

General Guidance Notes



for social workers trained and qualified outside the UK

This guidance is in two parts.

The first part gives you information about:

- the Social Care Register;
- the duty of the NISCC;
- the qualifications you need for registration;
- your suitability to work in social care;
- payment of your fee;
- the registration and renewal process; and
- maintaining your registration, including annual payments.

The second part tells you how to fill in your application form and the documentary evidence you need to provide. It includes notes on:

- documentary evidence;
- Section 1 – Your details;
- Section 2 – Your social work qualification;
- Section 3 – Current employment status;
- Section 4 – Employment history;
- Section 5 – Other regulatory bodies;
- Section 6 – Character and conduct;
- Section 7 – Endorsement;
- Section 8 – About your health;
- Section 9 – Payment; and
- Section 10 – Personal declaration.

Registration helpline

You can contact the registration helpline for help with any section of the application form.

Open Monday to Friday – 10.00 to 12.00 and 14.00 to 16.00

Telephone: **+44 (0)28 9041 7633**

Email: **registration@nisocialcarecouncil.org.uk**

Website: **www.niscc.info**

About the Social Care Register and the NISCC

The Social Care Register

The Social Care Register (SCR or register) was established by the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001. The aim of the register is to make sure that all social workers, social care workers and student social workers are suitable for work in social care.

A change in the law from 1 June 2005 means that you need to be registered on the SCR if you wish to work as, or describe yourself as, a social worker in Northern Ireland. This is called 'protection of title'. During 2008 and 2009 the UK government will be introducing new arrangements for people who want to come to the UK to work. For more information, visit the UK Border Agency's website at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk.

As part of our remit, the NISCC has developed a set of registration rules. You can find a copy of the rules on our website at www.niscc.info.

To be accepted onto the register as a social worker, you must provide evidence that you are suitable for registration by satisfying the NISCC that you:

- have a social work qualification in your country of training that is equivalent to the social work degree;
- are physically and mentally fit;
- are of good character and conduct;
- are competent; and
- agree to comply with our Code of Practice for Social Care Workers.

Which council should I register with?

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

The councils are:

- the Northern Ireland Social Care Council;
- the General Social Care Council;
- the Scottish Social Services Council; and
- the Care Council for Wales.

You should apply to the council in the country where you plan to work. If you plan to work in more than one country in the UK, you should apply to the council where you plan to do the most work. Once registered, you can apply for additional registration with one or more of the other councils or to transfer your registration.

If you are unsure which country to register with, contact the registration helpline **+44 (0)28 9041 7633**.

The public register

This is the information about registered social workers that is available to members of the public, including employers.

When you are registered, the public register will show the following information about you:

- your full name and title;
- your SCR number;
- the postal town relating to the address where you are employed or self-employed in the UK;
- any effective conditions we have imposed on your registration;
- particulars of any current Interim Suspension Order;
- particulars of any current Suspension Order; and
- any current admonishment we have imposed.

The NISCC may in exceptional circumstances withhold from the register the postal town of any registrant where it is satisfied that disclosure of that postal town could reasonably be expected to expose the person to danger.

You can check who is currently registered by accessing the public register at www.niscc.info or by telephoning +44 (0)28 9041 7633.

What is the duty of the NISCC?

It is the duty of the NISCC to promote:

- high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers; and
- high standards in their training.

Under the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001 the NISCC is required to be satisfied that an applicant is of good character and conduct, competent, appropriately qualified and physically and mentally fit to work in all or selected social care environments.

Please note that the requirement to tell us about your health is currently under review following the recommendations to the Government by the Disability Rights Commission (now the Equality and Human Rights Commission). Until that review is complete, you are still required to fill in this section of the form.

Code of Practice for Social Care Workers

The NISCC will register people who can satisfy us that they are suitable for work in social care. We will take into account standards set out in the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers when undertaking our assessment of your application to join the SCR. A booklet containing the codes of practice for both employers and social care workers is included in the application pack.

The Code of Practice for Social Care Workers is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional conduct and practice required of social care workers, social workers and student social workers as they go about their daily work.

When making its assessment, the NISCC must take into account conduct, both within and outside the workplace, and whether this is likely to constitute a risk to people using social care services. This is made clear in paragraph 5 of the code of practice – and particularly in paragraph 5.8, which requires social workers to uphold public trust and confidence in social care services by not behaving in any way, either in or outside work, that would call into question their suitability to work in social care services.

Once registered, social workers and student social workers are responsible for making sure that their conduct does not fall below the standards set out in the code of practice, and that no action or omission on their part harms the well-being of people using social care services.

The NISCC expects all social workers to meet the standards set out in the code of practice, and may take action if they fail to do so. We will take into account the standards set out in the code when considering issues of misconduct and decisions as to whether a registered social worker should remain on the register.

