

# Exploring the basis for a Critical Pedagogy for Social Care within the context of professionalization

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# Questions

1. How can educators equip social care students to become critical social care workers?
2. What principles might guide the education and training of social care students?
3. How can **a critical pedagogy of care** inform the pedagogical practices, knowledge and theoretical base, and skills training for learners?

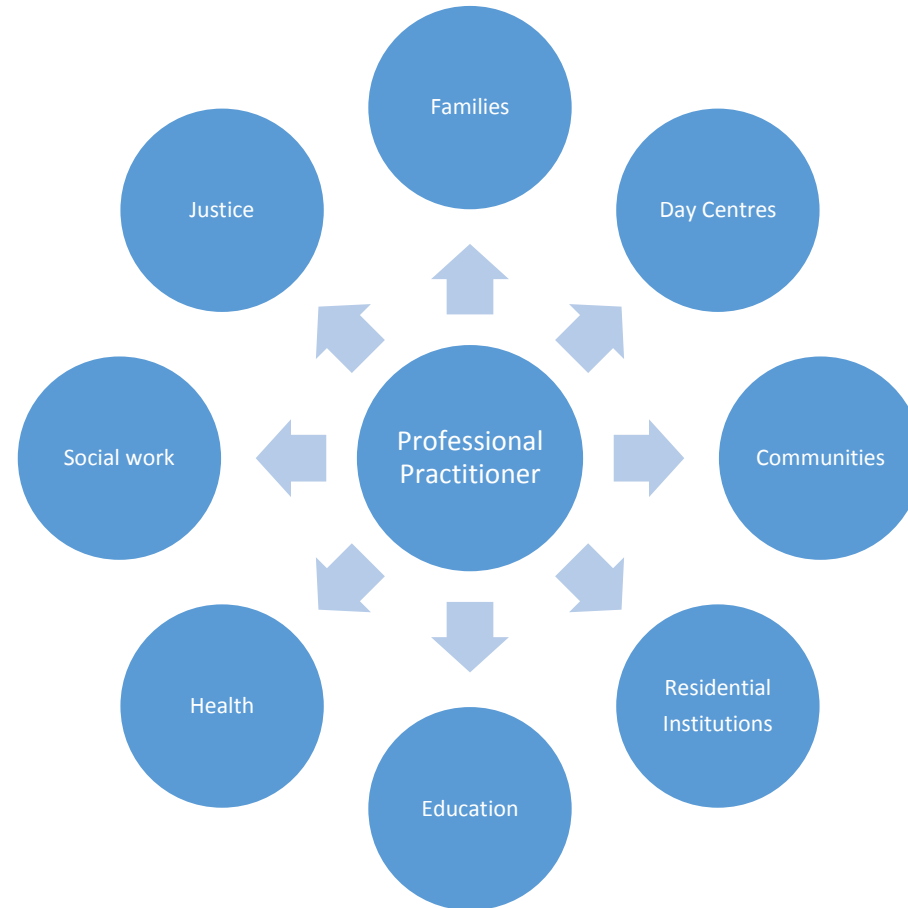
# Uncertain Evolution of Social Care

- **Controversial history** - oppression/neglect/abuse, especially in residential institutions
- **Deficit model** – functionalist and familist approach, residualism, charity/medical models, (de)institutionalization– emerging social / rights model
- **Mixed economy of welfare** – state/public, charity/voluntary, profit/private – ascendancy of neoliberalism
- **Ambiguous and complex objectives** - control, maintenance, containment, care, education, support, advocacy, empowerment.....?
- **Evolving Inter-professional work** - aligned with education, social work, health, community care, community development, youth work, criminal and youth justice etc.
- **Multi / Inter-disciplinary theoretical base** – social work, sociology, social policy, law, psychology, psychotherapy etc.

# Diverse Service User Groups



# Diverse Contexts of Social Care



# Professionalization & Professional Identity

- **Occupational status** – working/lower middle class occupation, gendered, ethnic diversity
- **Professional status** - profession? semi-profession? emerging profession?
- **Statutory Regulation (CORU), Academic Accreditation (QQI) - BA. (Ord.)**  
Professional Social Care, Threshold Level 7, practice placements (800 hours, minimum 2 placements)
- **Interests / stakeholders** – govt. & state actors, educators, service providers/employers, service users, caregivers, professional associations, ngos/charity, registerable and non-registerable care workers, other professions etc.
- **Power** - realignment / renegotiation of power -rights and social justice
- **Ideas** - knowledge, skills & competences

