

Review of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)

Final Report

August 2015

The Review of the Professional Capabilities Framework was commissioned by The College of Social Work (TCSW) in March 2015 and completed in August 2015.

The Strategic Lead for the Review was Dr Ash Chand of TCSW

The Operational Lead for the Review was Helen Keville, Independent Consultant (hrkeville@hotmail.com, 07922 064609)

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Review of the Professional Capabilities Framework

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

- Revisions to the PCF should
 - build on the PCF's strengths as a professional framework
 - develop and promote its flexibilities
- No changes are proposed for the qualifying levels, except in Domain 9 (see Recommendation 3)
- Minimal changes are proposed for post qualifying levels.

Recommendation 2:

The PCF level descriptors should be enhanced and made a focal point for signposting and integration:

- Integrate *Roles and Functions of Social Workers in England Advice Note Part 2 'Aligning levels of responsibility and complexity to different levels of capability'*
- Integrate specific qualifications and roles to the appropriate level e.g. AMHP, BIA, Practice Educator etc
- Ensure the language and descriptions used are applicable to a range of statutory, non-statutory and specialist social work roles

See draft revision 1: Revised level descriptors

Recommendation 3:

- Domain 9 Professional Leadership should be reviewed so that it:
 - Encompasses a broader and more up to date definition of leadership
 - Establishes a coherent relationship with the Knowledge and Skills Statements for practice leaders and practice supervisors
- Ensuring this work takes place should be a priority for the new owner/custodian of the PCF

See draft revision 2: Revised Domain 9 domain descriptor

Recommendation 4:

- As a general principle, there is a need to significantly improve dialogue and strategic partnership between the owners of additional statements or standards and the owner/custodian of the PCF
- Joint statements should be developed to explain priorities and relationships between the PCF and:

- Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family social work
- Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in Adults Services
- Health and Care Professions Council *Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England*
- Ensuring this work takes place should be a priority for the new owner/custodian of the PCF

See draft revision 3: Template for joint statement

Recommendation 5:

- Improve visual presentation and signposting to show how the PCF as an overarching generic framework is applied in practice using specialist knowledge and skills

Recommendation 6:

- Improve understanding of the PCF through making the explanations of its functions more accessible through better links within a refreshed version of the PCF and wider dissemination inside and outside the profession

See draft revision 4: PCF overview chart

Recommendation 7:

- The new owner/custodian of the PCF should ensure the recommendations of this review are implemented on behalf of the profession, drawing on the expertise of a social work-led group, working in partnership with service users

Section 1

Outcome of the PCF Review

1.1 Purpose of the PCF Review

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is a progressive professional standards framework, developed by the Social Work Reform Board, introduced in 2011-12, and owned by The College of Social Work (TCSW).

In March 2015, TCSW launched a review of the PCF. Its aim was to evaluate PCF's impact and effectiveness, and ensure it continued to be fit for purpose in the light of changes in social work practice, policy and legislation that had occurred since its introduction. In particular, this related to:

Changing practice needs – it was important to ensure that the PCF properly reflected contemporary practice needs.

Government changes – It was important to ensure that developments such as the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Child and Family social work and for social workers in Adults Services worked effectively with the PCF, alongside other national developments relating to the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE), accreditation for child and family social workers and Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

As a professional framework, the PCF sets out consistent expectations of social workers at every stage of their career. One of its strengths is its flexibility to be applied in a wide range of settings and levels, and it is key to the development of social work as a single profession.

The review was not intended to make extensive change to the PCF, but to update it in response to the changing context and clarify its role in relationship to the more specific guidance that has emerged since its introduction, such as the Knowledge and Skills Statements.

In addition, the review provided an opportunity to make modifications to the PCF that have emerged from experience. Substantial work has been done to integrate the PCF successfully into social work education, CPD, and performance management. The review gave practitioners, managers and educators an opportunity to contribute what they have learned – about what works well now and what might be improved – so that the PCF remains valid and relevant in the future.

Three themes were explored through the review:

- The importance of the PCF as a progressive professional framework for social work
- How the PCF works in conjunction with other standards, statements, curriculum guidance and expectations, both now and in the future
- Identification of any modifications needed to the PCF so that it continues to be valued as a framework for developing best practice

The review sought out the views of the whole social work sector - practitioners, managers, employers, universities, workforce development staff, practice educators, service users and carers, students, as well as organisations representing the voluntary sector and NHS. This was achieved through:

- A PCF Advisory Stakeholder Group (PASG), chaired by Annie Hudson CEO of TCSW, which provided comment, direction and advice to the project from the perspective of external agencies and bodies¹.
- Four consultation events which were held in May/June 2015. In addition, arrangements were made for separate consultations with service users and carers and practice educators, to ensure the specialist understanding of both groups was fully represented. There was a tremendous amount of interest in the consultations and all the events were substantially oversubscribed, so ensure maximum participation, an online consultation took place 10th to 24th June, with professional and service user surveys.
- A PCF Working Group (PWG), chaired by Ash Chand of TCSW, which provided day to day comment and support to the review. Members of the PCF Quality Assurance and Monitoring group, chaired by Lorna Boreland-Kelly, were included in the circulation of the final drafts. Both are internal TCSW groups.²

The review was conducted in partnership with:

- Chief Social Worker (Children) and Department for Education
- Chief Social Worker (Adults) and Department of Health
- Health and Care Professions Council
- Skills for Care

As either 'owners' of additional standards or with a specific role regarding them, it was essential their perspectives were integrated into the final outcome.

1.2 Impact of extraordinary circumstances surrounding the review

On 18th June 2015, the sudden closure of TCSW was announced and a period of shock and uncertainty followed. TCSW Board confirmed on 25th June that the last day of operation would be 30th September 2015 and that the PCF review would be completed by 31st August.

¹ See Appendix for membership

² See Appendix for membership

It is essential that the outcomes of the PCF review are put in the context of these extraordinary circumstances, which have not only had a practical impact but have imposed unforeseen restrictions on what is achievable at this point.

On a practical level, the news about TCSW came at a time when proposals for revisions were about to be discussed with stakeholders. Meetings had to be cancelled, and in any case, it was not reasonable to expect anyone to engage on this subject whilst coming to terms with the much bigger issue of the closure of a professional body.

It meant that the final stages of the review had to be completed within a very short window of time and without the benefit of further debate about the proposals for change that emerged from the consultations. Final discussions and feedback took place by email only.

More fundamentally, the loss of TCSW as owner of the PCF created a void which imposed severe restrictions on the outcome of the review. A key finding of the consultations was the need to improve strategic partnership between the TCSW, as the owner/custodian of the PCF, and the owners of the statements and standards related to it. Once there was no longer a strategic body with authority to act on behalf of the PCF – and no indication of who the future owner/custodian might be – the wisdom of producing revisions in isolation was questionable.

Thus, in the short window of time that has been available to complete the PCF review, its conclusions have had to be based on the situation that currently exists at the time of writing this report (at the end of July) – i.e. that the future custodianship and location of the PCF is unknown and that debate about the proposed revisions has been limited to email feedback. Even if the future owner is identified before the end of August, there would be no time to revisit the conclusions before the closure of TCSW, which is already in the process of winding down all its functions.

1.3 Findings, recommendations and proposed revisions

The findings from the PCF review consultation are summarised and discussed in this section, but described in full in Section 2 of this report.

1.3a Evaluation of the PCF and the case for change

There is strong support for PCF in the profession. The consultation process gave all contributors a chance to reiterate its value, based on their experiences in a wide range of situations and settings. There was a unanimous message that the PCF brings many benefits to social work and there was no doubt that it should remain in the future.

