



# **Scope of Practice Information for Registrants**

Version 1

Published June 2023

[www.ircm.org.uk](http://www.ircm.org.uk)

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## INTRODUCTION

‘Scope of practice’ is a term used to describe those aspects of your job that you are competent to do because you have the knowledge, skills, and experience to do them safely and effectively in the best interests of service users.

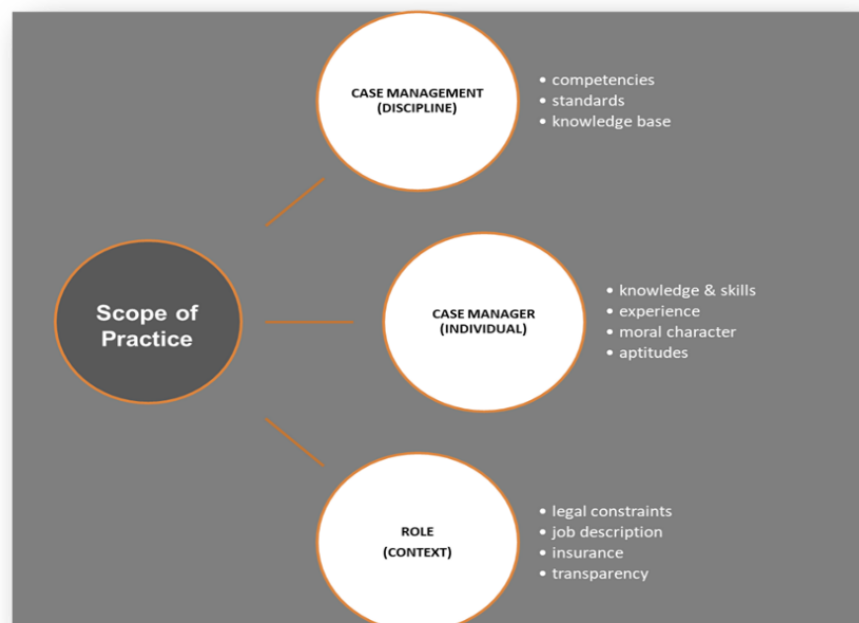
All practitioners and professionals in health and social care must be clear about, and operate within, their scope of practice and must be able to identify and justify their own scope in any given practice situation.

Hence, the IRCM uses ‘scope of practice’ with reference to the limit of the case manager’s role and/or competence based on their education, skills, and appropriate professional experience.<sup>1</sup> However, scope of practice can be difficult to clarify as it is dynamic, changing over time and in different contexts.

For example, in more general case manager roles, the registered case manager’s scope of practice may be broad and may vary in level of practice and autonomy, but as they move into more specialist practice roles, they may no longer perform some activities covered in the standards of proficiency, and their practice may become narrower in scope, though higher in levels of autonomy and influence within their specialist field.

As case managers develop new skills, knowledge, or experience they may feel equipped to take on new roles that may be more complex, unpredictable, or advanced and require an extended scope of practice.

For every case manager there is an interplay between three main aspects that will inform their scope of practice, as outlined in this graphic, and expanded on further in the following sections.



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<sup>1</sup> IRCM Glossary of Terms (Version 1)

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## Scope of case management as a discipline:

The IRCM Case Management Competency Framework sets out the scope of the discipline in its requirements and expectations regarding what case managers do and how they behave. This is informed by legal and professional frameworks pertinent to case management, contemporary evidence, consensus statements, guidelines, and examples of best practice, wherever these exist.

The Case Management Competency Framework provides a benchmark to help case managers (and their employers) to identify their scope of practice and to plan personal and professional development. It has also informed the development of the IRCM Standards of Proficiency, the Certificate of Proficiency (*in development*), the registration requirements, and the Standards (and curricula) for education and training (*in development*).

The case management competencies in the framework are applicable across all types of case management though it is feasible that in some case management roles there may be a stronger emphasis on some criteria than others.

The discipline of case management also exists within an evolving context where professional and legislative frameworks and standards will have to adapt in response to emerging research evidence and improved practice models.