# Context of contemporary education

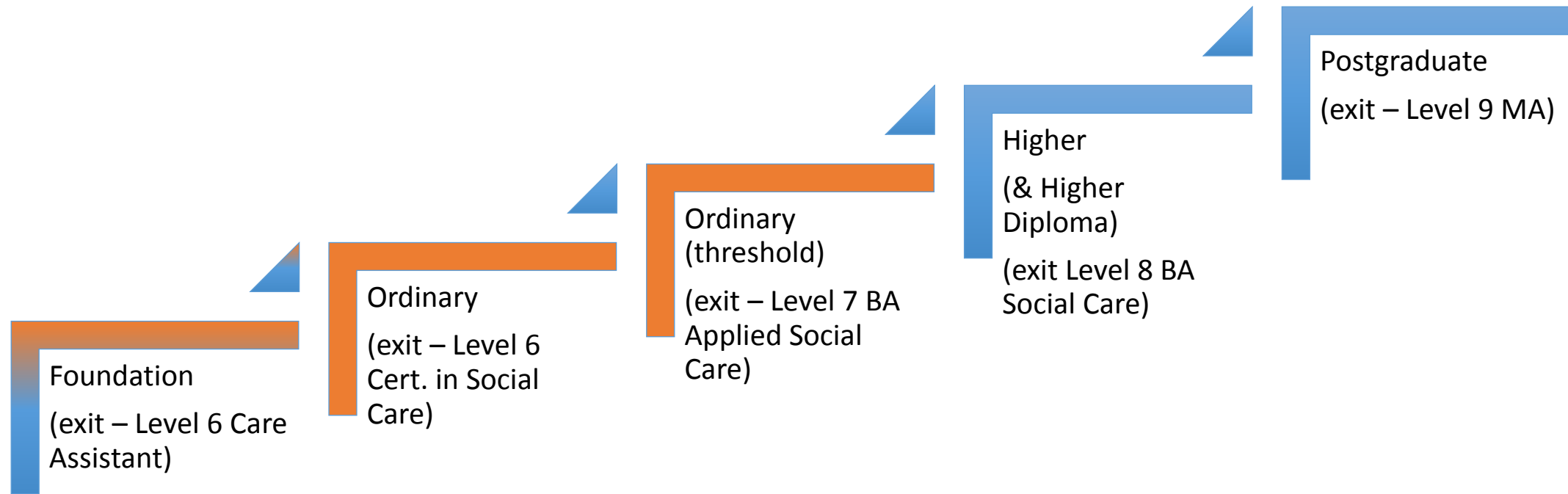
- **Caring profession** - Caring about, and for, the wellbeing, needs and rights of marginalised and vulnerable individuals and groups in society to live fulfilling and meaningful lives. Tensions?
- **Holistic relational work** - Developing quality relationships as the main tool to achieve welfare/wellbeing/care
- **Issues** - risk / protection, cultural diversity, rights & inequality, residual social services, advocacy, social justice, health and wellbeing, violence, stress/burnout etc.

# Approved Professional Programme

- Programme must be designed to meet the 5 detailed Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Work (CORU)
  1. Professional Autonomy & Accountability
  2. Communication, Collaborative Practice & Teamworking
  3. Safety & Quality
  4. Professional Development
  5. Professional Knowledge & Skills
- Each of the sciences underpinning social care (sociology, psychology, social policy, social pedagogy) must develop minimum module outcomes for students to achieve the knowledge, skill and competence required by QQI at each level