Qualifications needed for registration

To register, social workers who have trained outside the UK need to demonstrate that the qualification they hold is of a similar standard to the UK social work degree.

Your social work qualification must have prepared you for:

- professional, accountable and statutory responsibilities in social work;
- an understanding of and work experience with risk; and
- an understanding of civil liberty issues as they relate to social work.

You can apply for registration once you:

- have completed your course;
- have been awarded your social work qualification; and
- can provide documentary evidence from the university where you studied and qualified that confirms the date of award.

If you cannot provide this evidence, you should not apply for registration until you can. If you apply before you have this evidence, we cannot proceed with your application and it will be cancelled with no refund of your application fee. Once you have the evidence, you will then need to reapply with a new endorsed application form and another application fee.

Country assessment guidance

The NISCC works to the European Union (EU) Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications from inside and outside Europe. This introduces the general presumption that someone who is a fully qualified social worker in their home country is likely to possess the knowledge and expertise to practise the profession in the UK.

Accordingly the NISCC will work with regulatory authorities inside and outside Europe to find out the systems and standards in place for practising as a social worker. It is this contact that helps inform the country assessment guidance for each country.

The country assessment guidance sets out, by country of training:

- the social work qualification we expect you to hold;
- the sections of the application form you need to complete; and
- the documentary evidence you need to provide. You must read this guidance in order to fill in the application form.

For some qualifications we will ask you for a more detailed breakdown of the training which led to your qualification so that it can be assessed on an individual basis. In these cases, the country assessment guidance will specify the information that we require to make our assessment. A copy of the country assessment guidance is supplied with each application pack. It is also available to download from the NISCC website www.niscc.info

Your qualification will be assessed according to the following criteria

Social work course content

Your studies must have included:

- social work practice;
- social work theory;
- methods in social work delivery;
- legal and policy frameworks in social work;
- use of research evidence in social work;
- the ethics, codes and standards for professional practice; and
- the knowledge, skills and value base relevant to social work.

Supervised and assessed practice in a social work role

Your qualification must have included a period of supervised and assessed practice in a social work role as a compulsory element. The supervised and assessed practice must meet the UK standards for practice learning, as listed:

- organised through the teaching institution in partnership with community agencies in social work and subject to university quality control systems and credits;
- covered by learning agreements with objectives and clear arrangements for supervision, assessment and marking criteria;
- covered by guidance on the core values of social work, including ethical and safe practice for ensuring the safety and well-being of people who use services at all times;
- carried out in a social work field in a residential or community setting with one of these placements in the statutory service involving legal interventions;
- of sufficient duration to enable the learning outcomes to be clearly evidenced;

- organised to enable direct, assessed experience of inter-professional work;
- organised to enable direct, assessed practice with individuals, families, groups or communities in a social work role; and
- organised to include two different social work settings and work with two user groups.

The total **minimum** period of supervised and assessed practice placements in a social work role, completed during your training, should be 130 days (a day is at least six hours).

If you have completed less than 130 days during training and you have not made up this shortfall through relevant post-qualifying social work employment, you should not apply for registration until you have reached this minimum period of employment in a social work role. If you do apply for registration and have completed less than 130 days, your application is likely to be refused on training grounds and your fee will not be refunded.

The level, length and mode of study of your course

Your period of study must be **either**:

- three years or the equivalent academic full-time study at bachelor degree level; or
- two years or the equivalent academic full-time study at postgraduate degree level.

‘Degree level’ equates to the UK bachelor degree standard (either honours or ordinary) and ‘postgraduate degree level’ equates to the UK masters degree standard.

We will establish the academic level of your study with advice from the UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) – the national agency managed on behalf of the UK Government responsible for providing information and expert opinion on international qualifications.

If you apply for registration as a social worker and UK NARIC advises that the academic level of your training is lower than our requirements, your application for registration is likely to be refused on training grounds and your application fee will not be refunded.

If you wish to seek advice from UK NARIC about the academic level of your training before applying for registration, its contact details are as follows:

Telephone: **+44 (0)871 330 7033**

Fax: **+44 (0)871 330 7005**

Email: **info@naric.org.uk**

Website: **www.naric.org.uk**

Eligibility to be registered or licensed as a social worker

You should be eligible to be registered or licensed as a social worker in your country, state or province of training where such a system of registration or licensing exists. If you are registered or licensed, you must provide details in Section 5 of the application form.

Accreditation of your qualification

Your qualification must be accredited by a recognised social work accrediting body in your country of training, where such a body and accreditation exists. Where such a body does not exist in your country of training, the education institution that awarded your qualification must have been accredited to deliver training by the appropriate authorities.

