

# OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARD

## Social and Health Care Specialist, EstQF Level 4

An occupational qualification standard is a document which describes the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes, i.e. competence requirements, needed to successfully accomplish duties. Occupational qualification standards are used for compiling curricula and awarding qualifications.

Occupational title	Level of Estonian Qualifications Framework (EstQF)
Social and Health Care Specialist, EstQF Level 4	4

Possible specialisation and titles on occupational certificate	
Specialisation	Title on occupational qualification certificate
Work with an adult with an intellectual disability and mental health problems	Mental Health Support Worker, Level 4
Work with a child with special needs (health needs)	Support Person for a Child with Special Needs (health needs), Level 4
Work with a person with coping difficulties	Support Person for a Person with Coping Difficulties, Level 4
Work with a beneficiary of international protection	Support Person for a Beneficiary of International Protection, Level 4
Work with an abused person	Support Person for an Abused Person, Level 4
Work with a family with financial difficulties	Support Person for a Family with Financial Difficulties, Level 4
Work with an addict	Support Person for an Addict, Level 4

## Part A DESCRIPTION OF WORK

A.1 Description of work
<p>The work of a social and health care specialist includes developing, maintaining and supporting the client's social skills and operational capacity, guiding and supporting the client in everyday life activities and helping the client to contribute to the community and with their everyday affairs in accordance with their abilities.</p> <p>A social and health care specialist can specialise in working with an adult with an intellectual disability and mental health problems, an addict, a child with special needs (health needs), a person with coping difficulties, a beneficiary of international protection, an abused person or a family with financial difficulties.</p>
A.2 Tasks
<p>A.2.1 Development of client's social skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting the client in communication.</li> <li>2. Supporting the client in learning behavioural norms.</li> <li>3. Supporting the client's emotional well-being.</li> <li>4. Supporting the client in resolving conflicts and learning assertive behaviour.</li> <li>5. Supporting the client's self-representation skills.</li> </ol> <p>A.2.2 Development, maintenance and support for client's operational capacity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment and analysis of the client's operational capacity and need for assistance.</li> <li>2. Monitoring and noting changes in the client's state of health.</li> <li>3. Shaping health behaviour.</li> <li>4. Client empowerment.</li> </ol>

5. Instructing the client on the use of technical aids.

A.2.3 Instructing and supporting client in day-to-day living

1. Supporting the client in planning their day-to-day living.
2. Creating a household budget with the client.
3. Supporting the client in self-care.
4. Instructing the client on housekeeping.
5. Instructing the client on nutrition.
6. Guiding and including the client in leisure activities.

A.2.4 Supporting client in contributing to society in accordance with their abilities

1. Finding and maintaining appropriate learning, working and employment opportunities for the client.
2. Supporting the development of the client's work and study habits.
3. Supporting the client in learning the practical skills required for studying, working and other employment.

A.2.5 Supporting client in arrangement of everyday affairs

1. Supporting the client in affairs related to housing.
2. Supporting the client in using public services.
3. Instructing the client on using community-based services.
4. Supporting the client in using ICT tools.

A.2.6 Networking

1. Cooperation with the client's network.
2. Cooperation with the client's community and other professionals.

### **Specialised areas of work**

Mental Health Support Worker

A.2.7 Work with an adult with an intellectual disability and mental health problems

1. Supporting the client.
2. Assistance of support groups.
3. Guiding the client's sexual behaviour.
4. Coordinating work and personal life in a family house/accommodation unit.
5. Administration of documents related to the client.
6. Planning how to use resources.

Support Person for a Child with Special Needs (health needs)

A.2.8 Work with a child with special needs (health needs)

1. Supporting the child
2. Cooperation with the educational institution.
3. Guiding the client's sexual behaviour.

Support Person for a Person with Coping Difficulties

A.2.9 Work with a person with coping difficulties

1. Supporting the client in coping with behavioural peculiarities.
2. Supporting the client in dealing with everyday affairs.
3. Supporting the client in re-socialisation.

