



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

Scope of Social Work Practice

Discussion document

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Introduction

We are pleased to introduce this Scope of Practice discussion document to you.

We know there has been a lot of discussion within the sector about the Scope of Social Work Practice over the last few years, and it means different things to different people – reflective of the wide range of views represented in social work within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Social workers now have an opportunity to engage in the development of a general scope of practice specific to the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

It is important that you have your say in developing the Scope of Practice as this will be a foundation stone for social work in Aotearoa New Zealand going forward.

The Scope of Practice will help identify when a social worker requires a practising certificate.

We want to ensure the Scope of Practice represents the views of social workers. We encourage as many of you as possible to use this opportunity to discuss the Scope of Practice in peer groups and your communities. This document outlines our approach to this work, and the context within which the Scope will sit for social work practise in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We have included some questions to help you think about what the Scope of Practice might need to include on page 8 of this document.

Please share this document with social workers who may not yet be registered.

If you would like to discuss this with us, either as an individual or as part of a team or community, please email us at consultation@swrb.govt.nz or phone us on 04 931 2650.

If you would like to provide your input via Survey Monkey, please click on the link below <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DNK7WH2>. Please note that there is a word limit for each question if you use this option.

We will post fortnightly updates on the SWRB website, with a summary of feedback we have received through Survey Monkey, email and via direct contact with social workers. We will organise updates around the questions outlined on page 8. We have developed some FAQs which will also be available on our website and we will update these as questions come through to us.

Please provide your feedback by **20 March 2020**.

Once we have collated and analysed feedback, we will circulate a draft Scope of Practice to the sector before the middle of 2020, and social workers will have an opportunity to provide further feedback on this before we finalise it.

Background

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) was established following the passing of the Social Workers Registration Act in 2003. At the time, social work registration was voluntary and social work was still undergoing a journey from having a largely unqualified workforce to a more professional and

qualified one. Over the following few years government signalled an intention to shift to mandatory registration. In early 2019 mandatory registration for social workers was included in legislation and it will come into effect in February 2021.

Fundamental to the intent of the amended legislation is that a social worker is identified as such by their eligibility for registration as a social worker, rather than the title of their job.

Social workers who have a recognised New Zealand social work qualification and/or meet the eligibility criteria for registration through another pathway, can apply for social work registration (please see the SWRB website for more information on social work registration and the changes to mandatory registration).

From the 27th of February 2021, only registered social workers will be able to call themselves a social worker in Aotearoa New Zealand. If you are practising social work, you will need to hold a current practising certificate.

Social workers have until 27 February 2021 to become registered.

Some of you will have been involved in previous work led by the SWRB to develop a definition and scope of practice for social work in 2016-17. Following engagement with the sector at the time, a general scope of practice was developed (see page 9 of this document).

In submissions to the Select Committee¹ on the proposed amendments to the Act in 2018, many respondents recommended that a scope of practice be provided for in legislation. There were also a number of submissions supportive of adopting the International Federation of Social Workers' (IFSW) definition of social work and the Asia Pacific amplification of this (see page 8 of this document).

The role of the SWRB

The SWRB was established to ensure the purpose and functions described in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 are carried out, and the social work sector achieves the recognition it should have as a regulated profession.

The SWRB sets professional and practice standards for social work, assesses competence, and registers social workers to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The SWRB prescribes standards for social work education programmes, recognises social work education qualifications and carries out monitoring of education programmes to ensure standards are being met.

The SWRB also addresses concerns raised and resolves complaints about registered social workers' practice.

¹ See the following link to the submissions received to the Select Committee on including a scope of practice in the legislation.
https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/BILL_74844/tab/submissionsandadvice
https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-Z/52SCSS_EVI_74844_765/bc5bfc499b98a6dc6cc6a90a229aebc64d7d2534

The SWRB is a Crown Entity. As a Crown Entity², the SWRB has several government reporting and monitoring requirements to meet. The Minister of Social Development has overall responsibility for the SWRB, and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is responsible for monitoring our work.

