

Draft standards of proficiency for arts therapists

This document sets out the proposed changes to the standards of proficiency for arts therapists. Proposed deletions are indicated in the text by ~~strike through~~ whilst additions are shown in **bold** in the proposed amendments column. Text in *italics* sets out our reasoning for making certain amends.

Generic standards are indicated by shaded cells. These are standards which apply across all 15 professions. We have moved some standards around to ensure the generic standards are at the top of each section, and so are numbered consistently across all the professions. Feedback relating to these standards should be provided in **Part A: Generic standards** of the survey.

White cells are profession-specific standards. These are unique to each profession, although in many cases these are still consistent across multiple professions. Feedback relating to these standards should be provided in **Part B: Profession-specific standards** of the survey.

Where we have proposed to create a new standard, we have created a new row and assigned this a letter. This is to make it easier to refer back to when providing feedback. Please note the order of some of these standards may be subject to change. Once we have determined what changes we are going to make, we will update the numbering of the standards.

We have endeavoured to make the proposed changes as clear as possible. However, we are aware that this is still a complicated document. We have therefore created a 'clean' version of the standards, available on the consultation page. If you have any questions about the proposed changes, you can email consultation@hcpc-uk.org or call the Policy and Standards team on 020 7840 9815, and a member of the team will be able to talk through this document and the changes. **Please note, due to COVID-19, as the team is working from home, the above phone line is not manned. Instead, you will be prompted to leave a message.**

The current standards of proficiency for arts therapists are available to download and view for comparison at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-proficiency/arts-therapists/>

No.	Standard	Proposed amendments
Registrant arts therapists must:		
1	be able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice	
1.1	know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional	know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional or service
1.2	recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources effectively and be able to practise accordingly	recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources effectively and be able to practise accordingly safely and effectively
1.3	understand the value of therapy in developing insight and self-awareness through their own personal experience	
2	be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession	
2.1	understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times	understand the need to act in the best interests of service users promote and protect the service user's interests at all times
2.A		understand the importance of safeguarding and the need to engage in appropriate safeguarding processes where necessary
2.2	understand what is required of them by the Health and Care Professions Council	
2.3	understand the need to respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of service users including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing	
2.4	recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility	

2.5	know about current legislation applicable to the work of their profession	understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent <i>Moved from 2.6</i>
2.6	understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent	be able to exercise a professional duty of care <i>Moved from 2.7</i>
2.7	be able to exercise a professional duty of care	understand know about current legislation applicable to the work of their profession <i>Moved from 2.5</i>
2.8	understand the role of the art, music or dramatherapist in different settings	
3	be able to maintain fitness to practise	
3.1	understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct	
3.2	understand the importance of maintaining their own health	understand the importance of maintaining their own mental and physical health and be able to take appropriate action if their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively
3.A		understand the role that coping strategies can play in maintaining fitness to practise and the importance of seeking help and support when necessary
3.3	understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning	understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning continuous professional development
3.4	recognise that the obligation to maintain fitness to practise includes engagement in their own arts-based process	
4	be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement	
4.1	be able to assess a professional situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the	recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions

	required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem	<i>Moved from 4.4 to emphasise the importance of this standard</i>
4.2	be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately	be able to assess a professional situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem be able to use their skills, knowledge and experience, and the information available to them, to make informed decisions or initiate solutions where necessary <i>Moved from 4.1</i>
4.3	be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative	be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately <i>Moved from 4.2</i>
4.4	recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions	be able to make and receive appropriate referrals <i>Moved from 4.5</i>
4.5	be able to make and receive appropriate referrals	be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative <i>Moved from 4.3</i>
4.A		be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving <i>Moved from standard 14</i>
4.B		be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions <i>Moved from standard 14</i>
4.C		understand the importance of active participation in training, supervision and mentoring
5	be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice	

