

# Enhancing the readiness to practise of newly qualified social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand (Enhance R2P)

## Report on Phase Three The Professional Capabilities Framework

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# Introduction

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The overall purpose of the Enhance R2P project was to develop an evidence-informed, industry-agreed, professional capabilities framework that could be used to inform and guide the design of learning experiences, and continuing professional development opportunities, for social workers before and after the point of qualification.

This three-year project had three different phases. Phase one (during 2016) focused on mapping the curriculum using documentary analysis to analyse the curriculum documents of 19 social work degree programmes recognised by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). Focus group discussions were also held in a sample of institutions. This phase addressed the question: what is the content of the current social work curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand and how does it relate to the ten core competencies of the SWRB?

Phase two (during 2017) used online survey and interview methods to study the readiness to practise of newly qualified social workers as perceived by graduates and managers. This phase considered the question: how well prepared are newly qualified social workers to enter professional social work practice and how is their learning being supported and enhanced in the workplace?

During phase three (2018), the team conducted a literature scan on professional capability frameworks (Hay, Maidment, Beddoe, Ballantyne, Walker, & Mayhew, 2018); reviewed five social work competence and capability frameworks from four jurisdictions (Aotearoa New Zealand, England, the USA and Canada); then convened five workshops with social work managers, field work educators and practitioners (held in Auckland, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin). The workshops were held to co-produce a draft professional capabilities framework. Phase three aimed to answer the research question: what are the professional capabilities, including cultural capabilities, we should expect of newly qualified social workers and of social workers working at beginning, and experienced, levels of practice? This report discusses the findings of phase three in three parts: the first part summarises key themes from a review of five capability and competency frameworks; the second part discusses process and outcomes from the five co-production workshops; and the third part presents a draft professional capabilities framework along with recommended future actions for key stakeholders.

# Reviewing competence and capability frameworks

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In common with other professions, social work has an international body that works to develop shared values and professional standards at a global level. At the same time, social workers are increasingly regulated at the local level by professional and/or governmental regulatory bodies. Competence and capability frameworks are one of the devices used by regulatory authorities to influence training and education standards. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) – a body whose members represent professional associations from 126 different countries – is widely regarded as the voice of the social work profession at the global level and is recognised as such by the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. The international definition of social work, agreed by the IFSW, provides a high-level description that has influenced local statements and definitions, including frameworks defining professional competencies and capabilities such as the ten Core Competence Standards (CCS) of the Social Workers Registration Board in Aotearoa New Zealand (SWRB, 2015). The IFSW definition states that:

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 knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. (IFSW, 2014)

Following the completion of a literature scan (Hay et al., 2019), and in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how different countries and regulatory bodies define and shape professional standards for newly qualified or entry-level social workers, the Enhance R2P team examined the contents of five separate frameworks or competency profiles – two from Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017; SWRB, 2015), one from Canada (Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators, 2012), one from the United Kingdom (British Association of Social Workers, 2017) and one from the United States of America (Council on Social Work Education, 2015).

## A note on the terms ‘competence’ and ‘capability’

Three of the frameworks reviewed here are described as *competence* frameworks and two as *capability* frameworks. The English Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) was the first to use the term capability in the context of social work education; and The College of Social Work (TCSW), the body responsible for the creation of the PCF, stated that:

The move from the concept of competence to the concept of capability reflects the desire for social work education and development to move away from a mechanistic tick-box approach to a holistic approach and one which expects educators, students and professional social workers to consider people’s professional capabilities in a rounded way. It will help people identify areas for development (TCSW, 2012a, p.2).

In a similar manner, the family and sexual violence workforce capability framework commissioned by the Aotearoa New Zealand Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence (2017, p.7), differentiated the two terms in the following way:

A competency framework sets the minimum standards of competence. A capability framework sets out how individuals and organisations need to adapt, grow and continuously improve to achieve the highest standards of practice. During its development, the Framework evolved from a competency to a capability framework as the workforce made it clear to the EDG that it needed to focus on the capability of New Zealand's FVSV sector. Consequentially, the Framework identifies and outlines a base level capability across the sector.

To an extent, the frameworks reviewed here reflect these distinctions. There are clear differences between the holistic, high-level approach taken by the English PCF and the detailed, measurable, and behavioural approach adopted by the Canadian Entry-Level Competency Profile (ELCP). However, this distinction breaks down when we include the competence framework designed by US Council for Social Work Education as part of their Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Despite using the term competence, the framework expressed in the EPAS is one of the most high-level and holistic of all of the frameworks reviewed. Indeed, Taylor and Bogo (2014) argue that systematic reviews of the literature suggest that "...the terms competencies, abilities and capabilities appear to be used interchangeably" (p.1406) and go on to state that "...some would consider the EPAS competences to be a capability framework" (p. 1409). Burgess, Barcham, and Kearney (2014) concur that "...there is conceptual confusion between capabilities and competences. Depending on definitions and usage, there may also be considerable overlap" (p.2069). For the purpose of this review, we will use the terms referred to in the document under discussion, whilst recognising that there may be considerable overlap in the use of the two terms.

There are other significant differences in the scope and coverage of the five frameworks that can be accounted for by the different national contexts and variations in the functions that the drafting bodies perform. The US standards, for example, were written by the Council on Social Work Education, providing a list of requirements for any social work curriculum, whereas the SWRB is a regulatory body for the profession as a whole. Though very different in design, the documents tend to cover the same range of themes, which provides a general list of headings around which to structure this review. The section below offers a short commentary on each of the frameworks reviewed before going on to discuss the content of the frameworks in detail.

## The five competency/capability frameworks

### 1. The Aotearoa New Zealand Core Competence Standards (CCS)

As the regulatory body for social workers and social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB, 2015) maintains a set of ten Core Competence Standards (CCS) used for all competence processes undertaken by the Board, including the recognition of programmes of education. The development of the standards was influenced by the IFSW definition of social work (described above) and the practice standards of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (2014). The CCS are intended to "...identify minimum standards of practice for the social work profession in New Zealand. They are not intended to describe all of the possible knowledge and practice skills required by social workers. They are the 'core' competences for social work" (SWRB, 2015).

There are ten CCS defined in the short simple statements below. A competent social worker must demonstrate competence to:

1. practise social work with Māori,
2. practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand,
3. work respectfully and inclusively with diversity and difference in practice,
4. promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice,
5. engage in practice which promotes social change,
6. understand and articulate social work theories, indigenous practice knowledge, other relevant theories, and social work practice methods and models,
7. apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments,
8. promote empowerment of people and communities to enable positive change,
9. practice within legal and ethical boundaries of the social work profession, and
10. represent the social work profession with integrity and professionalism.

Each of the CCS includes between four and six more detailed statements indicating how social workers should demonstrate the competence in question; there are a total of 45 of these statements (SWRB, 2015).

## 2. The English Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), maintained by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW, 2017), is the most complex and comprehensive of the frameworks surveyed. The PCF sets out the following nine different domains of capability that social workers are expected to develop:

1. professionalism,
2. values and ethics,
3. diversity and equality,
4. rights, justice and economic wellbeing,
5. knowledge,
6. critical reflection and analysis,
7. skills and interventions
8. contexts and organisations,
9. professional leadership.

Each domain includes a short domain descriptor and the PCF goes on to specify a number of statements of the capabilities expected for that domain. Unlike any of the other frameworks, the PCF does not restrict itself to capabilities required of newly qualified social workers, but specifies separate capabilities for nine different levels of capability, ranging from new entrants to social work programmes (there are four pre-qualifying levels) to expert social workers practising in the field. The PCF also makes a deliberate point of not using the term *competence* and instead chooses to refer to *capabilities* which they define as:

An integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities, behaviour, understanding and values used appropriately, effectively and confidently, not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but in response to new, complex and changing circumstances. (British Association of Social Workers, 2018, p.3)

For the purposes of this review, the PCF capabilities examined are restricted to the level of practitioners who have completed their qualification and are on the verge of taking up their first position<sup>1</sup>. For the *completion of qualifying course* level there are between three and 14 capability statements associated with each of the nine domains; a total of 72 capability statements.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing (August 2018), the BASW has just released a refreshed and updated version of the PCF which can be viewed at <https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf>. The previous iteration of the framework was used in the preparation of this document.