Qualification assessment and decision

When we have all the information we require, we will assess your qualification. We will decide whether your training and employment meets the requirements of the UK social work degree, and will reach one of three decisions. The decisions and the next steps are shown in the following table.

If your application is refused for any reason, your application fee will not be refunded.

Decision	Next steps
Your professional social work qualification, any other relevant social work education and training, and your professional employment in social work meet the requirements of the UK social work degree.	Your application for registration will continue.
There is a shortfall in your professional social work qualification and other relevant social work education, training and professional employment that could be made up through additional training.	Your application for registration will be refused until you have successfully completed agreed training or you have successfully completed an aptitude test to meet the requirements of the UK social work degree. You will have the opportunity to provide additional evidence before we confirm our decision to refuse. We will write to you with more details.
Your professional social work qualification and any other relevant social work education, training and professional employment do not meet the requirements of the UK social work degree.	Your application for registration cannot proceed and your application for registration will be refused. You will have the opportunity to provide additional evidence before we confirm our decision to refuse. We will write to you with more details.

Additional training and aptitude test

Where a qualification in social work is significantly different to the UK social work degree, a period of assessed and supervised social work practice may be recommended. In these instances registration will be refused and the NISCC will specify what the gap identified in the qualification is and how it might be addressed through additional training.

Alternatively, if you think you have the required knowledge and skills, you can undertake an aptitude test. It will be a written and oral test in English.

Suitability to work in social care

We will undertake a suitability assessment if there is any evidence that calls into question your suitability to work in social care. The criteria used for our suitability assessment are based on our statutory duty to make sure that we register only those people who are of good character and conduct, and who are physically and mentally fit to perform social care work. We may ask the Registration Committee to consider the application. The Registration Committee has the power to refuse to register anyone who is not suitable or to impose conditions on registration.

You have an obligation to provide an accurate account in response to the questions in the application form. For more information read the **Suitability to work in social care – guidance notes** enclosed in the application pack.

Registration and renewal

Application fee

Your application fee is £155 and must be enclosed with your application form. If you do not enclose your fee with your application or you enclose the wrong amount, the form will be returned to you. Payment should be made to the **Northern Ireland Social Care Council**.

Registration period

The registration period is three years from the date you are registered.

Post registration training and learning

During the period of your registration we ask you to maintain your learning and training. You are required to complete a minimum of 90 hours or 15 days of post registration training and learning (PRTL) during the three year period. This is an average of five days or 30 hours per year.

You can find more details about PRTL on our website at www.niscc.info.

Conditions placed on your registration

If you have condition(s) placed on your registration, you may be required to provide evidence when you renew your application that you have met or taken steps to meet the condition(s) placed. You will know what evidence you need to provide when you are told what the condition(s) are.

Maintaining your registration

What should I do if any information I give in my application form changes?

It is very important that you let us know straight away about any changes to any of the information you give us. This will help us to make sure that we keep the register up to date and protect the users of social care services.

The changes could be:

- to your name, including by marriage or civil partnership;
- to your contact details (including email and telephone numbers) in the UK and in your home country (if applicable);
- because of registration with another regulatory body;
- to do with disciplinary or criminal proceedings taken against you; or
- to your employment, as a result of changing employer or taking up paid or voluntary work in social care, for example.

Please remember to make sure that we always have up-to-date contact details for you.

Annual payment

You are required to pay an annual fee of £30 a year (tax-deductible in the UK) for each year, or part thereof, that you remain on the register. We will write to you each year to request your annual payment.

If you fail to pay your annual fee, you will be required to pay any outstanding fees before your registration is renewed. For this reason you must keep us informed of any changes to your contact details.

If you decide that you no longer wish to maintain your registration or renew your registration in the UK, you must tell us as soon as possible so that we can remove you from the register.

Removal from the register

If you decide that you no longer wish to be on the register, you must tell us in writing; by post, email or fax. The written communication must clearly state that you wish to be removed from the register and that you no longer intend to practise as a social worker in the UK. We will write to you when you are removed from the register.

How and where do I send information?

This can be done by:

- letter;
- email to registration@nisocialcarecouncil.org.uk;
- fax to +44 (0)28 9041 7601; or
- telephone on +44 (0)28 9041 7633.

All correspondence by post should be sent to:

Registration Team

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

7th Floor, Millennium House

19-25 Great Victoria Street

Belfast

BT2 7AQ


How to fill in your application form

You must complete all sections of the form.

Check the guidance provided to make sure you are answering all the questions you need to complete in each section.

Documentary evidence

You are asked to provide a number of documents to support your application.

Whenever you see this image  on the application form you will need to enclose the documentary evidence asked for in the related guidance. Failure to enclose evidence will delay your application.

Translations

A translation is required for all documents that are in a **non-Latin alphabet** (such as Cyrillic, Greek, Arabic or Chinese).

