

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

CHILD PROTECTION SOCIAL WORKERS | New Job Description and Classification



Frequently Asked Questions

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW 2

QUESTION BY TOPIC..... 3

A. New Job Description..... 3

B. Classification..... 5

C. Other HR- related questions..... 5

D. Staffing and Training..... 6

E. Communication and Updates..... 7

CONTACT INFORMATION..... 7

Additional questions 7

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

OVERVIEW

As part of the Department's Social Workers recruitment and retention efforts, a new classification and job description has been introduced for Child Protection Social Workers. This has resulted in a new pay scale range that will take effect retroactively from April 1st, 2024.

The new classification and job description supports the department (DCS) to deliver on its mandate of providing services under the Child and Family Wellbeing program to support vulnerable children and families.

Given the increasing complexity in supporting children and families, we are recognizing the unique challenges faced by Child Protection Social Workers. This is an important step towards recognizing the complexity of work, level of decision making, and skills required to manage the risks involved.

Your work as Social Workers are essential to the success of our department and the positive impact we strive to make in the lives of all Nova Scotians. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment are deeply appreciated and recognized.

While the new job description and classification impacts the Child Protection position, it does not diminish the vital contributions of every team member supporting the wellbeing of children, families and communities. As part of this transition, the Union and Employer agree to waive the 12-month requirement in Article 13.02 (c), and the "same classification" requirement in 13.02, for a one-time EOI opportunity for otherwise eligible Social Worker 1-2s at DCS to EOI into the new Child Protection Social Worker positions, and otherwise eligible Social Worker 3s at DCS to EOI into the new Child Protection Social Worker Supervisor positions. Further details regarding this process will be provided to you by your manager.

This FAQ document contains hyperlinks within the Table of Contents – you can jump to a specific section of the document by clicking on the topic name. Alternatively, you can review the document from start to finish.

This document will be updated regularly as new questions are asked via email (SDFoundations@novascotia).

We would like to thank everyone for your questions and feedback, which have significantly contributed to this comprehensive FAQ document. We have compiled and combined questions to provide thorough answers to your concerns and avoid repetition. If you feel that any of your questions were not addressed in our responses, please reach out to your manager, or your HRBP.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

QUESTION BY TOPIC

A. New Job Description

- 1- Why is Child Protection getting a new description and not the rest of us (FC/Adoption/FOT teams/Family Therapist...etc.). Will there be any consideration for the positions that do not fall under the new classification to be reviewed at a later date?**

The Child Protection Social Worker classification and new job description represents the recognition of the level of challenges, risks and accountability associated with the role, and the required skills needed to effectively manage associated risks.

The focus at this time is on child protection positions. Any changes regarding other positions in the future, will be communicated to your managers.

- 2- What positions will be impacted by this change?**

This new job description and classification impacts Child Protection Social Workers currently working in the following areas:

- o Intake
- o Children in Care (Long term care, Temporary Care and Custody, Permanent Care and Custody)
- o Provincial After-hours Response Team (PART)
- o Consolidated Allegations and Investigation Team (CAIT)

Supervisors that are supervising these teams will be moving into the Child Protection Supervisor position.

- 3- How does the new job description impact emergency duty?**

The standby and call back Article 20 will continue to apply. As well, the overtime article and the acting pay article of the Collective Agreement will apply.

Article 19.11 Compensation for Performing Other Duties states:

When an employee is required to work overtime and during the overtime hours performs duties other than the duties of their regular position, they will be compensated for the overtime worked at the rate applicable to the duties performed during the overtime period but will in no case be paid a rate lower than their applicable overtime rate.

The union and Employer have also agreed to waive the three-day requirement for acting pay as noted in Article 38.10 (a) for non-CP social workers who cover Regional After Hours shifts from April 1-December 31, 2024.