### **3. The US Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)**

The social work competencies published by the American Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015) are included as part of a larger report on accreditation standards for social work programmes. The EPAS define competence as follows:

EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning. (p.6)

The EPAS identifies nine competencies, each of which includes a high-level descriptor followed by between two and five behaviours that represent observable components of the competence; altogether there are 36 behavioural indicators. The nine competencies are:

1. demonstrate ethical and professional behaviour,
2. engage diversity and difference in practice,
3. advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice,
4. engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice,
5. engage in policy practice,
6. engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities,
7. assess individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities,
8. intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities,
9. evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

One of the distinctive features of the EPAS is that four of the competencies (from six to nine) refer to different parts of the social work process (engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation) giving the competencies a strong practice-related emphasis.

### **4. The Canadian Entry-Level Competency Profile (ELCP)**

The Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators (CCSWR) Entry-Level Competency Profile (ELCP) is designed as a checklist of minimum requirements for entry-level social workers. The CCSWR states that: "The primary focus of the profile developed here is on the measurable entry-level, profession-specific competencies that a person should be able to demonstrate in order to receive registration" (CCSWR, 2012, p.11). This emphasis on measurability means that the competencies are very fine-grained and focused on specific behaviours or behavioural attributes. The section on professionalism, for example, details the regulatory requirements for individual tasks, such as conducting assessments, rather than considering the meaning of professionalism in a social work context.

The ELCP is organised into six competency blocks, with 21 competency families and a total of 152 sub-competencies making it the most granular of the frameworks reviewed. However, at the higher-level of competency blocks and families, similarities with the other frameworks can be discerned. The six competency blocks are:

1. applying ethical standards,
2. conducting assessments,
3. planning interventions,
4. delivering services,
5. improving policies and practices,
6. engaging in reflective practice and professional development.

Canada, like Aotearoa New Zealand, is a settler colonial country with many indigenous communities who are over represented in the social work service user population. Curiously, although the competencies include references to cultural factors and providing services in a “culturally supportive manner” there is no reference to the nature of competent practice with First Nations peoples.

### **5. The Aotearoa New Zealand Family Violence, Sexual Violence and Violence within Whānau Workforce Capability Framework (FVCF)**

The Family Violence, Sexual Violence and Violence within Whānau Workforce Capability Framework (FVCF) is a document describing the values and capabilities which should be exhibited by all professionals working in the area of family and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is different from the other frameworks in that it relates to a specialist area of practice. The FVCF includes the following six domains:

1. understanding people's experiences of family violence, sexual violence and violence within whānau,
2. upholding the dignity, values and beliefs of people and their diverse cultural identities,
3. enabling disclosures and response to help seeking,
4. using collective action to create safety for victims,
5. using collective action to sustain safe behaviours of perpetrators, and
6. working as part of an integrated team.

Since the focus of the FVCF is on a specialist area of social work practice, its content is not strictly relevant to the purpose of our research. However, there are several unique design features of the framework that make it of interest:

- the inclusion of six principles (or values) that underpin all six domains,
- the specification of knowledge requirements in each domain,
- a description of what excellent practice looks like in each domain,
- a description of the actions or behaviours required in each domain, and
- a list of reflective practice questions for each domain.

Of particular note is the list of the following seven underlying principles expressed in te reo Māori and English:

1. Ūkaipō: To recognise the origins of the voice and the story.
2. Rangatiratanga: Your voice is heard.
3. Whanaungatanga: Acknowledge the implications of your actions on your whānau.
4. Aroha: The voice of compassion and empathy.
5. Kaitiakitanga: The process will respect you as a whole person.
6. Manaakitanga: Your story is acknowledged.
7. Kotahitanga: Unity/together for collective good.

## The key competence/capability themes

This section presents an analysis of the five documents using eight key themes that recur across all of the professional frameworks or – in the case of the first theme – are critical to the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand. The themes are: social work with Māori, diversity, social justice, professionalism, critical reflection, advocacy and policy practice, ethics, and knowledge, skills and processes.

### 1. Social work with Māori

Although this theme is, of course, not one that is common across all of the frameworks, it is included here because it is of critical importance to social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. The SWRB Core Competence Standards (CSS) include a requirement that social workers are able to work effectively with Māori<sup>2</sup>, including an understanding of tikanga<sup>3</sup>, te Tiriti o Waitangi<sup>4</sup>, and more broadly how the historical and cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand impacts on social work with Māori people. Specifically, the first of the ten core competence standards emphasise the importance of the three principles of *rangatiratanga* (leadership and self-determination), *whanaungatanga* (connection through shared experience, kinship and belonging) and *manaakitanga* (hospitality, respect, care for one another). These principles are to be applied by social workers in order to ensure that practice is respectful, mana-enhancing and culturally sustaining (SWRB, 2015). The three applied principles were recently incorporated into the core competence standards as one of the outcomes of a broader review of social workers' competency to work with Māori commissioned by the SWRB (SWRB, 2016) and conducted by Tangata Whenua Voices in Social Work. The public output of this review is known as the Kaitiakitanga Framework (SWRB, 2016), so called because:

Kaitiakitanga is about fulfilling the vital obligation for 'taking care of, protecting and safeguarding', undertaking its commitment to ensuring the constant pursuit of safe space respectfulness, absolute integrity and wellbeing in relationships, signposting how the practice of 'tiaki' can be tracked and assessed. (p. 3)

As discussed above, the FVCF is founded on seven principles which are grounded in tikanga Māori, including the three principles mentioned above.

### 2. Diversity

Diversity is a theme of competence or capability included, in a broad sense, across all five of the frameworks reviewed. Human diversity is, of course, an extremely broad concept covering many facets of identity and experience. Reference to diversity is structured differently in each of the frameworks surveyed. For example, in the SWRB standards, aspects of diversity appear in one competence standard on *diversity and difference*, in another on *different ethnic and cultural groups*, and in the competence standard on *working with Māori* (SWRB, 2015).

In the SWRB competence standards, social workers are required to be able to work with people of different cultures and ethnicities, while being sensitive to and acknowledging cultural difference and change. Social workers must understand how their own cultural background plays a role in their practice and be able to reflect critically on their practice from this standpoint. Practice must be culturally-relevant in its approach and social workers must always engage with others respectfully. The SWRB standards broaden diversity and difference to include varying levels of disability and ability, social and economic status, age, sexuality, gender and beliefs (SWRB, 2015).

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<sup>2</sup> Māori or tangata whenua (people of the land) are the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> Tikanga is a term in te reo Māori referring to a customary and culturally meaningful system of processes, procedures and practices.

<sup>4</sup> Te Tiriti o Waitangi refers to the Treaty of Waitangi; a founding constitutional document first signed in 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and Māori chiefs from the North Island.

The English PCF includes a conceptualisation of diversity with a clear, if not explicit, grounding in intersectionality<sup>5</sup> and links this to forms of oppression. Practitioners should be able to appreciate how different people have varying experiences of oppression, marginalisation and alienation; and privilege, power and acclaim. In the PCF, diversity includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender and transgender<sup>6</sup>, faith and belief (BASW, 2017). The PCF also specifically requires social workers to:

- understand how individual identities are informed by culture, economic status, family composition, life experiences and characteristics, take these into account during practice, and question any assumptions where necessary,
- recognise instances of personal organisational discrimination, with reference to any statutory requirements, and seek guidance to challenge them,
- recognise the power invested in their role as social workers and take steps to manage how this power affects people and communities.

In the US EPAS (CSWE, 2015), *competency two: engage diversity and difference in practice* requires graduate social workers to both understand and demonstrate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference at all levels of practice. Social workers are to “present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences” and to self-regulate the extent to which any personal biases and values influence relationships with diverse clients and constituencies (CSWE, 2015, p.7).

The Canadian ELCP states that social workers should “Advocate for policies and services sensitive to diversity issues”; however, the checklist approach to competence adopted in the ELCP reduces diversity to a set of factors to consider during the assessment process. Canadian social workers must:

- assess the impact of cultural factors on the client system,
- assess the impact of sexual orientation on the client system,
- assess the impact of spiritual beliefs on the client system,
- assess the impact of sexual history on the client system.

According to the FVCF, practitioners should ensure their practice upholds the dignity, values and beliefs of all people and their diverse cultural identities. Practitioners should have appropriate knowledge of difference between people and communities, not only so they can better understand differing and changing family dynamics, but to ensure they act in a sensitive and non-discriminatory manner. This framework uses an open-ended list of diversity factors including: culture, ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. It places responsibility for responding to diversity on both individual practitioners and organisations (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017, p.29).