A significant proportion of the attendees at the events expressed the view that it is too soon to make any changes to the PCF, as it has only been in place for two or three years and it is not yet properly embedded. This perspective was supported by

39% of the respondents to the online survey and 50% of the respondents to the service user and carer's survey.

These views were perhaps not unexpected, in the light of the positive feedback given to the strengths and benefits of the PCF, but some attendees further considered that the review process might be an attempt to undermine the PCF in favour of wider government agendas (although plenty of evidence could be presented to counterbalance this view.)

The proposals for revisions therefore aim to acknowledge the extent of the positive feedback received for the PCF. The consultation process confirmed the strengths of the PCF as:

- The domains
- The level descriptors
- The 'fan' visual illustration
- Its framework which supports holistic assessment
- Its established role in qualifying training/ASYE
- Its established/potential role in the professional development of social workers at all stages of their career
- Its established/potential role in the long term sustainability of the social work profession in a changing political climate

The proposed changes discussed below aim to build on these on its strengths as a generic professional framework, but will also consider how its flexibilities can be extended, as the PCF must retain its relevance to the high standard of specialist knowledge and skills needed in the different settings in which social workers are employed.

Recommendation 1:

- **Revisions to the PCF should**
 - **build on the PCF's strengths as a professional framework**
 - **develop and promote its flexibilities**
- **No changes are proposed for the qualifying levels, except in Domain 9 (see Recommendation 3)**
- **Minimal changes are proposed for post qualifying levels.**

1.3b Build on the PCF's strengths

The key elements of the PCF that are presented visually in the PCF 'fan' are the nine domains and the level descriptors. It follows that making changes to either of these would have the most impact on the overall structure and appearance of the PCF, and proposals for any revision should therefore treated with the greatest care. However, two areas were identified in the discussions where it was agreed that modifications would lead to an improvement of the PCF.

Career development

The relationship between the PCF and career development was a subject that permeated a number of the discussions at the consultation events.

Although one of the PCF's strengths is the use of the level descriptors in career progression, there was a consistent message that these do not always fit with posts and roles as they exist in many organisations. This was of particular concern to employers who believed that improving this alignment would enable them to embed the PCF better within their organisations. More clarity is needed in the demarcation between the different levels of the PCF, and the way the levels align with - and describe – the skills required for different posts and roles, particularly at experienced social worker level and beyond. The links between the level descriptors and specific qualifications could also be improved.

There was strong support at the events for the idea of enhancing the level descriptors by making the skills expected at each level more explicit and developing all the level descriptors as a focal point for signposting and integration.

The links between level and function have already been described in *'Roles and Functions of Social Workers in England: Advice Note'* so this resource will be a valuable starting point for this. However, it will be important to recognise that any enhancement of the level descriptors will never fully match the range of job roles undertaken by social workers.

A further benefit of enhancing the level descriptors will be to provide a stronger and more consistent framework for the assessment of current and future qualifications and awards. This is discussed further in Section 3.1c below.

Recommendation 2:

The PCF level descriptors should be enhanced and made a focal point for signposting and integration:

- **Integrate *Roles and Functions of Social Workers in England Advice Note Part 2 'Aligning levels of responsibility and complexity to different levels of capability'***
- **Integrate specific qualifications and roles to the appropriate level e.g. AMHP, BIA, Practice Educator etc**
- **Ensure the language and descriptions used are applicable to a range of statutory, non-statutory and specialist social work roles**

See draft revision 1: Revised level descriptors

Domain 9 Professional Leadership

A further consistent message from the consultation events was about the narrow definition of professional leadership in Domain 9. The scope of the domain

descriptor for Domain 9 is limited to a predominately teaching and learning role, and this restriction is carried through to the some of the capability statements. This can inhibit students and social workers in the early stages of their career in adopting an understanding of the full meaning of professional leadership. The advanced and strategic capability statements in Domain 9 encompass a broader range of leadership roles, but these correlate even less to the domain descriptor.

There was strong agreement that a broader and more up to date definition of excellence in professional leadership in social work needs to be reinforced throughout the framework. The introduction, by the Department for Education, of Knowledge and Skills Statements for practice leaders and practice supervisors (subject to consultation 28th July to 1st September 2015) offers a significant opportunity for a coherent relationship to be developed between these necessary revisions to the PCF and the additional, context specific expectations in the Knowledge and Skills Statements. By addressing this relationship at an early stage, some of the issues identified in Section 1.3c below could be avoided.

Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to engage with stakeholders to undertake this work as part of the PCF review. As a first step, a revised domain descriptor for Domain 9 has been drafted, but further work will be needed to ensure the capability statements in this domain are properly aligned to it, taking into account the leadership elements that have been incorporated into the capability statements of other domains (e.g. Domains 1 and 8)

Recommendation 3:

- **Domain 9 Professional Leadership should be reviewed so that it:**
 - **Encompasses a broader and more up to date definition of leadership**
 - **Establishes a coherent relationship with the Knowledge and Skills Statements for practice leaders and practice supervisors**
- **Ensuring this work takes place should be a priority for the new owner/custodian of the PCF**

See draft revision 2: Revised Domain 9 domain descriptor

1.3c Develop and promote the PCF's flexibilities

Strategic partnership

As expected, a substantial part of the discussions at the consultation events related to the impact of other standards, statements and expectations on the PCF as this was one of the main reasons for undertaking the review.

Regardless of whether or not attendees agreed that the time was right to change the PCF (see Section 1.3a), there was a strong body of opinion that the introduction of new statements, such as the Knowledge and Skills Statements, had caused confusion and added complexity which needed to be addressed. This was also

identified as the first priority for improvement by the largest proportion of online respondents (85%).

Two key areas were explored: firstly, that the purpose, priority and status of different statements and standards was unclear, leaving individual workers and their organisations with the burden of making sense of them; and secondly, simpler methods of explaining and communicating the relationships needed to be found, as attempts to 'map' relationships often added to the confusion.

Underpinning much of the confusion was the introduction of assessment against the Knowledge and Skills Statements, and whether this fitted with other approaches to assessment against the PCF. At present, this relates to newly qualified social workers in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment but could be extended to other levels in the future.

Whilst the PCF is an overarching professional framework, it is possible to make separate decisions about which aspects of it are used in an assessment process. Specific assessment processes may also be related to securing funding or obtaining a particular accreditation. Such distinctions do not necessarily undermine the purpose and value of the PCF, but the relationship between the two should be crystal clear to all those involved. This is not the case at present and is at the heart of the confusions.

This discussion was not confined to the Knowledge and Skills Statements. As the regulator, the HCPC sets the standards for 'assessment' of a different type, that of the threshold standards in the *Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England* and the *Standards of conduct, performance and ethics*. The role of these standards has already been embedded in the approval process for qualifying social work courses. However, the same threshold standards continue to apply to all social workers, at whatever level of experience they have reached, because if their practice falls below them, they may be subject to Fitness to Practise procedures. This was highlighted in the consultation events by employers as another source of confusion, particular when there are capability issues to be managed.

For example, both sets of HCPC standards will be reviewed in the next year or two, so the PCF will need to be flexible enough to accommodate any changes which may result from this (as well as changes which may occur in other frameworks as well). At the same time, developing flexibilities to promote high standards of professional practice should not obscure the minimum or threshold standards of the HCPC which are, in effect, non-negotiable. The distinction between the two should always be clearly explained.

The fact that re-registration for social workers is based on CPD standards which are set by the HCPC and do not directly refer to the PCF was another area of concern. This is discussed in Section 1.3d below.

