**Professional Capabilities Framework and social work with dementia**

**This document outlines how the social work practice with people living with dementia resources can be used to evidence learning and development to satisfy the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).**

We have structured the document using domains of the PCF. Each domain includes:

* Statement from the PCF (<https://www.basw.co.uk/pcf>)
* Statement developed by Research in Practice for Adults in relation to practice with people living with dementia and their carers
* Capabilities that relate to this practice from that domain (social worker level)
* Knowledge and skills that relate to practice in this domain from KSS statement
* Example of how to use the resource to strengthen practice in this domain

**Professionalism**

Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession, a title protected in UK law. Social workers demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for their conduct, practice and learning, with support through supervision. As representatives of the social work profession they safeguard its reputation and are accountable to the professional regulator.

Social work with dementia statement

Professionalism: Social workers are ready to apply their knowledge, skills and values to recognise and support people with dementia.

Capabilities

* Maintain professionalism in the face of more challenging circumstances
* Maintain awareness of own professional limitations and knowledge gaps. Establish a network of internal and external colleagues from whom to seek advice and expertise
* Identify and act on learning needs for CPD, including through supervision.

Examples

You can use the [Professional Development](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/professional-development/) section to consider your own practice, how you will meet your learning needs, and to identify how you will use learning in practice.

**Values and Ethics**

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making, including through partnership with people who use their services. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of their profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

Social work with dementia statement

Values and Ethics: Social workers recognise the impact of people’s values and beliefs, including their own and those of people with dementia.

Capabilities

* Demonstrate confident application of ethical reasoning to professional practice, rights and entitlements, questioning and challenging others using a legal and human rights framework
* Critically reflect on and manage the influence and impact of own and others values on professional practice
* Recognise and manage conflicting values and ethical dilemmas, in practice, using supervision and team discussion, questioning and challenging others, including those from other professions
* Ensure practice is underpinned by policy, procedures and code of conduct to promote individuals rights to determine their own solutions, promoting problem-solving skills, whilst recognising how and when self-determination may be constrained (by the law)

Example

You can use the [case studies](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/case-studies/) to consider ethical dilemmas that arise in practice and how you will respond to these.

## Diversity

Social workers understand that diversity characterises and shapes human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Diversity is multi-dimensional and includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender and transgender, faith and belief. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim, and are able to challenge appropriately.

Social work with dementia statement

Diversity: Social workers value people as individuals, and ensure their wishes and needs are respected.

Capabilities

* Recognise the complexity of identity and diversity of experience, and apply this to practice
* Recognise discriminatory practices and develop a range of approaches to appropriately challenge service users, colleagues and senior staff
* Critically reflect on and manage the power of your role in your relationship with others.

Example

You can use the Practice Guidance on [Starting with the Person](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/practice-guidance/start-with-the-person/) to consider the importance of person-centred practice.

**Rights and Justice**

Social workers recognise the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. They ensure these principles underpin their practice. Social workers understand the importance of using and contributing to case law and applying these rights in their own practice. They understand the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty.

Social work with dementia statement

Rights and Justice: Social workers ensure that people with dementia, especially from marginalised or disadvantaged groups, can empower themselves and be enabled to get the support they need.

Capabilities

* Routinely integrate the principles of and entitlements to social justice, social inclusion and equality, and with support, consider how and when challenge may be needed
* Routinely apply the law to protect and advance people's rights and entitlements, identifying and highlighting situations where interpretations of the law are neither proportionate nor fair to promote autonomy and self-determination
* Apply the principles and entitlements of human and civil rights to analyse, evaluate and challenge interventions that are unlawful and/or disproportionate
* Enable and support people to consider and pursue a range of options that may enhance economic status (through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits)
* Where appropriate, set up and/or enable access to effective independent advocacy.

Example

You can use the Practice Guidance section on [Upholding People’s Rights](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/practice-guidance/uphold-peoples-rights/) to consider how to take a rights-based approach.

## Knowledge

Social workers understand psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and physical influences on people; human development throughout the life span and the legal framework for practice. They apply this knowledge in their work with individuals, families and communities. They know and use theories and methods of social work practice.

Social work with dementia statement

Knowledge: Social workers know how to use law, evidence and systems to support and protect people living with dementia and use the evidence base to inform their practice with people with dementia.

Capabilities

* Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and use of knowledge related to your area of practice, including critical awareness of current issues and new evidence based practice research
* Demonstrate knowledge and application of appropriate legal and policy frameworks and guidance that inform and mandate social work practice. Apply legal reasoning, using professional legal expertise and advice appropriately, recognising where scope for professional judgement exists
* Recognise how systemic approaches can be used to understand the person-in-the-environment and inform your practice
* Acknowledge the centrality of relationships for people and the key concepts of attachment, separation, loss, change and resilience
* Understand forms of harm and their impact on people, and the implications for practice, drawing on concepts of strength, resilience, vulnerability, risk and resistance, and apply to practice
* Demonstrate a critical knowledge of the range of theories and models for social work intervention with individuals, families, groups and communities, and the methods derived from them
* Recognise the contribution, and begin to make use, of research to inform practice
* Value and take account of the expertise of service users, carers and professionals.

