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Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director
Head of HR, PCRS
Director National Ambulance Service

From: Anne Marie Hoey, Chief People Officer

Date: 10th April 2025

Subject: HR Circular 006/2025 - Commencement of CORU Registration for Social Care Workers/Leaders/Managers

Dear Colleagues

I wish to advise that the Social Care Workers Register opened on 30 November 2023. This began a 2-year transitional period for existing practitioners to apply to register with CORU. From 30 November 2025, the list of professions covered by CORU registration will include **Social Care Workers, Social Care Leaders and Social Care Managers**¹. Existing social care workers do not need to be registered by 30 November 2025 but they must be able to show that they have applied for registration.

On 1 December 2025, the title 'social care worker' will become a legally protected title in Ireland. Please refer to CORU **Social Care Workers FAQs** [here](#).

In the public health service the eligibility criteria for Social Care Workers will be updated in November 2025 to reflect the fact that CORU registration is mandatory for applicants for Social Care Worker posts. The current HSE eligibility criteria for social care worker posts outlines the requirement for candidates to commence the registration process. Further information on this process and what will happen when registration becomes mandatory on 30 November 2025 is also provided in the Additional Campaign Information for HSE recruitment campaigns.

¹ The term Social Care Worker will be used throughout this Circular and will include Social Care Leaders and Social Care Managers.

The move to statutory regulation for 'social care workers' is a positive development that will undoubtedly enhance the profession's standing. Regulation will give reassurance to members of the public that registered social care workers in the public health service meet the specified approved standards as set by CORU.

Please refer to the *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Workers* devised by the Social Care Workers Registration Board at CORU. The code specifies the standards of ethics, conduct and performance expected of registered social care workers (copy attached).

Managers are required to notify each employee in writing of the requirement to commence the registration process and to support employees to achieve registration. It is the responsibility of each employee to make an application to register. An applicant to the register will be required to provide evidence of engagement in the practice of the profession for a minimum of two years out of five on the date of application.

An employer may be requested by an applicant to complete a *Proof of Professional Employment Form*. The applicant is responsible for submitting this form to CORU. An employer may be requested by an applicant to provide an opinion attesting to their competence to practise in the profession if they do not have a relevant qualification. This is called an *Employer Opinion of Competence Form*. An applicant who does not hold a relevant qualification may undertake an *Assessment of Professional Competence* (AoPC) as a route to register instead. Please see further information as outlined in CORU's [Employer FAQs](#).

Any employee who does not comply with the application process for registration may be put off duty without pay and may be subject to the process of terminating their employment under the Disciplinary Procedure. Failure to achieve mandatory registration in accordance with the CORU registration process and timeframes as outlined in this Circular and the supporting CORU guidance documents and website information will constitute grounds for termination of employment as a social care worker/leader/manager.

Social Care Worker applicants fall under two categories for registration purposes:

Section 91 applicants

Social care workers can apply to register as a Section 91 applicant under the grandparenting route if they have been practicing in the Republic of Ireland for at least 2 years in the previous 5 years on the date of application. Please find attached a copy of the CORU Guidance Notes for Section 91 applicants.

Please note, all practising professionals must have applied for registration before the end of the transitional period i.e. 30 November 2025.

All applications made after the transitional period closes are treated as Section 38 applications.

Section 38 applicants

Social care workers who commenced the practice of their profession at such a time whereby they will not be able to evidence a total of 2 years engagement in practice by the end of the grandparenting period on 30 November 2025 are deemed ineligible to apply under section 91. Such an applicant may seek to register under Section 38 which

does not require evidence of engagement in practice, rather this pathway requires evidence of an Approved Qualification from the list found [here](#).

Further details on the different types of registrant are available [here](#).

Existing employees

Existing social care workers do not need to be registered by 30th November 2025 but they must be able to show that they have applied for registration as a **Section 91 candidate**. As outlined above, Section 91 candidates are individuals who qualified before 30 November 2023 and have been engaged in the practice of the profession in the Republic of Ireland for a minimum of 2 years' fulltime service (or an aggregate of 2 years' fulltime service) between 30 November 2018 and 30 November 2025.

How to register as a social care worker

To register an applicant will need:

- Evidence of Qualification(s)
- Evidence of Identity
- Fit and Proper Questionnaire (Health & Character)
- eVetting and International Police Clearance (where relevant)
- Statutory Declaration
- Confirmation of good standing with other international regulator (if applicable)
- Employment History/Evidence of Practice (S91)/(S38)
- Visit CORU's registration section for further information on what type of applicant you are and what you will need to begin the process.

The current registration fee is set at €100. The annual renewal fee is also set at €100 per annum which is the same for all of CORU's regulated professions as set under the National Pay Agreement. The applicant is required to pay the registration and renewal fee.

Approved qualifications

The Social Care Workers Registration Board approved a number of qualifications which can be found on the CORU website [here](#).

Schedule 3 Qualifications

This is a qualification listed in Schedule 3 of the Health and Social Care Professions Act 2005 for existing practitioners under section 91 [here](#). Applicants who hold Schedule 3 qualifications can apply to register with CORU during the two-year transitional period up to 30 November 2025. Once the transitional period ends on 30 November 2025, only qualifications approved by a Registration board will be considered.

Can applicants register without a qualification in Social Care?

Yes. The transitional arrangement in place for CORU registration recognises that existing practitioners who do not hold a schedule 3 or sufficiently relevant qualification can apply providing an employer's opinion of competence or complete an assessment of professional competence. If successful, the Social Care Workers Registration Board will grant registration to the applicant. Further information is outlined [here](#).

