



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

USE OF PERSONAL NAMES

POLICY

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Relevant legislation and related policies:

- Social Workers Registration Act 2003
- Privacy Act 2020
- Public Record Act 2005
- Guidance notes: Certifying documents for registration applicants
- Information Management Policy (under review)
- Policy for maintaining the Register (under development)

Introduction

1. A person has the right (in common law) to be known by any name they wish, provided it is not for deceit.¹ A person can also use multiple names at any time for various reasons, whether it be an official name, a preferred name, a tribal name, an alias, or using a middle name instead of the first name.
2. However, the Board collects and uses different types of names for different purposes. It is also the Board's legal obligation to collect² and publish³ information on the Register of all registered social workers, including their names.
3. These activities support one of the legislative purposes⁴ of the Act: to protect the safety of members of the public, by prescribing or providing mechanisms to ensure social workers are accountable for the way in which they practice. Information about registered social workers should be published to the extent that supports these purposes while ensuring their privacy is protected.
4. An official name is used to validate the authenticity of an identity, i.e. a registered social worker, against an authorised data source, e.g. a birth certificate or a passport. The social worker's preferred name is displayed on the Public Register and practising certificate.

Purpose

5. This policy outlines the guidelines for recording, using, and presenting the names of registered social workers. Following this policy will:
 - i. Provide clarity on the types of names that are registered and published, and the requirements for name changes.

¹ Department of Internal Affairs, *Good practice guidance for the recording and use of personal names*, August 2014, pg 5

² Section 123 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

³ Section 135 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

⁴ Section 3 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

- ii. Enhance assurance of data quality and verification of identity and other attributes .
- iii. Ensure the Board maintains an accurate Register that enables members of the public to identify registered social workers and hold them accountable.

Scope

- 6. This policy applies to all applicants for registration and all social workers on the Register kept by the Board.

Guiding principles

- 7. Unless otherwise specified, all official documents issued by the Board should display the social worker's official name, with the preferred name in brackets. These documents include Tribunal decisions, Certificates of Good Standing, and other official documents for verification purposes, etc.
- 8. A preferred name should be used or displayed in other situations, including the Public Register or services that include a communication channel for registered social workers, e.g., user interface, emails or newsletters.
- 9. The use and display of names must remain consistent. All name elements are recorded in separate fields in the Internal Register. The first name, middle name, and last name of each social worker are recorded separately in their profile on the Internal Register.
- 10. In order to distinguish individuals with the same names, the Board may require them to add an initial of their preferred name on the Public Register.

Evidence of Names

- 11. All applicants for registration must provide evidence of their identity whereby their official name is validated against an authorised data source.
- 12. The Board's requirement for proof of identity aligns with the requirement of New Zealand for Police vetting, which specifies one primary and one secondary form of identification, one of which must be photographic.⁵ A certified copy of the primary and secondary forms of identification must be submitted. Alternatively, the Board may use online tools such as [REALME](#) to verify personal identity. This personal information will be stored, retained, and disposed according to the Board's Information Management Policy.

⁵ The NZ Police proof of identity requirement can be found in the 'Guide to completing the consent and request form' document on the the [NZ Police forms and guides web page](#)

13. Every social worker will be registered under their official name, which will serve as their anchor name. They must also provide their preferred names and previous names, which will be linked to their official names. All names are recorded in the Internal Register.

Registers of social workers

14. Every social worker's full personal details, including their official name, preferred name, and any other preferred names (current and past), will be stored and visible in the Internal Register.
15. Only the social worker's preferred name will be visible on the [Public Register](#).

Searching the Public Register

16. It is essential that members of the public can locate the correct entry when searching the Public Register. For this reason, a social worker who chooses to display their preferred name on the Public Register must inform us, in writing, of the name they use when practising social work. More details are specified in the next section (paragraphs 22 to 28).
17. Employers will also need to be able to establish a connection between a social worker's official and preferred names. Therefore, they can search the Public Register using the social worker's preferred name or official name, and the search result will show the entry under their preferred name.

Supporting documentation for change of official names or previous names

18. If the applicant's official registration name is different from their previous name, they must provide proof of name change. In this case, they should provide a name change certificate and a copy of their new birth certificate. Both documents must also show the person's previous name.
19. Any social worker may elect to change the name under which they are registered at any time for any lawful reason. They must notify the Board in writing within 1 month of the name change.
20. The Board may request the applicant or the social worker to provide reasons, in writing, for changing their official name.

21. If the official name is completely changed, they must provide a copy of their new birth certificate or name change certificate. Both documents must also show the person's previous name.

Using a preferred name on Public Register

Applicants requesting to use a preferred name

22. The option to use a preferred name on the Public Register is available during the registration process. They should declare that they intend to practise under the specified preferred name and affirm that they have no intention to deceive in using the specified preferred name.
23. An applicant should provide supporting documentation to the Board to use a preferred name on the Public Register, whether it is a derivative of their official name or a different name.
24. Supporting document includes correspondence from the current employer or supervisor confirming the name they practise under, the name under the supervision agreement, or they are employed under.
25. If they elect to practise under the name after their marriage or civil union, they need to provide a Copy of Particulars of Marriage or Civil Union, in addition to the document mentioned in paragraph 23.

Registered social workers requesting to change their preferred name

26. Any social worker may change the preferred name they practise as a social worker. As in the case of changing their official name, they must notify the Board in writing within 1 month of the name change.
27. They need to provide supporting documentation mentioned in paragraphs 24 and 25.
28. The Board may request the applicant or the social worker to provide reasons, in writing, for changing their preferred name.

Definitions/Glossary of abbreviations

Social Workers Registration Board	The Board
Social Workers Registration Act 2003	The Act
Register	the list of records of registered social workers that the Board keeps. It includes information in respect of each registrant outlined in section 123 of the Act .
Internal Register	the private list of records of registered social workers that the Board keeps.
Public Register	the external list of records of registered social workers accessible to the public at https://my.swrb.govt.nz/ Web/Public/Public-Register.aspx . Members of the public can search to confirm whether a social worker is registered, holds a valid practising certificate, and whether there are any conditions on their registration or practising certificate.
Social worker	a person who is registered under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 as a social worker
Official name:	or official registered name, is a personal name which can be validated against an authoritative source such as a birth certificate, citizenship certificate, or passport. This name can only be changed using official processes.
Preferred name:	the name a registered social worker wishes to be addressed by. This can be an official name, a married/civil union name, a tribal name or using a middle name instead of the first name. A preferred name can also be described as an 'assumed name', which is defined as any other name used by a person provided it is not for the purposes of deceit.
Declaration:	a declaration made under a person's official name that declares their intention to use a specified preferred name for their social work practise.

