

South East London  
Social Work Reform Group  
Partnership

Skills for Care

Social Work practice  
and interpersonal skills in  
community empowerment

Course handbook



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## 1. About the course

The community development sessions of this course aims to provide social work managers with the key knowledge and skills in promoting 'social work in the community' within their organisations, departments and teams. The following areas will be covered.

- How does the *Caring for our Future* White Paper relate to 'social work in the community'?
- Understanding of what we mean by the following terms community; community social work; community empowerment; Big Society; social capital and community development.
- Improving your knowledge of the community you work in - undertaking a community profile - community audit of services and resources.
- Working with their local community and voluntary sector - accessing local community services and resources - partnership working.
- Community social work: applying the models and skills to practice.
- Community development: applying the models and skills to practice.
- Learning the lessons from the Social Work Practice pilot sites.
- The way forward - opportunities and challenges.

## 2. Learning outcomes

At the end of the course learners will be able to:

- Contribute to and promote the development of practice, taking the initiative to test new approaches
- Apply concepts of active citizenship, inclusion and community empowerment to their social work practice.
- Assist individual and families to formulate creative care and support plans through sign posting and self help
- Apply key concepts from systemic and psychodynamic theory in analysing and addressing some of the dynamics at play in the relationship with service users families, carers and other professionals
- Take an active role in inter-professional and inter-agency work, building own network and collaborative working
- Show enhanced skills in use of self in working with adults, identifying strengths and areas for development
- Demonstrate greater confidence and skills in being a reflective practitioner and using supervision to strengthen and develop their practice.

## 3. Reading list

### Key introductory reading

Barbra Teater and Mark Baldwin (2012) *Social work in the community, Social Work in Practice series*, Policy Press: Bristol.

### Additional reading

Sarah Banks (2011) *Re-gilding the ghetto: community work and community development in 21st Britain*, in Michael Lavalette (ed) (2011) *Radical Social Work. Social work at the crossroads*, Policy Press: Bristol.

Gary Craig, Marjorie Mayo, Keith Popple, Mae Shaw and Marilyn Taylor (eds), (2011) *Community Development Reader: History, Themes and Issues*, Policy Press: Bristol.

Alison Gilchrist and Marilyn Taylor (2011) *The Short Guide to Community Development*, Policy Press: Bristol.

Murray Hawtin and Janie Percy-Smith (2007) *Community Profiling: A Practical Guide: Auditing social needs*, Open University Press: Berkshire.

Margaret Ledwith (2011) *Community Development A Critical Approach*, Policy Press: Bristol.

John Pierson (2008) *Going Local: working in communities and neighbourhoods*, Routledge: London.

Paul Stepney and Keith Popple (2008) *Social Work and the Community: a critical context for practice*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Additional reading material will be referred to during the sessions. Some handouts will be provided.

## 4. Assessment

### (Social work in the community)

Course participants to apply the 'social work in the community' skills and knowledge they have gained from the sessions to one of their cases or piece of work from their own workload.

One example might be how would you support a service user in accessing services and resources from the community and voluntary sector in your area?

The course aims to support you to reflect on your practice and develop a portfolio of evidence drawn from your practice to demonstrate how you are meeting the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). The PCF consists of nine domains and nine levels of practice. For this course we would expect you to produce evidence at least at the social worker level, though some or all of your evidence may meet the experienced social worker level. A diagram of the PCF is given below. Further information about the PCF is available at [www.collegeofsocialwork.org/resources/reform-resources/#pcf](http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org/resources/reform-resources/#pcf).

You will need to evidence this practice by providing examples; by feed back from community partners, supervisees or service users; direct observation from another colleague; and in reflective supervision sessions.

### Front sheet

Name:

Course:

Date:

### Table of contents

Brief introduction to the contents of the portfolio giving details of the social work practice that is being used as evidence (500 words).