### 3. Social justice

All five sources include some mention of human rights and social justice as a theme, including an awareness of internationally and locally accepted human rights standards, understanding of oppression and privilege and the effects they have on individuals and communities, and the promotion of self-determination and autonomy. In some sources, concepts of rights, justice and their advocacy are folded into or indistinguishable from each other, thus some of the issues in this section will be further discussed in the section on advocacy and policy practice below.

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<sup>5</sup> Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different forms of discrimination can combine, overlap, or intersect to impact the lives of a single person, such as a black woman with disability.

<sup>6</sup> Clearly any reference to differing gender identities should avoid listing ‘transgender’ as a noun rather than an adjective, or as a concept separate from gender, though a specific reference to non-cisgender identities is important.

In competence standard four, the Aotearoa New Zealand CCS refer to the principles of human rights, social and economic justice. The graduate social worker is expected to be able to promote the principles of human rights and economic justice, specifically in terms of understanding and advocating for human rights, economic justice and self-determination; understanding mechanisms of oppression and discrimination; demonstrating knowledge and skills “to leverage those which enhance power and privilege”; and respecting the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of people.

The United Kingdom PCF requires that social workers recognise the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. Social workers must ensure these principles underpin their practice. Related to these broad requirements, social workers should be able to:

- understand the importance of using and contributing to case law and applying these rights in their own practice, and understand the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty,
- understand, identify and apply in practice the principles of social justice, inclusion and equality,
- understand how legislation and guidance can advance or constrain people’s rights and recognise how the law may be used to protect or advance their rights and entitlements,
- work within the principles of human and civil rights and equalities legislation, differentiating and beginning to work with absolute, qualified and competing rights and differing needs and perspectives,
- recognise the impact of poverty and social exclusion and promote enhanced economic status through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits,
- recognise the value of – and aid access to – independent advocacy. (BASW, 2017).

Competence three of the American EPAS framework makes a unique reference to environmental justice by requiring social workers to *advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice*. It also makes explicit reference to “global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations”. The EPAS requires that graduate social workers be able to both:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice. (CSWE, 2015, pp.7-8)

One of the competence families of the Canadian ELCP requires graduate social workers to *advocate for and engage in practices to further human rights and social justice* (p.10) and includes the following sub-competencies:

- advocate for clients’ right to autonomy and self-determination,
- protect individuals from the undue influences and abusive use of power,
- identify linkages between situation/problem and life conditions, with particular attention to issues of oppression and discrimination,
- analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social justice and well-being,
- advocate for policies and services sensitive to diversity issues,
- advocate for the equitable access of all persons to resources, services and opportunities,
- advocate for appropriate resources,
- identify how a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power. (p.10)

In the Aotearoa New Zealand FVCF, human rights and social justice are directly woven into the framework’s list of core principles and are perhaps most closely encapsulated in the principle of *rangatiratanga* (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017, p.8). Human rights are also included in *domain 6: working as an integrated team*, focusing on the specific legislation and human rights agreements which are relevant in any particular scenario.

#### 4. Professionalism

All of the frameworks surveyed refer to the importance of the concept of professionalism, although each adopts a different approach to how competencies or capabilities for professionalism are expressed. Within the broader idea of professionalism, three sub-themes could be discerned; *professional conduct* in general, *working with other professionals and organisations*, and *self-management and self-care*. Capabilities and competencies that deal with *professional conduct* focus on attitude and behaviour, responsibilities, conflict management, accountability and the reputation and dignity of social work as a profession.

The Aotearoa New Zealand CSS require that social workers be compassionate, empathetic and respectful, and that they seek to understand others. They also require that roles and responsibilities be attended to with care and diligence, that professional and personal boundaries are maintained, and that conflict is managed professionally. The promotion of social work as a profession is included in competence ten, *represent the social work profession with integrity and professionalism*, as is an acknowledgement of the power and authority attached to social work roles (SWRB, 2015).

In the English PCF, professional conduct includes particular professional characteristics and behaviours including presentation, demeanour, reliability, honesty and respectfulness. The PCF recognises the importance of understanding the impact of self in interaction with others. Social workers are said to demonstrate professional conduct by taking responsibility for their conduct, practice and continuing development. Social workers must also be able to set and consistently maintain personal and professional boundaries and make use of supervision to ensure “accountability, professional reflection and development”. They must understand their role as a social worker within a range of contexts and act in ways that uphold the reputation of the profession (BASW, 2017).

Competence one of the American EPAS combines standards of professionalism with ethical considerations, and specifically covers professional behaviour in terms of appearance, communication and engagement with technology (CSWE, 2015, p.7).

Several of the frameworks reviewed also include the importance of *professional collaboration and communication* with other professionals, both within and between agencies and organisations. The SWRB standards require that social workers collaborate and engage with others in their work, and this requirement is mentioned in multiple instances across the ten individual standards (SWRB, 2015).

The FVCF framework, which, as stated above, applies to a range of professionals working within the specialist practice area of family violence, stresses inter-agency collaboration very strongly as an extremely important part of the sensitive work they do. It requires that social workers are able to work as part of an integrated team, that they understand their roles and responsibilities and that they can communicate effectively with all involved parties (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017, p.43). The English PCF also covers collaboration with other professionals and with communities and the US EPAS framework refers to “interprofessional teamwork and communication” and recognises that different professional ethical frameworks can affect these relationships (CSWE, 2015).

Another important aspect of professionalism referred to by several of the existing frameworks is *self-care* and *self-management*, requiring social workers to recognise their own limits, ask for help when they need it and ensure they are coping with their work. Under the SWRB competence standards, social workers should show resilience in their work, know their limits and actively engage in self-care. They should seek advice where required and participate in ongoing supervision and professional development (SWRB, 2015). The English PCF requires that social workers take responsibility for their conduct and practice, with support from supervision. This specifically entails managing time and workload, recognising and maintaining professional boundaries, understanding professional limitations,

knowing when to seek advice, and actively managing their safety, health and wellbeing (BASW, 2017). The American standards also allude to the concept of self-care in the section on ethical and professional behaviour with a mention of supervision and self-reflection (CSWE, 2015, p.7).

## 5. Critical reflection

The practice of reflection or critical reflection is consistently included in all frameworks with different emphases and connections made to other competencies, capabilities and practices. For example, reflection is frequently linked to the use of supervision, to continuing professional development, to the effective application of knowledge and skill, and, in the US EPAS framework, to upholding ethical practice.

The Aotearoa New Zealand CSS includes competence standard seven: *apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments* and, in other standards, notes the importance of supervision for social work practice. Graduate social workers are, for example, required to seek supervision or guidance where ethical dilemmas arise and the social worker should “actively participate in supervision, continual professional development and career-long learning”. In addition, the SWRB requires social workers to demonstrate the competency of reflection in practice, specifically to critically reflect on practice in relation to theories, models and approaches (SWRB, 2015).

The English PCF includes domain six: *critical reflection and analysis* and requires that qualifying social workers are knowledgeable about and can apply principles of critical thinking. In doing so they can “... identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate” multiple sources of knowledge and evidence for effective practice. These sources of evidence include practice evidence, reflections from their own practice experience, understandings from service user and carer experience, together with research-based, organisational, policy and legal knowledge. Uniquely, the English PCF also makes reference to creativity and social workers are expected to “...use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity” and “...apply imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice” (BASW, 2017).

The American EPAS framework requires social workers to “use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations” (CSWE, 2015, p.7). Supervision and consultation are recommended to guide “professional judgment and behavior” (CSWE, 2015, p.7). Uniquely, the EPAS framework includes a competence on *engaging in practice-informed research and research-informed practice* that requires, amongst other things, that social workers “apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings”. All of the frameworks refer to the use of research, but the EPAS is the only one making this an explicit, high-level requirement.

The Canadian framework includes a competency family *to engage in reflective practice and professional development* that emphasises the link between reflective practice, professional development and supervision. Canadian social workers are expected to “receive and use supervision to advance practice” (CCSWR, 2012, p.16). More broadly, they are required to engage in reflective evaluation of practice, “... in the light of professional standards, participate in professional development and contribute to the development of others” (p.16).