Support Person for a Beneficiary of International Protection

A.2.10 Work with a beneficiary of international protection

1. Supporting the client in coping with cultural specificities.
2. Supporting the client in dealing with everyday affairs.

Support Person for an Abused Person

A.2.11 Work with an abused person

1. Supporting the client in coping with the consequences of abuse.
2. Supporting the client in dealing with everyday affairs.

Support Person for a Family with Financial/Coping Difficulties

A.2.12 Work with a family with financial difficulties

1. Supporting communication with one another.
2. Support in raising children.
3. Supporting the client in dealing with everyday affairs.

Support Person for an Addict

A.2.13 Work with an addict

1. Supporting the client in coping with behavioural peculiarities.
2. Supporting the client in dealing with everyday affairs.
3. Supporting the client in re-socialisation.
4. Planning how to use resources.

### **A.3 Work environment and specific nature of work**

A social and health care specialist can work in both the private and public sectors, such as a local authority, educational institutions, day care centres and support centres. They work wherever the client is, for example at the client's home, school or welfare institution.

Working time is flexible and can be scheduled, including working on holidays.

A social and health care specialist may be exposed to risk factors (emotional and physical attacks, increased emotional stress, infections, etc.) that could affect their life and/or health.

### **A.4 Tools**

A social and health care specialist uses information technology and communication tools, home and household appliances and equipment as well as aids and care products when needed.

### **A.5 Personal qualities required for work: abilities and characteristics**

Empathy, responsibility, caring, reliability and integrity are important qualities in a support person's work. A support person must be cooperative and have good communication skills. Their work requires conscientiousness, stress and general tolerance and people-centred values. In addition, assertiveness, analytical thinking skills, perseverance and consistency are also important.

### **A.6 Professional preparation**

A secondary education is required for the specialisation of a social and health care specialist. The professional skills are acquired in completing the curriculum of formal vocational education or via continuing vocational training or work experience.

### **A.7 Most common occupational titles**

Support person, mental health support worker.

### **A.8 Regulations governing profession**

The professional training of a mental health support worker is regulated by the Social Welfare Act.

## **Part B** **COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS**

### **B.1 Structure of occupation**

All mandatory competences (B.2.1-B.2.6) and the recurring competence B.2.14 must be certified when applying for the occupational qualification. In addition, one of the specialisation competences (B.2.7-B.2.13) must be certified.

### **B.2 Competences**

## **MANDATORY COMPETENCES**

### **B.2.1 Development of client's social skills**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. instructs the client on establishing and maintaining relationships, taking into account the client's willingness, ability and communication skills; consistently carries out activities aimed at improving communication; uses various alternative communication forms in activities, taking into account the particularities of the client;
2. supports the client in learning how to behave appropriately by developing the client's universal human values, self-regulation and empathy while taking into account general behaviour rules and the client's cultural background and themselves setting an example;
3. notes meaningful behaviour by observing the expression of the client's feelings in different situations; supports the client in expressing and coping with feelings, explains other people's feelings and behaviour; explains different levels of communication (e.g. friendship, family, work and sexual relationships), instructs the client on behaving appropriately in different relationships and situations;
4. notes conflict, responds to the situation as appropriate and engages the client as well as their guardians, loved ones, colleagues, and support professionals in resolving the conflict; directs the client to notice, prevent and resolve a conflict; supports the client in learning assertive behaviour;
5. supports the client's self-representation skills with reference to recognition and promotion of fundamental human rights; provides guidance on how to get assistance in the exercising of rights and supports them in reaching out to relevant organisations.