Candidates who currently work in a social care setting

In making an application to apply to register under the grandparenting/transitional route, applicants must provide a Proof of Professional Employment form, which is verification

from their employer that the applicant has been engaged in the practice of the profession for the required period. An employer can provide attestation that the applicant has been engaged in the practice of the profession, in this case, social care work. While the Act does not specify limitations of professional title, the emphasis is on 'engaged in practice of the profession'. Further information on the transitional route to register as a social care worker is available [here](#).

Employer support

While it is the responsibility of an applicant to organise their documents for registration and submit these to CORU, a current or former employer can support in the process also.

- An applicant to the register will be required to provide evidence of engagement in the practice of the profession for a minimum of two years out of five on the date of application. In this instance, the employer will be requested to complete a Proof of Professional Employment Form.
- If an applicant does not have a relevant qualification as approved by the Social Care Workers Registration Board, an employer can be requested to provide an opinion attesting to the applicant's competence to practise in the profession. This is called an *Employer Opinion of Competence Form* and this opinion will be based on whether an applicant meets the Standards of proficiency for Social Care Workers.

Please note, an employer is **not** obliged to provide an opinion of competence. An applicant who does not hold a relevant qualification may undertake an Assessment of Professional Competence (AoPC) as a route to register instead.

Assessment of Professional Competence

If an applicant does not hold an [approved](#), [Schedule 3](#) or [Sufficiently Relevant Qualification](#) or an employer's opinion of competence <https://coru.ie/social-care-workers/employer-opinion-of-competence-forms.pdf>, they must undertake an Assessment of Professional Competence (AOPC) [view here](#).

The purpose of the assessment is to prove that:

- An applicant has been engaged in the practice of the profession
- An applicant meets the standards of proficiency for the profession

To qualify for an AOPC an applicant must demonstrate that they have a minimum amount of practice (as specified by the Registration Board for their profession). The Assessment of Professional Competence is based on the standards of proficiency for the profession. Further information on the Assessment of Professional Competence for Social Care Workers is available [here](#).

Candidates for HSE Social Care Worker posts

Job applicants for Social Care Workers posts in the HSE who do not have registration by 30 November 2025 will have their status on the panel changed to 'Dormant Registration'. This means that they will not be eligible to receive any expressions of interest until they notify the HSE that they are in receipt of registration and their status is changed to Active. The current eligibility criteria for Social Care Worker posts outlines the requirement for candidates to commence the registration process. Further information on this process and what will happen when registration becomes mandatory in November 2025 is outlined in the HSE job specification for Social Care Worker posts

and also provided in the Additional Campaign Information for HSE national recruitment campaigns overseen by the National Recruitment Service (NRS).

All HSE areas doing their own local recruitment under the Recruitment Operating Model and Section 38 organisations are required to put in place similar arrangements to ensure that job applicants are aware of the requirement for mandatory registration.

Applicants for Social Care Worker posts must have applied for registration with CORU by 30 November 2025 and must submit proof of application for registration with the Social Care Worker Registration Board at CORU. The acceptable proof is correspondence from the Social Care Worker Registration Board at CORU confirming their application for registration as a **Section 91 applicant**.

On appointment practitioners must maintain annual registration on the Social Care Workers Register maintained by the Social Care Workers Registration Board at CORU. Practitioners must confirm annual registration with CORU to their employer by way of the annual **Patient Safety Assurance Certificate (PSAC)**. See **Appendix 1** of the HSE Policy [here](#).

The PSAC confirms the following:

- the Social Care Worker is appropriately registered on the register maintained by the Social Care Worker Registration Board,
- the Social Care Worker will advise their employer without delay if there is any change in their registration status by way of restrictions or conditions placed on their practice or through erasure from the register or any other change to their status,
- the name under which the Social Care Worker is registered with the Social Care Worker Registration Board.

OR In the case of eligible Section 91 applicants, the PSAC provides proof that their application for registration was made on or before 30 November 2025

It is the policy of the HSE to suspend from employment without pay any regulated practitioner who does not provide proof of registration, and does not complete the PSAC, or, in the case of Section 91 applicants, who do not provide proof of application when requested. Employees who subsequently fail to achieve registration will not be able to continue in the role of a Social Care Worker and the process for terminating their employment will be initiated. The same obligation applies to Section 38 organisations.

The HSE reserves the right to report to An Garda Síochána, in support of section 80 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, any employee of the HSE who presents themselves as a registered practitioner to the HSE or practises as a registered practitioner in the HSE, without the appropriate registration with the relevant registration board. The same obligation applies to Section 38 organisations.

Section 38 Service Level Agreements

Registered practitioners employed by Section 38 organisations have a responsibility in the Service Arrangements, Part 1, Provider Personnel, section 16.2 and Part 2, Schedule 2, Quality and Safety to employ, contract, engage or accept, as part of the provision of the Services, only such persons who are registered, and maintain a current valid registration, with the appropriate statutory registration body. Section 38

organisations are responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of appropriate policies and procedures in support of this requirement.

Please ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of all relevant managers and staff in your area of responsibility as appropriate and there is active engagement with social care workers on the registration process.

Queries

General information on registration for Social Care Workers is available on the CORU website at <https://coru.ie/social-care-workers/>

Queries relating to registration as a Social Care Worker with CORU should be sent to CORU; registration@coru.ie . Queries on international qualifications: recognition@coru.ie

Queries from individual employees or managers should be referred to local HR Departments/Employee Relations Departments. The National HR Help Desk is also available to take general queries on 1800 444 925 or email: ask.hr@hse.ie

Queries from HR/Employee Relations Departments in relation to professional matters related to this circular should be referred to Jackie Reed, National Lead, National Health & Social Care Professions Office, Clinical & Administration Block A (2nd Floor, Green Corridor), HSE Merlin Park, Galway. Tel: 087 415 8758, E-mail: jackie.reed@hse.ie

Yours sincerely



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