



Literature Scan 3

Enhancing the readiness of newly qualified social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand

Professional Capabilities Framework

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Executive Summary

Social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand practise across different fields of practice and with a range of client populations. Their readiness to practise, especially as newly qualified social workers (NQSW) is, however, a contested subject. In recent years, there has been considerable debate within political, education and practice spheres about whether graduates are suitably prepared to be effective practitioners. Media critique of frontline social worker practice continues to emphasise the resourcing and other challenges faced by social workers. Significant policy and legislative developments, in particular the government review and subsequent development and implementation of the Ministry for Children Oranga Tamariki, has also increased scrutiny about the capabilities and role of social workers.

The social work profession in Aotearoa New Zealand does not currently have a professional capabilities framework that distinguishes the knowledge and skills that should be demonstrated by NQSW practitioners. As a result, there is ambiguity about what capabilities NQSWs should possess to practise effectively with individuals, whānau, hapu, iwi, groups and communities. It is vital for the enhancement of social work education and the accountability of the profession in this country to develop a capabilities framework that benchmarks expectations for NQSWs as well as other social workers at various stages of their career.

Background

An examination of the readiness to practise of NQSWs is both timely and important. Social work graduates in Aotearoa New Zealand are employed across government, non-government and private sectors and frequently work in highly complex situations with a diversity of clients. Social workers often work alongside the most vulnerable members of our society. In this country the readiness to practise of NQSWs is under-researched hence the implementation of a 3-year multi-phase project (Beddoe et al., 2018).

Phase one of the Enhancing Readiness to Practise project addressed the question:

- What is the content of the current New Zealand social work curriculum and how does it relate to the Social Worker Registration Board (SWRB) core competencies?

Phase Two addressed the question:

- How well prepared are NQSWs to enter professional social work practice and how is their learning being supported and enhanced in the workplace?

Finally, Phase Three of the project will address the question:

- What are the professional capabilities, including cultural capabilities, we should expect of NQSWs and of social workers working at experienced, advanced and expert levels of practice?

The detailed research questions that this phase will address are:

- What are the capabilities that ought to characterise graduates from social work degree programmes at beginning, experienced and advanced levels of practice?
- Are different capabilities required for specialist social work roles?
- How could social work education programmes and employers use a professional capabilities framework to improve the continuous learning of social workers across the career journey?

This phase begins with a scan of literature on professional capabilities frameworks (PCF) in the social work profession. Given the limited literature on such frameworks, the English PCF receives the most attention in the following scan. Consideration is also given to a framework for the children's workforce (also in England) and developments in the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand contexts.

The Professional Capabilities Framework - England

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) in England outlines clear and reasonable expectations of social workers at each stage of their career, including during the social work qualifying programme. This framework offers clarity to social workers, employers, practice educators and the public. Further, it enables social work as a profession the means to transparently assess the quality of individual, team and organisational practice (The College of Social Work, 2012). Developed as a response to concerns about the prescriptive tick-box and competency-based approach of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) (University of Bedfordshire, 2017b), the PCF replaces the NOS in England, however the standards still apply in the rest of the United Kingdom (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017c). The PCF was originally established by the Social Work Reform Board, however to strengthen social worker ownership and identity with the framework, it now sits with The College of Social Work in England (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).

Context

The PCF was developed with the purpose of providing a national structure for social work as a profession, which was done through stating the purpose and practise of social work clearly. The intention of the PCF was to be the focal point for social work standards (Social Work Reform Board, 2010). The Reform Board, The College of Social Work and Professor Eileen Munro, the Chair of the influential review of child protection practice in England, had all previously emphasised the importance of professional expertise for providing quality services (Research in Practice, n.d.). Evidence to support practice and professional development is essential to achieve this, along with building individual practitioners' confidence and public confidence in social work as a profession (Research in Practice, n.d.). While the PCF was under development the capabilities were tested with a range of professionals, including social workers, practice educators, academics, social work managers and workforce development managers. The capabilities draw on models used in various professions and international social work, underpinned by research from the United States (Social Work Reform Board, 2010). The PCF not only supports the professional and career development of social workers, but it can also be a framework which helps employers understand and distinguish remuneration rates for social workers at different stages of their career. Although the PCF does not provide guidance on salaries, reference to it is seen to support fair pay, as social workers are often underpaid and undervalued (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).

What is the PCF?