- 4- If there are insufficient staff to do E-duty due to Rep Status, will there be an expectation that we include those outside of the new job description? If so, how will they be paid?**

Only those staff within DCS who have Rep Status will be asked to do E-duty. Staff who perform duty will be paid the standby rate of pay, overtime according to Article 19.11, and acting pay. Non-CP Social Workers are required to support E-duty until we have enough staff with rep status in each office. Once we have that capacity, non-CP Social Workers will be asked if they want to do E-duty.

Thus, non-CP Social Worker in Service Delivery as well as CFW Program can be assigned to cover vacancies in child protection during regular business hours and after-hours if they have their rep status.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

5- Why are Intake Screening unit staff not part of the new job description?

The Child Protection role is unique due to the level of challenges, decision making, risks and accountability associated with the role, and the required skills needed to effectively manage associated risks.

6- Will those outside of the new description be able to take PART shifts? If so, how will be paid?

Only those staff within DCS who have Rep Status will be able to work PART shifts. Staff who work OT in PART will be paid overtime according to Article 19.11. (Please see Q3) We have given a 6-month period of time for all Child Protection Social Workers to obtain their Representative status.

Non-CP Social Workers who have representative status have the ability to accept shifts with PART and will be compensated at the CPSW rate.

7- If I accept another SW position in CFW, and it's outside of the new job description, will my pay decrease?

If you are a Child Protection Social Worker and you apply for another position different from the new Child Protection Social Worker classification, your rate of pay will reflect the rate of pay for the classification you have accepted. This may result in a change in pay based on Article 38.03 or Article 38.04.

8- Will there be a process to EOI into the new job description, if I'm currently in a Foster Care, Adoption or other SW role in CFW? And is there a timeframe on this?

Yes, we will open an expression of interest process for individuals interested in positions within the Child Protection roles. Applications can be submitted until June 28th.

The Union and Employer agree to waive the 12-month requirement in Article 13.02 (c), and the "same classification" requirement in 13.02, for a one-time EOI opportunity for otherwise eligible Social Worker 1-2s at DCS to EOI into the new Child Protection Social Worker positions, and otherwise eligible Social Worker 3s at DCS to EOI into the new Child Protection Social Worker Supervisor positions. This agreement will apply to employees holding a Social Worker 1-2 or Social Worker 3 position as of June 11, 2024. This EOI opportunity will be made available to employees **until June 28, 2024**. Per the normal EOI process, applicants will be required to provide a resume, references and participate in any other assessment required by the employer and may be excluded based on the references and/or assessment results.

9- Will service dates play a role in the new job description for those wishing to go back to CP? i.e.: can we bump a newer SW currently in the role?

Service dates will be used to fill positions through the expression of interest process. Current Social Workers working in Child Protection will stay in their position and move to the new rate. All vacancies will be posted, and we will open an expression of interest process for individuals interested in positions within the Child Protection roles.

Applications can be submitted until June 28.

Going forward, any unfilled positions will be posted as per the normal posting process.

10- Can I EOI into a Child Protection Social Worker after June 28th if I change my mind?

This is a new classification that is separate and distinct from the current Social Worker 1-2, therefore you will be required to apply and compete per the Collective Agreement. After June 28th, the EOI process will close and interested applicant will have to apply for the vacant CPSW positions.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

11- I am currently working in another division, but my home position is in Child Protection. Will I receive the updated pay?

If you return to your Child Protection position, you will receive the new wage rate.

12- When will the non- Child Protection Social Workers receive an updated job description for their roles?

We anticipate receiving the finalized job description from the Classification division at the PSC very soon and it will be shared via the Managers when available.

B. Classification

1- When is the increase happening? Retro to when? And in what pay period will we see that?

The classification will be effective as of **April 1st, 2024**. Affected employees can expect to see the new rate and Retro on their July 25, 2024, pay.

All Social Workers (CP and non-CP) who completed work in a CP role will be paid retro to April 1st, 2024, regardless of their rep status.

2- How will this change impact my anniversary date?