In the discussions, these issues were most frequently attributed to a lack of strategic partnership between those with responsibility for the social work profession: TCSW, Chief Social Workers (Adult and Child), Health and Care Professions Council, Department of Health and Department for Education. Suggestions about how this could be improved included:

- Better partnership working with developers of other statements or standards so that:
 - a. Relationships and connections are clearly explained
 - b. New standards are developed in conjunction with the PCF not separately
- Confirm at a strategic level the relationship between the PCF and other standards, statements and guidelines

Within these discussions was a call for stronger leadership from TCSW on behalf of the profession, to protect the PCF and raise its status, so that it ***informs*** new ***developments*** rather than reacts to them.

Unfortunately the closure of TCSW has had most impact on this area of the review and limits the revisions that are possible at this stage. A realistic outcome would have been to produce draft joint statements between the TCSW as the owner of the PCF and the owners of the other standards and statements discussed (Department for Education, Department of Health, HCPC) to explain:

- how was statement or standard was informed by the PCF
- which domains/levels it relates to and extends
- what is the status of the statement or standard with respect to the PCF
- what methods are currently in place for assessment using a) the PCF and b) the statement or standard and c) how do these work together

As there is no longer a strategic body to act on behalf of the PCF, the only possible outcome is a template for this. This could be developed into joint statements when the new owner/custodian of the PCF has been identified. The dialogue between the owners of other standards or statement and the new owner/custodian of the PCF, leading to the production of a joint statement, will be critical in creating consistent messages which can be shared across the social work profession. This should therefore be a priority for the new owner/custodian.

Recommendation 4:

- **As a general principle, there is a need to significantly improve dialogue and strategic partnership between the owners of additional statements or standards and the owner/custodian of the PCF**
- **Joint statements should be developed to explain priorities and relationships between the PCF and:**

- **Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family social work**
- **Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers in Adults Services**
- **Health and Care Professions Council *Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England***
- **Ensuring this work takes place should be a priority for the new owner/custodian of the PCF**

See draft revision 3: Template for joint statement

Presentation of the PCF and its connections

At the consultation events, there was a lot of discussion about streamlining and simplifying the PCF, so that the relationship it has with other statements and standards could be accommodated and explained, without adding more complexity. This would clearly build on the information identified in the joint statements outlined above, but it will be important for this to be conceptualised visually as well, and through signposting and improved web connections.

Alongside this, other feedback suggested that the functions of the different elements of the PCF (domains, level descriptors, capability statements) is not fully understood in all parts of the profession, nor is its contribution to specific functions, such as career progression, performance, appraisal and CPD. All of the explanations are contained within the PCF section of TCSW website, but may not be easily accessed from all parts of the PCF as it is currently presented. In addition, some of the explanations need to be simplified and updated.

The PCF needs to strike a balance between its role as an overarching generic framework and what it means when the framework is applied in practice. The capability statements are already intended to provide practice illustrations that can be selected according to the settings in which they are being used. One helpful way of extending the flexibility of the PCF would be to view statements such as the Knowledge and Skills Statements or additional capabilities produced by TCSW for fostering and adoption or the Care Act, as more detailed explanations of what social work in particular settings should look like, regardless of any separate strategies that might be in place for assessment. Communicating how these explanations are linked or not to the whole of the PCF or to specific domains will be essential.

The purpose and functions of the PCF should be understood not just within the profession but from outside as well, by service users, government and the public. It should be possible for someone who is not familiar with the PCF to nevertheless use it to understand what they can expect from all levels of professional practice in social work. Therefore, all revisions to the PCF should ensure that explanations about how it works are integrated more effectively within the PCF itself and this information is also communicated more widely to ensure its purpose and role is widely understood.

All of this should come together in a refreshed version of the PCF. The proposals for this are represented visually in a chart which is intended to supplement the main 'fan' branding, not to replace it. This would have been incorporated into an app on TCSW website, but once again, the planned closure of TCSW means this work will have to be completed by the PCF's new owner/custodian.

Recommendation 5:

- **Improve visual presentation and signposting to show how the PCF as an overarching generic framework is applied in practice using specialist knowledge and skills**

Recommendation 6:

- **Improve understanding of the PCF through making the explanations of its functions more accessible through better links within a refreshed version of the PCF and wider dissemination inside and outside the profession**

See draft revision 4: PCF Overview chart

1.3d Future development of the PCF

The PCF will now be transferred to a new owner/custodian (not yet been identified at the time of writing this report). Feedback received since the closure of TCSW was announced has stressed that the new owner/custodian should not only ensure the recommendations in this report are implemented, but that this work should be carried on behalf of the social work profession.

As well as the recommendations in this report, there have been further areas of feedback, either in the consultation events or in feedback to an earlier draft of this report, which the PCF's new owner/custodian may wish to incorporate into future work:

- Further work on the visual presentation of the PCF and improved explanation of its functions is likely to be necessary once website and/or app development has commenced, as the style and presentation of an updated version of the PCF will be influenced by the format of its new owner/custodian's existing website and available resources.
- Further work may be needed to ensure that the revisions to the PCF use language which is relevant to non-statutory as well as statutory settings.
- There is scope for further work on the capability statements. This might include streamlining them, reducing their number and reviewing the clarity of the language used. However, the PCF's new owner/custodian would need to consider whether other revisions proposed here will help to improve understanding of their role, before embarking on more changes.
- The PCF is not consistently used for CPD at social worker level and beyond. This is complicated by the role of the HCPC standards in re-registration. Further

work on this could provide a very significant lever to embed the PCF in all levels of the profession, but this would need to be done in the context of the future location of the PCF and its new owner/custodian's role and resources.

- An area that was outside the scope of this review, but was a factor in the confusions identified in the present use of the PCF was its role in assessment. Clearer distinction is needed between role of the PCF as a professional framework and the range of options that may exist for it to be used in assessment. This is another piece of work which the PCF's new owner/custodian may wish to take forward.

Recommendation 7:

- **The new owner/custodian of the PCF should ensure the recommendations of this review are implemented on behalf of the profession, drawing on the expertise of a social work-led group, working in partnership with service users**

1.4 Conclusion

This review has strongly reiterated the social work profession's support for the PCF and its continued commitment to it as a core professional framework in the future.

It was a huge undertaking to create the PCF through discussion and debate as part of the social work reforms, and it has only been implemented since 2011. Lessons from experience and the ways in which it could be improved have been identified through this consultation and review.

Bearing in mind the support the PCF has, it would be very demoralising for the profession as a whole if the future of the PCF remained uncertain, because it was perceived as an obstacle to the development of high quality specialist practice. This would be more so now, with the closure of TCSW.

Two key messages underpin this review:

The first is that all concerned with the PCF – not just the profession, but the key stakeholders in social work – need to have confidence it has sufficient flexibility for it to retain its key role in the development of high standards of professional practice in any setting. The nature of these flexibilities forms a major part of this review.

The second is that strategic partnership and dialogue to explain the relationships between the PCF and other standards and statements would undoubtedly reduce confusion and be welcomed by social workers and their employers. As long as it is properly explained, providing further contextual detail through additional statements is not necessarily a threat, but a means of giving greater depth and clarity to identified parts of the PCF.

Unfortunately, the timing of the closure of TCSW has had a detrimental effect on the outcome of this review, but this report aims to set out a clear direction of travel for the PCF's new owner/custodian.

Section 2

PCF Review Consultation May – June 2015

2.1 How the PCF Review consultation was organised

Four consultation events were held in May/June 2015 in London, Birmingham, Leeds and Taunton. A total of **170 people** attended, from organisations representing the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors, and higher education. In addition, two smaller events for a total of **24 practice educators** were held.

