



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

STATEMENT OF MEETING Professional Board for Social Work

REF: 4/26

10 September 2026

STATEMENT OF THE 67TH MEETING OF PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR SOCIAL WORK

The 67th meeting of the Professional Board for Social Work (PBSW) convened on 11 June 2026 focusing on its core mandate and reviewing progress since its 66th meeting held in March 2026.

General issues

The Professional Board reflected on the engagement between the SACSSP and the Minister of Social Development on 8 April 2026 which provided a platform to raise critical issues affecting the Council's operations. Key outcomes included:

- **Regulations on Fees Payable by Social Service Professionals**
Council raised delays in the approval of Regulations of fees payable by social service professionals. The Department confirmed that finalisation was feasible, and the regulations on fees payable were subsequently published on 17 April 2026. This marks a step forward in addressing one of Council's long-standing concerns.
- **Regulations on Specialties in Social Work**
Council also raised delays in finalising specialty regulations. The Department confirmed feasibility and public comments received during publication were received. These are currently under review by the Policy and Legislation Committee of Council, with Council committed to finalising the process and ensuring publication follows.
- **Classification of Council**
Discussions included the reclassification of the SACSSP to enable receipt of appropriated funds from Parliament. While no firm commitments were made, the Department indicated willingness to explore funding options. This remains a critical issue given the SACSSP's concerning financial situation.

Registration under the Professional Board for Social Work

The Professional Board noted the report on the activities undertaken from January to March 2026, as follows:

- a total of 588 social workers, 41 social auxiliary workers, 921 student social workers, 119 student social auxiliary workers were registered with the SACSSP. Furthermore, two social workers were registered for the speciality in occupational social work, four social workers were registered for the speciality in forensic social work while seven social workers were registered for the speciality in clinical social work. These social workers may now use the title of "specialist" in the respective fields of specialisation.
- 35 verifications on the status of registration with the SACSSP, which were received from Social Work England, CORU (Ireland), Social Workers Registration Board New Zealand, Albertina College of Social Workers and Northern Ireland Social Care were concluded. A further 100 status of registration and good standing reports were issued during this period. A total of 320 unemployed social services professionals were exempted from paying the annual fees for the 2026/27 financial year after their applications were approved.
- the Restoration Panel processed 45 applications for restoration in terms of section 20(3) of the Act for 34 social workers and 11 social auxiliary workers.

The Professional Board noted the report on the new online registration system which was reported as performing well overall. However, despite the system's reliability, some of the challenges emerged as follows;

- **Annual Renewal challenges**

A significant issue has been the late renewals by registrants. By the time of this meeting 16,697 social service professionals were due to renew their registration. Their grace period had already expired, but SACSSP extended the deadline until 30 June 2026 to accommodate them. Following the extension and reminder emails, many social service professionals had begun submitting proof of payment to confirm their renewals.

- **Practice Card Distribution**

Another challenge related to the distribution of practice cards. While the system allows registrants to access their cards online, many have been reluctant to navigate the platform. To address this, SACSSP began sending practice cards directly via email. Unfortunately, this approach has revealed a major obstacle: 5,457 emails have bounced back due to outdated or incorrect contact details. This number continues to rise daily, with the latest figure reaching 5,463 undelivered emails. In response, SACSSP has undertaken a mass resend of practice cards to the entire database in addition to daily distributions.

- **Webinars on the new online registration system**

10 webinars on the new online registration system were conducted and 1,420 social service professionals attended these webinars.

Professional conduct

- A total of 77 complaints of alleged unprofessional or improper conduct were investigated by the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry (CPI). The CPI finalised eight investigations in terms of regulation 8 of the *Regulations regarding the conducting of enquiries into alleged unprofessional conduct*, 12 matters were referred to Regulation 8 while 42 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*. Four matters were investigated and deferred pending supplementary documents, a further four matters were finalised in terms of Regulation 7(2) and Regulation 7(3) and seven were referred to the Professional Conduct Committee.
- seven matters of alleged unprofessional or improper conduct which were tabled before the Professional Conduct Committee of which one matter was finalised. One social worker was found guilty of contravention of Rule 3(1), 3(2), 3(3) and 3(4) of the *Rules* and received a 24 months suspension of registration in terms of section 22(1)(b) of the Act, wholly suspended for a period of 24 months in terms of section 22(1A)(a)(ii) of the Act. The respondent to attend CPD accredited training on the SACSSP Code of Ethics and relevant ethics course dealing with issues of fraud and submit proof of attendance during the period of suspension.
- three capacity development sessions on the code of ethics were conducted in partnership with the Limpopo Department of Social Development, Western Cape Department of Social Development and University of South Africa where 650 social service professionals were reached.
- two oath taking ceremonies were hosted at the University of Pretoria and the University of the Free State where 148 student social workers took their professional oath.

The Professional Board approved the Peer Review Guidelines which will now be regarded as a standard of practice. The document will soon be published on the SACSSP website.

Education, training and development

- A total of 148 continuing for professional development (CPD) applications were received of which 124 were assessed (114 approved, eight not approved and two were deferred).
- one CPD appeal was received during the reporting period and it was approved.
- quality assurance site visits for the University of Cape Town and the University of Venda were approved.
- assessment plans for Stellenbosch University, University of Zululand and Hugenote Kollege were approved.

The Professional Board for Social Work concluded its 67th meeting by extending sincere appreciation to its Members and Secretariat for their continued dedication and contributions to the work of the Professional Board. This recognition comes despite the ongoing financial crisis that poses significant risks to the sustainability of both the Professional Board and the SACSSP.

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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.