



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

GENERAL NOTICE 4 of 2026

REF: 3/7/6/1/4

12 February 2026

NOTICE TO:

1. All social workers, social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers.
2. Secure care centres providing secure care services.

THE POSITION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS ON SUPERVISION IN SECURE CARE CENTRES, BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THE NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM REPORT ON SECURE CARE CENTRES (NPMRSCCs)

1. Overview of the National Preventive Mechanism Report on Secure Care Centres

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) released the report titled [Reinforcing the Rights of Children Deprived of Liberty in Secure Care Centres in South Africa](#). This publication presents findings from monitoring visits conducted across 29 secure care centres nationwide. The visits were coordinated by the SAHRC in collaboration with the South African National Preventive Mechanism and the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria.

The objectives of these monitoring visits were to:

- (a) Assess compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT);
- (b) Develop a framework for independent oversight;
- (c) Strengthen monitoring practices within secure care centres;
- (d) Incorporate insights from the Global Study of Children Deprived of Liberty.

1.1 Key Findings on Supervision Challenges

The report highlighted supervision as a significant challenge for social workers and child and youth care workers. Specific concerns included:

- (a) In many centres, supervision traditionally aimed at professional and personal development was either absent or reduced to a monitoring function.
- (b) Staff reported limited opportunities for debriefing after serious incidents, as well as insufficient guidance and support in managing such situations.
- (c) Auxiliary child and youth care workers were often supervised by social workers rather than qualified child and youth care workers, contrary to professional standards.

2. Position of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

2.1 Council resolution

In response to these findings, the SACSSP adopted resolution 16/69/2023, mandating both the Professional Board for Social Work (PBSW) and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work (PBCYCW) to:

- (a) Review the report in relation to their respective mandates under the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978, including relevant regulations and rules;
- (b) Issue a general notice to guide social workers, social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, and auxiliary child and youth care workers in terms of section 14B(h) of the Act.

2.2 Professional Boards responses

The Professional Boards studied the report and presented their findings at the Council's 74th meeting. Below is the guidance registrants:

2.2.1 Professional Board for Social Work Guidance

All social workers based on the seriousness of the findings should take note of how social work supervision is being defined in response to *point 1.1* and *2.1* above. Social work supervision refers to “an interactional process within the context of a positive, anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on social work supervision whereby a social work supervisor supervises a supervisee by utilising the educational, supportive and administrative functions of social work supervision in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services” (Social Work Supervision Framework, 2012:10). Social work supervisors are requested to apply professional supervision practices; aimed at the improvement of personal wellbeing and professional development of social workers and social auxiliary workers. Professional and regulatory compliance should be adhered to during the supervision process:

Key compliance requirements include:

Social work supervisors are only allowed to supervise registered social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social auxiliary workers and student social workers as per Regulation 2 and sub-Regulation 2(1)(h) of the [Regulations defining the scope of practice of the profession of Social Work \(Government Notice No. R. 2617 published in Government Gazette No. 47300 of 14 October 2022\)](#)

- (a) Social work supervisors should not supervise any professional whose qualification and scope of practice is not aligned to that of the social work or social auxiliary work profession;
- (b) social work supervisors who are mandated to supervise social workers, social auxiliary Workers, student social workers and student social auxiliary workers should have the required experience, skills and qualifications as per the *Regulations regarding the Registration of Social Workers (Government Notice number: R 101)*;
- (c) Accountability and responsibility of supervisee ethical and regulatory work performance is the sole responsibility of the social work supervisor;
- (d) Social work practitioners should comply to point 5.1.6 (a-d), point 5.1.7 (b), point 5.1.8 (a-b), point 5.2.2 of the [Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers](#);
- (e) Social work supervisors should apply all three supervisory functions within their supervisory role which are educational, supportive and administrative;
- (f) Consultation and mentoring should be incorporated within the supervision process, where applicable;
- (g) All supervision methods should be incorporated within supervision contracts and personal development plans.

2.2.2 Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work Guidance

The PBCYCW expressed concern over the supervision challenges faced by child and youth care workers and auxiliary child and youth care workers. Supervision is regarded as fundamental to ethical practice as it ensures:

- (a) Quality care for children and youth, while supporting
- (b) Practitioners' professional growth, emotional wellbeing, and accountability

3. The issues highlighted in the NPMRSCCs are the absence of inadequate supervision, limited debriefing after critical incidents, and inappropriate supervisory structures (e.g., auxiliary child and youth care workers supervised by non-child and youth care professionals). These practices undermine the profession's integrity and compromise the support system required in emotionally demanding environments.

The PBCYCW reaffirmed its commitment to:

- (a) Ensuring that auxiliary child and youth care workers and professional child and youth care workers are supervised exclusively by registered child and youth care professionals;
- (b) Promoting structured, developmental supervision that fosters reflective practice;
- (c) Upholding professional standards, ethical conduct, and the rights and dignity of children and youth.

4. The SACSSP reminds social service professionals that failure to comply with the above may amount to unprofessional or improper conduct. This is in line with 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 \(Government Notice 54 published in Government Gazette 14526 of 15 January 1993\)](#) and the [Rules relating to the acts or omissions which constitute unprofessional or improper conduct of child and youth care workers and rules relating to conduct of child and youth care workers practising at professional and auxiliary levels \(Government Notice No 833 published in Government Gazette 38128 of 31 October 2014\)](#).

ISSUED BY: REGISTRAR, Mr Hitler Sekhitla