## 6. Advocacy and policy practice

Most of the frameworks reviewed include references to the advocacy role of social workers (although the English PCF assumes the social work task is to link service users to independent advocacy services), and all of the frameworks expect social workers to be competent in understanding and being able to influence or change social policies.

Advocacy and policy-related work is also included within the SWRB’s framework in three separate competences that echo the IFSWs global definition of social work:

- competence standard four: *promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice,*
- competence standard five: *engage in practice which promotes social change, and*
- competence standard eight: *promote empowerment of people and communities to enable positive change.*

The first competence outlines the role of advocating for human, legal and civil rights, social and economic justice, and self-determination. The second describes advocacy at a macro level, requiring social workers to critically analyse the structures and systems within which they operate and to promote social change to further the interests of people, communities and the wider society. The third competence standard encapsulates a more empowering and participatory concept of advocacy, promoting active participation in decision-making and requiring social workers to work in partnership with people and communities to gain access to resources and realise their potential.

The English PCF briefly mentions the value of independent advocacy in their *rights and justice* domain, but does not specifically consider advocacy on the part of social workers. As above, it does discuss the importance of maintaining human rights standards, but does not discuss the role of social workers in advocating for those rights.

As noted, the US EPAS framework refers to social worker's competence to offer advocacy for human rights and social justice at micro, meso and macro levels. Different aspects of advocacy work are included in *competency three: advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice* where social workers are expected to "advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels" and "engage in practices that advance social, economic and environmental justice". This is extended further in *competency five: engage in policy practice* which delineates a clear expectation that social workers understand, evaluate and "advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice".

Advocacy is also referred to more obliquely in the Family Violence and Sexual Violence framework and the Canadian ELPC. The principle of rangatiratanga in the FVCF includes the concept of advocacy, referring to "quality leadership, advocacy and service relationships" and the "use of language and applications that actively enhance mauri ora (the call to claim the right to speak)". The need to make safe spaces for victims of family and sexual violence and their family members (as well as perpetrators) is emphasised throughout the framework, which certainly could come under a more general advocacy domain. In the Canadian ELPC, advocacy is not emphasised in any general way, but is mentioned in three separate sections: *ethics* (social workers must advocate for clients' rights and protect them from abuses, advocate for changes to policy) (CCSWR, 2012, p.10), *service delivery* (social workers must advocate for clients' rights and inform them how to advocate for themselves) (pp.13-14) and *improving practice and policy* (social workers must assess policy and practice, advocate for change if necessary and work with communities to make improvements) (pp.14-15).

## 7. Ethics

Professional ethics for social work practice is included in all of the sources, both specifically in terms of professional conduct, and more generally in terms of a wider ethical basis for action and ongoing assessment of what is ethical in specific circumstances. Other than the FVSV framework, which has an interdisciplinary focus, the documents all make reference to specific codes of ethics and codes of conduct that apply in their local jurisdictions.

The Aotearoa New Zealand CSS includes a competence that connects legal and ethical practice: *practice within legal and ethical boundaries of the social work profession*. This requires that social workers follow any applicable codes of conduct and ethics, for example, the SWRB Code of Conduct and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. Social workers need to

be able to identify and manage ethical conflicts, seeking guidance where necessary. Social workers should be able to recognise and respond appropriately to any conflicts of interest, understand relevant legislation, policies and systems which govern practice and perform any required statutory duties. Clients' rights to privacy must be upheld and they should be informed of any required disclosures of their information. Social workers are also required to keep clear and accurate records of their practice and decision-making (SWRB, 2015).

Domain two of the English PCF is dedicated to *values and ethics* encompassing professional guidelines and the management of specific client values and beliefs. Much like the other frameworks, social workers are required to follow professional ethical guidelines and relevant legislation, and specifically take them into account when making decisions. They are also required to recognise the ways in which their own values and beliefs affect their practice, and to manage competing values, evaluating and reflecting on any ethical dilemmas with guidance and support. Clients and their families and carers must be actively included in decision-making and ethical discussions, where possible, and in a respectful manner (BASW, 2017).

Competency one of the American EPAS document connects ethics with professionalism, requiring social workers to *demonstrate ethical and professional behaviour*. This competency refers to the NASW code of ethics, law and regulations, ethical decision-making models, ethical research practice and the ethical use of technology.

The first of the six competency blocks of the Canadian ELPC is *applying ethical standards*, which includes a thorough section on ethics, covering ethical and legislative guidelines, protocols for action in specific situations and ongoing evaluation of decisions from an ethical standpoint (CCSWR, 2012, pp.9-10). As with the rest of the document, this section is very granular and offers a checklist of requirements for practice rather than a set of guiding philosophies.

Since the FVCF applies to a range of different professional contexts, it does not refer to a single code of ethics, but it does include domain four *using collective action to create safety for victims*, which addresses the responsibility of practitioners and agencies to maintain the safety of their clients, which could certainly be considered as a primary ethical standard, especially when it comes to the responsible sharing of information and managing interactions between perpetrators and victims (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017, pp.45-46).

## **8. Knowledge, skills and processes**

Although each of the frameworks reviewed highlight capabilities and competencies that require knowledge and skills to be applied, these are usually implied or articulated in relation to each statement of competence or capability. The exception to this is the English PCF (which includes a separate domain for *knowledge* and another for *skills and interventions*) and, to an extent, the Aotearoa New Zealand CCS.

In the Aotearoa New Zealand CCS, reference to knowledge and skills is generally assumed in each of the competences. Core competence six is the exception to this where social workers are expected to *understand and articulate social work theories, indigenous practice knowledge, other relevant theories, and social work practice methods and models*. This reference to indigenous practice knowledge is unique and important for a social work practice that embraces biculturalism and recognises our responsibilities to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In other competences the ability to access and evaluate multiple sources of knowledge are valued, including technological and research-based knowledge, and the ability to transfer this knowledge in research-informed practice (SWRB, 2015). The CCS also require that social workers understand human behaviour, are able to apply their knowledge of different social work theories and models in practice, and are able to critically reflect on this process (SWRB, 2015).

The English PCF takes a more explicit approach to the specification of knowledge and skills. Domain five of the PCF is headed *knowledge* and social workers must “develop and apply relevant knowledge from social work practice and research, social sciences, law, other professional and relevant fields, and from the experience of people who use services”. Domain seven is *skills and interventions* and social workers must “use judgement, knowledge and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support, prevent harm and enable progress”. At the PCF level of *completion of the qualifying course*, the domain five knowledge domain, and the domain seven skill domain, both lists 13 separate capabilities.

In contrast, the approach taken by the US EPAS is an integrated one; whereby, “Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes that comprise competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviours that integrate these components” (CSWE, 2015, p.7). Although, the US EPAS does not include separate competences on knowledge or skills, it does make explicit reference to four steps in what is widely accepted as the process of social work (Watson & West, 2016), and expresses these steps as four of their nine competences, giving the overall framework a very strong and recognisable practice-related foundation. The four process-related competences are:

- competence 6: engage with individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities,
- competence 7: assess individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities,
- competence 8: intervene with individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities,
- competence 9: evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities.

The Canadian ELCP does not have a high-level statement of knowledge or skills, but the 152 sub-competencies are expressed in a very detailed, technical skills-related format. For example, in relation to the global competency family *gather pertinent information by systematic questioning and regarding the nature and degree of problem*, there are nine sub-competencies including:

- interview clients to gather information from the clients’ perspective regarding the nature and degree of the problem,
- collect and verify relevant information pertaining to social functioning and development,
- collect and verify information about clients from collateral sources.

The FVCF documents incorporate many skills related to family violence practice in the form of checklists and evaluative questions intended to guide practice and minimise risk of further harm. In the FVCF there is an emphasis on practitioners needing to understand risk factors and to be proactive and safe in seeking information. Safety is the major emphasis when working with perpetrators to engage respectfully and productively, and support them to stop violent behaviour, while maintaining a priority on the safety of victims (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017).

## Conclusions

This review examined the content of five separate frameworks, or competency profiles, from four different jurisdictions developed by four professional bodies and one multi-agency working group. Discussion of the frameworks was structured using eight themes that recurred across the frameworks, with the exception of the first theme which was considered to be a self-evident component of any competence or capability framework for Aotearoa New Zealand. The themes were:

- working with Māori,
- diversity,
- social justice,
- professionalism,
- critical reflection,
- advocacy and policy practice,
- ethics,
- knowledge, skills and processes.

