



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

STATEMENT ON THE 55th MEETING OF SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

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14 May 2019

The South African Council for Social Professions held its 55th meeting on 29 and 30 April 2019 in Pretoria. Council welcomed two new members who were appointed by the Minister to fill vacancies on Council. Ms Octavia Malombo, is appointed as the representative nominated by trade unions which represent employees engaged in developmental social welfare services and Mr Fani Xaba is appointed as the representative nominated by business in accordance with sections 5(1)(c)(iv) and 5(1)(c)(v) of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978.

Council noted the progress made with regard to occupation of the new property, adjacent to the current building, and appreciated that it will allow for improvement in the servicing of registrants and expansion of the IT system.

Council deliberated extensively on the matter pertaining to registration of a specialty in adoption social work. Council continued to be engaged on this matter and a special task team was empowered to attend to this together with the Professional Board for Social Work.

Council received an operational report from the Registrar and appreciated the progress being made, especially that there is currently no backlog in the registration of social service professionals. During the last 3 months 553 social service professionals were registered.

Council noted that during the past 3 months, the Committee for Preliminary Inquiry (CPI) handled 55 matters pertaining to complaints related to professional conduct while the Disciplinary Committee dealt with 16 cases. Council appreciated the feedback that during the past 3 months, the backlog in disciplinary hearings was cleared.

Council noted with concern the escalating bank charges relating to over the counter payments of annual subscriptions. Council again urged the Registrar to inform all registrants about the different cost effective alternative methods of payment such as ATM deposits, EFT (internet transfers) payments or credit/ debit card payments or, using Sage Pay only. Council expressed appreciation towards all registrants who paid their annual fees for 2019/2020 by 31 March 2019. Council also approved the move to a new banking institution. Details will be shared once the transition Implementation plan has been developed and approved.

Council reiterated that employers of social service professionals registered or deemed to be registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions need to be informed of the implications for employing a person who is not registered as required by law. It was emphasised that the employer has an obligation to ensure compliance with the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 when social service professionals are employed.

Council received reports from the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work and Professional Board for Social Work on key matters for Council to note and/or endorse. Council noted with appreciation that the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work has finalised the Code of Ethics for child and youth care workers and will be submitting it to Council for approval. Council approved the revised Regulations for specialties in clinical social work, forensic social work, and occupational social work as well as the draft Regulations for school social work, supervision in social work and social work in health care which will be submitted to the Minister of Social Development to publish in the Government Gazette for public comment. Council also approved the Assessment of International Qualifications and Registration Policy that was submitted by the Professional Board for Social Work.

Council received feedback that its PAIA Manual will be published to the public on its website as required in terms of section 14 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000.

Council received feedback on the progress being made for the upgrade of its IT infra-structure and systems that

will be implemented during the 2019/18 financial year. It was noted that the upgraded system will significantly improve core services such as registration, payments, education and training and customer care. Council further noted the progress being made on the revamping of its website, which will be under construction during May 2019. Council requests that registrants and the public be patient during this construction period and should follow the directives on the webpage if they have urgent enquiries.

Council noted that social service professionals who have reached the age of 65 years and are not in full time practice may apply for exemption of payment of annual fees. This is not automatic, and persons who wish to remain registered but be exempted from paying annual fees need to obtain the prescribed application form from Council and apply in writing.

Council received a presentation from the Department Higher Education and Training regarding enrolments for courses in social work. It was noted that 16 universities are currently providing a degree course in social work from which 3,069 graduated in 2017. Council noted with concern that there was a drop in the enrolment for the degree in social work from 18,308 in 2016 to 15,053 in 2017.

Council received a presentation from the Department of Social Development on the development of the draft Social Service Practitioners Bill and the costing related to its implementation. Council noted and appreciated the progress being made, especially the fact that the Bill will be published for public comment as soon as it is approved by Cabinet.

Council concluded its 55th meeting by reflecting on the progress made since its inauguration as well as the significant work that still needs to be done to ensure that it meets its mandate towards the professions and the public. Council appreciated the constructive engagements and critique by registrants as it assist towards improving its service delivery.

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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.