

Standards for Accredited Registers



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About the Professional Standards Authority

The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care¹ oversees statutory bodies that regulate health and social care professionals in the UK. We assess their performance, conduct audits, scrutinise their decisions and report to Parliament. We also set standards for organisations holding voluntary registers for health and social care occupations and accredit those that meet them.

We share good practice and knowledge, conduct research and introduce new ideas to our sector including our approach to right-touch regulation². We monitor policy developments in the UK and internationally and provide advice on issues relating to professional standards in health and social care.

We do this to promote the health, safety and well-being of users of health and social care services and the public. We are an independent body, accountable to the UK Parliament.

Our values are at the heart of who we are and what we do. We are committed to being independent, impartial, fair, accessible and consistent in the application of our values. More information about our work and the approach we take is available at www.professionalstandards.org.uk.

¹ The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care was previously known as the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence.

² Professional Standards Authority. 2010. Right-touch regulation. Available at <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/policy-and-research/right-touch-regulation>

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The Standards

Organisations must meet all of the Standards. The benchmark for each Standard is set at the level of good practice. This means that for each Standard organisations must demonstrate, where available and relevant, that they apply good practice.

Standard 1: the organisation holds a voluntary register³ for people in health and/or social care occupations.

The Professional Standards Authority will decide whether an occupation is 'health or social care' having regard to the definition of health care set out in the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, section 25E (8) as inserted by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, section 228.⁴

Standard 2: the organisation demonstrates that it is committed to protecting the public and promoting public confidence in the occupation it registers.

The organisation will need to demonstrate that its purpose and directives are focused on public protection. Additionally, the organisation will need to show that in carrying out its voluntary register functions public interest is paramount and that professional interests do not dominate or unintentionally subvert that interest.

Evidence of this might include board or committee discussions where issues have been debated and conflicts of interest identified or the ethical interests of parties weighed in the balance; decisions made about admittance to the register where the documented rationale shows due consideration of public protection; outcomes of complaints; particularities of governance arrangements.

Standard 3: Risks

The organisation:

3a) Has a thorough understanding of the risks presented by their occupation(s) to service users and the public – and where appropriate, takes effective action to mitigate them.

3b) Is vigilant in identifying, monitoring, reviewing and acting upon risks associated with the practice of its registrants and actively uses this information in carrying out its voluntary register functions.

Evidence provided should demonstrate how the organisation seeks, gathers and handles information, and provide examples of having acted to prevent or mitigate risk.

³ A 'voluntary register' has the meaning ascribed to it under the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, section 25E (2) as inserted by the [Health and Social Care Act 2012 section 228](#).

⁴ 'Health care' includes: all forms of health care for individuals, whether relating to physical or mental health; and procedures that are similar to forms of medical or surgical care but are not provided in connection with a medical condition.

The Professional Standards Authority will decide whether this Standard is met with reference to guidance provided in the *Accreditation Guide (2014)*.

Standard 4: the organisation demonstrates that it has sufficient finance to enable it to fulfil its voluntary register functions effectively including setting standards, education, registration, complaints and removal from the register.

An organisation requires overall administrative and financial robustness if it is to be relied on to deliver all of its functions effectively. The Professional Standards Authority will therefore seek assurance that the organisation is financially sustainable and can reasonably cover its legal liabilities if its decisions are subject to challenge.

Standard 5: the organisation demonstrates that it has the capacity to inspire confidence in its ability to manage the register effectively.

Factors the Professional Standards Authority will take into account include the organisation's leadership, its reputation within and outside its field, the skills and experience of those involved in its voluntary register functions, its operational efficiency and its openness.

Standard 6: the organisation demonstrates that there is a defined knowledge base underpinning the health and social care occupations covered by its register or, alternatively, how it is actively developing one. The organisation makes the defined knowledge base or its development explicit to the public.

The Professional Standards Authority recognises that not all disciplines are underpinned by evidence of proven therapeutic value. Some disciplines are subject to controlled randomized trials, others are based on qualitative evidence. Some rely on anecdotes. Nevertheless, these disciplines are legal and the public choose to use them. The Authority requires organisations to make the knowledge base/its development clear to the public so that they may make informed decisions.

Standard 7: governance

The organisation:

- 7a)** Ensures that the governance of its voluntary register functions is directed toward protecting the public and promoting public confidence in the occupation it registers.⁵

This standard is linked to Standard 2. Where organisations have functions other than voluntary registration (for example, a professional or representative body) they will need to explain how their governance arrangements enable them to achieve this outcome, demonstrate that it is effective in causing that to happen in practice and explain how they assure themselves that it is. Forms of assurance might include reports to the board or relevant committee focusing on outcomes achieved, case audits, external or peer review.

⁵ By 'promoting confidence in the occupation' we mean maintaining among members of the public a well-founded confidence in the integrity and trustworthiness of registrants on an accredited register.

7b) Carries out its governance in accordance with good practice. It is for the organisation to determine what good practice standards it adopts as appropriate to its form and function. They should include as a minimum adherence to the following principles:

- Being clear about its purpose
- Being independent and fair
- Exercising control effectively
- Behaving with integrity (including proper management of conflicts of interest)
- Being open
- Being accountable
- Being socially responsible.

The organisation should provide examples that illustrate these principles being put into practice.

7c) Demonstrates that it seeks, understands and uses the views and experiences of service users and the public to inform key decisions about its voluntary register functions.

7d) Ensures that in carrying out its voluntary register functions it is fair, effective, proportionate and transparent so that it is respected and trusted.