All Child Protection Social Workers impacted by this change will have a new anniversary date of April 1st. This is as per article 38.05 - Anniversary date -see below:

The anniversary date of an employee shall be the first day of the month in which employment occurs if the employee reported for duty during the first (5) workdays of the month in which they were employed, or the first day of the following month if the employee reported for duty later than the fifth working day of the month. The anniversary date will only change to the first day of another month if:

- (1) The employee is reclassified, at which time the date of the reclassification becomes their new anniversary date
- (2) The employee has been on the leave of absence without pay, in which case the employee's anniversary date will be moved forward by the amount of time which the employee was on leave without pay, unless provided in this Agreement.

3- How is it determined where a person falls on the pay scale?

This will be applied as per Article 38.03, Rate of Pay upon Promotion in the Collective Agreement. The rate of compensation of a person upon promotion to a position in a higher pay range shall be at the next higher rate or the minimum of the new position, whichever is greater, than that received by the employee before the promotion.

4- Is there a formal process to take if you feel you are not on the correct pay scale after the classification has been processed?

Each employee will receive a letter outlining their new classification and if you have any further questions you can speak to your manager, HRBP or your union representative.

C. Other HR- related questions

1- Pay increase is great. Will caseload sizes and other factors leading to shortages in CP also be explored (IE: better self-care strategies such as more days working from home, increase in benefits, etc.)?

Through our recruitment and retention work across the department, we are currently exploring several initiatives, tools, and resources to ensure we are prioritizing the health and wellbeing of our Social Workers.

2- Is the department looking to increase the number of days working from home?

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

The Department is not reviewing the Flexible Work Arrangements structure in place. Any new updates regarding this will be shared with you.

3- Is the wage adjustment considered salary for benefits? IE: If my pension is paid based on a percentage of my salary, will my pension be a higher rate based on this adjustment?

Yes, Pension contributions and the definition of salary are dictated by the Public Service Superannuation Act – [public service superannuation.fm](http://public.service.superannuation.fm) (nspssp.ca)

“Salary” means the salary or compensation earned by an employee in respect of employment with an employer, including any performance-based pay or performance-based bonus except where expressly excluded under an employment contract

4- Will the wage adjustment be considered part of the “best 5 years” that pension uses to calculate my pension?

Yes, the wage adjustment is considered part of salary and would be included in the employees 130.5 highest biweekly salary.

5- How will the wage adjustment impact my life Insurance? Will the wage adjustment be included when calculating my life insurance? Life insurance is paid out as 2 times the gross salary rounded up. Will this adjustment be considered part of gross earnings or is the insurance payment based on the pay scale?

Yes, should you have any other questions regarding your individual circumstance, we would encourage you to connect with benefits: benefits@novascotia.ca

D. Staffing and Training

1- The new job description says that Rep Status is a requirement. What will happen if Social Workers cannot get the necessary training in time?

All Child Protection Social Workers (CPSW 1-3) will have a 6-month grace period to complete the representative status certification. Failure to obtain this certification within the grace period may result in unpaid administrative leave until the training is completed.

We are committed to assisting you in obtaining the necessary support to achieve Representative Status.

Individuals who have already obtained their representative status will not be required to undergo the training again to retain their status.

2- What training modules do I need to obtain my rep status?

1. Foundation of Child and Family Wellbeing
2. Foundation of Child Protection
3. Family Violence
4. Investigation & Assessment of Child Sexual Abuse
5. PRIDE 6

All training requests can be submitted through the [training calendar](#) after discussion with your manager.

3- How will CORE training requirements change with this new description?

Core training requirements will not change with this new job description, however, there will be more training available and accessible through online and in- person.

4- If I decide I want to return to CP/CIC, will I be expected to re-do CORE training?

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

No, you will not be required to re-do CORE training as long as you remain within the department. Consultation can occur on individual basis between SD and Program.

5- If the new job description creates a staffing deficit in other program areas (FC, Adoption, FOT etc.), what recruitment strategies will you consider?