5.1	understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups and individuals	understand the need requirement to adapt practice to respond appropriately to meet the needs of all different groups and individuals
5.A		be aware of the impact of their own values and beliefs on practice
5.B		be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as age, culture, disability , ethnicity, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation , socio-economic status and spiritual or religious beliefs <i>Moved from standard 8.6 as more relevant under this standard. Missing protected characteristics included, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership which considered could not impact on verbal and non-verbal communication</i>
5.2	understand the need to take account of psychological, social, cultural, economic and other factors when collecting case histories and other appropriate information	
6	be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner	be able to practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner
6.A		be aware of the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion
7	understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality	
7.1	be aware that the concepts of confidentiality and informed consent extend to illustrative records such as video and audio recordings, paintings, digital images and other art work	be aware of the limits of the concept of confidentiality <i>Moved from 7.2</i>
7.2	be aware of the limits of the concept of confidentiality	be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users or the wider public

		<i>Moved from 7.3</i>
7.3	be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users or the wider public	understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health, and social care and other relevant information <i>Moved from 7.4</i>
7.4	understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health and social care information	be aware that the concepts of confidentiality and informed consent extend to illustrative records such as video and audio recordings, paintings, digital images and other art work <i>Moved from 7.1</i>
8	be able to communicate effectively	
8.1	be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to service users, colleagues and others	be able to use demonstrate effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate with in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to service users, carers , colleagues and others
8.2	be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5 ¹ <i>¹ The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests competence in the English language. Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, must provide evidence that they have reached the necessary standard. Please visit our website for more information.</i>	
8.3	understand how communication skills affect assessment and engagement of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take	understand how communication skills affect assessment and engagement of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take

	account of factors such as age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability	account of factors such as age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.4	be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others	be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.5	be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as age, culture, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and spiritual or religious beliefs	be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as age, culture, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and spiritual or religious beliefs <i>Moved to standard 5</i>
8.6	understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions	understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.7	understand the need to assist the communication needs of service users such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter, wherever possible	understand the need to assist the communication needs of service users such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter, wherever possible <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.8	recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users	recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.A		be able to work with service users or their carers to facilitate the service user's preferred role in decision-making, and provide service users and carers with the information they may need where appropriate
8.B		be able to modify their means of communication to address the individual communication needs and preferences of service users and carers, and remove any barriers to communication where possible

8.C		be able to use information and communication technologies appropriate to their practice <i>Moved from standard 14</i>
8.9	be able to explain the nature, purpose and techniques of therapy to service users and carers	
9	be able to work appropriately with others	
9.1	be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with service users, other professionals, support staff and others	be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with service users, their relatives and carers , other professionals, support staff and others
9.2	understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team	
9.3	understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics and assessment outcomes to meet their needs and goals	be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team <i>Moved from 9.4</i>
9.A		understand the qualities, behaviours and benefits of leadership and be able to apply them in the context of your practice
9.4	be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team	understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics and assessment outcomes to meet their needs and goals <i>Moved from 9.3</i>
9.5	recognise the role of arts therapists and the contribution they can make to health and social care	
9.6	understand the need to establish and sustain a therapeutic relationship within a creative and containing environment	
10	be able to maintain records appropriately	

10.1	be able to keep accurate, comprehensive and comprehensible records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines	
10.2	recognise the need to manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines	
11	be able to reflect on and review practice	
11.1	understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection	
11.2	recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review	
11.3	understand the role and value of ongoing clinical supervision in an arts therapy context	
12	be able to assure the quality of their practice	
12.1	be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures	be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
12.2	be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care	be able to gather and use feedback and information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care
12.3	be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures	be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures <i>Captured by the new standard below</i>
12.4	be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement	be able to monitor and systematically evaluate the quality of practice, and maintain an effective audit trail to and work towards continual improvement
12.5	be aware of, and be able to participate in, quality assurance programmes, where appropriate	be aware of, and be able to participate in, quality assurance programmes, where appropriate <i>Captured by the new standard below</i>