#### **B.2.2 Development, maintenance and support for client's operational capacity**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. identifies the client's strengths and need for assistance, analyses the level of the client's operational and participatory capacity and in accordance with their competence adapts the environment to suit the activities;
2. monitors the client's state of health, taking into account the information available about the client's health; in the case of changes, informs the relevant specialist (e.g. nurse, family physician and/or health care professional and, if necessary, other specialists); instructs the client to monitor their own state of health by explaining to them the symptoms of a disease;
3. shapes the client's awareness about their health behaviour (including sexual health) by developing with the client an agenda that meets the client's needs and is in accordance with the balance between work, leisure activities and exercise/outdoor activities, etc.; instructs and motivates the client to pursue a healthy lifestyle using a variety of methods; instructs and motivates the client to use their medication according to the treatment plan prescribed by the doctor, noting possible side-effects;
4. on the basis of the client's ability, guides and instructs the client to set achievable goals; motivates and encourages the client to use the acquired skills consistently; helps to set up a calm and relaxed environment for the client for performing activities; motivates and engages the client to participate in activities planned to support their development (including work-like activities) and supports the client in achieving their goals;
5. within the limits of their competence, notes and identifies the need for a technical aid; supports the client in purchasing a technical aid; instructs the client on using the technical aid and motivates them to utilise it.

#### **B.2.3 Instructing and supporting client in everyday life activities**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. instructs and supports the client in planning daily activities, adjusting the daily and weekly rhythm to the client's needs; monitors and supports the implementation of planned activities, adapting them to changes in needs and living arrangements;
2. instructs the client on planning financial operations, taking into account the client's resources; assists the client in deciding whether transactions are reasonable and necessary and helps to make transactions;
3. instructs and supports the client in personal hygiene activities, dressing and other self-care activities; motivates the client to take care of themselves;
4. instructs the client on household chores, including cooking, using household appliances, activities related to home and property maintenance, takes into account the client's ability to work and complies with health, environmental and other safety requirements;
5. instructs and supports the client in choosing and eating balanced food; monitors the client's nutrition, taking into account the client's needs and health; feeds the client, if necessary;
6. instructs the client to find and participate in leisure activities suitable for them, taking into account the client's budget, needs and wishes; organises participation in leisure activities and community events and participates with the client, if necessary.

#### **B.2.4 Supporting client in contributing to society in accordance with their abilities**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. cooperates with other professionals, supports the client and their network members in finding areas of activity such as studying, employment or other occupations that conform to the client's abilities; notes obstacles to participation in employment and supports in obtaining the necessary services and aid; cooperates with an educational institution, employer or other organisation, explaining the client's needs and supporting the client in resolving organisational issues; within the limits of their competence, explains to the client the rights and obligations arising from the client's employment rights;
2. supports the client in developing learning and/or work habits by motivating and observing the client and providing feedback on their performance;
3. supports the client in the acquisition of the basic skills (e.g. use of time and working skills) needed for studying, working and other employment.

#### **B.2.5 Support client in arranging everyday affairs**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports cooperation between different parties in the client's place of residence (incl. accommodation unit and family house), explaining mutual expectations, obligations and common rules; supports the client in resolving housing issues;
2. instructs and supports the client in using public services and, where necessary, in the completion of the necessary documentation; explains the need for personal documents and options for document maintenance;
3. instructs and supports the client in using the services offered in the community (e.g. hairdresser, sauna and public transport), taking into account the client's operational capability; accompanies the client, if necessary;
4. supports the client in using ICT tools; in order to ensure the safe use of digital devices, explains to the client the risks and opportunities related to digital devices and data.

#### **B.2.6 Networking**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. if necessary, organises a suitable network for the client; cooperates with the network's members by exchanging relevant information with them; notes the need to include close family members and, with the client's consent, establishes contact with them; within the limits of their competence and on the basis of the agreement between the parties, cooperates with the client's relatives and guardians, involving them in matters concerning the client;
2. if necessary, cooperates with the community and other professionals.

### **COMPETENCES RELATED TO SPECIALISATION**

In addition, one of the specialisation competences (B.2.7-B.2.13) must be certified.