In addition, in Part B of Section 2 a translation is required for all documents that are not written in English.

If you translate the documents yourself, on the translated copy we ask you to write:

- your signature;
- the date.

We reserve the right to ask you to provide an independent translation at your own cost.

If you do not wish to translate your own documents, you can get a translator to do it at your own cost. The translator must write on each copy:

- their name;
- their signature; and
- the date.

Copies of the original and translated document must be signed and dated by your endorser to confirm they have checked the originals. We call this 'verifying' your evidence. For more information see the notes relating to Section 7 on pages 19 to 23.

Section 1: Your details

Social Care Register number (SCR or register)

When you first apply to join the register in whatever capacity, to any one of the four social care councils, you are given a number that is unique to you. Once you are registered, this number is made available to the public. Irrespective of which part of the register you are on or which council you are registered with, the number remains unchanged. If you leave the register for whatever reason and then apply again, you will keep the same SCR number that you were given when you first applied. This is why we need to know your SCR number, if you have one.

Once you have been given your SCR number, you should quote it on all correspondence with the NISCC.

Identification

You are required to provide verified copies of two identification documents (ID). One must be the photographic identity page of your current passport.

The second ID should be one of the following:

- your birth certificate;
- a copy of the entry of your birth in a register;
- your adoption certificate;
- your marriage or civil partnership certificate;
- your European National identity card;
- your Certificate of British nationality;
- your naturalisation certificate;
- your armed forces identity card;
- your secondary school certificate (India); or
- your UK work permit or visa, if issued in the last 12 months.

Copies of the original and translated documents must be verified by your endorser. Documents not verified will be returned to you, and this will delay the assessment process. For more information see the notes relating to Section 7 on pages 19 to 23.

What should I do if my name has changed and does not match my birth certificate or qualification documents?

We will need to see verified copies of the documents that show the date of and reason for your name change. For married or divorced women, we will need to see marriage or divorce certificates. For civil partners, we will need to see either your civil partnership certificate or your dissolution certificate.

For all other circumstances, we will need to see a verified copy of a legal document in English showing the reason for the change of name.

Nationality

We need to know your nationality. If you have more than one nationality, we need to know about each one.

Contact details

You must tell us how we can contact you quickly about your application and registration. We ask for both addresses because, from experience, we know that some applicants have contact points both inside and outside the UK, and move between their home country and the UK. This sometimes makes it difficult for the NISCC to contact applicants quickly, leading to delays in assessing the application.

We ask you to tell us the address to which we should send confirmation of your registration.

If we need to contact you about your application, we will normally email you at the address that you have provided. If we do not get a response to our email, we may try to contact you by post or telephone.

You must keep us informed of any changes to your contact details during the registration process. Failure to do so may lead to your application being delayed or cancelled owing to lack of contact.

Future communication

On request, we can provide forms and future correspondence in alternative formats such as large print. Please tell us in this section of any communications requirements and we will try to meet your needs. We will contact you to discuss what we can provide.

All correspondence from the NISCC will be in English.

Section 2: Your social work qualification

You will need the **Country assessment guidance** for the country you trained and qualified in before you can fill out this section of your application form.

This guidance will be supplied with your registration application pack. If you have not received the guidance for your country of training with your application pack, you can download it from the NISCC website at www.niscc.info or contact the registration helpline. The country assessment guidance will be reviewed and updated regularly on the website. If you have delayed completing your application form, we suggest you check the website for any changes to your country of training guidance before you complete your form.

If there is no guidance for your country of training on the website, you will need to follow the guidance in the document **Country assessment guidance – general**, this will be supplied with your application pack and can also be found on the website or obtained by contacting the registration helpline.

If you need to tell us about more than one social work qualification, you will need to complete Section 2 for each qualification. You can do this by photocopying the pages of the form or by downloading the pages from the website.

Parts A and B

There are two parts to Section 2 – Part A and Part B.

Part A asks you general questions about your social work qualification. **Part B** asks for more detailed information about your qualification. Documentary evidence is required to support the information you give us in Parts A and B. For further information see ‘Documentary evidence’ on page 15 and page 19.

Part A

You must complete:

- questions 1 to 6; and
- questions 7, 8 and 9 – only if your country assessment guidance tells you to.

Question 7 – your qualification must have included a period of supervised and assessed practice in a social work role as a compulsory element, and the supervised and assessed practice must meet the UK standards for practice learning. For more information about the UK standard for supervised and assessed practice placement see pages 5 and 6 of these notes.

Question 8 – you must record the number of supervised and assessed practice placements you undertook as part of your training and the total number of days (a day is at least six hours) you completed.

Question 9 – you must complete this question if you have completed less than 130 days of supervised and assessed practice placement during training. The shortfall in practice placements may be made up through relevant post-qualifying employment in social work.