We currently have a valid hiring pool and when that is exhausted, we will run competitive processes as needed.

E. Communication and Updates

How will I get updates on the changes?

Opportunities for engagement and updates will continue to be provided through:

- 1- Managers
- 2- DCS Pulse
- 3- FAQs

How can I ask questions?

We want to hear from you! You can provide feedback anytime via email to SDFoundations@novascotia.ca. You can also talk to your manager and/or supervisor who will bring your ideas/concerns/questions forward.

CONTACT INFORMATION

SDFoundations@novascotia.ca

We appreciate your questions, and we will do our best to provide you with the most accurate and up-to-date information possible. As we continue to navigate through this process, we will strive to keep you informed by addressing any questions or concerns you may have. Please feel free to submit any additional questions you may have, and we will respond to them as soon as we can. Please submit questions to sdfoundations@novascotia.ca

F. Additional questions

1. **If non-CP SWs completed duties of CP SW during regular business hours from April 1, 2024 to present, will they be compensated at the higher rate for those hours/days that they completed these duties? (For example, an adoption worker who was asked to work in protection for a day due to staff shortages)**

The union and Employer have also agreed to waive the three-day requirement for acting pay as noted in Article 38.10 (a) for non-CP social workers who are required to perform CP SW duties during regular business hours for all hours worked from April 1- December 31, 2024.

2. **If an employee is considering returning to protection, but unsure about long term, will the employer consider accepting a term position or grant a leave of absence (if applicable) should a SW want to EOI into one of the new CP SW positions?**

Yes, current DCS Social Workers will have until June 28th deadline to EOI into available vacancies. If the position is a term, then employee can EOI into the role on a term basis, however, if the position is a permanent position, then employee will have to vacate their home position in order to accept the new CP role.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

- 3. Will there be a list of vacancies position for which employees can apply to EOI into prior to June 28 deadline for? Will office location of vacancies be listed in the EOI, as per Article 13.02 a?**

We will not be sending a vacant position list in advance. If interested in a potential position, we encourage you to apply to EOI into an available opportunity.

Information regarding vacant position will be sent to applicant who have expressed interest in vacant position once the EOI process is closed.

Vacant positions once submit to the applicant will include vacant positions, locations within the province, and the areas within CP with the vacant roles (Long term, temporary care....).

- 4. If there are more SW who apply through the EOI prior to the June deadline than positions available, which results in SWs not successful in obtaining a position or perhaps a position in their desired location through the EOI process, will they need to, at a later date apply for and be interviewed for positions as they become available or will they be added to a hiring pool for future positions?**

Yes, SWs will have to apply and interview for future positions as they become available and outside their job description. Please refer to the Collective agreement clause 13.03.

- 5. Could approved annual vacation for employees who transfer into a CPSW position be affected for the first 6 months as per article 21.04 (b)?**

Yes, article 21.04 (b) applies.

And if a SW already employed in Protection had vacation denied due to operational requirements can this vacation be approved (6-month period-so possibly summer months and Christmas) if new staff transfer into the unit even if new staff have more years of service?

This will depend on operational requirements at the time. Please consult with your manager.

- 6. If you are SW working in a non CPSW (Foster Care/Adoption) but would like to be able to work Duty but do not have Rep status, will you be able to take the training required to achieve Rep status?**

Yes, we are committed to supporting all SWs obtain their rep status, by making all required training available and easily accessible online. Training request can be submitted through the [training calendar](#) on People & Culture SharePoint site.

- 7. What are the specific challenges, risks, accountability, and skills that a CPSW is required to have that an SW in FC or adoption do not require?**

We have outlined the responsibilities in the job description, please consult with your manager should you have any further questions or need more detailed information.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

- 8. Are currently classified CP SW1-2 and 3 EOI eligible prior to June 28 deadline for their respective SW1-2 and 3 positions? Can a currently classified CP SW EOI into a vacant position in other areas of child protection?**

No, the intention of this EOI process is to offer an opportunity for eligible non-CP Social Workers to move into vacant CPSW1-2, 3 positions.

