for advice. The endorser **must not** be a relative or family member.

Special arrangements for large organisations

The person who verifies your application (checks your birth certificate and other ID) should normally be the same person who endorses the application. However, in very large organisations, this may not be practical. In these circumstances, the endorser in your organisation can nominate someone to verify your application (check your birth certificate and other ID) on their behalf. This will be someone senior to you in the organisation, such as your line manager. Your employer / manager should be able to tell you who this will be.

The table below acts as a guide to who the endorser will be, according to your current employment circumstances:

Applicant's current employment circumstances	Who can endorse your application
Employed directly in social care work	A senior representative of the applicant's employer e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Social Care/Social Work • Assistant Director of Social Care/Social Work • Head of Human Resources • Chief Executive/Owner • Assistant Chief Executive
Employed in social care work by an employment or recruitment agency	A senior representative of the employment or recruitment agency
On secondment from a social care employer	An applicant on secondment is required to have their application endorsed by a senior representative of the social care employer from whom they are seconded and to obtain a countersignature from the employer to whom they are seconded.
Employed outside social care; or self-employed; or not currently in employment; or retired	If you are not currently employed directly in social care, your application should be endorsed by a person deemed by NISCC as equivalent to a senior representative of a social care employer e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A senior representative of a social care organisation you have worked for in the last 5 years • A senior representative of a known social care organisation who has known you for the last 2 years • A professional person, or someone of standing in the community, who has known you for the last 2 years e.g. Accountant; Barrister; Councillor, Chair/Director/Manager of a registered Charity or a VAT registered or a limited Company; Justice of the Peace; Member of Parliament; Minister of a recognised religion; Person with honours (e.g. OBE MBE etc.); Police Officer; Social Worker; Solicitor; Teacher; Trade Union Officer.

What do you have to do?

Gather the following list together and give them to the person in your organisation who is responsible for verifying and endorsing your application.

- Your application form (with sections 1-7 complete)
- A copy of the Guidance notes for verifying, endorsing and countersigning (provided in the application pack)
- The original copies of your birth certificate and one of the other listed forms of current photographic identification
- Photocopies of your birth certificate and one of the other listed forms of current photographic identification

Section 9 - Countersigning

This section is only relevant to people who have more than one job in social care or people who are on secondment

Applicants with more than one social care employer

If you have more than one social care employer, please ask a senior representative of your second employer to countersign your application. Your second employer is the employer that you spend the greatest amount of time with, after your main employer. We ask you to get your second employer to countersign your application, so that they can confirm that there is no reason why you should not be included on the Social Care Register.

Applicants who are on secondment

If you are on secondment, please ask a senior representative of the organisation to which you are seconded to countersign your application. The employer to which you are seconded to should countersign your application, so that they can confirm that there is no reason why you should not be included on the Social Care Register.

What should you give the person who is countersigning your application?

- This application form
- A copy of the *Guidance notes for verifying, endorsing and countersigning* (provided in the pack with this application form)

Section 10 - Your health

Your ability to carry out any role in social care safely is dependant on your physical and mental fitness. You are asked to indicate if you have a health condition that falls within the categories in section 10.

If you have declared a health condition, and you have had an occupational health assessment carried out by your employer, you are asked to provide this information.

If you have declared a health condition, but have not had an occupational health assessment, the NISCC will ask your permission to collect further information from your doctor or any other relevant person. This will be at no cost to you. Please complete the Health Consent form in section 11 of the application form.

Section 11 - Health consent form

You should only complete this section if you have declared a physical or mental health condition in section 10

By completing this form, you are giving the NISCC permission to collect further information from your doctor, a health professional known to you or if, needed, from any other relevant person. This will be at no cost to you.

Section 12 - Personal declaration and data protection

You will be asked to read, sign and date a personal declaration in section 12 of the application form. This declaration sets out the terms of the agreement under which you will be registered, including the Data Protection statement, and should be read carefully.

In order to make your application valid, this section must be **signed and dated**.

Section 13 - Equal opportunities (optional)

An equal opportunities form in section 13 of the application form, is used to ensure that all applicants and registrants are treated fairly and equitably. The information collected in this form will not be used in the registration process and will be treated in confidence. You do not have to fill out this form to apply for registration.