You are asked to name all the employers where you have had post-qualifying employment in social work. For each employer you list, you must give us full details of your role and responsibilities with that employer in Sections 3 and 4 of the application form. **For more information see the notes relating to Sections 3 and 4 on pages 17 and 18.**

Part B

You are only required to complete Part B if your country assessment guidance tells you to.

If there is no country assessment guidance for your country of training, you must follow the guidance in **Country assessment guidance – general** (see page 14) and complete all of the questions in Parts A and B.

It is very important that you tell us as much as possible about your social work employment from the time that you qualified up until the date of your application in Sections 3 and 4.

Documentary evidence

All copies of documents you enclose with your application must be checked against the original and signed and dated by your endorser. This is referred to as ‘verifying your evidence’. For more information about verifying documents and the endorsement process see the notes relating to Section 7 on pages 19 to 23.

Translations

The translated documents you need to send in with your form are:

If you are completing Part A only

- a translation of all documents in a non-Latin alphabet (such as Cyrillic, Greek, Arabic or Chinese); or

If you are completing Parts A and B

- a translation of all documents that are not written in English.

You can translate the required documents into English yourself, as detailed on page 11. Copies of the original and translated documents must be checked and verified by your endorser. For more information about verifying documents and the endorsement process see the notes relating to Section 7 on pages 19 to 23.

We reserve the right to ask you to provide an independent translation, at your own cost, if you have translated the documents yourself.

Qualification documents

The documents you need to send in with your form are:

If you are completing Part A only

If you are required to complete part A only, you **must** provide:

- a verified copy of your qualification certificate; or
- a verified copy of the course transcript

The document must state **in the original language**:

- the title of your qualification;
- the name of the training establishment where you studied;
- the name of the awarding body (if different from the training establishment where you studied); and
- the date that the qualification was awarded.

If you are completing Parts A and B

If you are required to complete Parts A and B, you **must** provide:

- a verified copy of your qualification certificate; **and**, as evidence of course content, **either**
- a verified copy of your course transcript; or
- a verified copy of your Diploma Supplement.

The qualification certificate must state **in the original language**:

- the title of your qualification;
- the name of the training establishment where you studied;
- the name of the awarding body (if different from the training establishment where you studied); and
- the date that the qualification was awarded.

If you supply your course transcript, this must list:

- all the courses you studied during your training;
- all your supervised and assessed practice placements including any periods of block placements; and
- all the marks, grades or credits you were awarded.

The Diploma Supplement has been available since 2005 and provides a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of your studies and provides all of the details listed above.

Section 3: Current employment status

You must tell us:

- your current employment status, by ticking the description that best describes your current status; and
- the sector that best describes where you are employed for the majority of your time.

Sectors

The definitions of the sectors are:

- **public sector** – organisations that are wholly or partly funded and regulated by local or national government;
- **private sector** – organisations that are not owned, controlled or funded by government; and
- **voluntary sector** – organisations that are usually maintained at least in part by private or charitable donations rather than by government or other official support.

Post-qualifying social work experience

The information you provide in this section and Section 4 will be considered if you have completed less than 130 days of supervised and assessed practice placements in a social work role during your training. The shortfall may be made up through relevant post-qualifying employment in social work. It is very important that you tell us about the type of work you were doing when you were employed as a social worker from the time that you qualified up until the date of your application.

Section 4: Employment history

Please see the notes relating to Sections 3 and 4 before you complete this part of your form. You need to give details of:

- your employment since leaving school, including work **inside and outside** social care and part-time work;
- unpaid work;
- any periods of study;
- any time you have spent on sabbatical; and
- any period not accounted for above.

Provide a brief description of your duties and other activities for each employer and activity. Clearly identify periods of employment when you were employed as a social worker and describe your key duties. This information will be considered if you have completed less than 130 days of supervised practice placements during your training.

Employment agencies

If you have spent time working for an employment agency, give the name and address of the agency and indicate clearly that it is an agency. You do not need to give us details of all the places where you worked for the agency.

Section 5: Other regulatory bodies

In this section of the form we need to know if you are registered with any other regulatory or licensing bodies, in or outside the UK.

Regulatory bodies in the UK

We need to know if you are registered with any of the following UK regulatory bodies. These are:

- the British Psychological Society;
- the General Dental Council;
- the General Medical Council;
- the General Teaching Council for England;
- the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland;
- the General Teaching Council for Scotland;
- the General Teaching Council for Wales;
- the Health Professions Council; and
- the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

If you are registered with any of these regulatory bodies, we will co-operate with them to investigate any complaints or issues of misconduct in connection with the field of social work.

Regulatory, licensing or competent bodies outside the UK

You must provide details of any regulatory, licensing or competent bodies that you are registered with outside the UK. These are bodies that authorise you to practise as a social worker. They may also supervise your status as a social worker. We will contact the body if we require any additional information about your qualification, legal establishment or professional conduct.

