

Revised Standards of conduct, performance and ethics – key changes

This document sets out the key changes to the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

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Equality diversity and inclusion
We have made changes to the Standards to promote an active approach to ensuring that registrants’ practice supports equality, diversity, and inclusion.
Why? These changes align with amendments made to the Standards of proficiency in our most recent review to strengthen our commitment to EDI. More active wording clarifies our expectations of registrants around issues such as challenging discrimination, empowering service users, and maintaining professional boundaries.
<p>Specific standards:</p> <p>Treat service users and carers with respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 You must treat service users and carers as individuals, respecting their privacy and dignity. • 1.2 You must work in partnership with service users and carers, involving them, where appropriate, in decisions about the care, treatment or other services to be provided. • 1.3 You must empower and enable service users, where appropriate, to play a part in maintaining their own health and well-being and support them so they can make informed decisions. <p>Make sure you have consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4 You must make sure that you have valid consent, which is voluntary and informed, from service users who have capacity to make the decision or other appropriate authority before you provide care, treatment or other services. <p>Challenge discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 You must treat people fairly and be aware of the potential impact that your personal values, biases and beliefs may have on the care, treatment or other services that you provide to service users and carers and in your interactions with colleagues. • 1.6 You must take action to ensure that your personal values, biases and beliefs do not lead you to discriminate against service users, carers or

colleagues. Your personal values, biases and beliefs must not detrimentally impact the care, treatment or other services that you provide.

- 1.7 You must raise concerns about colleagues if you think that they are treating people unfairly and/or their personal values, biases and beliefs have led them to discriminate against service users, carers and/or colleagues or they have detrimentally impacted the care, treatment or other services that they provide. This should be done following the relevant procedures within your practice and maintain the safety of all involved.

Maintain appropriate boundaries

- 1.8 You must consider the potential impact that the position of power and trust you hold as a health and care professional may have on individuals when in social or personal settings.
- 1.9 You must take action to set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with service users and/or carers and colleagues.
- 1.10 You must use appropriate methods of communication to provide care and other services related to your practice
- 1.11 You must ensure that existing personal relationships do not impact professional decisions.
- 1.12 You must not abuse your position as a health and care practitioner to pursue personal, sexual, emotional or financial relationships with service users and/or carers, or colleagues.

Expectations of registrants

- In the updated Standards we have strengthened our language around treating service users and carers with respect, requiring registrants to empower and enable (as opposed to encourage and help) service users and support them to make informed decisions.
- Making sure that registrants have consent before they provide care, treatment or other services is a vital part of our standards. Our new standards build on this, providing further information around what constitutes valid consent (i.e. that is in voluntary and informed).
- We have also strengthened our language around discrimination and made it more active by
 - adding an explicit requirement to treat people fairly and be aware of the potential impact that their personal values, biases and beliefs may have on the care, treatment or other services that they provide to service users and carers, and in their interactions with colleagues.
 - actively requiring registrants to take action to ensure that their personal values, biases and beliefs do not lead them to discriminate against service users, carers or colleagues and to raise concerns about colleagues if they think they are discriminating against service users, carers and/or colleagues.
 - Requiring registrants to know and understand the relevant procedures within their practice to raise concerns about discrimination.
- We've responded to requests from registrants to provide more clarity around what we expect in terms of their responsibilities maintaining appropriate boundaries. We've expanded this section, included more active language and introduced a requirement for registrants to consider the potential impact of their position of power and trust when in social or personal settings.

Communication

We have made changes to our standards on communication to ensure registrant responsibilities towards their colleagues, service users, carers and the public are clear. We have also updated our accompanying Guidance on social media to further support registrants in meeting these Standards.

Why? The way we communicate is continually evolving and our Standards need to reflect this. We have made changes to encourage registrants to focus on what they say and the language they are using regardless of whether they are communicating with service users, carers and colleagues in person or on social media and networking sites.

Specific standards

Communicate with service users and carers

- 2.1 You must be polite and considerate.
- 2.2 You must listen to service users and carers and take account of their needs and wishes.
- 2.3 You must give service users and carers the information they want or need, in a way they can understand.
- 2.4 You must make sure that all practicable steps are taken to meet service users' and carers' language and communication needs.
- 2.5 You must use all forms of communication responsibly when communicating with service users and their carers.

Work with colleagues

- 2.6 You must work in partnership with colleagues, sharing your skills, knowledge and experience where appropriate, for the benefit of service users and carers.
- 2.7 You must share relevant information, where appropriate, with colleagues involved in the care, treatment or other services provided to a service user.
- 2.8 You must treat your colleagues in a professional manner showing them respect and consideration.
- 2.9 You must use all forms of communication with colleagues and other health and care professionals responsibly including media sharing networks and social networking sites.

Social media and networking sites

- 2.10 You must use media sharing networks and social networking sites responsibly.
- 2.11 You must make reasonable checks to ensure information you share is accurate, true, does not mislead the public and is in line with your duty to promote public health when sharing information on media sharing networks and social networking sites.
- 2.12 You must use media sharing networks and social networking sites responsibly, maintaining professional boundaries at all times and protecting service user/carers privacy.

Expectations of registrants:

- We have strengthened our requirements to support service users and carers and their language and communication needs by asking registrants to take practicable steps to meet these needs. This better reflects statutory principles to meet people's needs and is also in line with recent changes to our Standards of proficiency.
- We have clarified our expectations around communicating responsibly by explicitly referencing this in each section under Standard 2 (Communications with service users and carers, Work with colleagues, and Social media and

networking sites). We want to encourage registrants to focus on the content of their communications, regardless of whether these are happening in person or through social media.

