

Scope of Social Work Practice Consultation Report

Introduction

Thank you to everyone who contributed feedback on the draft Scope of Practice. As part of the consultation and engagement process, we conducted two open zoom question and answer sessions and one zoom session requested by Oranga Tamariki's Professional Practice Group. Sessions were well represented by Scope of Practice Working group members who co-facilitated a short presentation and were available to answer and discuss participants' questions.

We had a total of 60 participants in these sessions. In addition, we received a number of written and oral submissions. Written submissions included a mix of group/ organisational, and individual submissions.

The vast majority of participants provided very positive responses to the structure of the Scope statement: the inclusion of the Pepeha and the Niho Taniwha kaupapa; Practice Lens; and Practice Statement. Contributors provided thoughtful and constructive comments and suggestions.

Approach to incorporating feedback

All feedback was organized into themes and sub-sections and then fully considered by the Working group.

The Working group's approach to deciding what feedback to include was informed by several factors including:

1. The number of submissions requesting a change, compared with the number of submissions expressing that they were happy with it as it stood.
2. Consideration of companion documents available to provide the detail that some respondents requested in order to maintain the need to keep the Scope statement high level.
3. Consideration of the flow of ideas from one section to the next.

Final Scope of Practice

Many of the suggestions from feedback have been incorporated into the final Scope of Practice, including re-ordering several paragraphs to strengthen the Practice Description's introduction and description, and to improve flow.

The Scope of Practice has been written to reflect the principles and high-level purpose of our work in common across the breadth of social work roles.

The Scope of Practice does not sit alone. Along with the Global Definition of Social Work, and regional amplification, ANZASW has developed a resource called 'Social Work Explained' in collaboration with social work members which will sit alongside the Scope of Practice. See link here: <https://anzasw.nz/social-work-explained/>

The Scope of Practice is deliberately a high-level description – supported by the Social Work Explained document. Many social workers also work within an organisational practice framework describing their specific practice context in more detail.

The Scope of Practice references social work qualifications, theory, knowledge, ethics and the regulatory context, including accountability requirements for demonstrating competency. This distinguishes social work practice from other professions and provides the link between the Scope of Practice and the regulatory system within which it is located.

The Social Workers Registration Act (the Act) identifies the Scope of Practice as a *description* of the services of social work. Section 5A(1) of the Act says the SWRB can determine this as it sees fit, including in one or more of the following ways:

- by reference to words commonly understood by people working in the social work services sector
- by reference to an area of social science or learning
- by reference to tasks commonly performed
- by reference to individual, interpersonal, or community needs to be alleviated.

Q and A's in response to feedback

Is the scope of practice a definition of social work?

Some feedback on the draft Scope of Practice referred to it as a definition of social work. The Scope of Practice is a *description* of social work, not a definition. As noted, the SWRB recognises the Global Definition of Social Work and the Asia/Pacific Amplification, and this will sit within companion documentation to accompany the Scope of Practice.

What parts of the Scope of Practice will be included in the Gazette Notice?

The whole statement – Whakatauki, Pepeha, Practice Lens and Practice Description together make up the Scope of Practice that has been Gazetted.

What is the New Zealand Gazette?

'The New Zealand Gazette' is the official newspaper of the New Zealand government. It is an authoritative journal of constitutional record and contains official commercial and government notifications that are required by legislation to be published'. Ref. <https://gazette.govt.nz/about-us/>

What are prescribed qualifications?

Amendments to the Social Workers Registration Act (the Act) commencing on the 27th February 2021 include Gazetting a Scope of Practice and the qualifications prescribed for the Scope of Practice. These are the Aotearoa New Zealand social work qualifications that are recognised by the SWRB as delivering social work programmes that meet the requirements of social worker registration.

What about social workers with overseas social work qualifications, or who are registered via S13 the Experience Pathway?

Social workers who are registered via section 7 of the Act 'Entitlement to registration of overseas qualified social workers', have a qualification that has been recognised as equivalent to a prescribed qualification for a scope of practice.