The PCF is a visual tool that assists individual practitioners to reach the highest standards within their professional career, focusing on continuing professional development from the moment they enter social work education, to the most advanced levels of practice (Moss, 2015; Social Work Reform Board, 2010; University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). The framework intends to represent social work professional standards as opposed to focusing on specific job roles (University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). As a generic tool, the PCF outlines what level a practitioner should be at and the expected capabilities for certain positions (Moss, 2015; University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). Although the PCF is often used to measure individual practitioners' development and career progression, it can be utilised in other ways. The PCF provides a platform for the tertiary sector to evaluate, redesign and implement a social work curriculum that is relevant, measureable and fit for purpose. As such, it can be used as a guide for the development of educational curricula and to ensure foundational learning is accessed by beginning social workers and advanced throughout a career (Social Work Reform Board, 2010). Employers can use the framework to understand what is reasonable to expect from social workers at each stage of their professional development, as well as facilitating variation and recognition of practitioners with different levels of expertise in their team. Employers can also use the PCF as a tool to measure outcomes when doing appraisals and performance management tasks (Social Work Reform Board, 2010).

The Social Work Reform Board defines capability as a combination of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal qualities used appropriately and effectively in a range of new and changing environments (Taylor & Bogo, 2014). The Framework is made up of nine capabilities, which outline the minimum standards social workers need to meet to be fit for practice within the social work profession. These capabilities are interdependent (Social Care Learning Forum, 2017). The flexibility of the PCF allows it to be utilised as an assessment tool in any practice context.

The nine capabilities include:

- **Professionalism**
- **Values and ethics**
- **Diversity**
- **Rights and justice**
- **Knowledge**
- **Critical reflection**
- **Intervention and skills**

- **Contexts and organisations**
- **Professional leadership**

The Capabilities

The nine different capabilities in the PCF are interdependent, as practitioners draw on the various skills and knowledge outlined in multiple domains at one time, guiding their social work practice and interventions (University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). The purpose of these capabilities is to support the process of career development rather than to assess the quality of a practitioner's practice in the way that competencies are used (University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). The nine capabilities listed above serve as the foundation of the framework and each capability is discussed below.

Professionalism is about how individuals portray themselves, their knowledge and their skills within professional practice. It is the way social workers represent their profession and commit to ongoing professional development to ensure they are providing quality and up to date services (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014, pg. 6). The **values and ethics** capability is concerned with social workers upholding the professional values and ethics of social work within their practice and managing their personal values in ways that do not negatively influence their work. Social workers therefore maintain professional accountability through applying ethical principles to their practice, such as maintaining confidentiality (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014, pg. 7). **Diversity** ensures social workers are aware of and respect differences among themselves and others, and are willing to challenge discrimination, oppression and cultural assumptions to enable clients to receive services which cater for their needs (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014, pg. 7). The capability of **rights and justice** identifies the need for social workers to recognise and understand the principles of human rights, and understand the impacts of poverty, oppression, discrimination and inequality. It is essential social workers draw on principles of human rights in their practice (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.8). Social workers have a wide array of **knowledge** that they can apply within their practice by drawing on various theories. It is expected that social workers have knowledge regarding holistic influences on people including psychological, spiritual, social, cultural and physical factors. It is essential social workers understand human development throughout the lifespan and legislative frameworks so they can utilise this knowledge base in practice (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.8). Social workers need to apply **critical reflection** principles using multiple sources of knowledge and evidence to justify their decisions, across a range of settings including direct practice, policy development and research (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.9). Social workers use a range of **skills and**

interventions when working alongside individuals, families/whānau and communities, including essential communication skills to build relationships (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.10). They use professional judgements to intervene, balancing rights and risks of the client(s) and their situation. It is essential social workers consider power imbalances and use their authority appropriately (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.10). It is vital social workers are able to adapt to changing social **contexts** which shape their practice, including **organisational** influences. Social workers have the responsibility to respond to these changes in ways that reflect the values and ethics of the professional body (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.11). **Professional leadership** is a capability in which social workers contribute to the development of social work as a profession through participating in activities such as supervision, research, and teaching. Learning may be facilitated with a range of people, including service users, colleagues and other professionals (North Lincolnshire Council, 2014 p.11).