Why is the SWRB developing a scope of practice?

Amendments to the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (SWRA) which came into law in February 2019³ include a requirement for the SWRB to develop a scope (or scopes) of practice to ‘...*describe services that are performed by the social work profession*’.⁴ The Act outlines the options for the approach the SWRB can take to develop the Scope of Practice.

Part 1A of the SWRA has been written to align with wording in the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA)⁵, as recommended by a number of submissions received from the sector on the recent changes to the legislation.

As many social workers work alongside other health professionals in their daily work, this alignment of approach to development of a general scope of practice provides some consistency across professions.

The general scope of practice applies across multiple fields of practice

A general scope of practice is a high-level description of social work practice⁶⁷. It supports a shared identity for social workers across different work settings (fields of practice) and establishes a common understanding of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The premise is that all registered social workers have similar core skills and knowledge. The field/context in which they practise will determine what additional skills and knowledge are required within that specific field of practice.

A number of health professions in Aotearoa New Zealand have developed scopes of practice in addition to a general scope, however, these have recognised qualification pathways that align with them.

For example, nurses have three scopes of practice – enrolled nurse, registered nurse and nurse practitioner. Psychologists have multiple qualification pathways and scopes as do dentists and doctors.

² Crown Entities Act 2004 <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2004/0115/latest/DLM329631.html>

³ Social Workers Registration Act 2003 <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0017/latest/DLM189915.html>

⁴ (Part 1A Scopes of practice for social work profession and prescribed qualifications, Social Workers Registration Act 2003, section 5A Board to determine scopes of practice for social work profession (1). <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0017/latest/LMS165943.html>

⁵ Health Practitioners' Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA) <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0048/latest/DLM203312.html>

⁶ British Columbia College of Social Workers - Scope of Practice <http://www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca/registrants/scope-of-practice/>

⁷ Scope it right Working to top of scope literature review Mental health and addiction workforce. Page 10 <https://www.tepou.co.nz/uploads/files/resource-assets/scope-it-right-literature-review.pdf>

Development of a general scope of practice provides the social work profession with a foundation from which to consider other scopes and their qualification pathways in the future.

What should a general scope of practice include?

A general scope of practice for social work describes at a high level, the:

- activities of social work – including the breadth of social work practice/roles
- purpose of social work – the needs social workers address in their work/the outcome being sought from social work intervention
- methods of social work - how social workers do their work, including reference to the knowledge, skills, interventions and strategies social workers use⁸.

For Aotearoa New Zealand, the Scope of Practice will be informed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document of our nation, our laws and codes, including the ANZASW Code of Ethics, and the definition of social work (see 'Global Definition of Social Work' section below).

The detailed knowledge, skills, ethics and values required of social workers will be described in the SWRB Code of Conduct and Competence Standards, and the ANZASW Code of Ethics.

How is social work practise determined?

A social worker is deemed to be practising social work when they are using their social work knowledge, skills, ethics and values in their work, and when this work affects or influences casework decisions directly or in the future⁹. This may be:

- direct work with people and communities where a social worker may have the employment title of social worker; navigator; whānau worker; youth worker; community worker; drug and alcohol worker; counsellor; programme facilitator; services coordinator; etc. or
- work that influences the practice social workers or social work students now or in the future. Some examples of roles social workers may have are supervisor; manager; social work researcher; policy advisor; social work educator etc.

What a general scope of practice is not

Therefore, a general scope of practice is not a description of restricted activities or tasks (i.e. carried out only by social workers). Restricted activities¹⁰ are described by the Ministry of Health as those which can

⁸ Position Paper on Scopes of Practice. The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. Page 2 discusses the purpose of a scope of practice <https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Position-Paper-on-Scopes-of-Practice-2018-revised-20180626.pdf>

⁹ Interpretation of s 25 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2013 (link to be added). Previous decisions of the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal discussing this issue are available on the SWRB's website.