Although there were striking similarities in the content of the frameworks, each was structured differently and expressed at different levels of detail; from the relatively high-level, holistic approach of the American EPAS framework to the meticulously detailed sub-competence checklists of the Canadian ELCP. There were also some unique features in each of the frameworks including the inclusion of competence for working with indigenous people in the CSS and a reference to the value of indigenous knowledge; the specification of nine different levels of capability in the English PCF, progressing from entry level to advanced and expert levels of practice; the articulation of a set of underlying principles or values in the FVCF that permeated all of the capabilities; and the clear emphasis on practice articulated in the four stages of the social work process included in the American EPAS.

The primary purpose of the Enhance R2P research project is to create an evidence-informed, industry-agreed, professional capabilities framework. The team always envisaged that this framework would build on and extend the existing Core Competence Standards of the SWRB, and that the process for doing so would involve empirical research, literature reviews and close consultation with key stakeholders. This review of the five frameworks, along with our scan of the literature on professional capability frameworks (Hay et al., 2018), underpinned the stakeholder consultation workshops described in the section that follows.

The research team acknowledge the work of our research assistant Caitlin Merriman who drafted this review of the five frameworks.

# The co-production workshops

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## Background

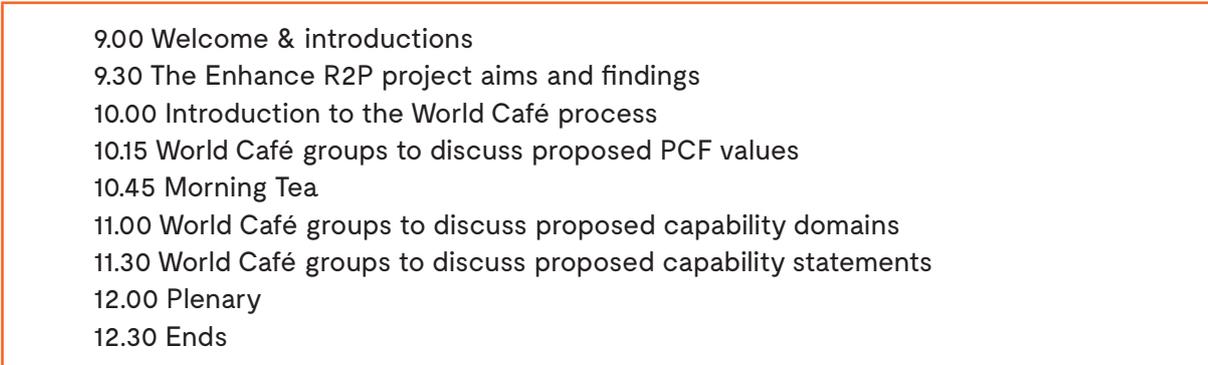
This step of the Enhance R2P project was intended to engage stakeholders from the social work community in workshops for the co-production of a draft professional capabilities framework. Being realistic about the burden of time we could expect from busy professionals, we decided to organise the workshops in a structured manner. We adopted a modified World Café style approach to the workshops to maximise participant engagement (Fouché & Light, 2011) and, at the same time, prepared draft values, domains and capability statements for the workshop members to consider.

## Recruitment and demographics

The criterion for inviting stakeholders to the workshops is that they were considered to have a key role within their organisations in enhancing the capabilities of social workers at the point of graduation, and at more experienced and advanced levels of practice. The research team consulted with the project advisory group, asking them to use their professional networks to propose stakeholders from relevant organisations across New Zealand. Between 20 and 30 participants attended each of the hui, with 132 taking part overall. Seventy six percent of participants identified as female, 22% as male and 2% as other. In terms of ethnicity, 69% identified as NZ European, 18% as Māori, 6% as Pasifika and 7% as another ethnicity. Finally, in relation to their occupational role, 29% described themselves as managers, 32% as social work practitioners, 10% as field work educators and 29% gave another role definition.

## Workshop programme

The programme (see Figure 1 below) consisted of a half-day meeting where participants were presented with a summary of the findings from the first two phases of the project – on the content of the social work curriculum (phase one) and perceptions on the readiness to practise of newly qualified social workers (phase two) – before moving into a discussion of the proposed professional capabilities framework. The research team used a structured process to engage participants in a discussion about the proposed PCF.



9.00 Welcome & introductions  
9.30 The Enhance R2P project aims and findings  
10.00 Introduction to the World Café process  
10.15 World Café groups to discuss proposed PCF values  
10.45 Morning Tea  
11.00 World Café groups to discuss proposed capability domains  
11.30 World Café groups to discuss proposed capability statements  
12.00 Plenary  
12.30 Ends

**Figure 1: Programme for the PCF co-production workshops**

Firstly, the team were persuaded by our review of the family violence framework that showed there was value in identifying a list of principles or values that underpinned all of the capabilities. Therefore, in advance of the workshops, the team agreed a list of six underpinning values expressed in te reo

Māori and with English descriptions. These values included *rangatiratanga*, *manaakitanga*, and *whanaungatanga* that were already part of the SWRBs Core Competence Standards. However, they also included *aroha* and *kotahitanga*, adapted from the family violence framework and considered by the team to add essential social work values of compassion and solidarity. In addition, the team wanted to include the idea of moral courage and the need for social workers to act in conditions of uncertainty, this we described in the principle of *mātātoa* (see Figure 2 for the six draft values).

1. **Rangatiratanga:** Social workers respect diversity and cultural difference and use our leadership to support the self-determination, autonomy and empowerment of others.
2. **Manaakitanga:** Social workers show respect, generosity and care for others. We practise empathic solidarity, acknowledge boundaries and meet obligations.
3. **Whanaungatanga:** Social workers work to strengthen reciprocal relationships, connectedness and to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion.
4. **Aroha:** Social workers are accepting and show compassion for others. We recognise our common humanity with people who use our services and hold people to account without being judgemental. We focus on people’s strengths and finding solutions.
5. **Kotahitanga:** Social workers work to build a sense of community, solidarity and collective action for social change. We challenge injustice and oppression in all of its forms including: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.
6. **Mātātoa:** Social workers have the moral courage to act in situations that are uncomfortable, challenging and uncertain. We use critical reflection and questioning to work through contradictions and complexity.

**Figure 2: Draft social work values for the Enhance R2P professional capabilities framework**

Secondly, we wanted to consult stakeholders on domains for the professional capabilities framework. To facilitate this process, we agreed a list of key high-level terms (including titles in te reo). These domains were presented to participants with summary terms for the existing Core Competence Standards as a comparator (see Figure 3 below). In drafting the Enhance R2P domains, the team had to identify a list of no more than ten domains; include a domain on working with Māori (which we expressed as *Te Ao Māori* in order to capture the value of awareness of the Māori worldview); replicate the strong practice emphasis of the American EPAS by including four domains on the social work process: engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation. From the outset of the project we had determined to identify capabilities at three different levels from newly qualified to more experienced. However, on reflection, we considered that attempting to define three different levels of capabilities for ten different domains, in a single half-day workshop was too complex and that our focus should be on the newly qualified level. We agreed that the more advanced capabilities could be developed from the benchmark NQSW level and results distributed to participants for feedback after the workshops.

Draft Enhance R2P Domains	Existing SWRB Core Competence Standard
Te Ao Māori   The Māori world	Social work with Māori
Kanorau   Diversity	Different ethnic & cultural groups
Manatika   Social Justice	Diversity & Difference
Mātanga   Professionalism	Rights & Justice
Whaiwhakaaro   Critical Reflection	Social change
Kaupapa Here   Policy Practice	Knowledge, methods & models
Hononga   Engagement	Critical thinking
Aromatawai   Assessment	Empowerment
Wawaotanga   Intervention	Legal & ethical
Arotakenga   Evaluation	Professionalism

**Figure 3: Comparator domains for discussion at the workshops**



**Figure 4: Participants working at the Auckland University workshop**

The workshop programme included sessions where participants, in small groups using notes on flipcharts, discussed and commented on the draft values and the draft domains. Participants then went on to review candidate statements for the ten draft domains. The candidate statements were extracted from the five frameworks reviewed by the research team. This part of the programme was conducted using the World Café format; a process whereby participants move between tables for short thirty-minute rounds of conversation with a different domain discussion at each table. Highlights of the discussion were captured by participants on flipcharts, and, at the end of thirty minutes, each member of the group moved to a different table and a new domain. Because of limitations on time, each group reviewed only two domains, but between them discussed all ten. The content of the flipcharts was used by the research team to inform revisions to the draft values and domains, and to produce a draft professional capabilities framework.

