



## Apprentice in Social Work

**Grade Code 6020**

In exercise of the powers conferred on me by Section 22 of the Health Act 2004, I hereby approve the qualifications, as set out hereunder, for the appointment and continuing as **Apprentice in Social Work** in the Health Service Executive.

### 1. Statutory Registration, Professional Qualifications, Experience, etc.

(a) Eligible applicants will be those who on the closing date for the competition have the following:

(i)	<p><b>Entry Requirements to Master of Social Work (MSW) (QQI- Level 9)</b></p> <p>Applicants must have at least a Second Class Honours Grade 1 in a primary honours degree (NFQ, Level 8) in social science or its equivalent, or have an approved Level 8 conversion programme i.e. the Higher Diploma in Social Policy with at least a Second Class Honours Grade I, and have completed a minimum of three-months' relevant work experience in a social work or social work-related field. <b>(see note 1 below*)</b></p>
<b>OR</b>	
(ii)	<p><b>Entry Requirements to Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies (PDSWS) (QQI- Level 9)</b></p> <p>Applicants must have at least an honours primary degree (NFQ, Level 8) in social science or its equivalent, or hold an approved Level 8 conversion programme i.e. the Higher Diploma in Social Policy, and have completed a minimum of three-month' relevant work experience in a social work or social work-related field. <b>(see note 1 below*)</b></p>
<b>OR</b>	
(iii)	<p>Hold an honours primary degree (NFQ, Level 8) in any discipline, and have completed a minimum of twelve months' relevant work experience in a social work or social work-related field. <b>(see note 1 below*)</b></p>
<b>OR</b>	
(iv)	<p>Hold a primary ordinary degree (NFQ, Level 7) in social science or its equivalent with an overall result of at least a Second Class Honours Grade 1 and have completed a minimum of three years' experience in a social work or social work-related field. <b>(see note 1 below*)</b></p>
<b>OR</b>	
(v)	<p>Non-graduates with a minimum of five years' professional experience in a social work or social work-related field may also be considered for admission. <b>(see note 2 below*)</b></p>

**And**

(b) Candidates must possess the requisite knowledge including high standard of suitability and ability for the proper discharge of the duties of the office.


## 2. Health

Candidates for and any person holding the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

## 3. Character

Candidates for and any person holding the office must be of good character.

**Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February two thousand and twenty five**



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**Anne Marie Hoey**  
**Chief People Officer**

### **\*Note 1**

For graduates with a social science or equivalent degree, the combination of qualification and required relevant work experience varies. See [here](#) for a full list of entry routes.

### **\*Note 2**

Consideration under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may also be given to applicants who:  
Demonstrate in detail on their RPL form how their work experience is relevant to Social Work and the apprenticeship pathway.

### **What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to the process by which knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through work experience, informal learning, or other non-formal avenues are recognised. This learning may not have been assessed through formal qualifications or assigned academic credits but can still demonstrate the capability to meet the requirements for certain programmes or roles.

### **RPL and its Application to the Apprenticeship in Social Work:**

The apprenticeship in social work is open to individuals from diverse backgrounds. For those applying to the Apprenticeship in Social Work, RPL is particularly useful if they do not have a traditional university degree (such as an NFQ Level 8 Degree in Social Science). Even without a degree or other university qualification, applicants may still meet the eligibility criteria if they can demonstrate sufficient relevant work experience.

**Demonstrating Relevant Work Experience:** To meet the entry requirements through RPL, an applicant must:

- Show that their work experience (paid or volunteer) is directly relevant to social work.
- Clearly outline how the tasks and responsibilities undertaken in these roles relate to social work.
- Consider the full-time equivalent of their experience; for instance, part-time work over 2 years would be counted proportionately.