



**How to make a
Complaint about a
Registered Social
Care Worker**

to the
Northern Ireland
Social Care Council

Introduction

This leaflet will give you advice if you are concerned about how you or someone close to you has been treated by a social care worker.

It is our job to help make sure that social care workers behave well towards you. If they do not we may be able to find out what happened and do something about it.

Many complaints can be sorted out without involving the NISCC, but if the complaint is so serious that it means the social care worker may not be suitable to work with people, we need to know about it.

Anyone can make a complaint to the NISCC. Before making a complaint please read this leaflet carefully - it will help you to work out what to do next. If you decide to make a complaint to the NISCC please use the Complaints Form enclosed at the back of this booklet.

What is the NISCC

NISCC is the 'Northern Ireland Social Care Council'. It was set up in 2001 to:

- Set the standards that social care workers have to meet.
- Keep a register of social care workers in Northern Ireland which eventually will include:
 - All qualified social workers
 - All paid support workers
 - All residential and day-care workers
- Help to make sure that registered social care workers know how to work with you properly and are prevented from working in social care jobs if they cannot work to the standards we expect.

As there are thousands of social care workers, the NISCC will put them on the Register in stages. The first stage started on 1st April 2003 and includes:

- Qualified social workers
- Social work students
- Heads of residential homes and day care centres
- Team leaders and all care staff working in residential childcare

What can I expect from a social care worker?

All social care workers who are registered with the NISCC have agreed to work to standards that are described in the NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers. Under this code you can expect that registered social care workers will:

- Protect service users' rights and make sure they are listened to.
- Work to gain and keep the trust of service users and carers.
- Help service users and carers to protect themselves and others.
- Help service users to be independent and to take risks in a careful way.
- Answer to service users and also to managers for what they do; and
- Make sure their skills are kept up-to-date.

On the whole, social care workers do a good job and their support is greatly appreciated by the people that they work with. Unfortunately though, in a small number of cases, social care workers may not provide the standard of practice that we expect. If this happens you have a right to complain and to have action taken in response to your complaint.

What should I do if I have concerns?

If you have concerns about the care you, or someone else, have received from a social care worker there are a number of options open to you depending on the nature of your concerns.

- You might want to speak directly to the worker to let them know your concerns and what you would like to see changed. Many worries about social care workers can be resolved without involving NISCC.
- If you are worried about talking to the worker, or have spoken with the worker and are still unhappy with their work, you should talk to their manager. You should also contact the manager if you are unhappy with the type of service you are getting, or if you would like additional support from the organisation.
- All social care organisations including voluntary organisations, charities and social businesses, should have written guidelines on making complaints. You should ask for the organisation's complaints leaflet and follow the advice in that.
- If your complaint is about someone employed in a Health and Social Services Trust, your local Health and Social Services Council will be able to offer you support in making a complaint. Their contact details are at the back of this leaflet.

What sort of things should NISCC be told about?

You should tell NISCC about any behaviour by a social care worker that seriously worries you and that doesn't meet the standards that we expect as described earlier. Examples of the types of things you should report to NISCC are:

- Stealing money or property from a service user
- Assaulting a service user or carer
- Rough physical or verbal contact
- Intimidating a service user or carer
- Making sexual advances to a service user or carer
- Failing to provide proper care

If you are not sure about whether to complain do not worry - get in touch with us and talk it over with one of our staff.

How do I make a complaint to NISCC?

The following written information will normally be needed for us to investigate your complaint:

- Your name and address
- The social care worker's name and the address where he or she works
- An explanation of what happened to concern you, and, where possible, the dates
- Names and addresses of anyone else who will support your complaint
- Details of any other complaints you have made about this concern

You should use the form at the back of this leaflet to provide this information. If you need help to fill in the form please contact us and we will try to help you, or put you in touch with someone who can.

We can only take action if:

- The worker is on our Register.
- The complaint is about specific behaviour by the worker that does not meet our standards.
- The behaviour is serious enough to affect their registration.
- We get evidence to support the complaint.
- We have received a completed and signed Complaints Form, which will help us to record the complaint and take action quickly.

What happens next?