## Results

At the end of each workshop the individual flipcharts, capturing participants comments on the draft values and domains, were scanned, converted to PDF format and uploaded to the cloud, giving the team a repository of content to review. The scanned flipcharts were then sorted into those commenting on the values, the domains and the candidate statements for each of the draft domains.

### Comments on the value statements

At each of the workshops, during plenary discussions, the team were left with the impression that, with a few caveats, the six values were strongly supported. This impression was confirmed in participants' comments on the flipcharts, a representative selection of which are included below:

- “We really like and identify with these values.”
- “These values are great; because they are uniquely NZ.”
- “Feel that six values align well to social work.”
- “Culturally inclusive, using te reo Māori is highly appropriate.”

Some groups suggested amendments and additions:

“Include kindness with Manaakitanga.”

“Ahuratanga: safety, where is it?”

“Wairuatanga: self-care and knowledge of self.”

Some groups commented on particular values in detail and some wanted to question and clarify the definitions of the terms in te reo:

“Aroha: we use professional judgement without being judgemental.”

“Manaakitanga is much more than *respect* and *generosity*. We can't 'give' people mana (they already have it), it's about us recognising mana.”

“Could use a blurb or definition at the beginning that talks about understanding the depth and levels of the term in te reo. They hold far more meaning than the short descriptions provide.”

Other groups commented on the ways in which the values could be used in social work education and practice:

“Ideally these values would be made evident prior to final student selection through assessment processes.”

“This is a way that we can show others the values of social work and are a way of educating others about social work.”

“Has a broad application with clients, colleagues and organisations.”

### **Comments on the ten draft domains**

During workshop plenary discussions, the proposed domains also appeared to be welcomed by participants attending the workshops, and the four process-related domains – domains seven to ten – were particularly well-received. The comments on flipcharts supported this view and, once again, added a more detailed commentary.

“Very positive to include domains 7 to 10 as these are practice-based.”

“Aligns well with providers/agencies.”

“Domains 7 to 10, we like this because this is what social work does.”

“We like the breakdown into stages of SW practice.”

“Having assessment as a separate capability is excellent/very important for new graduates and more experienced social workers, who do assess/analyse but don't necessarily communicate or document this.”

“Domains and values work well together.”

“The SWRB competencies feel like a standard to be met, and the R2P capabilities can be used as the person you want to be.”

“Unashamedly bicultural.”

Some comments suggested amendments and additions. The comments in relation to the domains were very both well-considered and wide-ranging. We include some highlights below:

“Domains 7–10: You have not included ending, which is actually vital and not well–done by most social workers.”

“Te Ao Māori: this does not acknowledge the diversity of Iwi, not generalising as Māori.”

“Missing: managing stress, self-care, managing self.”

“Analysis is an area we need to strengthen.”

“Include supervision as a specific domain.”

“Include community development; macro practice.”

“Priority around the Treaty of Waitangi and the relevance of the ten domains to this.”

“Greater emphasis on social work role in social change/social activism.”

“Organisational context; working within.”

“Knowledge of self/authenticity/interpersonal skills.”

“Oranga as an additional domain; wellbeing.”

“Enhance micro as well as macro skills.”

“Ability to communicate empathy as part of engagement.”

“Critical reflection includes self-knowledge and self-awareness.”

“Maybe include no 11: *ethical practice*.”

Other comments were in the form of questions, sometimes rhetorical questions, suggesting missing dimensions from the domains:

“Where is advocacy?”

“Legal framework as a domain?”

“Where is human rights? Where is methods? Advocacy?”

“Professionalism; does this include ethics?”

“Is theory/knowledge covered? Implicit?”

“Research and best practice? Are they included?”

“Self-awareness/self-care not included.”

“Integrated delivery; is it included in anything?”

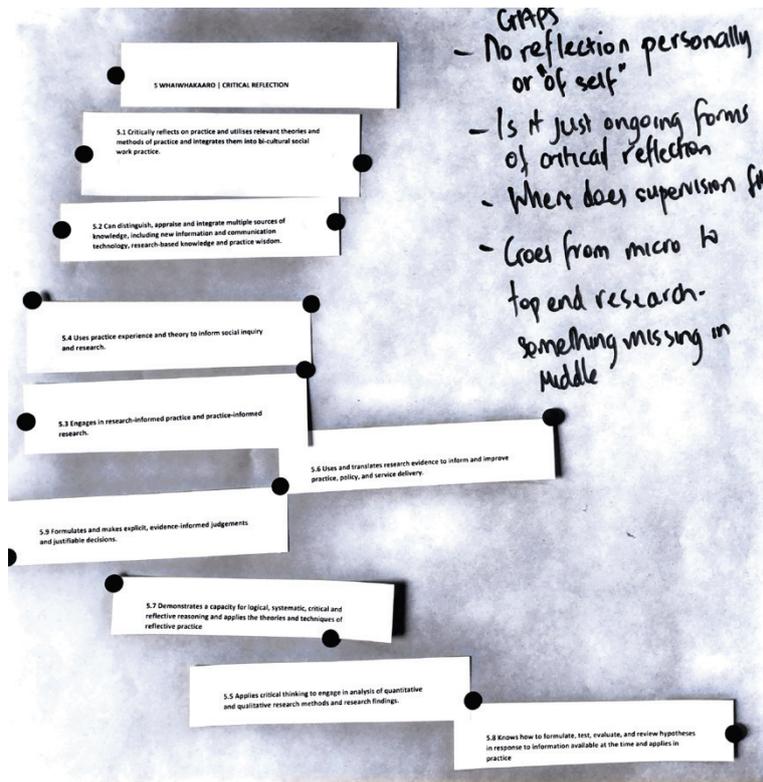
“Legal/ethical being such a need, how do we ensure it is there?”

In the absence of detailed domain descriptions, many of the comments above are unsurprising. They did however provide the team with a rich seam of informed reflections that assisted with further refinements to the ten domains and the subsequent drafting of domain descriptions.

### **Comments on the capability statements for the ten draft domains**

At each workshop, participants had the opportunity to review candidate capability statements for the ten domains. They were asked to select the most important of the statements, to rank order them (where possible), and they were informed that they could add their own statements or amend the statements on offer. Few groups added new statements, although several amended existing statements. Most attempted a rank order, although many made comments to the effect that this was difficult or impossible because all of the statements included were equally valuable. Some added that the linear format implied by rank ordering masked the relationship between statements, and others stated that this was a Western approach to knowledge generation. Most groups added comments on flipcharts and sometimes the layout and design of the flipchart itself conveyed a particular emphasis or meaning (see, for example, the three sample flipchart commentaries in Figures 5, 6 & 7 below).





**Figure 7: Flipchart commentary on policy practice domain**

The Flipchart commentaries provided by the workshop participants, along with the literature review and five frameworks review, were used by the team to develop the final draft values statement and the professional capabilities framework, which are provided in the next and final section of this report.

# The Enhance R2P Professional Capabilities Framework

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Based on a literature scan (Hay et al., 2018), a review of five existing competence and capability frameworks, and a series of five stakeholder workshops, the Enhance R2P team decided on several broad design principles for the creation of a professional capabilities framework.

The first was that, following the approach of the Family Violence and Sexual Violence Capability Framework (Ministerial Group on Family Violence and Sexual Violence, 2017), we would include a set of underpinning values expressed in te reo Māori and with descriptions in English. These values represent the bicultural heart of the framework and should be clear and direct enough to be understood by any student, social worker or service user. The values drafted for our co-production workshops were well received and are included here with minor amendments to the descriptors and – responding to the suggestion of several workshop groups – the inclusion of one additional value: *wairuatanga* (see Figure 8 below).

Secondly, influenced by the English Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) (British Association of Social Workers, 2017), we wanted a framework that focused on different levels in the professional development of a social worker. At this stage we propose only to illustrate this approach by drafting three levels: *NQSW* or the point of graduation from a recognised programme of study; *first year of practice* or after one year of supervised practice (preferably as part of an assisted and supported first year of practice); *social worker* or on attainment of two to three years of supervised practice. We have used feedback from the co-production workshops to draft the *NQSW* level and projected additional indicators for the *first year of practice* and *social worker* levels.

