

A vibrant banner for the Regional Social Work Awards 2025. The background is a colorful, abstract splash of paint in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and purple. In the foreground, there is a black silhouette of a city skyline. On the left, a building is labeled 'ULSTER ANNIERS FOLK PARK'. In the center, a cable-stayed bridge is visible. On the right, two figures are silhouetted against the sky.

REGIONAL SOCIAL WORK AWARDS 2025

‘Celebrating the unique identity, diversity, vibrancy, care and commitment of social workers’

**Information and guidance for those applying to the
Regional Social Work Awards 2025**

About the Awards

Social Work is a unique profession because it focuses on empowering individuals, families and communities and working *alongside* them to address social issues and promote positive change. We do this through advocacy and by providing support, practical help, and above all by holding close to our social work values along the way. We are fortunate in Northern Ireland to have a multi-cultural social work workforce that welcomes and celebrates diversity.

Social Work in Northern Ireland is unique due to its context within the region's distinct history which means that social work sits within, and deals with, the out-workings of a post-conflict society. Northern Ireland is like nowhere else in the islands of the UK and Ireland. We are a unique people with distinct history, culture, social challenges and a quirky sense of 'Norn Irish' humour. The social work profession plays a crucial role in contributing to the well-being of all of the people of Northern Ireland within this unique context.

Despite, or perhaps because of the significant challenges faced by the people of Northern Ireland, we are a resilient people with a strong sense of fairness, social justice and identity. The Regional Social Work Awards 2025 aims to encapsulate that sense of unique identity by recognising the diversity, vibrancy, care and commitment of social workers who continue to engage in empathetic and collaborate practices to enhance the well-being of the people of Northern Ireland. These social work awards will take an alternative approach and not only recognise outstanding examples of practice, but also celebrate the tenacity and creativity of individuals and teams who simply keep on giving in their own unique way.

This time around there will be eight awards drawing on the theme of '*Celebrating the unique identity, diversity, vibrancy, care and commitment of social workers*'. These will be presented at a ceremony on Wednesday 26th March 2025 in the Manor House Hotel, Enniskillen. We will also be celebrating World Social Work Day 2025.

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Who can enter

The Awards are open to social workers and teams working in the statutory, voluntary, independent, education, justice, probation and training sectors in Northern Ireland. Applications are welcome from individuals/teams in all areas of social work; you do not have to be working in a unique project to submit an application. The BASW NI Outstanding Achievement Award is open to social workers in the service or who have retired. Previous applicants are welcome to reapply if their application has a different practice focus. Please read all of the information in this booklet before you complete and submit your entry.

Closing date for applications is midnight on Sunday 20 October 2024.

How to apply

Applications for all awards must be made online through Northern Ireland Social Care Council Citizen Space. Applicants must provide a summary of why their nominee should be considered for the award. They will also be required to provide contact details for the social worker(s) being nominated, including their NISCC registration number and they must provide confirmation that the nominee and their employer have consented to the nomination being submitted. Read on to find out more about the judging criteria for each award and to access the links to the online applications.

A checklist has been included on page 6 to help you prepare all the information that will be needed for your application. We recommend that you complete this checklist before starting to fill in the online application.

When nominating a social worker for an award, please outline what makes this social worker's practice excellent in relation to the specific award category. Please include examples of the contribution this social worker has made to people's lives. Quotes and testimonies from service users, carers and other professionals strengthen a submission.

The judging panels will be chaired by senior representatives responsible for promoting high standards of social work in Northern Ireland. Panel members will include service users, social workers, social work academics and members of BASW NI. In all the awards categories, the judges will be looking for evidence of the individual or team's achievements. The application must demonstrate what is excellent about the social work practice and the positive impact on individuals, groups or communities they work with.

Timeline

- Online applications will be open until midnight on Sunday 20 October 2024
- All applications will be checked to make sure they have all the information needed for the judging panels
- Judging panels will meet during December and January to review all the applications and shortlist the three finalists for each award (excepting the BASW NI award)
- By end of January 2025, all applicants will be notified of the outcome of their submission and shortlisted finalists will receive an invitation to attend the award ceremony.
- Shortlisted finalists will be asked to participate in a short film to promote their work/project during February. This film will be used to promote the awards and will be shown at the award ceremony
- Wednesday 26 March 2025, the awards ceremony will be held to celebrate the unique identity, diversity, vibrancy, care and commitment of social workers practising in Northern Ireland at the Manor House Hotel, Enniskillen.

Summary of the Social Work Awards 2025 categories

There are eight award categories in the 2025 Regional Social Work Awards. Judging criteria and links to the online application form are included overleaf.