Social workers who are registered via section 13 of the Act 'Experience Pathway', are assessed as having enough practical experience to compensate for the lack of a recognised social work qualification.

Does protection of the title 'social worker' mean my job has to be titled social worker?

There was some feedback expressing concern that the Scope of Practice would not apply to a social worker if their job title doesn't include the words 'social worker'.

The concept of title protection included in the amended Act means registered social workers can legally be known as/hold themselves out to be or be held out by others as a social worker if they are registered as a social worker.

It does not mean their job title has to be called 'social worker'.

One of the reasons for keeping the Scope of Practice high level, is to ensure social workers who are working in roles such as lecturer/tutor, manager, supervisor, policy advisor, coordinator, navigator, researcher etc. can still see themselves included.

SWRB advice is that anyone with a recognised social work qualification, working in social services and using their social work knowledge and skills to deliver services and / or influence the practice of social workers at any level (directly or indirectly), is deemed to be practising social work and should be registered. The SWRB Website provides some guidance here <https://swrb.govt.nz/social-workers/practising/practising-certificate/>

Scopes of Practice for different fields of practice?

The General Scope of Practice applies across all fields of practice. It is usual for a Scope of Practice to have a qualification pathway associated with it. For example, different types of psychologists – psychologist, clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, educational Psychologist. Each has a different post graduate qualification associated with it.

At the moment, the SWRB recognises a general social work qualification that enables social workers to work across any field of practice as a beginning practitioner.

The General Scope of Practice is regarded as a foundational Scope of Practice. The SWRB may consider the development of further Scopes of Practice in the future.

How do social workers see themselves in the Scope of Practice – the Practice Lens?

The Practice Lens acknowledges the breadth of perspectives that inform social work practice. Each social worker's practice is informed by their culture, knowledge, experience, and worldview. The lens statement also acknowledges the field of practice each social worker works within. The field of practice is included in the Practice Lens, to acknowledge the practice context within which they work, and any organisational practice frameworks associated with this.

The Practice Lens introduces the Practice Statement. All social workers are expected to work within the principles, values and standards referred to in the Practice Statement.

What do we mean by paradigms in the practice lens section?

The word paradigm is used as it is inclusive of all the contributing philosophies and approaches that inform a social worker's practice. It includes the social worker's '*...cultural lens and through the lens of their field of practice, knowledge, experience, and worldview*'.

How do the sections relate to one another within the Scope of Practice?

The Scope of Practice begins with a whakatauki, gifted by Matua Kereama Warren, SWRB Kahui Chair. It sets the scene for the Pepeha which describes the Niho Taniwha kaupapa. This is included to bring the essential components of a tangata whenua perspective to the scope korero in a way that upholds the authenticity of the tipuna korero. It is one way of doing this, and the Tangata Whenua Caucus of the Working group acknowledges that it is not the only way.

The Practice Lens links the Pepeha with the Practice Statement. The Practice Statement describes at a high level, the principles and elements of practice that are common to all social workers and includes reference to responsibilities and accountabilities. It is the place where social workers share knowledge, and it represents the shared space between different paradigms.

Why the Niho Taniwha kaupapa?

The whakatauki is significant as it talks about bringing the wisdom of the past into the present. The Niho Taniwha kaupapa has a relationship and a history with social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, both in the people who brought it to social work, and in how it was used as a competency process for the Tangata Whenua Takawaenga Caucus members.

The value of the Niho Taniwha kaupapa is it brings in the tipuna korero, with John Bradley and koro Turoa Haronga (life members of ANZASW) being responsible for its adaptation and practice to enhance mana motuhake. The Niho Taniwha kaupapa provided a marae and tikanga-based process to the assessment of social work competence.

Overall approach to development of an Aotearoa-specific Scope of Practice

The concept of Te Ara Whiria, Braided Rivers developed by Angus MacFarlane, which values each worldview, joins together in an agreed way before resuming its own path, and is a metaphor for the way the Scope of Practice has been developed.