# Course Levels Structure

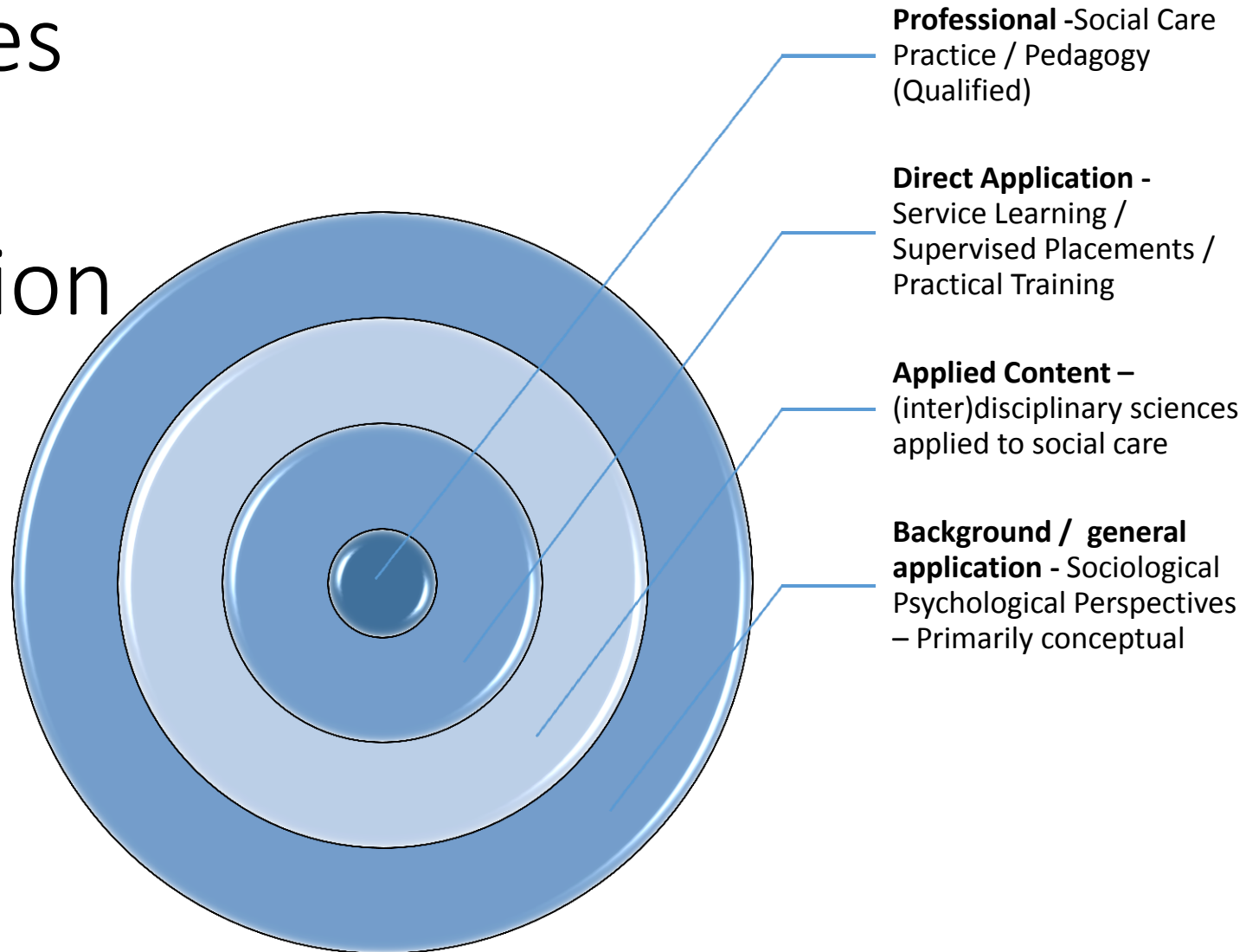


- Certification (non-professional) Care Assistant / Social Studies
- **Ordinary BA Professional Social Care - Level 7 - Threshold**
- Honorary BA Professional Social Care – Level 8
- Higher Diploma in Professional Social Care – Level 8
- Master of Arts in Professional Social care – Level 9

# 6 Programme Strands



# 3 Degrees of Application



# An integrated programme model

- **4 Levels** - Foundation, Ordinary (threshold), Higher, Postgraduate
- **6 Strands** – Psychological, Sociological, Law & Policy, Professional Practice, Service Learning, Creative & Practical (delivered at each level)
- **Diverse Social Care Contexts** - Community, Day Care, Families, Residential etc. (embedded / distributed across an entire programme)
- **Diverse Social Care Groups** – based on age (children / youth), age (older people), People with Learning Disabilities, People with physical / sensory disabilities, Mental & physical illness, Gender/ sexualities, Social disadvantage, and Racial, ethnic and cultural minorities (embedded / distributed across an entire programme)
- **3 Degrees of Application** - application of critical disciplinary knowledge to all the **identified user groups** in relation to specified diverse **contexts** at particular **levels**.

# Principles of a Critical Pedagogy

- **Broad** – to capture the diversity of work contexts, service users and situations
- **Theoretical** – drawing on current academic research / theory informing the field
- **Applied** – connected to real world context of employment and social conditions
- **Practical** – based on the practical application of knowledge & developing skills / competencies
- **Excellent** – guided by excellence in third level teaching & social care practice
- **Transferable** – cognisant of the transferability of knowledge and skill to cognate caring professions through life-long learning
- **Coherent** – integrated knowledge between key academic disciplines informing professional practice
- **Caring** – supporting the personal and professional development of learners through professional supervision and other support structures
- **Ethical** – educational process informed and infused with ethical practices of respect, dignity, social justice, equality and human rights for both service users and learners
- **Professional gatekeeping** – ensuring only learners suitable to work within the field of social care gain access to the profession
- **Critically reflective** – nurturing questioning practitioners who challenge received norms, knowledge & practices within college and social care workplaces

# Developing Strand content

- **6 questions** to test content

1. How is the conceptual, theoretical and practical knowledge of the particular academic discipline **relevant** to nurturing critically engaged social care workers / pedagogues?
2. How does the discipline conceptualise and address the needs, rights and wellbeing of **core identified service user groups**?
3. How does the discipline address the diverse and evolving **contexts of social care**?
4. What **background concepts** of the discipline are required for learners before they are introduced to **applied concepts**?
5. At what **level** is it best to introduce particular understandings within a programme?
6. How well is content, assessment and progression within a strand **supported and logically integrated** with other strands?