Feedback

The NISCC always welcomes feedback about registration or any other aspect of our work. You can email or write to the registration manager at the address below.

The NISCC also recognises that from time to time, there may be problems or issues with registration. You have a right to raise issues if you believe that your application has not been treated fairly. We have produced a leaflet entitled *Your right to complain* and a copy of this leaflet can be obtained from the registration manager at the addresses below.

The Registration Manager
Northern Ireland Social Care Council
7th Floor Millennium House
19-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ
Email: registration@nisocialcarecouncil.org.uk

The steps in completing your application

- Read the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers
- Fill in sections 1-7 of the form (use CAPITAL LETTERS, write in black ink)
- Get your form verified and endorsed
- If you have a second social care employer or if you are on secondment, you must get the form countersigned
- Fill in the health section
- If appropriate, complete the health report consent form(s)
- Read, sign and date the personal declaration
- Fill in the equal opportunities monitoring form (optional)

Finally, return the pre-addressed envelope with:

- Completed application form
- Signed photocopy of your birth certificate (NISCC do **not** need the original)
- Signed photocopy of your photographic identity (NISCC do **not** need the original)
- Your application fee (details are included on the application form)

Further Information

What happens next?

The NISCC will send you a letter of acknowledgement once they have received your application form.

When your application to register is successful, the NISCC will write to you. Please keep this pack so that you have all your registration information together.

If the NISCC have any concerns about your application, or if they decide to impose conditions on your registration, they will keep you informed in writing.

Storing your information

The NISCC will store all the information about your current registration in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. When you renew your registration, your details will be updated in accordance with any new or changed information.

The NISCC will keep any information and material used to make a decision about your registration. This includes the copy of your birth certificate and copy of your photographic identity.

Your contact details will be used to keep in touch with you.

Registering in other UK countries

There are four social care regulatory councils. Each one maintains a register in its own country:

- The Northern Ireland Social Care Council
- The General Social Care Council
- The Scottish Social Services Council
- The Care Council for Wales

You must register with the council of the country in which you work. By completing the current application pack, you are registering with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

If you are unsure which country to register with, call the NISCC registration team on 028 9041 7633 for advice.

Further information and advice

For further advice about registration, call 028 9041 7633 and ask to speak to a member of the registration team. Textphone is also available on 028 9023 9340. Alternatively, you can email registration@nisocialcarecouncil.org.uk, visit www.niscc.info or write to:

Registration Team
Northern Ireland Social Care Council
7th Floor Millennium House
19-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ

Appendix 1 - Qualifications for Social Workers

You must hold at least one of these qualifications to register on the part of the Social Care Register for social workers.

1. A course leading to a Certificate in Child Care or Home Office Letter of Recognition in Child Care (issued by the Home Office Central Training Council in Child Care from 1947 to 1971).
2. A course leading to a Certificate in Social Work (issued by the Council for Training in Social Work from 1962 to 1971).
3. A course leading to a Probation Certificate or satisfactory completion of courses by the Recruitment and Training Committee (issued or recognised as the case may be by the Recruitment and Training Committee of the Advisory Council for Probation and After Care until 1971).
4. A course leading to a Certificate or satisfactory completion of courses recognised by the Institute of Medical Social Workers (previously the Institute of Almoners).
5. A course recognised by the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers and subsequently recognised by CCETSW as an approved course for social workers.
6. A course leading to a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (issued by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work from 1971 to 2002).
7. A course leading to a Letter of Comparability to the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (issued until 1990).
8. A course leading to a Certificate in Social Service (issued by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work from 1975 to 1995).
9. A course leading to a Diploma in Social Work issued by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, a Care Council or the Council (issued from 1991).
10. A course in relevant social work for persons who wish to become social workers, and approved by a Care Council in accordance with section 63 of the Care Standards Act 2000, section 54 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 or section 10 of the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001.
11. Certificate or Diploma in Applied Social Studies:
 - (i) University of Aberdeen
 - (ii) Queen's University, Belfast
 - (iii) University of Bristol
 - (iv) University College, Cardiff
 - (v) University College, Dublin (National University of Ireland)
 - (vi) University of Dundee