You must enclose a verified copy of your original letter, certificate or licence with your application.

A translation is required if this document is in a **non-Latin alphabet** (such as Cyrillic, Greek, Arabic or Chinese). We reserve the right to ask you to provide an independent translation, at your own cost, if you have translated the document yourself.

What is a competent authority?

Under European Union (EU) Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, regulatory and licensing bodies in the European Economic Area (EEA), the European Union and Switzerland (Member States) are identified as competent authorities.

For example, the NISCC is one of four competent authorities in the UK. We authorise the content of education and training and set professional standards for social workers in the UK. We will also consider issues of professional misconduct and decide whether someone can continue to use the professional title of 'social worker'.

If you want to contact your home member state for more information about competent authorities, regulated and unregulated professions, please visit the Europa website at www.europa.eu.

Section 6: Character and conduct

You must complete all of the questions in Parts A, B and C of Section 6. For more information about how to fill in Section 6 read the separate **Suitability to work in social care – guidance notes** enclosed in the application pack. The notes can also be downloaded from the NISCC website at www.niscc.info.

Section 7: Endorsement

We ask you to get independent endorsement of your application so that we can:

- be sure of your identity and the authenticity of your identification documents;
- be sure of the authenticity of your qualification document;
- be sure that the information you have provided about your character and conduct is correct; and
- receive assurance from your social care employer or an equivalent source that there is no reason why you should not be considered suitable for registration on the Social Work part of the register.

Endorser's duties

Your endorser must:

- Check all of the documentary evidence that we have asked you to provide in the original language and any translations into English you have made. The endorser will sign and date a copy of each document you provide. We call this 'verifying' your documents.
- Check the answers you have given in Section 6 and confirm that to the best of their knowledge they are a true record.
- Answer the questions in Section 7 and sign and date the declaration on page 26 of the form.

There is a separate guidance document called **Guidance notes for endorsing applications** which you should pass to endorsing application with your application form and supporting documents.

Translations

My endorser does not read or understand the original language of my document(s)

If your endorser is unable to check your translation of your original documents into English, they should note this fact on the photocopy of the translation. They are still required to verify that the photocopy is a true copy of the original document. In such cases we may ask you to obtain a translation at your own cost.

What if my endorser does not speak English?

Unless otherwise stated in the form, all questions must be answered in English. Your endorser can use the services of an independent translator at your cost.

The independent translator can translate the guidance notes, the content of the form and supporting documents that you have provided in English. They can also record your endorser's answers to the questions on the form in English.

In Section 7 of the application form we ask the translator to confirm that it is the true record of your endorser's comments. We ask them to tell us their name and contact details in case we need to contact them about the service they provided.

Can I use the same translator to translate my own documents?

You can use the same translator to translate your documents at your cost if you do not want to do it yourself. If the translator translates your documents for you, they must write on each copy:

- their name;
- their signature; and
- the date.

Can the NISCC recommend a translator?

We are unable to recommend a translator. For endorsement it does not have to be an official translator. However, you may wish to contact your embassy (if you are in the UK) or the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate (if you are abroad).