The consultation events were significantly oversubscribed so an online consultation was set up to run from Tuesday 10th June to Wednesday 24th June. This gave a much wider audience an opportunity to contribute to the consultation and indicate their views on the initial ideas and proposals emerging from the events. There was a tremendous response to the online survey and a total of **536 people** took part.

One consultation session took place for **8 service users and carers** with experience of working with the PCF. Alongside this, a separate version of the online survey for service users and carers was set up which received a total of **11 responses**.

All versions of the direct or online consultations addressed the same three themes:

- The importance of the PCF as a progressive professional framework for social work
- How the PCF works in conjunction with other standards, statements, curriculum guidance and expectations, both now and in the future
- Identification of any modifications needed to the PCF so that it continues to be valued as a framework for developing best practice

The same questions were used, with some modifications for clarity, across the consultation period, to ensure that the feedback would be focussed on broadly the same issues. At the events, delegates spent a large proportion of the day in small group discussions. They recorded their views on flipcharts that were subsequently typed up and collated into themes. The views expressed in the first two sessions formed the basis of the online survey.

2.2 Who participated in the consultation?

The information collected about the participants who attended the consultation events can be broken down by the type of post they held, although the setting or sector they worked in was not always clear. Attendees fell into the following groups:

Type of post	Number
Workforce Development	65
HEI	25
Practitioner (SW to TM)	22
Service Manager	18
Principal SW	17
ASYE co-ordinator	8
Practice Educator	7
Social Work Student	2
Other/unknown	5
TOTAL	170

Table 1: Participants at four consultation events

The results from the online survey show that 92% of the respondents did NOT attend the face to face consultations, so their views represent those of a wider and additional cross section of the profession.

The information collected about the respondents to the survey indicates they came from the following settings:

Setting/Sector	Number
Adults (private, independent, voluntary sector)	28
Adults (statutory setting, local authority)	136
Child and family (statutory setting, local authority)	168
Child and family (private, independent, voluntary sector)	34
Higher Education Institute	74
Mental health (local authority or NHS Trust)	36
Mental health (private, independent, voluntary sector)	2
More than one sector/setting	58
TOTAL	536

Table 2: Response to Q2 'Which setting/sector do you predominantly work in?'

Data was also collected about the type of post held by the respondent. This was expressed in terms of the level of the PCF at which they were working, rather than through job titles and roles.

Post or role	Number
Student	34
Newly qualified social worker	26
Social worker	49
Experienced social worker	158
Advanced/Strategic SW	194
Other profession	75
TOTAL	536

Table 3: Response to Q3 'Post or role you predominately hold'

The most significant finding about those who took part in the consultations is the extent to which they represented the more senior levels of the profession. 36% of the respondents to the survey were at the Advanced or Strategic level of the PCF while 21% of the participants at the events were either Service Managers or Principal Social Workers.

The largest group of attendees at the events had a workforce development role (39%) and taking into account the attendees from HEIs and those identified as Practice Educators or ASYE Co-ordinators, the number of practitioners of all types was relatively small at 13%. However, the online survey reached a much larger group of students and social workers who were 50% of the total respondents.

2.3 Responses to the questions

What follows is a synthesis of the views expressed across all the available opportunities, indicating where necessary whether opinion was shared or divided. Any differences between the face to face and online feedback is highlighted.

Question 1: What are the main strengths of the PCF?

This question gave all contributors a chance to reiterate their support for the PCF and its value in a wide range of situations and settings. There was an almost completely unanimous message that the PCF brings many benefits to the social work profession and there was no doubt that it should remain in the future.

The strengths most commonly identified in the discussions at the events are outlined below. The percentage of online respondents who **strongly agreed or agreed** with these themes is in brackets.

- It represents professional development over whole social work career and therefore gives practitioners a clear sense of where they are heading as they seek to improve their practice **(89%)**
- The PCF enables social workers to develop a professional identity and helps to clearly define their role as a social worker. It is also based around the needs of service users and carers **(85%)**
- Its value increases as more social workers and managers become familiar with it through applying it in practice **(83%)**
- It is very flexible and can be used in a wide range of situations e.g. CPD, supervision, performance, development **(82%)**
- It is a neutral point of reference, and can be used to promote consistency. It is particularly useful as a means of communicating how and why performance may need to improve **(81%)**
- The PCF plays a key role in career progression when it is incorporated into employer schemes **(73%)**
- It facilitates holistic assessment and encourages the use of professional judgement in assessment rather than 'ticking boxes'. Its role in social work

education was particularly valued, as a tool to map a student's progress and identity areas that need further work **(70%)**

- The visual image of fan was seen as an extremely valuable means of communicating the PCF and its role in progression **(70%)**

Question 2: In what ways do you think it could be improved?

The majority of the feedback to this question can be grouped into seven areas:

Change is not needed yet. A significant proportion of the attendees at the events expressed the view that it is too soon to make any changes to the PCF, as it has only been in place for two or three years and it is not yet properly embedded. This was a continuation of the positive support given to the strengths and benefits of the PCF in the first discussion and further reiteration of the value placed on it by the profession.

This point of view was supported by 39% of the respondents to the online survey and 50% of the respondents to the service user and carer's survey.

More clarity is needed about the status of the PCF, especially in relationship to other statements, standards and expectations. Even though there was support for the view that no change was necessary, there was also a strong body of opinion that the introduction of new expectations had caused confusion and added complexity which needed to be addressed. This was linked to the idea that the PCF should become a 'single' framework where all connections could be seen. (This is discussed further below in Questions 3-5.)

This was identified as the first priority for improvement by the largest proportion of online respondents (85%).

Better use of PCF in CPD. There was a strong view that while the PCF is well embedded in qualifying programmes and in ASYE, its use and profile reduces significantly at social worker level and beyond. This was seen as being partly due to the lack of levers to ensure the PCF is used after ASYE, and the HCPC re-registration process which does not highlight the PCF, but focuses on other standards and expectations.

This was the second priority for improvement identified by the online respondents (60%).

The purpose and functions of the PCF are not fully understood. Following on from the lack of incentives to use the PCF after ASYE was an acknowledgement of the PCF is poorly understood in some parts of the profession. This confusion was demonstrated at the events, where some discussions revealed misunderstandings about how the different elements of the PCF worked in practice. There was a clear message that improved marketing and explanation of the PCF was needed.

It is interesting to note that 72% of the online respondents described their current knowledge of the PCF as Excellent or Good. However, this area was identified as their third priority for improvement (38%) which supports a view that more work needs to be done to embed the PCF.

The language of the PCF can lack clarity. There was general acceptance that reviewing/editing the language and using more Plain English would improve the accessibility of the PCF.

It is important to note that 40% of the respondents to the service user and carer survey made this their first priority for change. It was the fourth priority of the online respondents (33%).

Better demarcation is needed between different level descriptors. Although one of the PCF's strengths is its use in career progression, another consistent message was that it does not fit as well as it could with posts and roles as they exist in many organisations, both in the clarity of the demarcation between different levels and the way it aligns with posts and roles as they exist, particularly at experienced social worker level and beyond.

Discussions about the relationship between the PCF and career development was a strong feature of the consultation events. This area is discussed in Question 6 below.

The definition of Professional Leadership in Domain 9 is limited. The scope of the domain descriptor for Domain 9 is limited to a predominately teaching and learning role, and this restriction is carried through to the illustrative capability statements. A consistent feature in the discussions at the events was that this can inhibit students and social workers in the early stages of their career adopting an understanding of the full meaning of professional leadership. A more appropriate definition of leadership needs to be reinforced throughout the framework.

This area is discussed in Question 6 below.

