



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

STATEMENT ON 66TH MEETING OF COUNCIL

REF: 1/23

1 February 2023

STATEMENT OF THE 66TH MEETING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS (SACSSP)

The South African Council for Social Professions (SACSSP) held its 66th meeting on 29 and 30 November 2022 in Gauteng. The meeting started with Council observing a moment of silence for the *16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children*. The meeting focused on the core business of Council and the priorities the 5th Council and the Professional Boards set to achieve in the first 100 days in office. Council noted the resignation of Ms Hloniphile Ndhlovu who was elected in terms of section 5(1)(b) and that the election process for this vacancy in terms of section 6(2) of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 ("the Act") will commence soon.

Council noted the constitution of *Risk and Audit Committee* established in terms of section 10 of the Act has been fully constituted as the three external persons to serve was appointed in accordance with the Rules, and the appointment of Mr Kenneth Mhlongo (external) as the chairperson of this committee was endorsed.

Council also endorsed the designation of Members to serve on the *Fit and Proper Panel* and the *Restorations Panel*, both panels are under the Registrations Committee.

- The *Fit and Proper Panel* that deals with matters regarding the fit and proper person requirement for registration in terms of sections 17(1), 18(1) and 18A(1) of the Act with the following Members serving: Adv Lulamile Peter (also designated as Chairperson) and Ms Samantha Baron from the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work, Ms Ida Strydom from the Professional Board for Social Work and Ms Thembisa Jimana from Council.
- The *Restoration Panel* that deals with matters pertaining to the restoration of social service professionals to the Register as contemplated in section 20(3) of the Act with the following Members serving: Ms Winnie Morake (also designated as Chairperson) and Adv Derrick Block from the Professional Board for Social Work, Donald Nghonyama from the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work and Ms Lesley du Toit from Council.

Council was apprised on the following matters pertaining to **registration and payment** of fees:

- The SACSSP online registration system that commenced early in 2022 is progressing well, but with some glitches that are being attended to on an ongoing basis, for example the challenges of issuing digital certificates and receipts.
- The online registration system also requires that the manual system be systematically migrated to digital database, which is 40% complete.
- On 1 April 2022 38,443 social workers, 12,716 social auxiliary workers, 200 child and youth care workers and 8,358 auxiliary child and youth care worker were registered with the SACSSP (excluding students). The Registrations Committee reported that more than 500 applications through the online registration system were processed and approved since June 2022, while 7,335 social service

professionals to removed (deregistered) from the Register in terms of section 20(1) across all categories still needs to be processed.

Council noted the following regarding **education, training and development** from the reports presented during the meeting:

- Two quality assurance visits regarding the prescribed qualifications in social work, subject to the provisions of sections 14B(c)(i), (d), (e) and 14C(1)(c) of the Act were undertaken by the Professional Board for Social Work to UNISA and Hugenote College. The Professional Board for Social Work plans further three quality assurance site visits to University of Zululand, Walter Sisulu University and University of Limpopo by March 2023.
- Two training providers providing training in social auxiliary work were investigated by the Professional Board for Social Work with regards to offering auxiliary qualification while not accredited.
- The Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work is negotiating with different universities to create opportunities for child and youth care workers to acquire tertiary education - amongst them is Durban University of Technology (DUT). The DUT will be offering a Portfolio Development Course with financial support from HWSETA to prepare prospective students to register for a B.Tech degree in Child and Youth Care Work.
- The Professional Board for Social Work assessed five applications in terms of section 17D where the applicants obtained their qualifications outside of the Republic of South Africa as to ascertain whether it meets the minimum requirements for a prescribed qualification to be registered with the SACSSP.
- On continuing professional development (CPD) the Professional Board for Social Work assessed 136 CPD applications as well as two appeals that were received, while the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work assessed seven CPD applications.