¹⁰ Restricted Activities description by MoH website in relation to the HPCA Act.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/health-practitioners-competence-assurance-act/restricted-activities-under-act>

only be performed competently and safely by a particular professional to avoid serious public risk or permanent harm.

Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) - Code of Ethics/ Ko te Tauākī Tikanga

The ANZASW and Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association are the professional bodies supporting social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Representatives of both professional bodies have provided input into the development of this document.

A Code of Ethics was developed by ANZASW for the profession in 1964 and has been updated from time to time. The latest update was published in August 2019 (see <https://anzasw.nz/code-of-ethics-2019/>).

The SWRB has referred to the ANZASW Code of Ethics in the development of the Code of Conduct and 10 Core Competence Standards, and recognises this document as representing the ethical framework for the profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Code of Ethics has been written to ensure consistency with the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles.

As not all social workers are members of ANZASW, it is important that the SWRB formally adopts the Code of Ethics as the ethical position for the profession in Aotearoa, and it is included as an explicit part of regulation. ANZASW has given permission for the SWRB to use the Code of Ethics for this purpose.

How will the Scope of Practice work together with the Code of Conduct, Core Competence Standards and ANZASW Code of Ethics?

The SWRB Code of Conduct and Core Competence Standards will be reviewed by the SWRB in 2020 to ensure they align with: the Scope of Practice; ANZASW updated Code of Ethics; the amended Social Workers Registration Act; and any other relevant legislation and information. We will be seeking sector feedback on amendments to the Code of Conduct and Core Competence Standards as part of our review process.

The SWRB's commitment to working competently with Māori is currently reflected in Core Competence Standard 1, Principle 2 of the Code of Conduct and the ANZASW Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the Code of Ethics document. When we review of the Code of Conduct and Core Competence Standards, we will also review how the profession's commitment to Māori is reflected in all SWRB documents.

Definition of Social Work

Aotearoa New Zealand is part of a global social work network called the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). Representatives from this country have contributed to development of a global definition of social work. An Asia Pacific regional amplification of the definition has been developed to emphasise social work values that are important to the countries involved.

Joint Global Definition of Social Work

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

IFSW Joint Amplification of the Global Definition for Asia, Pacific Region

Professional social work in the Asia Pacific Region has an emphasis on:

- *Realising the care and compassion of our Profession in ensuring that all people are provided with adequate social protection so that their needs are met, and human rights and dignity safeguarded;*
- *Recognising the importance of faith, spirituality and/or religion in people’s lives and holding respect for varying belief systems;*
- *The celebration of diversity and peaceful negotiation of conflict;*
- *Affirming the region’s indigenous and local knowledges and practices alongside critical and research-based practice/practice-based research approaches to social work practice;*
- *Encouraging innovative, sustainable social work and social development practices in the preservation of our environment*

Contributing to development of the Scope of Practice

The Scope of Practice developed in 2017 is included at the end of this document for your reference. We have also included several examples of health practitioner general scopes of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We anticipate social workers will have different perspectives on wording for the Scope of Practice. We invite your thoughts on what is important to include.

Please refer to page 3 for our contact details and link to Survey Monkey.

Scope of Practice – questions to guide development

1. Purpose: What are the individual, interpersonal, and community needs social work aims to alleviate, and what is the desired outcome of the work?
2. What do social workers do? (encompasses the range of settings and roles - supervisors, managers, policy advisers, researchers, educators etc.)
3. What are the methods social workers use in their practice? (thinking about what unique contributions social workers bring to a team - multi/inter-disciplinary team?)
4. Anything else you think is important to include?

Please have feedback to us by 20 March 2020. Email address consultation@swrb.govt.nz

SWRB draft General Scope of Social Work Practice as developed in 2017 (for reference)

Does this description answer the questions above?

If not, what is missing or might need rewording?