Questions 3 - 5 How can we refresh the PCF so that it:

- 3 Works effectively** in conjunction with an emerging number of additional standards, statements, curriculum guidance and expectations
- 4 Informs** the development of emerging standards, statements, curriculum guidance or expectations
- 5 Clearly communicates** its relationship with this emerging range of additional standards, statements, curriculum guidance and expectations, so that it is understood inside and outside the profession

These three questions are discussed together because the themes that emerged are overlapping.

The feedback can be grouped into two areas: strategic partnership and presentation of the PCF and its connections

Strategic partnership

A substantial part of the feedback attributed the confusion caused by the new standards, statements and expectations on the PCF to a lack of strategic partnership between those with responsibility for the social work profession: TCSW, Chief Social Workers (Adult and Child), HCPC, Department of Health and Department for Education. This had resulted in the burden of making sense of the situation being put on individual workers and their organisations. Comments about how this could be improved included:

- Improve partnership working with developers of other frameworks so that
 - a. Relationships and connections are better explained
 - b. New standards are developed together not separately
- Confirm at a strategic level the relationship between the PCF and additional standards, statements and guidelines
- Clarify the purpose, priority and status of different documents and communicate this better

It is important to note that these discussions included a call for stronger leadership from TCSW on behalf of the profession, to protect the PCF and raise its status, so that it informs developments rather than reacts to them.

It is also important to note that discussions included the need to improve the links with HCPC standards, as part of the overall PCF framework, due to the role they play in registration, re-registration and fitness to practice.

Presentation of the PCF and its connections

There was a lot of discussion about streamlining and simplifying the PCF, so that the relationship it has with other documents could be accommodated and explained, without adding more complexity. This is a challenge, which will clearly need to be conceptualised visually, as well as through signposting and improved web connections. Comments and suggestions included:

- Streamline the PCF to become a unified starting point which links to the standards, statements and guidelines associated with it
- Improve the visual presentation of the PCF as a unified starting point
- Provide a clearer distinction between the PCF as an overarching generic framework and how it is applied in practice, using specialist knowledge and skills in a wide range of settings
- Provide a clearer explanation of the purpose and status of the PCF
- Make the right links with other bodies such as HCPC, CQC and Ofsted

- Provide clearer explanations of how the PCF works in specific situations (examples include: assessment, CPD, career development, performance)

Due to the complex nature of the discussions that took place at the events around these questions, online respondents were asked to indicate their support or otherwise for some of the proposals that were put forward. Their responses cover both of the areas outlined above. Please note, respondents could give support to more than one proposal.

Proposal	Very Helpful or Helpful (%)
Provide clearer explanations of how the PCF works in specific situations (examples include: assessment CPD, career development, performance)	86%
Clarify the purpose, priority and status of additional standards, statements and guidelines and communicate this better	86%
Confirm at a strategic level the relationship between the PCF and additional standards, statements and guidelines through providing joint statements with other organisations	85%
Provide a clearer distinction between the PCF as an overarching generic framework and how it is applied in practice, using specialist knowledge and skills in a wide range of settings	84%
Streamline the PCF to become a unified starting point which links to the standards, statements and guidelines associated with it	79%
Provide a clearer explanation of the purpose and status of the PCF	79%
Improve the visual presentation of the PCF as a unified starting point	48%

Table 4: Response to Q10. 'A number of proposals/suggestions about how the PCF could be refreshed have been discussed at the consultation events. Please indicate which ones, in your view, would helpfully contribute to making the PCF fit for purpose in the future'

Question 6: What, if anything, needs to change in the PCF and why?

The last set of questions were geared to identifying specific modifications that could be made to the PCF to ensure it is fit for purpose in the future.

There was a notable difference in the views expressed about this at the events and in the online survey. There was a greater willingness to make changes amongst those who participated in the four consultation events compared with those who contributed through the online survey. This may reflect the fact that it was possible to engage more widely in discussion at the events and explore possible options in more detail. These questions were the final discussion of the day and the ideas were a continuation of the issues that were explored in the earlier parts of the day.

Online Survey: Responses to Questions 11, 13 and 15 (online survey) (NB Question 6 at the events)		
	YES	NO
Does anything need to change in the structure and focus of the domains?	22%	78%
Does anything need to change in the structure and content of the level descriptors?	32%	68%
Does anything need to change in the content of the capability statements?	34%	66%

Table 5: Responses to Qs 11, 13 and 15

Those who responded yes to the online questions were asked a follow up question with some options. The suggested changes below reflect both the feedback from the consultation events and the responses to the additional questions asked in the survey.

6.1 Domains Streamlining the PCF through combining different domains was considered at all the events (e.g. combining 2, 3 and 4, or 1 and 9). However, on balance the majority decided that the domains should remain as they are, with the exception of the Taunton event, where the delegates were receptive to combining domains if it would contribute to the overall simplification of the PCF.

6.2 Level descriptors Suggested improvements to the level descriptors included providing a clearer explanation of how they might relate to employer career structures, making clearer distinctions between the levels and reviewing the advanced and strategic levels to ensure they are relevant to current management roles. Other feedback suggested making clearer links with HCPC SoPs as part of the expectations at each level and locating specific qualifications at the appropriate level such as Practice Educator and AMHP.

6.3 Capability statements The use of capability statement appeared to cause the most confusion about the PCF. Suggested improvements included

- Providing a clearer explanation that they are meant to be illustrative examples, not met in every situation
- Reducing their overall number
- Removing italicised capability statements to improve clarity
- Reviewing the language used

Section 3

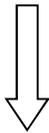
Draft revisions of the PCF

Revised Level Descriptors

PCF Level of Capability (level descriptor): End of Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

By the **end of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)** [newly-qualified] social workers should have consistently demonstrated practice in a wider range of tasks and roles, and have become more effective in their interventions, thus building their own confidence, and earning the confidence of others. They will have more experience and skills in relation to a particular setting and user group, and have demonstrated ability to work effectively on more complex situations. They will seek support in supervision appropriately, while starting to exercise initiative and evaluate their own practice.

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Degree of responsibility at this level

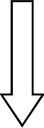
1. During this first year following qualification, newly qualified social workers should be expected to take overall responsibility for cases they work on, but should regularly seek feedback and support, especially in relation to decision-making.
2. They should not be expected to take responsibility alone for cases involving complex risk or high levels of ambiguity – for example, cases that involve taking court/legal action, or deciding if a case meets the threshold for statutory intervention in safeguarding and child or adult protection cases.

Decision-making at this level

- Generally, a newly qualified social worker should expect to make recommendations³ about action to social workers with an experienced or advanced level of capability.
- However, professional decisions on straight forward issues⁴ should be within the capability of this group of social workers, especially as their confidence and experience grows towards the end of the 12 months of the ASYE programme.
- Newly qualified social workers should start to demonstrate the analytical skills, reflective

³ These recommendations will demonstrate their ability to meet HCPC threshold standards e.g. SoP 4 'be able to practice as an autonomous professional exercising their own professional judgement'

⁴ Straight forward – there is some predictability and stability in the situation

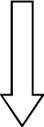
	thinking and holistic approach in their work with individuals and families that should be the hallmark of their professional life.
Qualifications/roles aligned to this level (additional training and/or demonstration of capabilities may be needed)	ASYE accreditation child and family social workers (arrangements under review due to closure of TCSW) ASYE accreditation adults social workers (arrangements under review due to closure of TCSW) <i>Approved Child and Family Practitioner (under development)?</i>
Joint statements that affect this level	<i>e.g. Joint statement with HCPC</i> <i>e.g. Joint statement with DfE KSS Child and Family social work</i> <i>e.g. Joint statement with DH KSS Social workers in Adults services</i>
PCF Level of Capability (level descriptor): Social worker	
In the social work role [practitioners] progress to practise effectively, exercising higher quality judgements in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge. Through growing understanding they expect and anticipate, but do not pre-judge, the issues that may develop. They have greater confidence and independence, while accessing support when needed, and use their initiative to broaden their repertoire of responses. They have expertise in one or more areas of practice, are familiar with local resource networks and are recognised by peers as a reliable source of knowledge and advice.	
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Degree of responsibility at this level	For example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertaking assessments of risk involving safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. 2. Taking responsibility and working with individuals facing complex social and family crisis, such as in safeguarding work, youth offending, hospital social work, and mental health. 3. Promoting autonomy and development with individuals who have complex social needs and are more vulnerable as a result of disability, exclusion, or diminished capacity, for example, working with people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or diminished capacity. 4. Working with communities, families and individuals to maximise or promote their personal strengths, social networks and resources.