Council received reports regarding inquiries into alleged **unprofessional or improper conduct** as follows:

- The *Committee of Preliminary Inquiry (CPI)* is progressing with the 84 complaints of alleged unprofessional or improper conduct carried over from the 4th Council. As of 30 November 2022, 21 complaints were investigated, and the outcomes were as follows: One matter was referred for a disciplinary inquiry; two were referred for *regulation 8* proceedings; two were referred for mediation and six are partly investigated and awaiting additional information from parties and ten were closed for lack of evidence.
- The *Committee for Preliminary Inquiry (CPI) Appeals Committee* is progressing with eight appeals against the findings of the CPI carried over from the 4th Council. As of 30 November 2022, four of these appeals were attended and the outcomes are as follows: two matters were confirmed in favour of the CPI and the other two matters were referred back to the CPI for a further investigation.
- The *Professional Conduct Committee (PCC)* is progressing with over 40 matters referred for a disciplinary inquiry carried over from the 4th Council. As of 30 November 2022, five disciplinary inquiries were finalised. One Respondent (social worker) was found not guilty. A further four respondents (3 social workers and 1 student social worker) were found guilty, and the following penalties were imposed:
 - one with registration number was suspended for twelve months in terms of section 22(1)(b) for contravening section 17C (4)-(5)¹ of the Act and rule 3(1), (2), (3) and (4) 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 ("the Rules")*, in relation to improper intervention while rendering forensic social work services to children in need of care and protection;

¹ For reference, section 17C(4) "No person shall take up, use or publish in any manner whatsoever any name, title, description or symbol indicating or calculated to lead persons to infer that he or she possesses an additional qualification contemplated in subsection (1), if such qualification has not been entered in the register against his or her name" and section 17C(5): "No person registered under this Act shall practise as a specialist or shall pretend to be such a specialist, or shall in any other manner profess to be a person in respect of whom a speciality has been registered, unless the speciality in question has been registered in terms of this section in respect of such person".

- one was removed from the Register in terms of section 22(1)(c) for contravening rules 3(1), (2), (3), (4), (11), and 4(2) in relation to improper conduct and fraudulent activities while rendering adoption services;
- one was fined R4,000 in terms of section 22(1)(d) in relation to three charges and received a twelve months suspended suspension in terms of section 22(1)(b) read together with section 22(1A)(a)(ii) and in relation to other two charges for contravening rules 3(3) and 7(1) of the *Rules* in relation to involvement in exchanging sex-texting and/or using cellular connections to text messages of a sexual nature using a work computer and engaging in sexual intercourse with the husband of her social work colleague during working hours; and
- the student social worker received twelve months suspended suspension in terms of section 22(1)(b) read together with section 22(1A)(a)(ii) for contravening rules 3(3) and 7(1) of the *Rules* in relation to submission of plagiarised reports during 4th year practicum placement.

(Also see [Professional Conduct Notice of Findings in Terms of Section 22\(2\)\(c\) of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978: July 2018 to June 2022](#) (Board Notice 375 of 2022 published in Government Gazette 47665 of 9 December 2022))

Members took note during the meeting of a number **communication, public relations and outreach** activities, including:

- The engagement with unemployed social service professionals and the actions being undertaken by the SACSSP as set out in [General Notice 9 of 2022](#) (available on the website). On the date of reporting at the 66th meeting eight application for exemption from the payment of annual fees by unemployed social service professionals were received. At the end of the closing date for application, 82 applications were received, 72 were found to be eligible for exemption and 10 needed further validation.
- The publication of a [Newsletter](#) before the end of 2022 was appreciated as reported by the Communication and Public Relations Committee.
- The launch of the [Social Work Readiness Pilot Programme](#) on 10 November 2022 with 120 participants, which aims to enhance and facilitate the employability of unemployed social workers through a custom designed capacity development programme that focuses on knowledge, skills and experience to support their readiness and transition to employment was noted by Council.
- The Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work hosted a virtual roundtable to support the development of the child and youth care work sector focusing on available opportunities for child and youth care workers.
- The IT and Business Reengineering Committee indicated that the new call centre contributes notably to alleviating missed or abandoned calls

Council approved the *Audited Financial Statements 2021/2022*, which will be submitted to the Minister and made available to the public as part of the Annual Report 2021/2022.

The President of the SACSSP concluded the 66th meeting by expressing appreciation to Members for the work done in the four months since the commencement of their term of office and the Secretariat for their support. Council re-affirmed its commitment to the advancement of the interests of the social service professionals with reminder of its motto – *Non Nobis: Not for ourselves*.

ISSUED BY: SACSSP Communications

ENQUIRIES:

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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 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.