Social workers are registered professionals who are educated to work collaboratively with clients and communities to assess, manage and evaluate individual and interpersonal situations incorporating analysis of environmental, cultural, structural, societal and economic issues. Social work seeks to enable and empower people and their communities to address life challenges, enhance well-being and challenge societal barriers. Across a variety of practice settings, social workers use indigenous, social sciences and humanities knowledge, social work theories, skills, strategies and interventions. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work practice.

Social workers assess and manage risk, trauma and safety and apply critical thinking and professional judgment.

Social workers create and review social policy, undertake socio-political research, community development, community organising, networking and advocacy in relation to social justice, poverty and inequality.

Social workers use their expertise in professional and/or team leadership, social work management, supervision, coaching, mentoring, teaching and tutoring social work, and advisory roles.

Such practice is undertaken in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi based practice, the IFSW IASSW joint definition of social work, the Social Work Registration Board's Code of Conduct and 10 core competencies, the ANZASW's Code of Ethics and within the generally accepted standards relevant to the individual social worker's area of practice and level of expertise. leadership, management, supervision, coaching, mentoring, teaching and tutoring social work, and advisory roles.

Aotearoa New Zealand examples of health profession Scopes of Practice

Registered Nurse Scope of Practice

Registered nurses utilise nursing knowledge and complex nursing judgment to assess health needs and provide care, and to advise and support people to manage their health. They practise independently and in collaboration with other health professionals, perform general nursing functions, and delegate to and direct enrolled nurses, health care assistants and others. They provide comprehensive assessments to develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated plan of health care, and provide interventions that require substantial scientific and professional knowledge, skills and clinical decision making. This occurs in a range of settings in partnership with individuals, families, whānau and communities.

Registered nurses may practise in a variety of clinical contexts depending on their educational preparation and practice experience. Registered nurses may also use this expertise to manage, teach, evaluate and research nursing practice. Registered nurses are accountable for ensuring all health services they provide are consistent with their education and assessed competence, meet legislative requirements and are supported by appropriate standards.

There will be conditions placed in the scope of practice of some registered nurses according to their qualifications or experience limiting them to a specific area of practice. Some nurses who have completed the required additional experience, education and training will be authorised by the Council to prescribe some medicines within their competence and area of practice.

The Nursing Council's Competencies for Registered Nurses describe the skills and activities of registered nurses.

General Scope of Practice: Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapists are registered health professionals, who use processes of enabling occupation to optimise human activity and participation in all life domains across the lifespan, and thus promote the health and well-being of individuals, groups, and communities. These life domains include learning and applying knowledge; general tasks and demands; communication; mobility; self-care; domestic life; interpersonal interaction and relationships; major life areas; and community, social and civic life.

Enabling occupation incorporates the application of knowledge, principles, methods and procedures related to understanding, predicting, ameliorating or influencing peoples' participation in occupations within these life domains. Such practice is evidence-based*, undertaken in accordance with the Occupational Therapy Board's prescribed Competencies and Code of Ethics, and within the individual therapist's area and level of expertise.

General Scope of Practice: Physiotherapist

Physiotherapy provides services to individuals and populations to develop, maintain, restore and optimise health and function throughout the lifespan. This includes providing services to people compromised by ageing, injury, disease or environmental factors. Physiotherapy identifies and maximises quality of life and movement potential by using the principles of promotion, prevention,

treatment/intervention, habilitation and rehabilitation. This encompasses physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being.

Physiotherapy involves the interaction between physiotherapists, patients/clients, other health professionals, families/whanau, care givers, and communities. This is a people-centred process where needs are assessed and goals are agreed using the knowledge and skills of physiotherapists.

Physiotherapists are registered health practitioners who are educated to practise autonomously by applying scientific knowledge and clinical reasoning to assess, diagnose and manage human function.

The practice of physiotherapy is not confined to clinical practice, and encompasses all roles that a physiotherapist may assume such as patient/client care, health management, research, policy making, educating and consulting, wherever there may be an issue of public health and safety.