Decision-making at this level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions involving complex risk⁵ in well known cases should be within the capability of a social worker at this PCF level, but where situations are less clear or information is limited the involvement of someone at experienced social worker PCF level would be advisable. • Social workers at this level should be making recommendations about whether a case has reached the threshold for statutory intervention, but the decision itself should be made by someone with an experienced or advanced level of capability.
Qualifications/roles aligned to this level (additional training and/or demonstration of capabilities may be needed)	Practice Educator Standards Stage 1 <i>Approved Child and Family Practitioner (under development)?</i>
Joint statements that affect this level	<i>e.g. Joint statement with HCPC</i> <i>Joint statement with DfE KSS Child and Family social work</i> <i>Joint statement with DH KSS Social workers in Adults services</i>
PCF Level of Capability (level descriptor): Experienced social worker	
<p>Experienced social workers are more autonomous in their role. They demonstrate expert and effective practice in complex situations, assessing and managing higher levels of risk, striking a balance between support and control, liaising with a wide range of professionals, including more senior levels. They manage complex caseloads, and offer expert opinion within the organisation and to others. They chair a range of meetings, offer expert support to case conferences, and produce high quality assessments and reports for a range of functions. They model good practice, setting expectations for others. They start to take responsibility and be accountable for the practice of others, mentoring newly qualified social workers, and supervising the work of less experienced staff. They undertake capacity - building with individuals, families, communities, user groups and voluntary organisations, and contribute their views on service provision to commissioners.</p>	
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⁵ Complex – there is uncertainty, the situation requires reflection and judgement

<p>Degree of responsibility at this level</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertaking assessments of risk involving safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, where there are complex or ambiguous issues involved. 2. Taking on roles that require autonomous professional decision-making, concerning the restriction of personal liberty and/or involving significant infringements of private and family life. For example, when working as an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) or Best Interests Assessor (BIA); when making decisions that a child or adult safeguarding case has reached the threshold for statutory intervention; or when making a recommendation to a court to remove a child from the care of their birth parents. 3. Taking responsibility for the learning, development and practice of others, including through local leadership of practice, or supervision of colleagues and students. For example, making recommendations about whether a social work student has reached the necessary level of capability to pass their placement, or making a decision about a section 47 child protection enquiry under the Children Act 1989 that has been recommended by a less experienced social worker (while also encouraging that worker to develop such skills themselves.) 4. Providing professional leadership and opinion within multidisciplinary contexts.
<p>Decision-making at this level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers at the experienced level of capability are able to argue their case confidently and persuasively in multidisciplinary discussions, or other situations involving conflicting views, such as with family members in court proceedings. • Experienced social workers are able to make defensible, autonomous professional decisions in specific situations involving interventions in people’s lives that significantly impact on their human rights. For example, these decisions could involve infringements on personal autonomy, family life or the deprivation of a person’s liberty. • Such decisions often involve balancing a number of different perspectives. In this way experienced level social workers are able to work in complex family and social situations with issues of ambiguity and risk where outcomes are not always clear. • Where situations are particularly complex or uncertain – or where the risks regarding outcomes for the service user are significant – experienced social workers should consider involving an advanced level social worker

Qualifications/roles aligned to this level (additional training and/or demonstration of capabilities may be needed)	Approved Mental Health Practitioner Best Interests Assessor Practice Educator Standards Stage 2
Joint statements that affect this level	<i>e.g. Joint statement with HCPC</i> <i>Joint statement with DfE – KSS Practice Supervisor?</i>
PCF Level of Capability (level descriptor): Advanced Social Worker	
<p>At the advanced level, it is expected that all social workers will provide practice and/or professional leadership, through the development of research-informed practice, quality assurance, staff development, knowledge development or management, and will also help to influence and contribute to strategic development in the organisation. Social workers at this level make a difference by working either directly with people in highly complex situations, or by supporting and/or developing staff or knowledge, to provide better outcomes for people who use services, families, carers and communities.</p>	
<p>There are three developmental pathways: Professional Social Work Educator, Advanced Social Work Practitioner and Social Work Manager. The three pathways, or areas of expertise, whilst distinctive, will not necessarily be mutually exclusive, and many social workers will wish to develop capabilities across the pathways, reflecting their expected career progression.</p>	
<p>Professional Social Work Educators: facilitate the learning and development of others (for example managing a number of students on qualifying programmes, NQSWs undertaking ASYE, undertaking direct research or professionals undertaking CPD) to develop their knowledge, skills, values and practice. They positively manage the interface between providers of education and training and workplace situations, by contributing to arrangements for selection, curriculum delivery, assessment and evaluation. They draw on and contribute to contemporary research and educational practice. They contribute to workforce development strategies in the agency and/or in a university setting.</p>	
<p>Advanced Social Work Practitioners: have their practice recognised as exemplary, and provide leadership and professional wisdom to their colleagues and other professionals for work in situations of high complexity. They continue to work directly with people who use services, and those who care for them, as well as families and communities. They provide constructive challenge to enhance practice, procedures and policies, promote innovation, and introduce new ways of working from recognised sites of excellence. They contribute to the development of knowledge and promotion of excellence in their field using evidence-informed practice. They make use of sophisticated, critical reasoning and both model and facilitate reflective and evidence-informed practice.</p>	

