

## **My support network**

Starting work as an NQSW can be exciting but it can be challenging particularly if you are relocating to a rural or remote area. You will be establishing new social and professional networks while maintaining important links with your friends and family. Social work is a demanding job so it's important to have people and activities in your life which support your work/life balance and resilience.

The My Support Network template can help you identify who or what supports your resilience and wellbeing as an NQSW. You will see there are six support areas identified with some suggestions provided, so you can adapt the template to suit your own situation:

1. **My inner circle** (eg: close friends and family you can talk openly to about how you feel; people who listen and support you).
2. **Friends/extended family** (eg: people you enjoy spending time with).
3. **Social contacts** (eg: people you pass the time of day with; people you meet for coffee or do a shared activity with; neighbours; people who support you with practicalities).
4. **Social activities** (eg: classes; events; meetings; community activities; face to face or online groups).
5. **Professional supports and networks** (eg: colleagues; mentor; supervisor; people who can give professional support and advice; associations; social media groups which provide information and support).
6. **Other supports** (eg: coaching; consultancy; people who support your wellbeing)

## **Reflective questions**

These questions have been suggested by practitioners working in rural areas.

- Who are the people who support and care about you?
- What are your needs, both as an NQSW and an individual?
- Who can you talk to if you are having a tough time or feeling low or lonely?
- What if there's no coffee shop, restaurant or social space nearby? How will you spend your time at weekends?
- How can you meet other people who are new to the area?
- How will you get to know people and what communication skills do you have to make relationships in a community where there are established social networks (including amongst professionals)?
- How much do you want to tell people about yourself and your job if you are new to the area?

- What strengths do you have to share with your team and how can your team support you? How can you get to know colleagues in different teams?
- What if your team leader isn't working in the same area- how will you work together and get support?

**Related Links:**

[NQSW Resource 7: Wellbeing and resilience needs.](#)

[NQSW Resource 12: Using peer group reflective practice](#)

[NQSW Resource 9: Virtual supervision](#)

[Scottish Association of Social Workers \(SASW\)](#)

[SASW Social Work Professional Support Service](#)