Levels of Capabilities:

There are nine different levels within the PCF which relate to the complexity of the work an individual with the identified capabilities would be able to achieve and manage (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017c). Four pre-qualification levels are used to assess the development of students and their potential to be social workers (University of Bedfordshire, 2017c). These levels provide guidance for the development of social work curricula throughout England, aiming to promote consistency in social work education for students regardless of their programme provider. However, the way the skills and knowledge are taught can be unique to each institution, as long as beginning practitioners start with the required foundational skills and knowledge (University of Bedfordshire, 2017c). Following qualification there are several levels of capabilities as practitioners become more experienced and develop a range of skills.

The prequalification levels are as follows:

Entry to training means individuals can demonstrate they have an awareness and some understanding of the social work practice context, they are self-aware, they have the ability to establish relationships and demonstrate capacity to develop essential values, skills and knowledge to be a professional social worker (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d). Expectations when entering tertiary social work education is often around awareness and motivation shown by individuals. New students entering a social work programme are required to have a basic understanding of a social worker's role and the influence social work has on promoting social justice, equality and inclusion (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017a). Understanding the

importance of adaptability and resilience, and having motivation to gain a social work qualification and continuously work on developing one's learning is also necessary (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017a). Those entering into social work education need to understand how their values can impact on other people and why it is essential to take service-users' perspectives into consideration. They need to be open to understanding the viewpoints of others, recognise and appreciate diversity, and be mindful this may affect social work practice. Due to the nature of the social work role, those entering study need to understand how conflict may play a large role in their interactions with others, and how social work values may cause conflict when having to enforce responsibilities (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017a). It is important new students are critical thinkers, are reflective, and have self-awareness. To enter social work programmes, it is essential individuals have effective communication skills, and are able to engage empathetically with a range of people. An understanding of working both individually and in teams within an organisation is vital, as well as being aware of the influence one can have on others, whether it be colleagues, other professionals or service-users (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017a).

The *readiness for practice* level exists to ensure students are prepared for their first practice placement and consequently they are assessed on this readiness. Students need to be able to demonstrate their understanding and application of social work values, core social work skills, and relevant knowledge. This includes the ability to engage and communicate effectively, having the capacity to work within an organisation, being receptive to feedback, and being committed to ongoing learning (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

By the *end of their first placement*, social work students should be able to demonstrate appropriate application and use of their knowledge and skills within a particular social work context. It should be evident to their practice educators that their work is supported by core social work values. In their first placement students would have generally worked with less complex cases, however should be able to demonstrate their ability to engage and work with various people and situations (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d). The PCF is used to assess pre-qualifying social workers on their placements thus contributing to a determination as to whether they are ready for practice.

By the *end of their qualifying programme*, social work students should be able to apply core social work values, skills and knowledge. They should be able to manage complex situations, work with a wide range of people, and complete various tasks at a foundational level. These activities should be able to be completed more autonomously than in their first practice placement (The British

Association of Social Workers, 2017d). Although they may be able to work independently, they will also be aware that final decisions are made by their supervisor so decisions are not being made in isolation. They will also utilise support and supervision appropriately. A social work student graduating from their qualifying programme must have demonstrated an understanding and application of values, skills, and knowledge throughout their entire qualifying programme, with an emphasis on their capabilities during their two practice placements (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

There are five post-qualifying levels in the PCF which focus on the development of social workers as they transition from a student into a professional role and build on their practice to reach the highest levels of professional social work practice.

The post-qualifying levels are as follows:

In England, the assessed and supported year (ASYE) in employment enables NQSWs to be somewhat eased into the workforce. The programme aims to consolidate the learning new graduates received from their qualifying programme, develop their confidence as a professional, and advance their capabilities as a practitioner (University of Bedfordshire, 2017a). The ASYE aims to ensure consistency during and after graduates' first year of employment. This means employers will often allocate smaller and less complex caseloads to beginning practitioners, will provide regular support and will assess NQSWs based on the ASYE level of the PCF. As well as ensuring consistency, this means social workers are generally not doing work that is too complex for their level of training (although the unpredictability of social work means this is sometimes not the case) and organisations can rightly be held to account (Hussein et al., 2014; University of Bedfordshire, 2017a). At the *end of the ASYE*, the NQSW should be able to demonstrate their capacity to achieve a range of tasks and roles. NQSWs will have gained confidence in themselves, and professionals and service-users will have confidence in their practice and their ability to use effective interventions. NQSWs will be more competent in a specialised area of social work, working with particular client groups and complex situations. By the end of the ASYE, NQSWs will be proactive in using supervision and reflecting on their own practice to ensure they maintain safe practice (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