The organisation should provide examples which illustrate fairness, effectiveness, proportionality and transparency happening in practice – explain the means by which it makes sure this happens and how it assures itself that these outcomes are being achieved routinely.

7e) Engages with relevant stakeholders and works in partnership with other bodies where appropriate to promote and protect the health, safety and well-being of service users and the public.

7f) Communicates effectively with the public and its registrants. In particular it ensures that the information it provides about its registrants and their occupation(s) helps service users to make informed decisions.

Standard 8: setting standards for registrants

The organisation:

8a) Sets, requires and promotes good standards of:

- personal behaviour⁶
- technical competence,⁷
- business practice⁸ (including, as appropriate: financial practice, advertising, customer service, complaints handling, work premises / environment, management and administration).

Evidence might include codes of practice, ethical frameworks, guidance, training and examples of decisions taken in relation to registration or complaints that demonstrate registrants being held to account against these standards.

8b) Bases its standards of competence upon its defined body of knowledge.⁹

8c) Requires its registrants, where relevant to their occupation, to use products and equipment that are approved as suitable and safe for use in health and social care. It provides clear guidance to registrants on any special requirements relating to the suitability of premises, products and equipment for the practice of their occupation, which are essential to protect the health, safety and well-being of service users.

8d) Requires registrants to have appropriate arrangements for indemnity cover.¹⁰

8e) Encourages good communication and requires registrants to provide clear information to service users to help them to make informed decisions and to make readily available information about complaints processes.

8f) Publishes its standards for registrants.

8g) Encourages, where relevant, effective team work.¹¹

⁶ Standards for personal behaviour should be based upon an ethical framework - a defined set of values and principles – that include responsibility, honesty, openness, integrity and respect.

⁷ 'Technical competence' refers to 'applied knowledge, training and skills'. It includes both the set of competencies that a voluntary register requires of people on its register and the skill with which they apply their knowledge and carry out key components of their discipline, particular occupation or specialist area of practise.

⁸ 'Business practice' includes financial, managerial and administrative activities.

⁹ Note: this standard relates to standard six.

¹⁰ Note: organisation's requirements for indemnity cover should take account of the risks associated with the occupation (Standard 3) and whether or not registrants are covered by employers' indemnity schemes or other appropriate insurance.

- 8h)** Keeps under review and evaluates its standards, considering whether they are achieving the outcomes it intends for service users and the public.

Standard 9: education and training

The organisation:

- 9a)** Sets appropriate educational standards that enable its registrants to practise competently the occupation(s) covered by its register. In setting its standards the organisation takes account of the following factors:
- The nature and extent of risk to service users and the public
 - The nature and extent of knowledge, skill and experience required to provide service users and the public with good quality care
 - Standards set by other relevant bodies for the same or similar occupation and where different, can offer a reasonable justification
 - Maintaining public confidence
 - Equality, diversity and human rights
 - European mobility for health and social care practitioners.
- 9b)** Ensures that registrants who assess the health needs of service users and provide any form of care and treatment are equipped to:
- Recognise and interpret clinical signs of impairment
 - Recognise where a presenting problem may mask underlying pathologies
 - Have sufficient knowledge of human disease and social determinants of health to identify where service users may require referral to another health or social care professional.
- 9c)** Requires its registrants to meet its educational standards and assures itself that they do.
- 9d)** Only approves or accepts those education and training courses that equip students to meet its educational standards. In addition:
- Where an organisation provides training itself, it ensures that the training has been independently verified as meeting its standards
 - Where an organisation permits an experience based entry route, it ensures that registrants undergo an objective assessment of equivalence.

¹¹ Note: this includes multi-disciplinary working or inter-professional liaison.

Standard 10: the register

The organisation:

- 10a)** Focuses on promoting the health, safety and well-being of service users and the public and generating confidence in its register.
- 10b)** Maintains a register that is accurate, easily accessible to the public and supports all those using it to make informed decisions.¹²
- 10c)** Only allows those who meet its standards to join and remain on/be on the register.
- 10d)** Requires registrants to keep their practice up to date and checks at appropriate intervals that registrants continue to meet its standards. In deciding its arrangements the organisation takes account of:
 - The pace and extent to which professional practice is subject to change (for example, technological advancements or research based findings)
 - The nature and extent of risk registrants' practice poses to service users and the public.
- 10e)** Recognises decisions regarding professional conduct made by regulatory bodies and other registers accredited by the Professional Standards Authority when deciding whether a person should be admitted, kept on or removed from their register.
- 10f)** Explains clearly the circumstances in which it will review its decisions relating to admissions to the register and removal from it, and explains how it will do that.

¹² The register must be available online and reasonably available in other formats to ensure public accessibility.

Standard 11: complaints and concerns

The organisation:

- 11a)** Provides clear information about its arrangements for handling complaints and concerns about a) its registrants and b) itself.
- 11b)** Encourages early resolution of complaints including use of mediation where appropriate and it has adequate monitoring arrangements in place to identify matters that require disciplinary action.
- 11c)** Provides good advice and support for those providing information and evidence in relation to complaints and disciplinary cases.
- 11d)** Focuses on protecting service users and the public where necessary and putting matters right where possible.
- 11e)** Makes sound decisions that are fair, transparent, consistent and explained clearly.
- 11f)** Reports concerns to other relevant agencies when that is needed to protect the public.

Document Control

Version Control

Printed documents are uncontrolled. This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

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