- (vii) University of Glasgow
 - (viii) University of Hull
 - (ix) University of Keele
 - (x) University of Leicester
 - (xi) University of Liverpool
 - (xii) University of London, Bedford College
 - (xiii) University of London, Goldsmiths' College
 - (xiv) London School of Economics
 - (xv) University of Newcastle upon Tyne
 - (xvi) University of Nottingham
 - (xvii) University of Oxford
 - (xviii) University of Sheffield
 - (xix) University of Southampton
 - (xx) University of Surrey
 - (xxi) University College, Swansea
 - (xxii) New University, Ulster
12. Diploma in Social Work or Diploma in Social Work Studies:
- (i) Queen's University, Belfast
 - (ii) University of Birmingham
 - (iii) University of Edinburgh
 - (iv) Enfield College of Tech
 - (v) University of Kent, Canterbury
 - (vi) University of Leicester
 - (vii) London School of Economics (from 1970)
 - (viii) University of Sussex
13. BA (Hons) degree in Applied Social Studies or BA (Hons) degree in Applied Social Science:
- (i) University of Bradford
 - (ii) Enfield College of Tech – with appropriate social work options
 - (iii) Hatfield Polytechnic
 - (iv) University of Keele
 - (v) Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry
14. MA Degree in applied Social Studies:
- (i) University College, Bangor
 - (ii) University of Nottingham
15. Diploma for Advanced Studies in Social Administration & Social Work (with appropriate social work options)
- (i) University of Manchester
16. Diploma in Social & Administrative Studies (with appropriate social work options)
- (i) University of Oxford
17. Bachelor of Phil (with appropriate social work options)
- (i) University of Exeter
 - (ii) University of Liverpool

18. M Phil (with appropriate social work options)
 - (i) University of York
19. Master of Social Science (with appropriate social work options)
 - (i) University College, Dublin (National University of Ireland)
20. Certificate in Medical Social Work
 - (i) University of Edinburgh
 - (ii) Institute of Medical Social Workers
21. Certificate in Psychiatric Social Work
 - (i) University of Edinburgh
 - (ii) University of Leeds
 - (iii) University of Manchester
22. Certificate in Childcare
 - (i) University of Edinburgh
23. Diploma for Social Workers in Mental Health
 - (i) London School of Economics
24. MSc in Social Administration & Social Work Studies
 - (i) London School of Economics
25. Masters in Social Work
 - (i) University of Sussex
26. BA/BSc (Hons) Sociology (with appropriate social work options)
 - (i) Bath University of Technology

Appendix 2 - Regulatory bodies

- British Psychological Society (chartered membership only)
- General Chiropractic Council
- General Dental Council
- General Medical Council
- General Optical Council
- General Osteopathic Council
- General Teaching Council
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
- General Teaching Council for Scotland
- General Teaching Council for Wales
- Health Professions Council
- Nursing and Midwifery Council
- Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Appendix 3 - Criminal offences

The NISCC will consider the information you provide in the Criminal Offences section of the application form and, if necessary, may write to you for more information to help decide if you should be registered. The NISCC are likely to ask about:

- Details of your offence
- Evidence of rehabilitation
- Character references

In considering the application, the NISCC will take account of:

- Whether your offence is relevant to Social Care Work
- The seriousness of your offence
- The length of time since your offence
- Whether you have a pattern of offending behaviour
- Whether your situation has changed since the offence or offending behaviour
- The circumstances surrounding your offence
- Your explanation for the offence

The NISCC can take one of three decisions:

- Register you without conditions
- Register you with conditions
- Refuse to register you

The NISCC reserves the right to request a Criminal Record Check from Access (NI) if an employer has not carried out this check.

Appendix 4 - Health

The NISCC is required to ensure that all applicants for registration are physically and mentally fit to perform the whole or part of social care work. Employers are also required to ensure that people working in social care are fit to do so.

The NISCC is interested only in serious, long term conditions that could affect a person's ability to work as a social worker or social care worker. If you declare a health condition, the NISCC will assess its relevance to work in social care by seeking advice and an assessment from medical personnel, including an existing occupational health assessment or your own doctor(s).

Once this process is complete, the NISCC can take one of three decisions:

- Register you without conditions
- Register you with conditions, for example:
 - you work within reasonable bounds relating to your health, and
 - inform your employer, or any prospective employer, about your health condition if it is relevant or will be relevant to your work
- Refuse to register you



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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