Once *in the social work role* it is expected that social workers can practice effectively, which means they can make appropriate judgements about complex, risky and uncertain situations. They are able to anticipate possible situations based on their practice experience and deeper understanding of

social issues, however have the ability to refrain from imposing prejudice (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d). Social workers are expected to work autonomously and have greater confidence in their abilities, although continue to seek support where needed. They draw on a range of knowledge and skills to utilise more theories and interventions in their practice, having gained expertise in multiple areas of social work. Social workers have established a range of networks and have insight into the local resources available. Colleagues and other professionals are able to recognise the social worker as being able to utilise appropriate knowledge and skills (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

Experienced social workers are often known as senior social workers. Compared with social workers, senior social workers are very autonomous, have an extended range of expertise, and have significant experience with complex and higher risk cases, having the challenge of balancing support and control. Senior social workers liaise with and work alongside senior professionals, often providing expert opinions and advice within the organisation. Often senior social workers are accountable for the practice of other staff and play a large role in mentoring NQSWs and those new to their organisation. Senior social workers contribute significantly to the delivery of services (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

Advanced practitioners are role models in a specialised area of practice, providing wisdom and leadership to colleagues and other professionals. Advanced practitioners often challenge practice, policies and procedures, enhancing service delivery through providing ideas and new ways of working. Advanced practitioners provide knowledge and critical reasoning to their field of practice, supporting and demonstrating the use of reflective practice (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

Professional educators support social workers from NQSWs to social workers in advanced levels of practice. They help social workers to develop their skills and knowledge through facilitating their learning. Professional educators support and help develop other practice educators, along with identifying and resolving situations for learning purposes. Professional educators work alongside those who provide education and training to ensure NQSWs are fit for practice. This means they contribute to selection processes, curriculum development, assessment and evaluation of students. Professional educators actively engage with current research and take a leadership role in developing strategies within their agency (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

Social work managers lead, motivate and manage a team of professionals to ensure service delivery is of high quality and is appropriate. Social work managers manage budgets and resources alongside other professionals. They are knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of management in the public sector, and more specifically in social work (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d). Social work managers contribute to the organisation as a whole, including having input in policy and procedural development, development of practice, and ensuring ongoing professional development of their team. They are accountable for the practice of others, and provide mentoring, coaching and supervision to enhance the practice of their team. This is supported by performance appraisals and acknowledging and addressing complaints to ensure practice is enhanced. Social work managers need to ensure the experience and expertise of their team has a positive impact on the organisation as a whole, as well as other service providers (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017d).

Readiness to Practise and Ongoing Continuing Professional Development

With specific reference to NQSW’s Table 1. below outlines PCF expectations from the English model. By utilising the PCF during professional supervision and for performance appraisal, managers can measure existing knowledge and skills and identify areas for development. This process enables employers and managers/supervisors to develop training for specific groups of practitioners to facilitate progression within specialised areas of social work (University of Bedfordshire, 2017b).

Table 1. Readiness for Practice level for NQSWs (The British Association of Social Workers, 2017b)

Capability	PCF expectations
Professionalism	NQSWs need to be able to understand and describe the role of the social worker; the role and responsibilities within supervision; importance of professional behaviour and boundaries; and the importance of emotional resilience. They also need to be able to demonstrate the ability to learn and utilise various social work approaches.
Values and Ethics	NQSWs need to understand the social work ethics and values and how they are relevant and applied within practice, as well as being aware of their own self and the impact their worldview can have on their practice.
Diversity	NQSWs need to be able to recognise and acknowledge the diversity within people’s experiences and identities. They need to be able to practice in a way which is anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive.

Rights and Justice	NQSWs need to understand principles of rights, justice and economic wellbeing and their importance to social work practice.
Knowledge	NQSWs need to demonstrate how they can apply research, theory and knowledge from various disciplines such as social policy, sociology, health, psychology and human development. They also need to be able to demonstrate a foundational understanding about a range of theories and approaches used within social work, including how they are applied, and of legislation and policies which guide social work practice.
Critical Reflection	NQSWs need to demonstrate an understanding of reflective practice and the importance of it within social work. They need to be able to reflect on the significance of evidence-based practice and hypothesis construction within social work.
Intervention and Skills	NQSWs need to demonstrate: core communication and interpersonal skills to be able to create effective working relationships; awareness and understanding of various assessment and intervention frameworks; basic skills to produce written documents; and initial awareness of risk and safeguarding.
Contexts and Organisations	NQSWs need to be able to demonstrate how an organisational context, its policies and procedures can impact on social work practice.
Professional Leadership	NQSWs need to be able to demonstrate how leadership is significant within social work as a profession.