- We will do what we can to find out what happened. To do this we will need to share the information with others.
- We will look at all complaints very carefully to make sure that you get the appropriate advice.
- If we cannot take any action we will write to you explaining our decision.
- If the issue is serious, there is evidence to back up your complaint and NISCC has determined that it should take action; NISCC must inform the Registrant. The social care worker and the person making the complaint may have to appear before NISCC at a public hearing. If we decide to take this action we will contact you and tell you what will happen next.

What can the NISCC do?

We can make sure that social care workers are registered to do the jobs they are able to do to the required standard. In very serious circumstances we can remove someone from the Register, which would prevent them working as a social care worker anywhere in the UK.

What NISCC cannot do

- Deal with complaints about anyone who is not on our Register.
- Pay you compensation.
- Fine a social care worker.
- Tell a social care worker to apologise to you.
- Order a social care worker to provide you with the services you want.

Our commitment to you

In order to deal effectively with complaints about registered social care workers NISCC will:

- Communicate with you using your preferred method, as set out on the back of this booklet.
- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days.
- Be in touch with you to let you know what is happening to your complaint - within 28 days of acknowledging receipt of your complaint form.

Useful Contact Details

Eastern HSS Council 1st Floor
McKelvey House
25-27 Wellington Place
Belfast. BT1 6GQ
Tel: 028 9032 1230
Fax: 028 9032 1750
Freephone
0800 328 5420

Western HSS Council Hilltop
Tyrone and
Fermanagh Hospital
Omagh. BT79 0NS
Tel: 028 8225 2555
Fax: 028 8225 2544

Northern HSS Council 8 Broadway Ave.
Ballymena
BT43 7AA
Tel: 028 2565 5777
Fax: 028 2565 5112

Southern HSS Council Quaker Buildings
High Street
Lurgan. BT66 8BB
Tel: 028 3834 9900
Fax: 028 3834 9858

Citizen Advice Bureau Regional Office
11 Upper Crescent
Belfast. BT7 1NT
Tel: 028 9023 1120
Fax: 028 9023 6522

Association of Independent Advice Centres (AIAC)
303 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 3GG
Tel: 028 9064 5919
Fax: 028 9049 2313

If you would like to find out more about our work or to check things out before making a complaint please contact us - remember we are here to help you.

Registration Manager
Northern Ireland Social Care Council
(7th Floor)
Millennium House
19-25 Great Victoria Street
BELFAST
BT2 7AQ

Tel: 028 9041 7633
Fax: 028 9041 7601
Textphone: 028 9023 9340
E-mail: **registration@niscc.n-i.nhs.uk**

This leaflet is available on disk, in large print and can be made available, on request, in Braille, in minority languages (for those who are not fluent in English) or on audiocassette by contacting the NISCC (details above).

It is also available on the NISCC website at **www.niscc.info**

Complaint Form

- for a complaint against a social care worker registered with NISCC

Fill in, tear off and return.

Completing this form will give us the information we need to deal with your complaint. If you need help to complete the form please contact us by telephone on (028) 9041 7633 and we will try to help you or put you in touch with someone who can. If you do not know the answer to any question just write 'don't know'.

1. Your Details

Title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc)

First Name

Surname

Address

.....

.....

Town/city

Post Code

Phone No. (Home)

Phone No. (Mobile)

E mail address

We may need to contact you to check details of your complaint. Please tick the way you would like us to do that.

- Home phone Email Mobile phone
 Other (please detail below)

.....

Please tick one box to tell us how you are involved in this complaint.

- I am the service user
 I am a relative/friend/carer of the service user
 I am a member of the public
 I am another professional working with the service user, (if so, please specify)

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- I am the employer of the social care worker
 Other (please specify)

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Do you need any special arrangements when we contact you?

- Yes No

If yes, please specify what arrangements are needed (e.g. Interpreter, signer)?

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2. Details of the Social Care Worker

To help us identify the social care worker(s) involved as quickly as possible, please give us their name(s), job title and employer(s). If there are more than two, please give additional information on a separate sheet.

First social care worker

Title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc)

First Name

Surname

Job Title

.....

Name of his/her employer

.....

Second social care worker (if applicable)

Title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc)

First Name

Surname

Job Title

.....

Name of his/her employer

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