1. ***Award for Contribution to Social Work Leadership*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker at **any** stage and in **any** role
2. ***Sunshine Award*** – Nominations can be made for an individual social worker or a social work team
3. ***Nurturing Development Award*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker or a social work team
4. ***Rising Star Award*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker who is within their first three years of practice at the time of applying (inclusive of the AYE year)
5. ***Spirit of Social Work Award*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker
6. ***Co-production Award*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker or a social work team
7. ***The People's Choice Award*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker. (This award has been determined by people with lived experience from 'The Parent's Forum' in WHSCT; they have designed the award and will present it to the winner)
8. ***BASW NI Outstanding Achievement Award*** - Nominations can be made for an individual social worker

Application checklist

Listed below is a summary of the information needed in each part of the application. Please ensure that you have gathered the information needed before starting the online application.

Section 1 – Nominee details. These are required for every social worker included in the nomination and includes:

- ✓ Name
 - ✓ Social Care Council registration number,
 - ✓ Job title,
 - ✓ Daytime phone number
 - ✓ Email address, employing organisation
 - ✓ Address where they are based for work
-

Section 2 – Proposer details. These details are for the person proposing the social worker(s) for the award. The information required includes.

- ✓ Name
 - ✓ Daytime phone number
 - ✓ Email address
 - ✓ Role in which they have contact with the nominee(s)
 - ✓ Work address or contact address
-

Section 3 – Endorser details. These details are for the person authorised to approve/submit the nomination. All applications must be approved by the organisation employing the nominee(s) and they must consent to being included in the nomination. (This will not apply in the case of retired social workers who are nominated for the BASW NI Outstanding Achievement Award). The information required includes:

- ✓ Name
 - ✓ Job title
 - ✓ Organisation this person represents
 - ✓ Organisation address
 - ✓ Daytime phone number: (Required)
 - ✓ Email address (Required)
-

Section 4 - Statement support the application. This is a descriptive piece to evidence how the nominee(s) meet the criteria for the award. This piece must not exceed *1000 words. Supplementary material cannot be added to the application. It is recommended to include:

- ✓ Brief description of where the nominee works
- ✓ How they meet the criteria for the award
- ✓ What makes their practice excellent
- ✓ How they have contributed positively in people's lives
- ✓ Quotes and testimonies from service users, carers and other professionals will be helpful in evidencing this nomination.

*Any words beyond the count will not be included in the judging review.

Awards criteria

Award Name	Nomination type:	Award criteria (evidence the submission should demonstrate for the judging panel)
<p>Award 1</p> <p>Award for Contribution to Social Work Leadership</p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the Contribution to Leadership Award</p>	<p>Individual award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker at any stage and in any role</p>	<p>Submissions for this award should evidence how this person leads with the values of care and compassion</p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading self: Leadership capability to intentionally behave and communicate in ways that facilitate change • Leading others: harness the intelligence and resourcefulness of the people they work with to achieve positive change and inspiring others • Leading practice: supporting excellent practice and developing excellent practitioners through fostering innovation, learning and evaluation • Leading the profession: making a contribution to the future evolution of the profession to meet current and future challenges <p>(The Social Work Leadership Framework NI, 2022)</p>
<p>Award 2</p> <p>Sunshine Award</p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the Sunshine Award</p>	<p>Individual/s or team award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker or a social work team</p>	<p>Submissions for this award should evidence the nominees' unique and vibrant approach to being part of a team</p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun is fuel: Behaves in a way that brings vibrancy, laughter and humour to their work and team • Morale booster: Comes up with unique ideas to boost team morale • Ray of sunshine: demonstrates in their interaction with individual team members how they contribute positively to the wellbeing of others

Award Name	Nomination type:	Award criteria (evidence the submission should demonstrate for the judging panel)
<p>Award 3</p> <p><i>Nurturing Development Award</i></p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the Nurturing Development Award</p>	<p>Individual/s or team award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker or a social work team</p>	<p><i>Submissions for this award should evidence the nominees' commitment to having learning and development at the heart of their practice</i></p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enables:</i> makes a difference to the development of others • <i>Encourages:</i> promotes a vibrant, continuous learning culture • <i>Innovates:</i> takes a unique approach to learning and development to ensure social workers are skilled and confident
<p>Award 4</p> <p><i>Rising Star Award</i></p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the Rising Star Award</p>	<p>Individual award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker who is within their first three years of practice at the time of applying (inclusive of the AYE year)</p>	<p><i>Submissions for this award should evidence how this person's practice demonstrates the unique identity, diversity, vibrancy, care and commitment of social work</i></p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Curiosity:</i> practice that questions the status quo and identifies areas for improvement • <i>Courage:</i> practice that advocates for service users, colleagues, and the social work profession • <i>Care:</i> provides an inclusive service that makes a difference to individuals, families and communities • <i>Innovation:</i> embraces a unique and vibrant approach to their work