Implementation

In the context of developing a PCF in Aotearoa New Zealand (the focus of this particular Ako Aotearoa project) it is important to consider how it will be introduced, and implemented. An example of how one university introduced the English PCF into their education system is the University of Suffolk. The PCF was implemented at the university a year before it became mandatory for three key reasons:

- 1) to allow students in their final year to understand the framework and what was expected of them before heading into their assisted year post graduating;
- 2) to ensure the first year students were aware of what was expected of them prior to going on their first practice placement; and
- 3) to allow the university a year to test the framework and provide an evaluation (Plenty & Gower, 2013).

At the beginning of the implementation year, practice educators, academics and students were alerted to the new developments and how they were likely to be affected. Mentors were made available to provide guidance. Throughout the practice placement in the first year of implementation, students attended weekly workshops or lectures focusing on integrating academic learning with practical learning and the PCF capabilities (Plenty & Gower, 2013).

Practice educators have reported that the PCF enables more flexibility when assessing students on placement as the framework can be applied across all practice contexts (Jasper & Field, 2016). The PCF provides students with guidance as to how they can develop both as a practitioner and in their career. The PCF also helped practice educators identify areas where students could further develop to reach progression milestones. The holistic nature of the PCF gave students a foundation to develop their professional social work identity and as such it provides a model for students to use to continue learning once they have completed their education (Jasper & Field, 2016). Practice educators did however, offer three critiques of the PCF. Firstly, some found the framework to be too generalised and broad, making it challenging to provide specific examples of how a student could achieve the capabilities. Secondly, there was a concern that essential social work skills, such as assessment, risk assessment and communication skills could be overlooked. Thirdly, demonstrating a 'minimum' standard of competence can be very subjective, as it is based on the assessor's judgement, posing the question: "what is good enough?" (Jasper & Field, 2016).

Effectiveness

The development and implementation of a PCF for social work in England appears to have had both positive impacts as well as challenges. There is belief the framework will continue to evolve in response to changes in the practice context and profession (University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). It has been argued the PCF gives social work as a profession more value, providing insight into the roles and responsibilities of social workers (Dunn & Yeoman, 2011; Higgins, 2016a). According to Higgins (2016a) and The College of Social Work (2015), the focus of accountability in the PCF has contributed to gaining trust of the public towards social workers, and has supported social work as a profession within changing contexts. The PCF integrates social work education and practice, ensuring students and practitioners are held accountable for their practice and understand the expectations of their role (Higgins, 2016a).

The PCF has allowed for a more flexible progression through the social work profession, placing value on the strengths of individual practitioners, and assessing them in any field of practice (Higgins, 2016a; University of Bedfordshire, 2017b). This process ensures social workers are developing their professional practice and creating their own career path, while at the same time ensuring consistent standards are articulated commensurate with each level of practice (The College of Social Work, 2015). Previously students gathered evidence while on their practical placements to demonstrate they met certain requirements. However, with the implementation of the PCF, practice educators themselves gather evidence through observation and supervision and provide a report in conjunction with the student's placement portfolios. (Plenty & Gower, 2013).

Challenges

Although the PCF has advantages, there are also significant challenges including the practicality of implementing the framework, and whether limitations of existing structures, resources and funding reduce the development and change the PCF can realistically have on social work practice (Dunn & Yeoman, 2011; Higgins, 2016a). A factor for effective implementation of the PCF identified by Dunn and Yeoman (2011), is that everyone involved needs to be fully committed to practising under the framework.

Higgins (2016b) discusses some limitations of the PCF, including the meaning of 'capabilities' and the underlying conceptualisation of the framework. The previous competency model in social work was viewed as being too narrow, focusing on the abilities of individual social workers, however not considering the wider context of how they made professional judgements. In contrast, the PCF has provided an avenue to assess social workers in a more comprehensive and contextual way, considering wider influences, such as ethics, and attitudes of individual social workers. Unlike competence, capabilities not only include a practitioner's current ability to perform, but also their potential to further develop their abilities (Higgins, 2016b).