Thirdly, and in common with all of the existing frameworks, the Enhance R2P PCF is not intended as a comprehensive list of all of the knowledge, skills and attributes of social workers, but a framework for highlighting core capabilities. The production of long competency checklists can be counterproductive. We decided to identify no more than ten capabilities, to include a capability descriptor and to identify several behavioural indicators for each of the three levels. In common with the American EPAS framework (Council on Social Work Education, 2015), our view is that each capability is holistic and describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the capability, and that the behavioural indicators represent observable components of the capabilities at each of the three levels. The Enhance R2P team, and our workshop participants, welcome the strong practice emphasis of the American EPAS provided by including the four steps in the social work process as capabilities: engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation.

Finally, unlike the English PCF, our framework is firmly focused on the transition from *NQSW* to professional practitioner status, and we see the three levels described as building on each other. As social workers progress through the three levels their capability becomes more integrated and we express this in the framework by using fewer, higher-level indicators.

## The Enhance R2P Values

1. **RANGATIRATANGA:** Social workers value diversity and cultural identity. We use our practice to advocate for and support the self-determination and empowerment of people.
2. **MANAAKITANGA:** Social workers recognise and support the mana of people. We act towards people with respect, kindness and compassion. We practise empathic solidarity, ensure safe space, acknowledge boundaries and meet obligations.
3. **WHANAUNGATANGA:** Social workers work to strengthen reciprocal mana-enhancing relationships, connectedness and to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion.
4. **AROHA:** Social workers acknowledge our mutual responsibility for wellbeing. We recognise our common humanity with people who use our services and hold people to account, using professional judgement without being judgemental. We focus on people's strengths and finding solutions.
5. **KOTAHITANGA:** Social workers work to build a sense of community, solidarity and collective action for social change. We challenge injustice and oppression in all of its forms including: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.
6. **MĀTĀTOA:** Social workers act with moral courage in situations that are uncomfortable, challenging and uncertain. We use critical reflection and questioning to work through contradictions and complexity.
7. **WAIRUATANGA:** Social workers attend to the wellbeing – spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical – of self and others. We acknowledge the significance of whakapapa, self-awareness and self-care.

**Figure 8: Enhance R2P values for Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand**

## CAPABILITY ONE: Te Ao Māori | The Māori World

Social workers are capable of understanding the historical and present effects of colonisation on tangata whenua as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. Social workers understand and work to promote the principles and articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand society) and work with whānau, hapū and iwi to maintain relationships that are mana-enhancing. Tau iwi social workers are respectful of Te Ao Māori and recognise when it is appropriate to seek cultural guidance, supervision and advice from cultural advisors.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
1.1 Explain how colonisation, historically and currently, impacts the wellbeing of tangata whenua and the nature of social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.	1.7 Make active use of cultural supervision to improve understanding of Te Ao Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to improve confidence and capability to work effectively with tangata whenua.	1.10 Act independently and with confidence to challenge the practice of agency workers and others that undermine commitment to advancing the wellbeing of tangata whenua.
1.2 Maintain relationships that are mana-enhancing, self-determining, respectful, mindful of cultural uniqueness and acknowledge cultural identity.	1.8 Reflect critically on agencies commitment to Tiriti o Waitangi and commitment to advancing the wellbeing of tangata whenua.	
1.3 Use practice behaviours that promote mauri ora by ensuring safe space, acknowledging boundaries and meeting obligations.	1.9 Demonstrate improvements in knowledge and skill in te reo and tikanga Māori.	
1.4 Engage in practice that is culturally sustaining, strengthens relationships, is mutually contributing and connecting and encourages warmth.		
1.5 Demonstrate beginning knowledge and skill in te reo Māori.		
1.6 Demonstrate beginning knowledge and skill in tikanga Māori.		

## CAPABILITY TWO: Kanorau | Diversity

Social workers understand how the power dynamics of diversity and difference<sup>7</sup> lead people to experience marginalisation, stigmatisation, oppression and exploitation. Social workers understand how different forms of diversity intersect to shape human experience and the identities of people. Social workers demonstrate self-awareness and are capable of reflecting on how their own experience, personal values and biases impact their work. Social workers are capable of advocating with or on behalf of oppressed peoples and of analysing and challenging all forms of injustice and oppression including exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
2.1 Display openness to learning about diversity and difference and recognise service users as experts of their own lived experience.	2.5 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability to respond to diversity and challenge oppression.	2.7 Demonstrate leadership in improving organisational and/or governmental policies to increase responsiveness to diversity and difference and to challenge oppression.
2.2 Reflect critically on personal values, culture, knowledge and beliefs and show awareness of the influence of bias in decision-making.	2.6 Promote diversity and difference by, where appropriate, challenging assumptions, organisational cultures, practices and policies.	
2.3 Communicate and engage respectfully and effectively with diverse groups of people.		
2.4 Critically analyse how organisational cultures, practices and policies may limit effective responses to diversity and difference.		

<sup>7</sup> Including, but not limited to, age, class, colour, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, neurodiversity, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex and sexual orientation.

## CAPABILITY THREE: Manatika | Social justice

Social workers understand the sources of social inequity and are capable of taking actions to protect and advocate for human rights including civil, political, environmental, economic, social and cultural rights. Social workers recognise the impact of social structural factors on the lives of people – such as poverty, racism, poor housing and social exclusion – and are capable of working with people at micro, meso and macro levels to prevent stigmatisation and promote social change. They understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need, social justice and strategies to promote social, economic and environmental justice and human rights. Social workers promote strengths, agency, hope and self-determination.

Capable social workers can:

<b>NQSW</b>	<b>FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE</b>	<b>SOCIAL WORKER</b>
3.1 Describe the framework of human rights and freedoms and the New Zealand and international laws, conventions and protocols that underpin it.	3.6 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in promoting social, economic and environmental justice and human rights.	3.8 Show leadership in promoting organisational transparency and political accountability with regard to social justice and human rights.
3.2 Explain the dynamics of power and privilege in Aotearoa New Zealand and the forms of inequity that result from them.	3.7 Take practical steps and actions that result in the protection and promotion of the rights of service users.	
3.3 Advocate for and protect human rights including civil, political, environmental, economic, social and cultural rights.		
3.4 Understand how legislation and policy can advance or constrain people's rights and makes appropriate use of the law to protect or advance rights and entitlements.		
3.5 Promote the strengths, agency, hope and self-determination of people.		

## CAPABILITY FOUR: Matanga | Professionalism

Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession and understand the history, values and ethical standards of the profession. Social workers are capable of taking responsibility for their conduct, practice, self-care and professional development. Social workers are accountable and actively participate in professional supervision, professional development and lifelong learning. They are ethically fluent and can reason about ethical issues, problems and dilemmas in the context of practice, policy or research. Social workers are open to innovative practice developments, stay up to date with relevant research findings and are committed to the ethical uses of emerging technologies. They are mindful of the SWRB code of conduct, the ANZASW code of ethics and other professional frameworks relevant to their role and function.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
4.1 Act with integrity attending to professional demeanour, diligence, reliability, timeliness, openness, honesty and respect.	4.7 Make active use of professional supervision to improve their confidence, capability and integrity as professional practitioners.	4.11 Manages tension between conflicting ethical principles.
4.2 Reason about ethical issues, problems and dilemmas arising in the context of practice, policy and research.	4.8 Demonstrate resilience and the ability to manage interpersonal conflict and challenges that arise in day-to-day practice.	4.12 Work independently and ethically with minimum direction, making well-informed professional judgements and seeking advice and guidance where necessary.
4.3 Show awareness of their 'use of self' in practice, reflecting on the limits of their capability and practising self-care.	4.9 Use the power and authority associated with their professional role responsibly and accountably.	4.13 Offer support to NQSWs seeking guidance in challenges that arise in practice.
4.4 Make effective and proactive use of professional supervision for accountability, reflection and professional development.	4.10 Manage time and workload effectively and efficiently.	
4.5 Understand the purpose and value of professional documentation, keeping clear and accurate records in a timely manner.		
4.6 Uphold the right to privacy and confidentiality of personal information, understanding when information may need to be shared and ensuring people are informed of rights and remedies.		