#### **Work with an adult with an intellectual disability and mental health problems**

##### **B.2.7 Work with an adult with an intellectual disability and mental health problems**

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. assesses the client's operational capacity and coping skills using contemporary assessment methodologies;
2. draws up a preventive warning sign and crisis intervention plan;
3. supervises, supports and, if necessary, carries out activities arising from the client's action, care and rehabilitation plan, taking into account the specific nature of the client's state of health and the psychopathology of mental health;
4. instructs and supports the client in maintaining their treatment regime, taking into account the main forms and principal effects of medicines, side-effects and the methods of dosage;
5. supports recovery from a mental illness, taking into account the principles of recovery;
6. assists clients and the activities of support groups for the clients' relatives while supervising and counselling them;
7. supports the client in acquiring sexual behaviour skills, taking into account the client's individual particularities;
8. coordinates the cooperation of staff, clients and others within a family home/accommodation unit, managing resources, organising housework, creating a family-like atmosphere, shaping and maintaining traditions, organising varied and developing leisure activities, etc.
9. coordinates document management related to the client's service in accordance with requirements and, if necessary, in cooperation with the client's guardian;
10. plans and monitors the use of the client's personal resources in cooperation with the client or their guardian, instructing and supporting the client in various activities.

## Work with a child with special needs (health needs)

### B.2.8 Work with a child with special needs (health needs)

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports the child, taking into account a child's developmental stages and noting age-related and health-related peculiarities; cooperates with a parent and other child-related network members;
2. supports the child in the learning process by working with the educational institution, including the teacher/supervisor, helping the teacher; supports communication between a parent and the educational institution;
3. supports the child in the acquisition of sexual behaviour skills, taking into account the child's age and developmental peculiarities.

## Work with a person with coping difficulties

### B.2.9 Work with a person with coping difficulties

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports the client, taking into account the circumstances related to their previous physical and social environment; observes behavioural peculiarities (including those related to different addictions) and informs an appropriate institution;
2. in accordance with the legislation regulating and organisation of their work, supports the client in their dealings with debt advisers, bailiffs and the Unemployment Insurance Fund;
3. in the case of prior offences, supports the client's re-socialisation in cooperation with the probation officer.

## Work with a beneficiary of international protection

### B.2.10 Work with a beneficiary of international protection

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports the client in coping with their cultural particularities and adapting to their new physical and social environment, taking into account the client's cultural background;
2. supports the client in communication with the Police and Border Guard Board and relevant international organisations in activities related to residence permits, family reunification and voluntary return; supports the client in dealing with the local authority, following the case plan drawn up by the local authority.

## Work with an abused person

### B.2.11 Work with an abused person

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports the client, taking into account the different forms of abuse (including gender-based violence and violence against children), warning signs and myths and realities related to abuse, reasons for falling victim, the motives and strategies of abusers and the impact of domestic violence on children; focuses on the specific nature of assisting victims of abuse (including mental health problems that may accompany it);
2. supports the client in activities related to institutions and organisations involved in the field (including the local authority, victim support, police, prosecutor's office, court and women's support centres) and in the relevant procedures conducted by these institutions and organisations.

## Work with a family with financial difficulties

### B.2.12 Work with a family with financial difficulties

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports communication between family members, taking into account the developmental stages and dynamics of family life; notes changes in behaviour and notifies an appropriate institution;
2. taking into account the children's age and health specificities, supports parents in raising their children and interacting with educational institutions; notes obstacles to parenting, including lack of parental skills, addiction and abuse;



3. supports the client in the client's communication with certain institutions, including debt advisers, bailiffs and the Unemployment Insurance Fund, in accordance with the relevant legislation and organisation of work in these institutions.