Higgins (2016b) discusses how the PCF has not yet reached its ultimate aim of establishing a safe and confident future for social work as a profession in England, and recommends having a comprehensive model to underpin the framework. He argues the PCF has not had a significant impact on social work practice, but has instead supported a move away from preventative work towards bureaucratic, evidence-based accountability. Further as the PCF is aligned with the International Federation of Social Worker's definition of social work it does not reflect current trends in social work in England, which are often individually focused. Higgins (2016b) recommends aligning

the PCF with a capabilities model which focuses on individual potential, development, and social justice.

PCF for the Children's Workforce

The Professional Capabilities Framework for the Children's Workforce (PCFCW) is a specific framework that was developed in England to ensure those who volunteer, lead work or work with children understand their roles and responsibilities when involved in prevention and early intervention work. This means they are knowledgeable and skilled to a standard where they know how to take action when deemed necessary to do so. It ensures children, young people and their families are provided with effective support when needed, which is supported and led by leadership and management. The Framework ensures support is delivered in a professional manner and informed by evidence-based practice. Finally, the Framework aims to minimise having to provide more intensive and costly interventions at a later date (Garrod-Mason, 2016). The PCFCW details the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are expected from workers at each level of the continuum, ensuring they understand their role in prevention and early intervention work. The PCFCW endeavours to ensure workers can apply skills and knowledge in a professional, ethical and appropriate way. Commissioners of service, learning providers, management and leadership teams, education institutions and individuals can use the framework to guide their practice. For individual practitioners, this means being able to grow as a practitioner and develop their skills, knowledge and overall practice through comparison with the capabilities (Garrod-Mason, 2016).

The structure of the PCFCW is organised into the categories that show the role of the work in improving outcomes along the continuum of need of children, young people and their families.

There are nine categories including:

- **Starting work with children, young people and their families**
- **Universal:** Includes a range of services which are available to all children and young people, including: schools, early childhood education, youth work, health and police.
- **Universal plus:** Includes a range of specialised services which focus on specific issues as an attempt to prevent them turning into crises. For example: children and adolescent mental health services and teenage alcohol and drug services.
- **Vulnerable:** Includes children, young people and their families whose needs cannot be addressed by universal services. This includes: behaviour and education support teams, targeted housing teams and youth offending workers.

- **Complex:** This is when children and young people are in need of statutory involvement to receive positive outcomes, which they may not receive with NGOs and voluntary assistance.
- **Severe:** Includes those who have child protection plans, those who have advanced mental health issues and children with severe and complex educational needs. Professionals under this category include: paediatricians, educational psychologists and social workers.
- **Team leaders, senior managers and strategic leaders:** All the workers in the above categories are supported by these professionals.

The purpose of the PCFCW is not for staff working with children to move up in their career development, but rather to identify the particular skills, knowledge and behaviours necessary when working in particular contexts. For each category of work, nine skills, knowledge and behavioural headings provide an outline of what is expected for professionals in each work context. These headings include:

- 1) Relationships and effective direct work;
- 2) child development;
- 3) adult mental ill-health, substance abuse, domestic violence, physical ill-health and disability;
- 4) abuse and neglect of children;
- 5) child and family assessment;
- 6) analysis, decision-making, planning and review;
- 7) the law and the family justice system;
- 8) the role of supervision; and
- 9) organisational context.

Within these headings are the knowledge and skills required to meet the key outcomes, for example neglect, family violence and safeguarding children. This type of professional capabilities framework could be beneficial to use within specific fields of social work practice, however may not be as relevant when considering professional development of social workers in a broad context.

Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Developments

A professional capabilities framework for social workers has not yet been developed in either Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand. An increasing focus particularly on indigenous practice, knowledge and skills, and an emphasis on understanding the importance of capabilities for social workers (and other professionals) working with diversity has however, led to some relevant initiatives.