## CAPABILITY FIVE: Whaiwhakaaro | Critical reflection

Social workers are capable of using critical thinking to reflect on power, practice, policy and research findings. They understand how evidence from multiple sources: qualitative and quantitative, implicit and explicit – including indigenous knowledge – can be used to inform micro, meso and macro level practice. They are able to identify how power relations affect the underpinning assumptions embedded in research and practice theories. Social workers use critical reflection to reflect on their practice within supervision, to analyse policy settings and to conduct reviews of literature and research inquiries, including undertaking studies that generate new knowledge.

Capable social workers can:

<b>NQSW</b>	<b>FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE</b>	<b>SOCIAL WORKER</b>
5.1 Use supervision to reflect critically on their practice and connect practice experience with other forms of knowledge.	5.4 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in critical reflection.	5.6 Confidently contributes to the improvement of practice, policy, and service delivery.
5.2 Provide sound evidence-informed justifications for professional judgements and decision-making.	5.5 Lead research-informed presentations to reflect critically on current practice issues.	
5.3 Access, evaluate and use knowledge and research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and sustainable service delivery.		

## CAPABILITY SIX: Kaupapa Here | Policy Practice

Social workers are capable of understanding the role of policy and legislation in shaping the duties and powers of social workers and the social services and resources available to support the social, emotional, environmental and material wellbeing of people. Social workers understand policy development and implementation and are capable of advocating for and working with people to campaign and create sustainable change in policy settings. They recognise how framing affects policy outcomes and can respond strategically to challenge frames that have oppressive policy effects.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
6.1 Critically analyse policy and legislative systems and structures and understand their impact on the wellbeing of people.	6.4 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in advocacy and policy practice.	6.6 Practise confidently at micro, meso and macro levels using a range of strategies, from advocacy for individuals to campaigning on policy issues.
6.2 Contribute to policy making and policy review to make systems and structures responsive to those who use them.	6.5 Conduct successful advocacy actions on behalf of individuals, groups, families, whanau or communities.	
6.3 Advocate the need for social change to provide equity and fairness for all.		

## CAPABILITY SEVEN: Hononga | Engagement

Social workers value and work to build respectful, mana-enhancing human relationships. Social workers are capable of critically evaluating and applying theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge to engage and build positive working relationships with other people including individuals, groups, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, organisations and communities. Social workers use empathy, reflection, interpersonal skills and their understanding of diversity to build rapport and trust with people including professionals from other agencies and people who are involuntary users of social work services. They are aware of their role in interprofessional groups. Social workers are self-aware and use reflection in and on action to ensure interpersonal and cultural responsiveness.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
7.1 Listen attentively and respond appropriately to the explicit and implicit content of communication, including emotional content.	7.7 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in engagement and rapport building.	7.10 Engage confidently and competently with a wide range of people in a range of circumstances including work with involuntary service users.
7.2 Use empathy, reflection and interpersonal skills to engage effectively with people.	7.8 Increase the range of situations and methods in which effective engagement occurs.	
7.3 Identify and adapt verbal, non-verbal and written communication skills, including online communication, in response to peoples' age, comprehension and culture.	7.9 Recognise and work with conflict and repair breakdowns in helping relationships.	
7.4 Engage with people in ways that recognise and respect family, language, cultural, spiritual and relational factors.		
7.5 Recognise the reciprocal nature of engagement and respect the agency and willingness of others to engage, especially in relation to involuntary service users.		
7.6 Build, manage, sustain and conclude mana-enhancing and trusting human relationships.		

## CAPABILITY EIGHT: Aromatawai | Assessment

Social workers recognise that assessment is a fluid, dynamic and continuous process involving the collection and analysis of data in order to make judgements and arrive at mutually agreed decisions on future action. Social workers critically evaluate and apply theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge to question assumptions and biases and to interpret information collected from individuals, groups, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, organisations and communities. Social workers actively involve service users, significant others and relevant professionals in assessment processes. They ensure that assessment processes are research-informed, ethical, safe and responsive to the interpersonal and cultural needs of service users.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
8.1 Undertake assessment processes that are responsive to the age, comprehension and interpersonal and cultural needs of service users.	8.7 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in conducting assessments.	8.9 Lead well-organised, culturally responsive and comprehensive assessment processes.
8.2 Use critical thinking to rigorously question and evaluate the reliability and validity of information from different sources.	8.8 Consistently produce high-quality professional reports for tribunals, courts other formal proceedings.	
8.3 Adopt a holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks.		
8.4 Negotiate mutually agreed objectives based on the assessment of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks.		
8.5 Collect, record, organise and communicate information effectively in both verbal and written reports.		
8.6 Ensure that assessment processes lead to constructive interventions.		

## CAPABILITY NINE: Wawaotanga | Intervention

Social workers recognise that intervention is a fluid, dynamic and continuous process requiring careful attention to the responses and changing circumstances of affected individuals, groups, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, organisations and communities. Social workers critically evaluate and apply theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge to inform and monitor interventions. Social workers actively involve service users and significant others in intervention processes. Social workers recognise the value of interprofessional collaboration and communication to achieve positive outcomes for service users. They ensure that intervention processes are research-informed, safe and responsive to the interpersonal and cultural needs of service users.

Capable social workers can:

NQSW	FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE	SOCIAL WORKER
9.1 Select appropriate techniques and intervention strategies from a range of research-informed and culturally-relevant theories, models and approaches.	9.8 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in making effective interventions.	9.10 Intervene effectively and with confidence in a range of practice situations making flexible and creative use of a range of intervention strategies.
9.2 Negotiate mutually agreed intervention strategies based on assessment, research evidence, and the values and preferences of service users.	9.9 Expand the range and complexity of intervention strategies used to improve outcomes for service users.	
9.3 Explain accurately the legal basis for interventions.		
9.4 Recognise factors that create or exacerbate risk and act to safeguard vulnerable people.		
9.5 Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve positive outcomes for service users.		
9.6 Monitor and modify intervention strategies to ensure effectiveness and alignment with the values and preferences of service users.		
9.7 Facilitate transitions and endings that advance positive outcomes for service users.		

## CAPABILITY TEN: Arotakenga | Evaluation

Social workers recognise that evaluation is a fluid, dynamic and continuous process requiring careful monitoring of interventions over time. They acknowledge that the evaluation of processes and outcomes is a critical method for enhancing agency practice and ensuring positive outcomes for individuals, groups, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, organisations and communities. Social workers critically evaluate and apply theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge to inform evaluation practice. They understand the role of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods for evaluating processes and outcomes. They ensure that evaluation processes are research-informed, safe and responsive to the interpersonal and cultural needs of service users.

Capable social workers can:

<b>NQSW</b>	<b>FIRST YEAR OF PRACTICE</b>	<b>SOCIAL WORKER</b>
10.1 Select and use culturally-relevant methods for the evaluation of outcomes.	10.5 Make active use of professional supervision to improve confidence and capability in evaluating interventions and services.	10.7 Use quantitative and qualitative data collected in evaluation processes to propose improvements to the design and delivery of social work services.
10.2 Critically analyse, monitor, and evaluate an intervention, or programme process and outcomes.	10.6 Make presentations based on evaluations of own practice and service level interventions.	
10.3 Understand and use qualitative and quantitative methods to monitor and evaluate service delivery.		
10.4 Identify and communicate evaluation findings to improve future practice.		

# Conclusions and recommendations

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The draft professional capabilities framework created by the Enhance R2P project was founded on a literature scan, a review of five existing competence and capability frameworks, and a series of stakeholder workshops. It attempts to synthesise the best of the frameworks reviewed with our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and bicultural practice, the latter being reflected in its values and capabilities. At the time of writing, the values described in the Enhance R2P framework have been incorporated as core values in a revised ethical code being developed by the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. The framework, and all three of the Enhance R2P project reports, have been submitted for inclusion in a proposed governmental review of social work education. Finally, the Social Workers Registration Board, as a result of the recent introduction of mandatory registration, is reviewing their educational programme requirements and the ten core competence standards. The Enhance R2P project reports and capability framework are considered to be key documents informing the SWRB review process.

## **Recommendation: Promote the professional capabilities framework**

To be effective this framework needs to be widely supported and endorsed by key stakeholders. We recommend that the Social Workers Registration Board considers the adoption of the capabilities framework to replace the current ten core competence standards and works with industry stakeholders to review and develop the framework to ensure its continuing relevance. If adopted, the framework would become a significant educational focal point for the education of social workers and for their continuing learning and development.

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