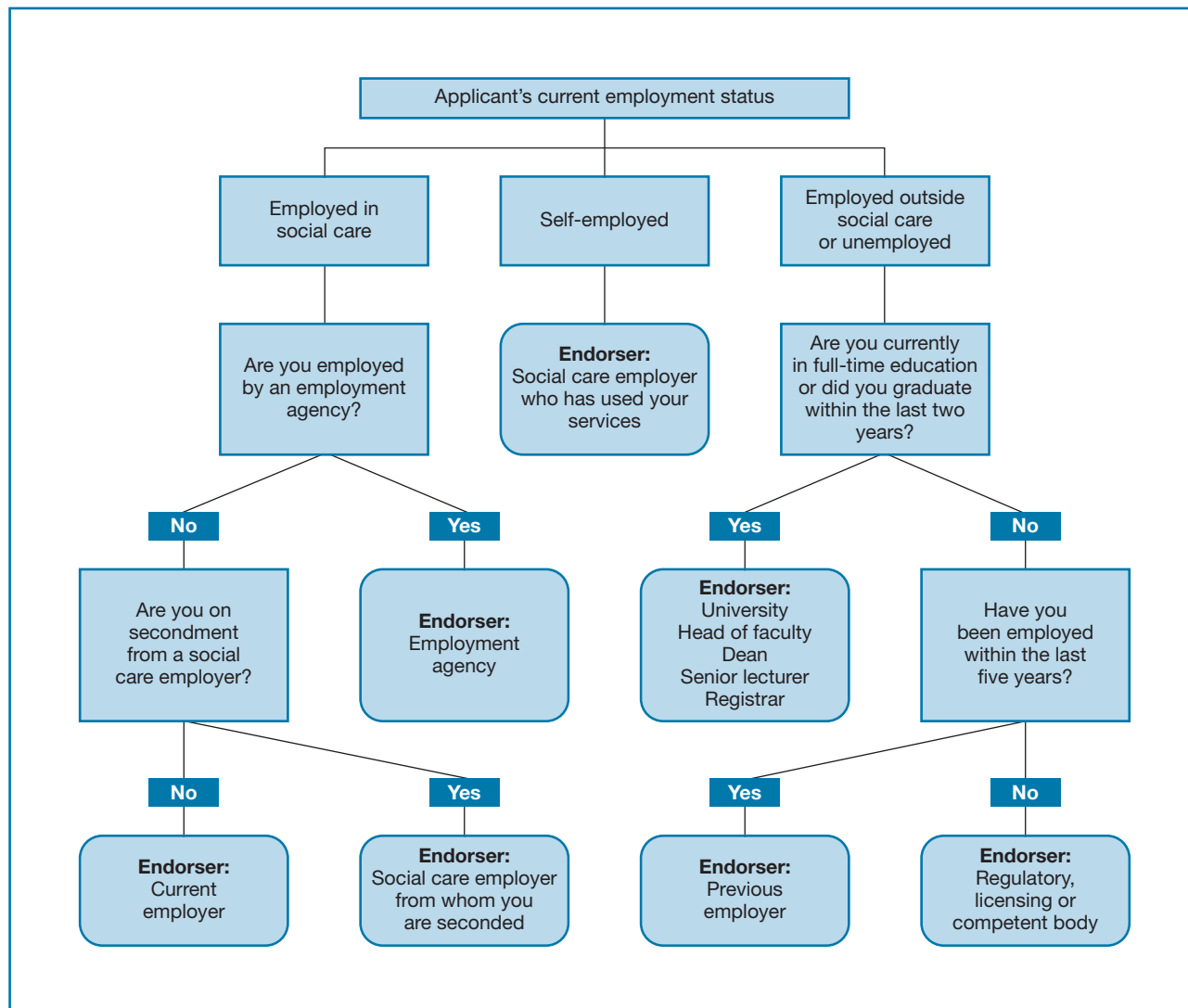
Who cannot endorse my application?

Your endorser must **not** be:

- related to you by birth, marriage or civil partnership;
- conducting a personal relationship or living with you in any capacity; or
- a co-director of a company with you.

Who can endorse my application?

Your choice of endorser normally depends on your current employment status. Find your status on the flowchart on the next page and it will tell you who can endorse your application.



Senior representative

A senior representative is someone who has knowledge and evidence of your character and professional conduct and is able to verify your responses to the questions in Section 6 of the application form. They can be:

- your line manager;
- someone more senior to you in the organisation;
- a representative within your human resources department;
- a senior manager who has commissioned your services;
- a responsible officer in your employment agency;
- a responsible person in your social care voluntary group; or
- a representative of a competent authority or regulatory body.

If you have more than one employer

If you have more than one employer, you should ask the employer with whom you spend the majority of your working time. If you work the same number of hours with each employer, you should ask the employer with whom you have worked the longest.

Regulatory, licensing or competent body

If you are unemployed, you can ask one of these bodies to endorse your application if they supervise your professional conduct. For more information about these bodies see the notes relating to Section 5 on pages 18 and 19.

What should I do if the law in my country only allows a state department to confirm my identity?

You will need to comply with the law of your country. Please ask the representative of the state department to make a note of this requirement in Section 7 on the form, in the space provided under the heading 'Are you the right person to endorse the application?'

What state department can endorse my application?

This will depend on the law within your own country. It must be able to give us some assurance about your professional conduct inside and outside work and be able to verify your identity and qualification documentation.

What if I cannot find a suitable endorser?

If you cannot find a suitable endorser, contact the registration helpline and we will try to help you identify an appropriate endorser.

Verifying documents

You must photocopy all the documents that need to be verified and pass them with the originals to your endorser. Your endorser must:

- check the copies against the originals;
- check any translations you have made against the documents in the original language; and
- write their signature and the date on the photocopy of each document.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the endorser has checked and verified all of the documents in the way described. Documents that have not been verified as shown will be returned to you to be verified. This will delay the registration process.

Contacting your endorser

We may contact your endorser to:

- check the information that has been provided; and
- confirm that the named person did countersign your application form and verify the documents.

We may also contact the organisation your endorser represents to check:

- that the endorser is employed by the organisation;
- their position in the organisation is as stated in Section 7 of the form; and
- that they do have knowledge of your character and professional conduct.