Examples

You can use the [Overarching Resources](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/overarching-resources/) section to establish essential knowledge around what dementia is, law and policy, and evidence-informed practice.

**Critical Reflection**

Social workers are knowledgeable about and apply the principles of critical thinking and reasoned discernment. They identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. These include practice evidence, their own practice experience, service user and carer experience together with research-based, organisational, policy and legal knowledge. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.

Social work with dementia statement

Critical Reflection: Social workers are able to make professional judgements related to support that demonstrate critical reflection and use of the evidence base. They can also identify when they themselves need additional support.

Capabilities

* Routinely and efficiently apply critical reflection and analysis to increasingly complex cases
* Draw on a wide range of evidence sources to inform decision making
* Ensure hypotheses and options are reviewed to inform judgement and decision making
* Start to provide professional opinion.

Examples

You can use the [Case Studies](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/case-studies/) to critically reflect on good practice, and the [Professional Development](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/professional-development/) resources to identify and capture implications for your work.

## Intervention and Skills

Social workers engage with individuals, families, groups and communities, working alongside people to assess and intervene. They enable effective relationships and are effective communicators, using appropriate skills. Using their professional judgement, they employ a range of interventions: promoting independence, providing support and protection, taking preventative action and ensuring safety whilst balancing rights and risks. They understand and take account of differentials in power, and are able to use authority appropriately. They evaluate their own practice and the outcomes for those they work with.

Social work with dementia statement

Intervention and Skills: Social workers are able to effectively engage with people living with dementia to ensure they have the support they need.

Capabilities

* Communicate with compassion and authority in challenging situations and with resistant individuals
* Routinely explain professional reasoning, judgements and decisions
* Engage effectively with people in complex situations, both short-term and building relationships over time
* Gather information so as to inform judgement for interventions in more complex situations and in response to challenge
* Use assessment procedures discerningly so as to inform judgement
* Develop a range of interventions; use them effectively and evaluate them in practice
* Expand intervention methods and demonstrate expertise in one or more specific methods relevant to your setting
* Make timely decisions when positive change is not happening
* Clearly report and record analysis and judgements
* Demonstrate and promote appropriate information sharing
* Use contingency planning to anticipate complexity and changing circumstances
* Recognise and appropriately manage the authority inherent in your position
* Demonstrate confident and effective judgement about risk and accountability in your decisions
* Regularly undertake assessment and planning for safeguarding.

Example

You can use the Practice Guidance sections on [Maintain a relationship](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/practice-guidance/maintain-a-relationship/) and [Involve support networks](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/practice-guidance/involve-support-networks/) to identify how best to support people with living with dementia and their loved ones.

## Contexts and Organisations

Social workers are informed about and pro-actively responsive to the challenges and opportunities that come with changing social contexts and constructs. They fulfil this responsibility in accordance with their professional values and ethics, both as individual professionals and as members of the organisation in which they work. They collaborate, inform and are informed by their work with others, inter-professionally and with communities.

Social work with dementia statement

Contexts and Organisations: Social workers are able to promote good support to people living with dementia within their organisational context, making links with relevant multiagency colleagues to access information, advice and input where necessary.

Capabilities

* Keep abreast of changing context at local and national level, and take account of these in practice
* Demonstrate the ability to work within your own organisation, and identify and begin to work with the relationship between the organisation, practice and wider changing contexts
* Work to and explain the relevant legal structures in the organisation, including basic case law; know when and how to access support and appropriate legal advice and consultation
* Explore, and identify how organisational practice can support good social work practice
* Be confident about your role in the team, working positively with others; draw on and contribute to team working and collaborative support wherever possible
* Take an active role in inter-professional and inter-agency work, building own network and collaborative working.

Examples

You can use the Practice Guidance sections on [Work with ongoing change](http://dementia.ripfa.org.uk/practice-guidance/work-with-ongoing-change/) to identify how best to support people living with dementia and their loved ones.

## Professional Leadership

The social work profession evolves through the contribution of its members in activities such as practice research, supervision, assessment of practice, teaching and management. An individual’s contribution will gain influence when undertaken as part of a learning, practice-focused organisation. Learning may be facilitated with a wide range of people including social work colleagues, service users and carers, volunteers, foster carers and other professionals.

Social work with dementia statement

Professional Leadership: Social workers highlight the importance of supporting people living with dementia and lead multiagency colleagues in delivering effective support. They share ‘what works’ for the people they support, and engage in organisational learning activities.

Capabilities

* Contribute to and promote the development of practice, taking the initiative to test new approaches
* Contribute to the learning of others.

Example

You can share this resource, and the linked resources and tools, with others to enable them to improve the way that they work with people with dementia.