



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

STATEMENT ON 69TH MEETING OF COUNCIL

REF: 1/26

19 January 2024

STATEMENT OF THE 69TH MEETING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS (SACSSP)

The South African Council for Social Professions (SACSSP) held its 69th meeting on 29 and 30 November 2023 and the meeting focused on the core business of Council during the second quarter of the 2023/2024 financial year and the status of resolutions and progress made.

GENERAL MATTERS

Council noted the progress being made towards the appointment of a Registrar and that the process will be concluded soon. As soon as the appointment is finalised the sector will be informed accordingly. Council further appreciated the work of Ms Octavia Malombo and Mr Hitler Sekhitla who alternates as Acting Registrars since 01 August 2023.

Council received a briefing on the finalisation of the SACSSP's audited Annual Financial Statements for the 2022/2023 financial year and noted that it will be submitted for approval, whereafter, upon approval, it will be made available to interested persons as per regulation 41 of the *Regulations relating to election of members of the SA Council for Social Service Professions; quorum for and procedure at the meetings of the Council and the Executive Committee; accounting records; financial statements; appeal against refusal, penalty or removal from the Register*.

REGISTRATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Council noted a total of 1,348 persons registered through the new online registration system. However, there is a great concern with the number of applications that are not yet finalised and the 1,621 applications were rejected due to failure to attach the prescribed documents and or incorrect supporting documents submitted.

On specialities, two social workers were registered for the speciality in probation work and eight social workers for the speciality in adoption social work, while a further 50 social service professionals' names were restored in terms of section 20(3) of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 ("the Act").

A total of 45 applications for exemption from paying annual fees for 2024/2025 financial year from unemployed social service professionals in terms of regulation 3(b)(ii) of the *Regulations relating to the fees payable by social workers, child and youth care workers, social auxiliary workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers, student social workers and student child and youth care workers* was received and their applications are currently being reviewed whereafter they will be informed whether it was approved or declined.

Council also noted the ongoing challenges with the online registration system which is negatively impacting on the SACSSP and social service professionals from receiving their registration certificates and receipts on time. The SACSSP's Registration Division and IT unit is working tirelessly on resolving these challenges.

Council was informed that 166 verifications on the status of registration with the SACSSP from Social Work England, CORU Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals, Social Workers Registration Board New Zealand were concluded, and 368 status of registration reports were issued.

Council noted the 32 social service professionals' names which have been removed from the Register in terms of section 20(1)(d) of the Act due to non-payment of annual fees. These social service professionals are not allowed to continue practising and if they want to re-enter their profession, they need to apply for restoration in terms of section 20(3) of the

Act. Council was also informed that a further 24,332 social service professionals may also be removed from the Register in terms of section 20(1)(d) of the Act, and that the procedures in terms of the Act and the Regulations in this regard have commenced. Council expressed concern about social service professionals not paying their annual fees as required by law, which will result in them being removed from the Registers and not allowed to practise.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Council noted the report on the 57 complaints of alleged unprofessional or improper conduct investigated by the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry (CPI). The CPI finalised 21 complaints in terms of regulation 8 of the *Regulations regarding the conducting of enquiries into alleged unprofessional conduct*, while 19 matters were closed as the respondents were found not to be in contravention of the *Rules relating to the acts or omissions of a social worker, a social auxiliary worker or a student social worker which shall constitute unprofessional or improper conduct*, 10 matters are still under investigation and seven were referred to the Professional Conduct Committee.

Council noted the report of the CPI Appeals Committee that one appeal was received during the period under review, bringing the total of appeals for consideration to two including the one carried over from the previous quarter. Two cases were reviewed and one matter the decision of the CPI was set aside and the matter was referred back to the CPI for further investigation; and in the other matter the CPI Appeals Committee upheld the decision of the CPI.

The Professional Board was informed of the eight matters of alleged unprofessional or improper conduct which were tabled before the Professional Conduct Committee of which five matters were finalised and one part-head (to be heard in 2024). In this regard the Professional Conduct Committee found:

- (a) one social worker guilty of contravening rules 3(1), 3(2), 3(3) and 3(4) of the *Rules* and a penalty of 12 months suspension in terms of section 22(1)(b) of the Act was imposed.
- (b) one social worker was found guilty of contravention of rules 3(3), 3(4) and 7(1) of the *Rules* and the penalty was a warning in terms of section 22(1)(a) of the Act.
- (c) one social worker was found guilty of contravention of rules 3(1), 3(2), 3(3) 3(10), and 4(5) of the *Rules* and a penalty of 12 months suspension in terms of section 22(1)(b), suspended for a period of 12 months in terms of section 22(1A) (a)(i) of the Act.
- (d) one social worker was found guilty of contravention rules 3(3) and 3(4) of the *Rules* and a penalty of 3 years suspension in terms of section 22(1)(b) of the Act was imposed; and
- (e) one social worker was found guilty of contravention rules 3(1), 3(2), 3(3), 3(4) and 3(10) of the *Rules* and a penalty of 12 months suspension in terms of section 22(1)(b) of the Act was imposed.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

In line with the recommendation of the Professional Board for Social Work that Council should develop general Regulations for social service professionals in private practice in terms section 28(1)(a) and (f) of the Act, the Education Training and Development Committee of Council provided input on the Rules for good practice in private practice.

Council received an update on the establishment of the Professional Board for Community Development Work and noted the progress as well as the challenges being experienced, in particular regarding financial sustainability of such a Professional Board.

On the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work on education, Council noted the participation in the review of the current Child and Youth Care Work NQF Level 5 qualification facilitated by the HWSETA.

On the Professional Board for Social Work on education, Council noted the developments with the National Department of Social Development on the issue of accreditation of adoption service providers and the future of adoption services in South Africa. Furthermore, the Professional Board for Social Work advised the *South African Association for Social Workers in Private Practice (SAASWIPP)* following their enquiry to the Professional Board, to engage directly with the Department of Social Development regarding their concerns.

The President of the SACSSP concluded its 69th meeting by expressing appreciation to Members and staff in the Secretariat for the work done during 2023 with reminder of the SACSSP's motto – ***Non Nobis: not for ourselves***.

ISSUED BY: SACSSP Communications

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ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SERVICE PROFESSIONS

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) is an autonomous statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 ("the Act"). The SACSSP discharges its mandate, subject to the provisions of the Act together with the Regulations and Rules thereto, as the determining, guiding and directing authority body for the social service professions of social work and child and youth care work in the country. The SACSSP fulfils this role through Council constituted in terms of section 5 of the Act and the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work established in terms of section 14A of the Act and constituted in terms of the applicable Regulations, by setting the standards for education and training of social service professionals (qualifications and continuous professional development); registration of social service professionals as a requirement to practice; setting standards for and exercise effective control over the professional conduct (including ethics) of social service professionals as well as by taking policy resolutions as guidelines for the practising of the social service professions under its auspices. Thus, protecting the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. It is a legal requirement in terms of the Act for a social worker, social auxiliary worker, student social worker, student social auxiliary worker, child and youth care worker, auxiliary child and youth care worker, student child and youth care worker and student auxiliary child and youth care worker to be registered and in good standing in terms of his or her registration as condition to practise.