12.A		be able to participate in audit procedures and quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
12.6	be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user	
12.7	recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes	recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes <i>Captured by amendments above</i>
13	understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession	
13.1	understand the structure and function of the human body, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction relevant to their profession	
13.2	be aware of the principles and applications of research enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process	be aware of the principles and applications of research scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process <i>For consistency across the professions</i>
13.3	understand the concept of leadership and its application to practice	understand the concept of leadership and its application to practice <i>Addressed by a new standard on leadership under standard 9 (9.A)</i>
13.4	recognise the importance of working in partnership with service users when carrying out research	recognise the role(s) of other professions in health and social care and understand how they may relate to the role of arts therapists <i>Moved from 13.5</i>
13.5	recognise the role of other professions in health and social care	understand the structure and function of health and social care services in the UK <i>Moved from 13.6</i>
13.6	understand the structure and function of health and social care services in the UK	recognise the importance of working in partnership with service users when carrying out research

		<i>Moved from 13.4</i>
13.7	understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention	
13.8	understand the psychological and cultural background to health, and be aware of influences on the service user – therapist relationship	
13.9	understand the core processes in therapeutic practice that are best suited to service users' needs and be able to engage these to achieve productive outcomes	
13.10	understand the therapeutic relationship, including its limitations	
13.11	be able to employ a coherent approach to the therapeutic process	
13.12	understand how and why different approaches to the use of the arts in arts therapy and in other settings varies according to context and purpose	
13.13	know about theories of group work and the management of group process	
13.14	know about theories relevant to work with an individual	
13.15	know about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - human development - normal and abnormal psychology - normal and abnormal human communication and language development - mental illness, psychiatric assessment and treatment - congenital and acquired disability - disorders of social functioning - the principal psychotherapeutic interventions and their 	

	<p>theoretical bases</p> <p>- the nature and application of other relevant interventions</p>	
13.16	<p>recognise methods of distinguishing between health and sickness, including diagnosis, specifically mental health disorders and learning disabilities and be able to critique these systems of knowledge from different socio-cultural perspectives</p>	
<p>Art therapists only</p>		
13.17	<p>understand that while art therapy has a number of frames of reference, they must adopt a coherent approach to their therapy, including the relationship between theory, research and practice and the relevant aspects of connected disciplines including visual arts, aesthetics, anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, psychotherapy and medicine</p>	
13.18	<p>know the practice and process of visual art-making</p>	
13.19	<p>understand the role of the physical setting and the art-making process in the physical and psychological containment of emotions</p>	
13.20	<p>understand the role and function of the art object within the relationship between service user and art therapist</p>	
13.21	<p>understand the role and use of visual symbols in art that communicate conscious and unconscious processes</p>	
13.22	<p>understand the influence of socio-cultural context on the making and viewing of art in art therapy</p>	
13.23	<p>recognise that different approaches to the use of visual arts practice in therapeutic work have developed in different sociocultural and political contexts around the world</p>	

Dramatherapists only		
13.24	understand core processes and forms of creativity, movement, play and dramatic representation pertinent to practice with a range of service user groups	
13.25	understand both the symbolic value and intent inherent in drama as an art form, and with more explicit forms of enactment and re-enactment of imagined or lived experience	
13.26	know a range of theatrical representation techniques and be able to engage service users in a variety of performance-derived roles	
13.27	recognise that dramatherapy is a unique form of psychotherapy in which creativity, play, movement, voice, storytelling, dramatisation, improvisation and the performance arts have a central position within the therapeutic relationship	
13.28	recognise that different approaches to the discipline have developed from different histories in Eastern and Western Europe and the Americas	
13.29	recognise that the discipline has deep foundations within the many cultural traditions that use ritual, play, drama and performance for the enhancement of health	
13.30	know the key principles of influential theatre practitioners and their relevance to the therapeutic setting	
Music therapists only		
13.31	recognise that different approaches to music therapy have developed in different cultures and settings, and be able to apply a coherent approach to their work appropriate to each setting in which they practise	recognise that different approaches to music therapy have developed in different cultures and settings, and be able to apply a coherent approach to their work, appropriate to each setting in which they practise