<p>Social Work Managers: lead, motivate, nurture and manage a team (social workers and others), ensuring the service provided is effective, and delivering positive outcomes. They do so by managing performance and quality assurance, resources and budgets, in collaboration with others and key stakeholders. They are knowledgeable about managing social workers and others within single or multi-professional teams. They contribute and support the development of practice, procedures and policy and specifically the professional development of the team they lead. They are accountable for the practice of social workers within the team they manage, and provide or ensure effective professional and practice supervision, as well as performance appraisals, takes place. They support mentoring and coaching to enhance the quality of practice. They investigate complaints as needed. They seek to ensure team experience influences and informs the work of the organisation and that of other service providers, supporting and managing change as needed within their area of responsibility.</p>	
<p>NB this column will open new page/link on app or website</p> 	
<p>Degree of responsibility at this level</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acting as social work managers within specific and multidisciplinary teams. 2. Providing specialist professional leadership, across services or organisations, in areas such as personalisation, safeguarding, child protection, mental health/AMHP work, and the Mental Capacity Act including the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). 3. Taking responsibility and providing professional leadership around training and development of groups of staff and students, including supporting less experienced professionals to develop defendable, autonomous decision-making skills.
<p>Decision-making at this level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced social workers make professional decisions, and provide high level professional advice, involving complex practice and organisational risk. • They are able to maintain their point of view in challenging and hostile situations, articulating their position and decision-making with confidence. • They work effectively with ambiguity, and the anxiety it often engenders in others, managing this to ensure that the needs of the person using services (be they vulnerable adults or children) are clearly in focus even in situations of uncertainty. • In complex situations of risk and uncertainty, they are able to articulate and defend the decisions they make, as well as the decisions of other social workers supported by them.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They recognise when they need to intervene to make an autonomous professional decision, but also when to support and enable less confident or less experienced social workers or other professionals to take the lead in decision-making. • Where decisions involve significant organisational or reputational risks, advanced social workers should consider whether to consult social workers with a strategic level of capability.
Qualifications/roles aligned to this level (additional training and/or demonstration of capabilities may be needed)	Practice Development Educator ?
Joint statements that affect this level	<i>e.g. Joint statement with HCPC</i> <i>e.g. Joint statement with DfE – KSS Practice Supervisor?</i> <i>e.g. Joint statement with DfE – KSS Practice Lead?</i>
PCF Level of Capability (level descriptor): Strategic Social Worker	
<p>Social workers at a strategic level work to ensure that organisations are aware of and respond to the views of people who use services, families and carers, as well as the political context within which social work is delivered locally, regionally and nationally. They take responsibility for the implementation of the Standards for Employers of Social Workers. They manage and are accountable for using available resources effectively. Using a human rights and ethical framework, they support complex decision-making at a strategic level, balancing the needs of different interests. They ensure that professional social work counsel and experience are available and inform decision-making at a strategic level, supporting the organisation to do things right and also to do the 'right thing'.</p> <p>They aim to ensure that the services provided promote positive outcomes and experiences for people, families, carers, and communities. They pro-actively seek feedback from a range of sources to inform strategic decisionmaking. They provide strategic leadership to ensure effective risk management practice, through the development of excellent inter-agency collaboration and communication. Strategic leaders work across organisations with partners, at local, regional and national levels seeking out best evidence-informed or emerging practice. They support the development of social work knowledge and skills, influencing the development of the profession. They lead and initiate change within and across organisations to improve quality and outcomes.</p> <p>As with the advanced level, there are three developmental pathways: Strategic Social Work Educator, Principal Social Worker and Strategic Social Work Manager. The three pathways, or areas of expertise, whilst distinctive, will not necessarily be mutually exclusive, and many social workers will wish to develop capabilities across the pathways, reflecting their expected career progression.</p>	

Strategic Social Work Educators: take the responsibility for responding to professional development needs, including those from initiatives and policy, liaising locally, regionally and nationally to seek out best practice. They respond to learning needs that emerge from audit, analysis and serious case reviews locally and nationally. They are involved in and initiate research. They will use this information to plan change across the organisation ensuring developments dovetail with other organisational developments and priorities. They ensure that a workforce and/or academic development strategy is in place within the organisation to ensure that staff and students are equipped to deliver quality outcomes for people who use services, families and carers. This will include collating, analysing and reporting on information to measure the impact and outcomes for the workforce, organisation and the service provided. They will lead on ensuring that partnership arrangements are in place to deliver workforce or academic development requirements. They will take a pro-active stance on developing the body of social work knowledge within and outside of the organisation; they will champion research and evidence-informed practice.

Strategic Social Work Practitioners/Principal Social Workers: take a professional lead across an organisation, and have a responsibility for supporting and advising on the quality of practice. They provide professional leadership for social work practice, and continue to directly engage and work with people who use services, families and carers. They draw on this professional experience to influence strategic decision-making across the organisation. They use their knowledge and skills to inform the wider functions of the organisation, beyond social work and 'social care' boundaries. They take the responsibility for identifying and responding to new initiatives and changes in legislation and government policy. They will liaise and develop professional networks locally, regionally and nationally to identify and influence practice improvements. Principal Social Workers ensure that organisational change takes account of professional social work issues. They develop and sustain partnership arrangements with stakeholders within and across organisations. They promote and take part in developing the body of social work knowledge and research within and outside of the organisation, working in partnership to ensure that developments reflect the needs of front line practice.

Strategic Social Work Managers: are skilled managers and leaders. They work with stakeholders, including service users, carers, families and communities to deliver change and quality improvements. Professional leaders at this level are responsible for ensuring social work practice and values deliver positive outcomes. They promote local and national research and evaluation to influence and develop social work evidence-informed practice. They lead, motivate and inspire social workers and others across organisations ensuring the services provided are effective and responsive. They are knowledgeable about the communities and the political context in which they work. They promote equalities, inclusion and diversity within strategic decision-making. They advise on the impact of policy and practice for people in more excluded groups or communities. They use their influence within and across organisations working pro-actively to initiate, manage and support change within and across organisations to meet the needs of their whole community.

<p>NB this column will open new page/link on app or website</p> 	
<p>Degree of responsibility at this level</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing strategic professional leadership for social work in senior roles such as director, assistant director, principal social worker or strategic professional development and workforce lead. 2. Working and leading across and between organisations; exercising strategic influence and articulating and promoting the social work agenda; and demonstrating professional leadership. 3. Managing high levels of organisational risk relating to social work, making decisions in the most prominent and complex cases. 4. Taking responsibility for implementing the Standards for Employers of Social Workers, held by the Local Government Association, which set out the conditions of good social work practice at organisational level.
<p>Decision-making at this level</p>	<p>Exercising capability at this level is often interlinked with specific job roles or functions. However, in order to operate effectively at this level, strategic social workers must have the capability to make decisions in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic social workers operate with confidence in highly political environments, articulating social work positions with authority and clarity. • They provide leadership and authoritative direction within and outside of their organisations, managing the anxiety and ambiguity inherent in the decisions they need to make. • They make autonomous, professionally informed decisions on a regular basis, and ensure the organisation and those within it are also able to make autonomous professional decisions appropriate to their level of capability.
<p>Qualifications/roles aligned to this level (additional training and/or demonstration of capabilities may be needed)</p>	<p>?</p>
<p>Joint statements that affect this level</p>	<p><i>e.g. Joint statement with HCPC</i> <i>Joint statement with DfE – KSS Practice Lead?</i></p>

Revised Domain 9 descriptor

CURRENT

9. Professional Leadership: Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management

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

PROPOSED

9. Professional Leadership: Take responsibility for development of professional leadership appropriate to own role and status. Be proactive in selecting opportunities to model, promote or use professional leadership. Incorporate professional leadership into improving practice standards, influencing inside and outside the profession. Provide and model professional challenge of own and other's practice. Facilitate the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, and management.