Award Name	Nomination type:	Award criteria (evidence the submission should demonstrate for the judging panel)
<p>Award 5</p> <p>Spirit of Social Work Award</p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the Spirit of Social Work Award</p>	<p>Individual award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker</p>	<p>Submissions for this award should evidence how this person's practice and behaviour encapsulates the spirit of social work</p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenacity: the Social Worker who turns up every day, works hard and keeps giving • Reliability: the Social Worker who is there for others and delivers on commitments • Respect: the Social Worker whose practice and behaviour demonstrates care and regard for everyone
<p>Award 6</p> <p>Co-production Award</p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the Co-production Award</p>	<p>Individual/s or team award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker or a social work team</p>	<p>Submissions for this award should provide examples of the nominee(s) working alongside people with lived experience to create a unique outcome that benefits all</p> <p>Examples should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive: people with lived experience are involved in every aspect of a project or service improvement • Reciprocal Relationships: everyone on an equal footing with an equal voice creating a sense of belonging • Unique Outcome: co-production approach results in a positive change or new approach that benefits others

Award Name	Nomination type:	Award criteria (evidence the submission should demonstrate for the judging panel)
<p>Award 7</p> <p><i>The People's Choice Award</i></p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the People's Choice Award</p>	<p>Individual award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker.</p> <p>(This award has been determined by people with lived experience from 'The Parent's Forum' in WHSCT. They designed the award and will present it to the winner.)</p>	<p><i>This award has been determined by the member of 'The Parent's Forum'. In their words, submissions for this award should evidence how this person is 'Someone to stand beside me, encourage me, support me, and show me the way'</i></p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curiosity: someone with a thirst for knowledge, who is curious enough to learn and humble enough to acknowledge the need to learn • Passion: someone who has passion for their work with individuals and families, who acknowledges strengths and positives, and who generates hope • Integrity: someone who is transparent, honest, authentic and who enables trust and connection
<p>Award 8</p> <p><i>BASW NI Outstanding Achievement Award</i></p> <p>Click here to access the online application for the BASW NI Award</p>	<p>Individual award</p> <p>Nominations can be made for an individual social worker.</p>	<p><i>The BASW NI Outstanding Achievement Award celebrates the work of social workers who have made an exceptional contribution in their professional role. It recognises those who have affected a unique and valuable difference to the profession, or to the lives of people who use social work services.</i></p> <p>Examples could include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting best practice in the nominee's area of social work expertise, • Demonstrating innovative and creative approaches to delivering services. • Contribution to education and training • Publishing research. <p>Equally, the Award criteria recognises the value of improvements made to the lives of children, families, or individuals through dedicated and compassionate practice, working directly with service users.</p> <p>The Award also celebrates the efforts of those who have demonstrated an enduring commitment to the promotion of social justice through campaign activities or social work practice.</p>

Further guidance

Please read this information before commencing an award application

- 1. Starting, pausing and submitting the application** - The application is split into four sections (further detail is below). It is recommended to gather this information together before starting the online application. If the proposer needs to pause an application, they can save the content at the end of each of the four sections and return to complete the form. Citizen space will ask for an email address to send the unique log-in to allow the proposer to return to an application. Please note: an application cannot be edited once it has been submitted. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- 2. Section 1 Information - Details for the social worker(s) nominated for the award.** The information required includes the nominee name(s), Social Care Council registration number, their job title, daytime phone number, email address, employing organisation and the address where they are based for work.
- 3. Section 2 Information - Details for the person proposing the social worker(s) for the award.** The information required includes the proposer's name, daytime phone number, email address, role in which they have contact with the nominee(s) and proposer's work address/contact address.
- 4. Section 3 Information – Details for the person authorised to submit the nomination.** All applications must be approved by the organisation employing the nominee(s) and they must consent to being included in the nomination. (BASW lifetime achievement award varies from this. Further detail is below). The information required from the person endorsing the nomination includes included the name, contact details and organisation details for the endorser. It also includes completing an affirmation that all the material included on the application is correct and that all nominee(s) are eligible to be included on the application.
- 5. Section 4 - Statement of evidence to support the application –** This is a descriptive piece to evidence how the nominee(s) meet the criteria for the award. It is recommended to include testimony from service users and those who have experienced the nominee(s) practice. This piece must not exceed 1000 words. Any words beyond the count will not be included in the judging review. Supplementary material cannot be added to the application.
- 6. BASW NI Outstanding Achievement Award – This award is open to practising and retired social workers.** Entries for this award do not require a managerial endorsement and can be submitted by the person proposing the individual social worker for the award. The nominee must be made aware of and have consented to being nominated for the award.

7. **Previous applicants are welcome to reapply.** Previous winners are only eligible to reapply if their application has a different practice focus.
8. **Multiple applications** - A project may only be entered for one category. Organisations can enter more than one category; however, each submission must be entirely separate and on an individual entry form.
9. **Consent** - By submitting this application, the proposer consents on behalf of all those involved in the application that they will meet the conditions of entry.
10. **Publicity** - By entering the Social Work Awards, entrants agree to take part in any publicity and to the contents of their submission being used in media releases.
11. **Further advice** – if you have a query about the management of the Social Work Awards, please email the WHSCT planning team at Maria.emilsson@westerntrust.hscni.net If you require assistance with completing the online application, please contact the Social Care Council team at businesssupport@niscc.hscni.net