## Work with an addict

### B.2.13 Work with an addict

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. supports the client, taking into account the nature of addiction, the impact of various drugs on mental and physical health and social coping, the client's drug abuse/addiction background (duration of use and consequences for physical and mental health, coping and family relationships), the client's motivation to quit and the peculiarities of the behaviour of the person using drugs; notes changes in behaviour and motivates the client to see a specialist, if necessary;
2. supports the client in dealing with state agencies and local authorities, dealing with debt advisers, bailiffs and the Unemployment Insurance Fund; supports the client's communication with health and social care institutions and other organisations whose work is related to the field, explaining their services and the client's rights, and accompanying the client, if necessary;
3. in the case of offences, including prior offences, supports the client's re-socialisation in cooperation with the prosecutor's office, police officer and probation officer;
4. if necessary, plans and monitors the use of the client's personal resources in cooperation with the client, instructing and supporting the client in various activities.

## RECURRING COMPETENCES

### B.2.14 Recurring competence in profession

**EstQF Level 4**

Performance indicators:

1. takes into account the client's vulnerability and potential stigmatisation;
2. takes into account the principles of individual and group work with clients;
3. takes the goals of the agency into consideration, respects others and fulfils their role in the team;
4. communicates respectfully and professionally with colleagues and clients; uses conflict management techniques; chooses an appropriate means of communication when communicating with the client;
5. follows the code of ethics of a social worker in their work (see Annex 1 Code of Ethics of Social Worker);
6. appreciates their emotional ability to work in the field and protects themselves against negative influences;
7. analyses the methods and results of their work, including reflective practices in both teamwork and networking;
8. keeps informed of developments and changes in the field and is a self-managing lifelong learner;
9. notices people in need of assistance and informs the relevant institutions in accordance with the Social Welfare and Child Protection Act;
10. refrains from exposing themselves and their clients to danger, taking into account security risks;
11. if necessary, gives first aid;
12. uses at least B1-level (B2 for Mental Health Support Worker, Level 4) Estonian in their work (see Annex 2, Language skills level descriptions) and understands and speaks one foreign language at least at the A1 level of proficiency;
13. uses a computer in their work at the Basic User Level on the Digital Competence Self-Assessment Scale (see Annex 3).

Evaluation method(s):

Occupational competences are evaluated during the evaluation of other competences listed in the occupational qualification standard.

## Part C GENERAL INFORMATION AND ANNEXES

### C.1 Information concerning compilation and certification of occupational qualification standard and reference to classification of occupations

1. ID of occupational qualification standard in register of occupational qualifications	25-13112025-2.3/8k
2. Occupational qualification standard compiled by:	Ebeli Berkman, Sotsiaalkindlustusamet Anneli Habicht, Eesti Puuetega Inimeste Koda Talvi Karbe, Tallinna Perekeskus Christin Kelder, Tallinna Tugikeskus Juks Aljona Kurbatova, Tervise Arengu Instituut Silvia Looveer, Eesti Sotsiaaltöö Assotsiatsioon Maida Michelson, Tallinna Sotsiaaltöö Keskus Sirje Pauskar, Pärnumaa Kutsehariduskeskus Piret Pent, MTÜ Eesti Tegevusjuhendajate Liit Katrín Tsuiman, Sotsiaalkindlustusamet Agnes Veldemann, SA Perekodu Kaisa Üprus-Tali, Sotsiaalministeerium
3. Occupational qualification standard approved by:	Social Care
4. No. of decision of Sectoral Council	34
5. Date of decision of Sectoral Council	13.11.2025
6. Occupational qualification standard valid until	12.11.2026
7. Occupational qualification standard version no.	8
8. Reference to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08)	3412 Social Work Associate Professionals
9. Reference to European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	4
<b>C.2 Occupational title in foreign language</b>	
English:	Social and Health Care Specialist, EstQF Level 4
<b>C.3 Annexes</b>	
Lisa 1 <a href="#">Code of Ethics of Social Worker</a>	
Lisa 2 <a href="#">Language skills level descriptions</a>	
Lisa 3 <a href="#">Scale of self-assessment in digital competence</a>	