- 9. I'm wondering if you can clarify information about the new EOI pool. If I were to apply for that pool and an opportunity came up in adoption (for example) would I still have access or be on the adoption hiring pool as well? i.e., can I have my name on both pools and still apply for adoption positions.**

This is a one-time EOI process for the vacant position in the CPSW classification. This pool will be closed once the position have been offered. We will then go back to our regular hiring process.

No, it will not affect your application to an adoption position.

- 10. If someone does not have representative status and is currently in a position in which they are not within the new classification (Foster care, Adoption, Screening unit), can they still go through the EOI process prior to June 28th?**

All non-Child Protection Social Workers are eligible and encouraged to apply for the EOI process regardless of their rep status. We are committed to working with all applicants to obtain their rep status within the 6-months grace period.

- 11. Will there still be exceptions after the 6-month mark for certain offices to pull from non-representatives to complete duty (with appropriate representative back up)?**

Yes, although rep status is a requirement for Child Protection work, we will make exceptions based on operational needs. we will work with all Social Workers interested in taking duty shifts to obtain their rep status.

- 12. Can you provide more clarity in relation to what the wage adjustment?**

This wage adjustment is a specially approved, additional compensation mechanism being applied to increase the total pay for these jobs for a defined period, until further reviewed. It is separate from and in addition to the base salary rate of the defined classification levels, intended as an incentive to help attract and retain employees in these highly critical roles which require specialized skills and experience, specific to the needs and nature of child protection service work. The adjustment amount is set in consideration of industry-wide compensation levels for similar positions in comparable organizations and job markets at the time of the review, to ensure more comparable and competitive total pay amounts for employees in this particular field.

The wage adjustment will only apply to those in Child Protection Social Worker and Child Protection Supervisor positions and will be added to your bi-weekly pay over a period of 36 months starting April 1, 2024.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

13. Those who have been working long term and are at the top of pay scale are not receiving that much of an increase. How are senior staff being recognized and retention being met?

Through our comprehensive recruitment and retention efforts across the department, we are continuously exploring and implementing several initiatives to ensure the well-being of our employees and to position ourselves as an employer of choice.

Our staff engagement initiatives and reward and recognition strategies, such as the Game Changer Awards and Ministers Awards, are just a few examples of how we recognize and value our employees, contributing to their sense of appreciation and encouraging them to stay.

Additionally, we promote a culture of appreciation where staff are encouraged to recognize each other informally through thank you cards and shout-outs.

The Department is committed to celebrating the achievements of individuals and teams, fostering a sense of belonging and community. We also honor Years of Service at 5, 10, 15, and 20-year intervals, and provide corporate Long Service Awards (PSC) at 25+ years in 5-year increments, recognizing their dedication to the Department of Community Services (DCS) and the Province of Nova Scotia

14. Many of the staff in adoption, foster care and screening unit are highly skilled Social Workers and have worked in protection positions for years. Why are they not being recognized for the work they have contributed to the department. They assist in placing and supporting caregivers who are meeting the high day to day needs of children in care and adoption.

We deeply value the expertise and dedication of all our Social Workers and the incredible work and contributions they make on the daily basis in the lives of children and families in Nova Scotia. While the current focus is on child protection positions due to their unique challenges and risks, we are committed to recognizing and appreciating the vital work of all our Social Workers.

15. Was there consultation with front line workers (specifically rural workers) in relation to this decision?

This has been an ongoing discussion item for several years, and more recently during the ED office visits. Feedback received has contributed to this change. Additionally, the Labour Management Committee work as well as other committee work has highlighted the need for a different classification. Employees participating in these working groups were representative of different areas of the province.