A teaching and learning framework was developed in Australia in 2014 to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge was integrated into social work education and practice. Like many other indigenous cultures, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders continue to be over-represented in social disadvantage (Zubrzycki et al., 2014). The 'Getting it Right' Framework aims to ensure social work education in Australia is underpinned by indigenous knowledge and values, and that social work graduates enter the workforce with an understanding of how to work in a culturally safe and responsive way with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. Getting it Right is a conceptual framework which focuses on various areas of the tertiary education learning environment, including: field education; leadership and governance; and recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff. The Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (2015) emphasised the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowing, doing and being through this knowledge becoming a core component of the education curriculum. It is expected those studying social work in Australia will be informed and competent to work with Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in any area of practice (p. 5).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, one of the social work professional associations, The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), has a longstanding Code of Ethics which enshrines a principle that signals that social workers have responsibility to support and uphold a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based society. Similarly, the Social Work Registration Board (SWRB) Code of Conduct includes a principle that ensures the status of Māori as tangata whenua is respected (ANZASW, n.d.; SWRB, 2016). These principles infer an expectation that social workers have knowledge about Aotearoa New Zealand and Māori history; an understanding of Te Ao Māori; and an awareness of difference within Māori populations. Being aware of oneself when working with Māori is essential, and utilising appropriate bicultural practice theories, tools and models, as well as accessing appropriate services to promote the rights of tangata whenua is critical. Non-Māori (tauīwi) social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand need to work with Māori in a way which opens up opportunities

for tino rangatiratanga (self-determination, sovereignty, and autonomy) and enhances mana (prestige, power, influence) (ANZASW, n.d.; SWRB, 2016).

The Kaitiakitanga Framework (2018) has been created by the Tangata Whenua Voices in Social Work group following an invitation to contribute to the Social Worker Registration Board's review on social worker competency to practise social work with Māori. The Framework (SWRB, 2018) provides:

... a cultural approach to underpin and inform the assessment of a social worker's competence to work with Māori at initial registration as well as at recertification (p. 3).

The Kaitiakitanga Framework upholds three tākepu (applied principles): Te Rangatiratanga; Te Whanaungatanga; and Te Manaakitanga. Although the Framework is yet to be fully implemented, registered social workers will be expected to demonstrate their application of these principles in their practice context. A Pou Tārawaho Whakamātautau (Assessment Matrix) has been developed to assist the process of assessment and guide each social worker's understanding of the expectations in this competence ().

Also of interest, is the recent development by the New Zealand Government of the Workforce Capability Framework (WCF) which specifies capabilities required by people who work across the family violence and sexual violence and violence within whānau sector (MSD, 2017). Recognising the diversity and complexity of professionals in this workforce, the framework was developed as part of an effort by government to ensure a consistent and integrated approach for victims, perpetrators and their whānau and families. Seven principles relevant to the Aotearoa New Zealand context underpin the framework and six domains will guide the activities in this workforce:

- Understanding people's experiences of family violence, sexual violence and violence within whānau
- Upholding the dignity of people and their diverse cultural identities
- Enabling disclosures and response to help-seeking
- Using collective action to create safety for victims
- Using collective action to sustain safe behaviours of perpetrators, and
- Working as part of an integrated team.

As a foundational document for any work in this sphere, the framework is intended to improve and increase the knowledge, capabilities, and skills of the workforce; ensure more effective processes and systems especially for the collection and sharing of relevant information; assist with earlier

intervention that is more effective for individuals, whānau and families; and enable common understandings and consistent practice across this workforce (MSD, 2017). The principles and domains in this framework offer a context-specific and culturally appropriate approach to a capabilities framework and might have considerable utility in the development of a professional capabilities framework for NQSWs. The workforces also overlap with many social workers active in the family violence and sexual violence space.

Conclusion

This brief scan of the literature aimed to orient the team, our research participants and the wider stakeholder community to the third phase of the enhance R2P project. The central focus of this phase is the development of a professional capabilities framework for social workers. In our review we offered a summary of the development and implementation of the English PCF which provided some clarity for the proposed development of a PCF in Aotearoa New Zealand. While a PCF has considerable merit there are also challenges, and in our context we are especially mindful of the cultural competence required by social workers to effectively work with Māori. The recent developments of the Kaitiakitanga Framework for registered social workers and the Family Violence, Sexual Violence and Violence within Whānau Workforce Capability Framework offer guidance and food for thought especially in respect of the underpinning principles that are specific to our context. While this review has outlined the relevant literature on capability frameworks for social workers, as we have highlighted previously, “there is currently an absence of a mechanism in Aotearoa New Zealand that identifies key capabilities and at what stage of a social worker’s development these could be expected to be achieved” (Hay et al., 2017, p.27). The focus of Phase 3 of this project will therefore be the collaborative creation of a PCF for the Aotearoa New Zealand social work environment. Although the PCF will ultimately include capabilities for advanced and expert practitioners, the initial development will focus on capabilities for newly qualified social workers.

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