- We have added a new standard which covers treating colleagues in a professional manner showing them respect and consideration. We hope that this will help support a good working culture and positive relationships between colleagues.
- We have also added requirements for registrants to make reasonable checks to ensure information they share on social media and networking sites is accurate, true, does not mislead the public and is in line with their duty to promote public health. The proliferation of misinformation on social media has the potential to undermine public safety and we need to ensure that this is reflected in our Standards.

Duty of candour

We have made changes to standards to ensure that registrant practice is open, honest and promotes learning from when things go wrong.

Why? Our changes set out a process for registrants to follow when things go wrong which better aligns with our guidance and gives registrants clear steps to follow at a time that is often challenging and stressful.

Specific standards:

Openness with service users and carers

- 8.1 You must be open, honest and candid when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide by:
 - Where applicable, alerting your employer of what has gone wrong and following the relevant internal procedures.
 - Informing service users and/or where appropriate, their carer or responsible clinician to inform them that something has gone wrong
 - Providing service users and/or their carer with a detailed explanation of the circumstances in which things have gone wrong and the likely impact
 - Taking action to correct the mistake if possible and detailing this action to the service user and/or where appropriate, their carer.
- 8.2 You must apologise to a service user and/or their carer when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other service that you provide.

Expectations of registrants:

- We have made changes to better support registrants by setting out a clearer process for registrants to follow when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that they provide (updated Standard 8.1). As part of this, registrants will need to know and understand their employer's internal procedures.
- We have separated out the requirement to apologise to service users and/or their carer. This better highlights the centrality of apologising when things go wrong, and more clearly aligns it with our guidance. It also recognises apologising as a professional duty.

Upskilling and training responsibilities
We have made changes to standards to ensure that registrants understand the relationship between their scope of practice and practising safely and effectively.
Why? We often receive questions from registrants regarding their scope of practice, particularly in relation to taking on new roles. The changes that we have made provide further guidance around this and highlight the need to make sure registrants have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise safely and effectively.
<p>Specific standards: Keep within your scope of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 You must only practise in the areas where you have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to meet the needs of a service user safely and effectively. • 3.2 You must undertake additional training to update your knowledge, skills and experience if you wish to widen your scope of practice. • 3.3 You must refer a service user to an appropriate practitioner if the care, treatment or other services they need are beyond your scope of practice. This person must hold the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to meet the needs of the service user safely and effectively.
<p>Expectations of registrants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our standards already require registrants to only practise in the areas where they have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience, however, the updated standards provide clarity for those wishing to widen their scope of practice. This more explicitly recognises that scope of practice develops over time and supports registrants to transition to a wider scope of practice whilst also ensuring they practise safely and effectively. • We have also provided more information around referring service users to other practitioners and added an explicit requirement to clarify that the person being referred to must hold the appropriate knowledge skills and experience to meet the service user's needs safely and effectively.

Managing existing health conditions and disabilities in the workplace
We have made changes to standards to support registrants with health conditions and disabilities to continue practising in a safe and effective way.
Why? We think that it's important to further clarify within the Standards that registrants do not need to stop practising simply because they have a physical or mental health condition. Where a registrant's physical or mental health will detrimentally impact their ability to practise safely or effectively they will need to adjust their practice, and only if this is not possible will need to stop practising.
<p>Specific standards: Manage your health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.3 You must take responsibility for assessing whether changes to your physical and/or mental health will detrimentally impact your ability to practise safely and effectively. If you are unsure about your ability to do so, ask an appropriate health and care professional to make an assessment on your behalf. • 6.4 You must adjust your practice if your physical and/or mental health will detrimentally impact your ability to practise safely and effectively. These adjustments must promote safe and effective practice. Where it is not possible to make these adjustments within your scope of practice, you must stop practising.

Expectations of registrants:

- We have clarified language within the Standards around a registrant's responsibility to assess whether changes to their physical and/or mental health will detrimentally impact their ability to practise safely and effectively. Recognising that registrants may not always have the capacity to assess their own health we have introduced an option for registrants to ask an appropriate health and care professional to make an assessment on their behalf.
- We want to better support registrants with health conditions and disabilities and have therefore clarified our expectations around practising with a physical or mental health condition. We will only require registrants to make adjustments to their practice if their physical or mental health will detrimentally impact their ability to practise safely and effectively. We have not been prescriptive about what these adjustments must look like. We recognise that there are a range of adjustments that can ensure safe and effective practice, and these will largely depend upon a registrant's profession, work-place context and health needs.

Sustainability

We have not made sustainability-linked changes to our Standards of conduct, performance and ethics at this time.

We have committed to creating a dedicated green practice hub on our website to support registrants to practice more sustainably.

Why? We wanted to explore whether it would be appropriate to include a standard on sustainability in future reviews. Although we have agreed that it isn't appropriate to include a standard at this time, we recognise the importance of incorporating sustainability into our work going forwards and this will inform our upcoming review of the Standards of education and training.

Expectations of registrants:

- There are no new obligations introduced for registrants in relation to sustainability in this review.
- Registrants will have access to the green practice hub and are encouraged to engage with the available materials. We hope this will help to support registrants to understand the impact of sustainability in health and care and the changes they can make to their practice to be more sustainable.

Guidance on social media

We have updated our guidance on social media, to complement the revisions we have made to the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Why? How we communicate is continually evolving and our Standards must reflect this. We know that registrants sometimes have questions or concerns about using social media because they want to make sure they always meet our standards.

Expectations of registrants:

- The guidance explains how to meet our standards when using social media in a professional and/or personal capacity
- It sets out the areas of our standards which apply to the appropriate use of social media – challenge discrimination, maintain appropriate boundaries, communicate appropriately, respect confidentiality, and be honest and trustworthy.