16. Is there going to be an opportunity to have a direct question and answer session?

We currently do not have any direct Q&A sessions planned. To ensure consistency, we will be using the FAQs. If you have any further questions, we recommend reaching out to your manager, HRBPs, or union representatives.

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

17. What code can I use in ESS when entering my time if I am asked to do protection work to ensure I am paid at the higher rate?

We are currently mapping this process and information will be provided shortly.

18. It would be helpful to have a visual of the breakdown of the current PR scales in comparison to the new PR Scale wages, along with the CPSW 3 PR scales. If this could be done biweekly and yearly. This would have a positive impact visually for staff and future staff.

To ensure consistent and accurate information regarding pay scale wages, please refer to the PR pay plans available on my HR pay tab ([Pay Plans](#)). A copy of the MOA was forwarded by your manager/ supervisor on June 12th.

19. If someone successfully EOIs into a CPSW position before June 28, 2024, will they be eligible to EOI into another CPSW position between June 28, 2024, and June 28, 2025? (ex. CPSW 1-2 from Long Term EOI to CPSW Term in TCC for 3 months - then is posted Permanently in Sept /Oct 2024 - can they EOI?).

If you accept an EOI position, it triggers the 1-year clause as noted in Article 13.02 (c). The waiving of this clause applies to the EOI posting that closes on June 28, 2024.

20. Can a SW 1-2 who is qualified act in a CPSW 3 position? Would they get 10% of current salary or 10% of CPSW salary?

Article 38.10 will apply to all acting pay assignments. Where an employee is designated to perform for a temporary period of three (3) or more consecutive work days, the principal duties of a higher position, they shall receive payment of acting pay, including the three (3) work days, equivalent to ten percent (10%) higher than their existing rate of pay, provided that in no case shall the rate for that period exceed the maximum rate of the higher-paying position.

21. Several FC/Adoption SWs have been doing social histories for overtime, for other offices – should this be paid at the CPSW rate, as it is their task? Will this be allowed within the collective agreement to do tasks outside your role? (this is an issue with Clerk versus Sec 1)

Yes, that is correct. If it is OT, then 19.11 applies. If you did this for 3 or more days, then acting pay also applies.

22. If we need a second Social Work Supervisor for ac conference, how do we compensate the Non-CP Social Work Supervisor? Will compensation be provided based upon the amount of time (hours) or the full day? Similarly, if we have a non-CP Social Worker Supervisor provide consults with any of the CP Social Workers, how will they be compensated?

Planning for children is an ongoing responsibility for all CFW staff. Participation in the planning meetings remains unchanged due to this job description change, as program

UPDATED: JULY 19th, 2024

requirements have not changed. This includes family support worker, Access and Transportation and other CFW staff being in attendance as required.

In this regard, there will be no further compensation as it is a program requirement and a component of all CFW duties.

23. I am currently working as an intake screener (term position), but my permanent position is children in permanent care. I am currently at a PR 15(04). I am wondering how this new job description/ classification is going to impact my pay?

If you moved to a non-CP role from a CP role after April 1, 2024, you are entitled to receive retro pay for the time between April 1, 2024, and when you started in the non-CP role. If you move back to your CP role, your pay will be adjusted accordingly. You will receive a letter outlining the changes effective April 1, 2024.

24. Given the short window to EOI, how is the information about the EOI opportunity being communicated to other Social Workers?

Managers have reached out to all social workers including those who are currently on leave to inform them about the changes and opportunity to EOI into vacant CPSW positions. A copy of the EOI process has also been sent to all staff impacted. Updates and reminders have also been sent out to ensure that staff are properly informed.

25. Are positions that are currently posted being extended to allow time for EOIs?

Those competitions that were concluded prior to the announcement, continued outside of this EOI process. Many of the postings that had not closed when the announcement was made, have been paused to be included in the EOI process.

And are positions within the Provincial Hiring Pool being pulled to be reposted?

All vacancies in the hiring pool will be offered to those who expressed interest in the EOI.