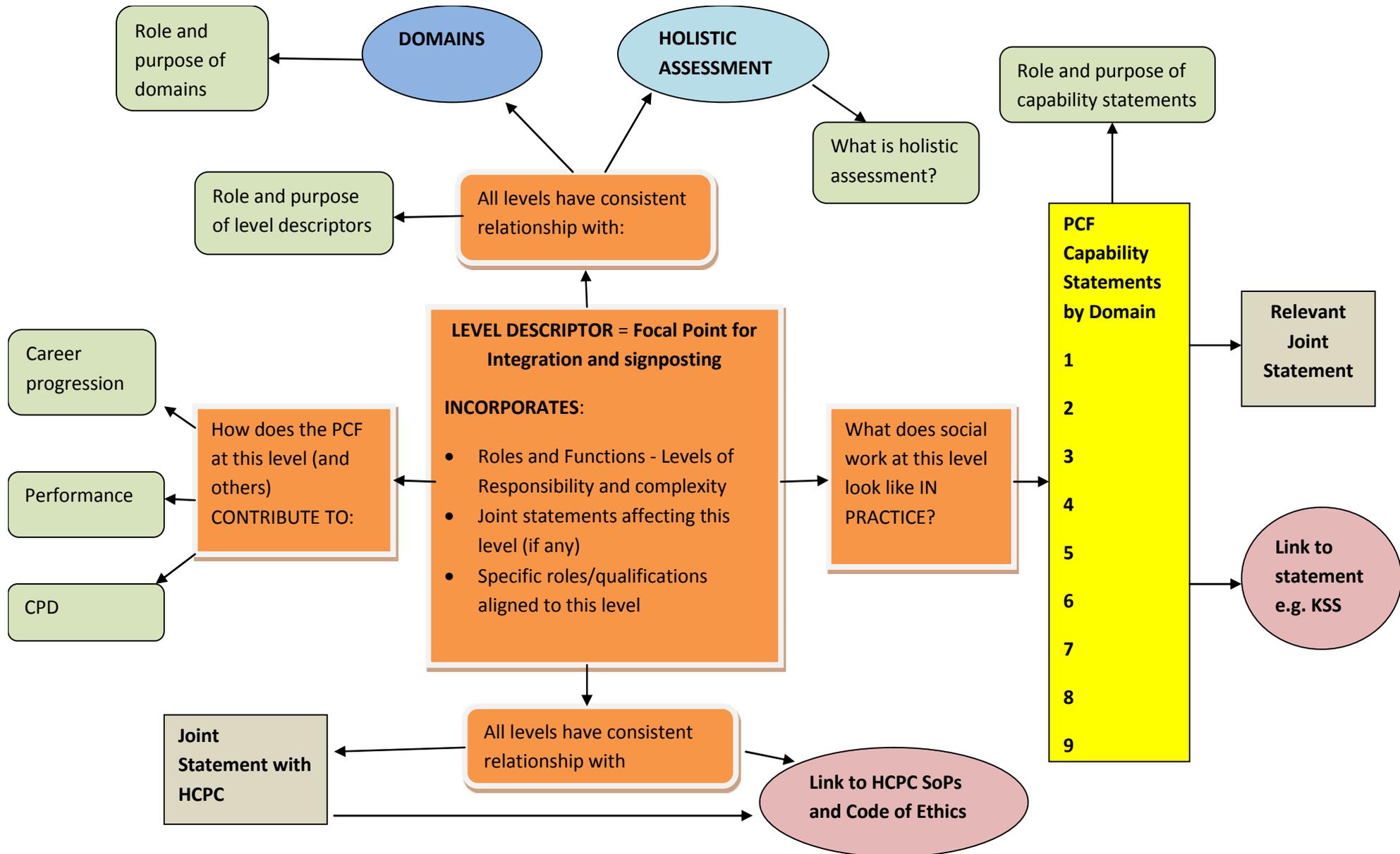
The social work profession is responsible for its own identity, values and expertise. It evolves and has impact through members of the profession increasing understanding of social work and raising standards. All social workers are responsible for ethical and excellent practice in the profession. An individual's professional leadership activities will have most impact when they are undertaken as part of a learning, practice-focused organisation. Creating the best outcomes for service users and carers will be at the heart of all professional leadership activities.

Template for joint statement

This template is used to inform the discussions between the owner/custodian of the PCF and the owner of any statements or standards linked with it. The jointly agreed responses should aim to demonstrate/confirm the relationships between the two.

What is the purpose of the (named) statement or standard?	<i>This section would outline the purpose of the (named) statement or standard in the context of the PCF e.g. to illustrate what social work in a specific setting looks in practice, to outline threshold standards for professional practice etc.</i>										
How/when was this joint statement produced?	<i>This section will enable the strategic ownership of this joint statement to be confirmed, including indicating the level of staff involved in developing it and how it was signed off within the organisations.</i>										
What is the strategic relationship between the PCF and the (named) statement or standard?	<i>This section would look specifically at the relationship between the PCF and the (named) statement or standard. It would identify whether the PCF underpins/informs the (named) statement or standard, with links (as appropriate) to any detailed mapping that has been done. The visual grid below will help illustrate that the PCF is a full professional framework while the (named) statement or standard is only likely to relate to parts of it.</i>										
Where the PCF directly underpins the (named) statement or standard, which Levels and Domains of the PCF does it cover and/or extend?	Levels of PCF extended	Domains covered and/or extended									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	Point of qualification										
	ASYE										
	Social Worker										
	Experienced Social Worker										
	Advanced Social Worker										
Strategic Social Worker											
How does the (named) statement or standard strengthen capabilities in these domains and at these levels?	<i>This section would provide added detail about the purpose of extending the PCF in specific contexts and settings and demonstrate continuity between the PCF and the additional (named) statements or standards.</i>										

<p>How do the PCF and the (named) statement or standard work together in order to make specific decisions?</p>	<p><i>This section would address the methods for assessment and/or decision-making (e.g. Fitness to Practice) currently available or planned that relate to the (named) statement or standard. This would acknowledge, where appropriate, that an assessment of capability uses assessment criteria based on the (named) statement or standard and/or the PCF.</i></p>
<p>When will this joint statement be reviewed?</p>	<p><i>There should be plans for keeping this joint statement under review, taking into account possible changes in assessment arrangements or the (named) statement or standard itself.</i></p>



Section 4 Appendices

1. Membership of main groups

a. PCF Advisory Stakeholder Group (PASG)

Name	Organisation
Keith Wright	Department of Health
Bekah Little	Department for Education
Isabelle Trowler	Chief Social Worker
Lyn Romeo	Chief Social Worker
Annie Hudson (CHAIR)	TCSW
Tracey Cooper	Learn to Care
Angela Whitford	Learn to Care
Nicole Casey	HCPC
Mary Keating	Skills for Care
Joan Beck	ADASS
Yolanda Dennehy	ADASS
Jo Davidson	ADCS
Colin Pettigrew	ADCS
David Cundy	SCIE
Samantha Baron	JSWEC
Prof. Di Bailey	APSW
Prof. Tim Kelly	APSW
Suzanne Hudson	LGA
Jon Sutcliffe	LGA
Maris Stratulis	BASW
Kate Morris	RAKE (TCSW)

b. PCF Working Group (PWG)

Name	Network represented
Nikki Burton	Professional Assembly TCSW
Pat Higham	Adults Faculty TCSW
Ruth Allen	Mental Health Faculty TCSW
Brigid Featherstone/June Thoburn	Child & Family Faculty TCSW
Dame Lorna Boreland-Kelly	PCF QA and Monitoring Group TCSW
Claire Barcham	PCF QA and Monitoring Group TCSW
Brendan Clifford	Adult Principal Social Worker Network
Lee Pardy-McLaughlin	Principal Child and Family Social Worker Network

c. PCF Quality Assurance and Monitoring group

Name	Organisation
Amanda Thorpe	University of Bedfordshire
Cheryl Wall	Skills for care
Claire Barcham (also on PWG)	PCF QA and Monitoring Group
Claire Gregory	Learn to Care
Graham Wilkin	Surrey County Council/Independent

Hilary Burgess	Higher Education Academy
Jakki Cowley	
Jill Scholl	Carer Rep
Lorna Boreland-Kelly (also on PWG)	Chair - PCF QA and Monitoring Group
Mandy Nightingale	Essex Council
Mary Keating (also PASG)	Skills for Care
Mike Bush	Service User
Rachael Willis	Practitioner Lancashire
Steve Porter	SEPT
Suzanne Hudson (also PASG)	Local Government Association
Wendy Allen	Learn to Care

2. Additional documents available for new owner/custodian of the PCF

- Full collated feedback from consultation events in London, Birmingham, Leeds and Taunton.
- SurveyMonkey report – professional survey
- SurveyMonkey report - service user and carers survey
- Notes on two sessions held with practice educators
- Notes on one session held with service users and carers
- Response from BASW to online survey
- Written feedback to early draft of this report