Section 8: About your health

You must answer the question about your health. Failure to do so will result in the form being returned to you for completion. For more information about how to fill in Section 8 read the separate **Suitability to work in social care – guidance notes**, enclosed in the application pack. The notes can also be downloaded from the NISCC website at www.niscc.info.

Please note that the requirement to tell us about your health is currently under review following the recommendations to the Government by the Disability Rights Commission (now the Equality and Human Rights Commission). Until that review is complete, you are still required to fill in this section of the form.

Section 9: Payment

Application fee

Your application fee is £155 and must be enclosed with your application form. If you do not enclose your fee with your application or you enclose the wrong amount, the form will be returned to you. Payment should be made to the **Northern Ireland Social Care Council**.

Please note that:

- if your application is refused for any reason, the £155 initial fee is not refundable;
- if you do not complete the application process for any reason, the £155 fee is not refundable;
- if you apply before you have qualified or cannot provide written confirmation of your award, the £155 fee is not refundable;
- if we are unable to complete the assessment of your qualification because of lack of supporting evidence, the £155 fee is not refundable; and
- if you are removed from the register for any reason, any fees collected will not be refunded.

Letter of verification

Letters of verification were issued by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work or the GSCC between 1990 and 30 April 2004. If you were issued with a letter of verification during this time, you are only required to pay an application fee of £30.

If you have a letter of verification, you must provide the reference number from the letter in Section 9 or enclose a copy of the letter with your form. If we find through our checks that you do not hold a letter of verification, you will be required to pay the additional fee of £125 before we can proceed with your application.

Payment methods

You can pay by personal cheque or bank draft. Payment by direct debit is not yet possible, but should be set up in 2009.

Personal cheque

Your personal cheque must be in sterling. It must be drawn on the UK banking system, have the address of a bank branch in the UK on it and be made payable to the '**Northern Ireland Social Care Council**'. Cheques drawn on overseas bank accounts are not accepted, because of exchange rate fluctuations and clearance charges.

Bank draft

Your draft must be in sterling and drawn on a UK bank account. Bank drafts drawn on overseas bank accounts are not accepted, because of exchange rate fluctuations and clearance charges. Your own bank should be able to help you to arrange a bank draft in sterling. The draft must be made payable to the '**Northern Ireland Social Care Council**'.

If paying by bank draft or cheque, you must enclose the bank draft or cheque with your application form.

Section 10: Personal declaration

The NISCC's data protection statement is as follows.

Data protection

The NISCC is registered with the Information Commissioner, and information supplied by you in connection with this application will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Reasons for obtaining and processing information

We may use the information which you give us to:

- keep in contact with you;
- process your application;
- maintain accurate information including information contained in the Social Care Register;
- assist in any subsequent investigation of your conduct;
- protect the public;
- monitor trends in the social care workforce; and
- provide reports on the Social Care Register.

Equal opportunities monitoring

Please note that any information provided by you on an equal opportunities monitoring form will only be used for the purposes of monitoring trends and providing reports on the Social Care Register. Reports will not identify any individuals.

Making information public

The NISCC will make public the register and other information in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001, Rules made by the Council under that Act from time to time and any other legislation requiring publication.

Sharing information which is not publicly available

The NISCC will share information where required to do so by legislation or by the courts.

If we are satisfied that this is in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and that the other organisation is under a duty to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (or with comparable legislation, if the organisation is situated outside the UK), the NISCC may also share information, including:

- your previous names, if any;
- your date of birth;
- your qualifications;
- your work or course address (except where disclosure would reasonably be expected to expose you to danger) and any work history; and
- any action taken in relation to previous conduct which you have declared in this form,

with

- educational establishments;
- employers or employment agencies;
- the Care Council for Wales;
- the General Social Care Council;
- the Scottish Social Services Council;
- other regulatory bodies;
- the police;
- the courts;
- government departments or agencies acting their behalf; and
- similar organisations within or outside the UK.

Consent

By signing and sending us this form, you consent to the processing of your personal information in the ways described above.

Feedback

We always welcome feedback about registration or any other aspect of our work. You can contact us at:

Registration Manager

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

7th Floor, Millennium House

19-25 Great Victoria Street

Belfast

BT2 7AQ

Telephone: **+44 (0)28 9041 7600**

Email: **registration@nisocialcarecouncil.org.uk**

Your right to make a complaint

We realise that, from time to time, there may be problems or issues with registration.

You have a right to complain if you believe that we have not dealt with your application fairly. We have produced a leaflet about your right to complain and how to make a complaint. You can get a copy of the leaflet from:

Complaints and Representations Team

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

7th Floor, Millennium House

19-25 Great Victoria Street

Belfast

BT2 7AQ

Telephone: **+44 (0)28 9041 7600**

Email: **info@nisocialcarecouncil.org.uk**