



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

STATEMENT ON THE 59TH MEETING OF SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

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7 October 2020

The South African Council for Social Professions (SACSSP) held its 59th meeting on 26 August 2020 using a virtual platform. Council observed a minute of silence in memory of the late Ms. Conny Nxumalo (Deputy Director-General: Welfare Services at the National Department of Social Development) who passed away on 22 August 2020.

Council noted the health and safety measures and the business continuity plan put in place by Management since 25th May 2020, to prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure minimal interruption of services to clients during the national lockdown.

On partnerships, Council noted with appreciation the donation of Personal Protective Equipment provided to the SACSSP by the HWSETA to support and strengthen the social services sector across the country, to ensure that social service practitioners are safe and protected against the spread of Covid-19 when rendering services to the communities. Council also noted the progress made on the partnership between the SACSSP and UNICEF, in which the latter has pledged to provide funding to strengthen the efforts made by many stakeholders on the provision of quality social services, in particular around the area of child protection, gender based violence and ethical conduct.

On registrations, Council noted the following:

- The progress on the registration of practitioners. As at 25 August 2020, there were 35,797 social workers, 11,994 social auxiliary workers, 92 child and youth care workers (professional category) and 7,390 child and youth care workers (auxiliary category) registered with the SACSSP.
- The challenge around unclaimed mail, especially registered mail for certificates and receipts still exists, which hampers service delivery and leads to duplication of services. Practitioners are encouraged to collect their mail on time to reduce the burden on the SACSSP's limited human resources.
- The huge number of requests by practitioners for re-issuing of practice cards is still a problem. This challenge is attributed to failure by practitioners to update their contact details especially cellphone numbers, emails and postal addresses. Amongst other strategies to address these challenges, the SACSSP will continue to remind practitioners on a regular basis to update their details. The SACSSP is also working closely with national welfare organisations and the provincial departments of social development to centralise the distribution of practice cards to practitioners through their district and local offices.

- The report regarding social service practitioners who did not pay their annual fees for the 2020/21 financial year, which is one of requirement for practitioners to maintain their registration status. Council have in accordance to section 20(1)(d) of the Social Service Professions Act, 110 of 1978 as amended, instructed the Registrar to remove from the register of practitioners, the names of all persons who have failed to pay their annual fees by 26 August 2020. Any person whose name will be removed shall be notified in writing and should s/he wish to restore, s/he may do so in terms of section 20(3) of the Act.

On finances, subsequent to consultation with the internal governance structures and the professional boards for social work and child and youth care work, Council approved the proposed fee increase on the current regulations relating to fees payable by social service practitioners. The proposed fees are intended to be implemented for the 2021/2020 financial year and will be published by the Minister of Social Development for public comment prior to approval and implementation.

On the Professional Boards, Council noted the following:

- The engagements between the Professional Board for Social Work, the *Association of South African Schools of Social Work Education Institutions* (ASASSWEI) and the Heads of Schools of Social Work around the Covid 19 related challenges, which affected field practice for final year social work students', block placement. Stakeholders are encouraged to continue the engagements and find a workable solution for students.
- Progress on the development of the regulations regarding the general requirements for continuing professional development of social service professionals. These regulations will be published for public comments in due course.
- The registration of child and youth care work profession as a professional designation of the SACSSP by SAQA in terms of section 30 of the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008.

Council concluded its 59th meeting by expressing appreciation to Members and staff for the work done during these challenging times. Council also expressed its gratitude towards all registered social service practitioners for continuing to provide essential social work and child and youth care work services during a trying period where the country and the world are experiencing an inevitable enemy- COVID-19, who posed an unprecedented "new normal"

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ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SERVICE PROFESSIONS

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP/ Council) is a statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act No. 110 of 1978 (the Act). Council has two professional boards under its auspices: the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work. Council, in conjunction with its two professional boards, guides and regulates the professions of social work and child youth care work in aspects pertaining to registration; education and training; professional conduct and ethical behaviour; ensuring continuing professional development; and fostering compliance with professional standards. It protects the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. In order to safeguard the public and indirectly the professions, registration with Council in terms of the Act is a prerequisite before practising social work and child and youth care work. Registration is mandatory for social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers, student social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers, student child and youth care workers, and student auxiliary child and youth care workers.