### Continuing Professional Development plan

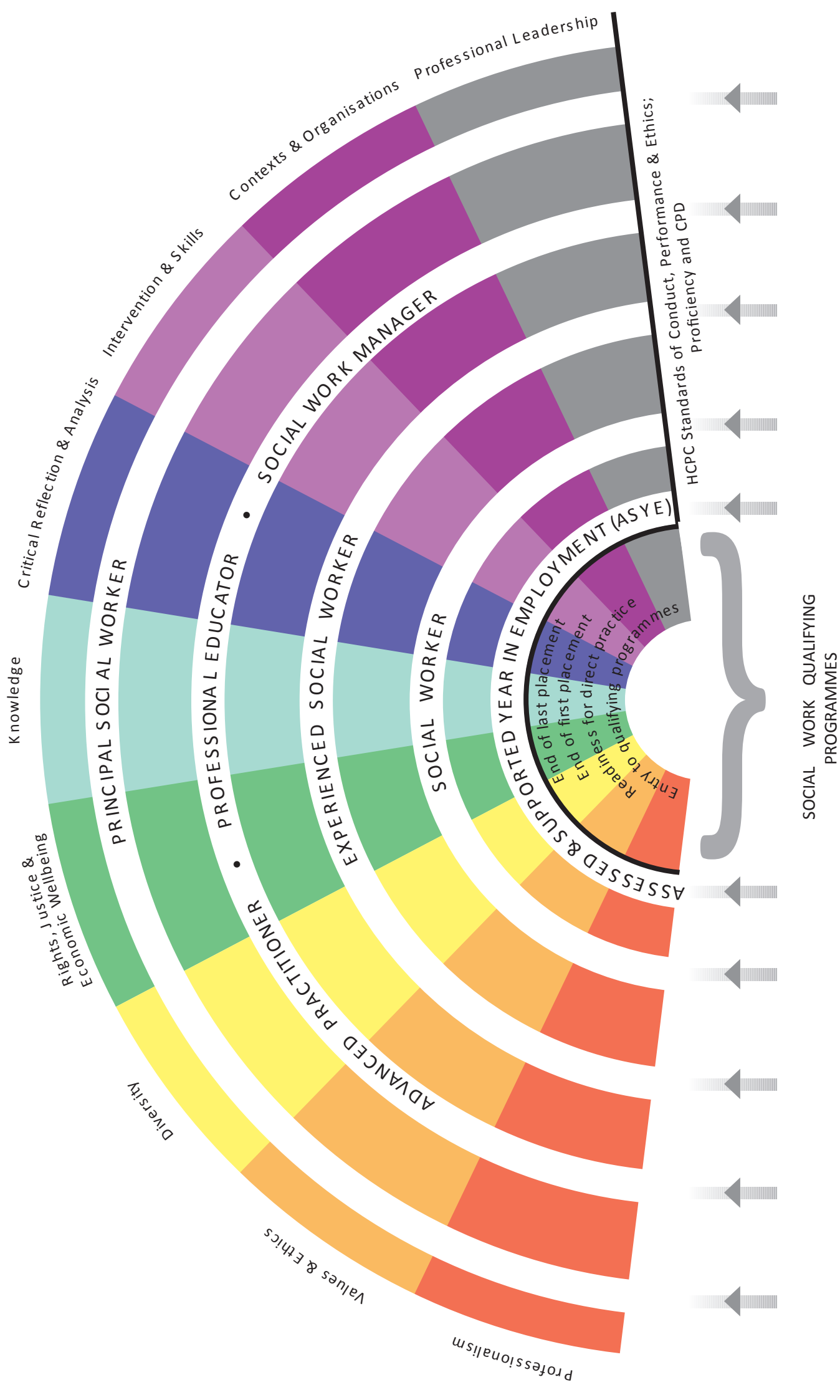
Use the form in [appendix one](#) to record your learning from the Skills for Care CPD project.

### Reflective practice summary

Write notes of the reflective practice session after implementing learning into practice. Cover all or some of the following:

- Description of event  
How have you tried to implement your learning in practice? What are your **feelings and thoughts** about doing this?
- Evaluation  
What went well? What could be improved?
- Analysis  
Why do you think this happened? What theories, research or prior knowledge might help you understand this?
- Conclusion  
What have you learnt from the event? What does this tell you about your good qualities and practices? What could you do differently?
- Action Plan  
What are your next steps?
- What was helpful about the reflective practice session?
- What was not so helpful?
- What could you do to use the session more effectively?
- What feedback would you give to the facilitator?  
What did they do well? What could they do more of or less of?

# Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for Social Workers



## 4. Guidance on using the Direct Observation templates

### Template A (appendix two)

Can be used for formal planned observations of the participant's practice. In these cases the observer will normally be a line manager or other practice educator or other senior member of staff who will have knowledge of the levels and domains of the PCF.

### Template B (appendix three)

Can be used for less formal observations of day-to-day practice. These observations may be undertaken by non social work professionals and practitioners and include a range of settings, for example, multi-professional team meetings, case conferences or joint visits. In these cases, the observer completing the template may not necessarily be a registered social worker. The observer will still need to have a basic understanding of what is required of a social worker at the different levels of the PCF.

## Guidance for using template A

Preparation for the direct observation of practice:

- The participant and observer should plan the direct observation and agree objectives and assessment criteria for the observation (what do they want to achieve in the intervention and there any specific capabilities, identified as areas for development or concern, they would like the observer to focus on and provide feedback). The participant should complete and share boxes 1 and 2 of the participant form (section 1) with the observer as part of the preparation for the observed session.
- Wherever possible the service user(s)/carer involved should be asked if they are willing to be part of the process. If they agree, it is the responsibility of the observer and the candidate to ensure that the service user/carer is given the opportunity to comment on the participant's capabilities, and/or for the service user to be given feedback about the participant and assessor's own assessment. Not all service users will be able to or want to be involved in the process; others will be willing to contribute and be part of the assessment process. The observer and candidate will need to plan how this is managed using their knowledge of or/and relationship with the service user wherever possible to ensure that this is comfortable for all concerned.
- Participant and observer should agree and clarify the role of the observer during the intervention: how will they be introduced, under what circumstances, if any, will they intervene.
- Participant and observer should agree what happens after the observation—how and when will feedback be given, what reports/documents need to be completed by the NQSW and observer and by when.
- The participant should have the opportunity to reflect and comment on the observer's report (box 6).

## Planning for intervention

Questions you might want to think about:

- How did you prepare for this intervention?
- What is your purpose, role and responsibility?
- What outcomes or objectives do you want to achieve? (These can be linked to areas for development identified in reviews, supervision or previous observations).

## Brief description of the intervention

Questions you might want to think about:

- What happened, what was achieved?
- Describe your role and the action of others.

## Reflections on the observed practice

Questions you might want to think about:

- What went well?
- How did you know it had gone well?
- Were the outcomes achieved?
- What action do you need to take next in this intervention?
- How did you feel generally and about being observed?
- What key points have you learnt from this experience?
- Were there any surprises for you in this observation?

## Critical reflection and professional development

Questions you might want to think about:

- Bearing in mind the relevant capabilities and level descriptor, have you identified or confirmed any specific areas for further development? (cross reference to capability statements if required)
- How do you intend to address these areas of development?

What support do you require?



## Feedback from service users

You may wish to devise your own form depending on the service user's specific situation. Here are some suggested questions that you could ask or you may wish to get someone to ask these questions on your behalf:

Give brief details of the practice situation

- Did I explain my role clearly to you?
- Do you think I understood your situation clearly?
- If not, what could I have understood better?
- What did I do well? Can you give me an example?
- What could I have done better? Are you able to identify something specific?
- If you could give me some advice about how I could do my job better what would it be?
- If you were telling someone else about my good qualities what would you tell them?
- If you were telling someone else about my not-so-good qualities what would you tell them?
- Any other comments about what it was like working with me?

Reflection on feedback – your responses and planned actions as a result of the feedback

## Feedback from other professionals

You may wish to devise your own form depending on the other professional's role.

Here are some suggested questions that you could ask or you may wish to get someone to ask these questions on your behalf:

Give brief details of practice situation

- How well did I work with you in this situation?
- What did I do well?
- What could I have done better?
- What advice would you give me about how I could improve my practice in the future?

Reflection on feedback – your responses and planned actions as a result of the feedback



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