

What you need to know about mandatory registration

New Zealand is shifting to mandatory registration of all social workers by 27 February 2021. As of that date, only those registered by the Social Workers Registration Board can call themselves social workers, following a change to the law. It's the SWRB's role to ensure the safety of members of the public and to enhance professionalism of social workers – being registered is part of having the system in place to make that happen.

Who must be registered

You need to be registered if you:

- call yourself a social worker,
- are known as a social worker, or
- are held out to be a social worker

Who would we advise to register:

If you have a social work qualification¹ and work in social services, the SWRB would advise, and best practice is, that you would become registered. You are in all likelihood using your social work skills and knowledge in the role, and you can be practising social work even if it is not in your job title (see below for what is social work practice).

For employers - if your employee has a social work qualification¹ and works in social services, the SWRB's advice, and best practice, is they would become registered for the above reasons.

By having registered social workers, it shows your organisation supports and stands behind a fully professional workforce which adheres to the SWRB's Code of Conduct. By supporting a registered social worker, regardless of whether the position is called social work, you know your staff is required to meet the standards set by the profession. That helps to build trust and shows the public you take your obligations to public safety seriously.

What is social work practice?

Practising social work can include any one or more of the following:

- working directly with clients, including whānau, hapū and community
- being involved with casework decisions at any level
- managing and/or supervising other social workers
- if you apply your social work values, skills, ethics, and knowledge in your role
- teaching social work practice or theory
- developing policy that impacts upon social work practice

A Scope of Practice is being developed with the sector which will describe social work in Aoteroa.

Extensive practical social work experience

If you have extensive social work experience in New Zealand, (10-15 years or longer), but not a recognised social work qualification¹, you may be eligible to apply to become registered under the SWRB's [Experience pathway: S13](#). We want you to know that your skills, knowledge, networks, and contribution are valued and will be taken into account when you apply. You are welcome to apply in Te Reo Māori.

More info

There is lots more information on the SWRB website on registrations, including FAQs. Check out this [link](https://swrb.govt.nz/social-workers/). (<https://swrb.govt.nz/social-workers/>)

¹ A NZ social work qualification or overseas equivalent that is [recognised](#) by the SWRB.