13.32	understand the practice and principles of musical improvisation as an interactive, communicative and relational process, including the psychological significance and effect of shared music making	understand the practice and principles of musical improvisation as an interactive, communicative and relational process, including the psychological and psychosocial significance and effect of shared music making
13.33	know a broad range of musical styles and genres and be aware of their cultural contexts	be able to make culturally informed use of know a broad range of musical styles and genres within their music therapy practice and be aware of their cultural contexts
13.34	be able to play at least one musical instrument to a high level, and to use their singing voice and a keyboard / harmonic instrument to a competent level	be able to apply a high degree of musicianship, including the ability to play at least one musical instrument to a high level, and to use their singing voice and a keyboard / harmonic instrument to a competent level
14	be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice	
14.1	be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively	be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments, technologies and or changing contexts <i>Moved from 14.4</i>
14.2	be able to work with service users both to define a clear end for the therapy, and to evaluate the therapy's strengths, benefits and limitations	be able to gather appropriate information <i>Moved from 14.5</i>
14.3	be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales	be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected <i>Moved from 14.11</i>
14.4	be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments or changing contexts	be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques <i>Moved from 14.6</i>
14.5	be able to gather appropriate information	be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and resources <i>Moved from 14.7</i>
14.6	be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques	be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate <i>Moved from 14.8</i>

14.7	be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and resources	be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively <i>Moved from 14.1</i>
14.8	be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate	be aware of a range of research methodologies and their respective limitations in evaluating psychotherapeutic interventions and treatments <i>Moved from 14.15</i>
14.9	be able to observe and record service users' responses and assess the implication for diagnosis and intervention	recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice <i>Moved from 14.14</i>
14.10	be able to undertake or arrange investigations, for example setting up an assessment period in order to ascertain the appropriateness of an intervention	be able to critically evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice <i>Moved from 14.16</i>
14.11	be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected	be able to work with service users both to define a clear end for the therapy, and to evaluate the therapy's strengths, benefits and limitations <i>Moved from 14.2</i>
14.12	be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving	be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving <i>Moved to standard 4</i>
14.13	be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions	be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions <i>Moved to standard 4</i>
14.14	recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice	be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales <i>Moved from 14.3</i>
14.15	be aware of a range of research methodologies and their respective limitations in evaluating psychotherapeutic interventions and treatments	be able to observe and record service users' responses and assess the implication for diagnosis and intervention <i>Moved from 14.9</i>

14.16	be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice	be able to undertake or arrange investigations, for example setting up an assessment period in order to ascertain the appropriateness of an intervention <i>Moved from 14.10</i>
14.17	be able to use information and communication technologies appropriate to their practice	be able to use information and communication technologies appropriate to their practice <i>Moved to standard 8</i>
Art therapists only		
14.18	be able to use a range of art and art-making materials and techniques competently and be able to help a service user to work with these	
Dramatherapists only		
14.19	be able to use a range of dramatic concepts, techniques and procedures including games, activities, styles and structures and to improvise drama spontaneously with service users in a variety of styles and idioms	
Music therapists only		
14.20	be able to use a range of music and music-making techniques competently including improvisation, structured musical activities, listening approaches and creation and composition of material and music technology where appropriate and be able to help a service user to work with these	be able to use a range of music and music-making techniques competently including improvisation, structured musical activities, listening approaches and creation and composition of material and music technology where appropriate and be able to help a service user to work with these
15	understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment	
15.1	understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care	

15.2	be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these	
15.3	be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, in a safe manner and in accordance with health and safety legislation	be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner and in accordance with health and safety legislation
15.4	be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly	
15.5	be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control	be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks appropriately manages risk to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control