The general scope of case management practice may include:

- Assessing service user needs
- Formulating a management plan
- Commissioning services
- Enabling physical and mental wellbeing
- Meeting occupational and vocational needs
- Monitoring interventions and outcomes
- Assessing and mitigating risk
- Recruiting, training, and supervising staff
- Liaising with legal teams/statutory services/ funders in the interests of the service user
- Adapting to meet the needs and achieve the best outcomes for service users
- Providing written evidence and reports
- Ensuring interventions are evidence-informed, as far as is feasible, to achieve best possible outcomes for service users
- Engaging in learning, teaching, and research in case management
- Sharing and promoting best practice and a contemporary and evidence-informed approach with the case management discipline as a whole

This list is indicative but not necessarily exhaustive. It will vary between registrants, their role, and the context of their practice.

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## Scope of the individual

Currently, IRCM registration is set at a 'competent' level where aspiring registrants must be able to demonstrate that they meet the Standards of Proficiency (including understanding and working within their scope of practice) and must successfully complete a Certificate of Proficiency assessment<sup>2</sup>. Registration provides a fundamental benchmark of competence, not only for case managers but also for those who use their services, their employers, and those who commission case management. However, each individual case manager's scope of practice is more nuanced than this.

Just as the scope of the case management discipline will evolve over time, in the light of new practice developments and emerging research evidence, so must the individual case manager. This is one of the drivers for engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) activities to ensure that practice is up to date and each case manager's scope remains appropriate. Registered case managers are expected to meet the IRCM standards for CPD, engaging in CPD on a regular basis and maintaining accurate CPD records. If asked, they must be able to demonstrate how they have maintained their competence.

Individual scope of practice is determined by whether the case manager has the appropriate skills, education, training, values, attitude, and experience to provide safe and effective case management services. As case managers develop new skills, knowledge, or experience they may feel equipped to take on new roles that may be more complex, unpredictable, or advanced and require a broader scope of practice.

Each case manager must decide for themselves what is, and is not, within their scope of practice at any given time and in any given situation, considering whether their training and support have adequately equipped them to perform the required activities safely and effectively. This can be tricky, and some case managers may want to work through these decisions with support (e.g., in supervision sessions or in peer group discussions).

Questions may include<sup>3</sup>: -

- Do I have the skills and knowledge to carry out the activity safely and effectively?
- Can I complete training or receive other support (such as supervision) that will give me the skills and knowledge needed to carry out the activity safely and effectively?
- Is the activity restricted by law? Can I do it, legally?
- Does my professional indemnity insurance cover the activity?

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<sup>2</sup> Additional registration categories will be developed in the future for specialised or advanced case managers.

<sup>3</sup> HCPC: [Identifying your current scope of practice | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/identifying-your-current-scope-of-practice)

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Case managers registered or regulated by more than one professional body for different aspects of their practice, will need to consider their scope in relation to the specific activities they are performing, and which professional 'hat' they are wearing at the time.

## Scope in relation to the context of practice

A range of contextual factors can impact the individual case manager's scope of practice including: -

### The purpose or remit of the role:

In some situations, a case manager might move into a role where the job and person specifications require a narrower scope than they have personally.

- ↳ This would limit the activities they can perform or the skills they exercise to those required by the job description. It is perfectly acceptable for them to practise in a narrower scope of practice if they are working safely and effectively within the limits of the job description. Any extension to the role remit, to fully utilize their individual scope, would require agreement with the employer and an adjustment to the job description.

If moving into a new scope of practice, say in a new job, the case manager must initially identify any gaps in their knowledge, skills, and experience and address them.

- ↳ This may involve additional training, support, evaluation of the evidence base for any new techniques or interventions, and consideration of any legal or professional indemnity limitations. They must be able to demonstrate how these strategies have adequately equipped them to extend their scope safely and effectively.

If the case manager is moving into a new scope of practice because their existing role or job is evolving (or the discipline of case management is evolving), they must also ensure that their role remit, or job description, is updated to reflect the new scope.

- ↳ This may involve negotiation with an employer and adjustments to their job description. Ensuring that they continue to practice within the scope of their role remit (and the discipline) and do not practise in areas which go beyond it.

If a case manager is employed in a specific role and has developed skills and knowledge that are beyond the remit of that role

- ↳ They might seek agreement from the employer to extend the role and avoid operating outside the remit of their role (again also ensuring that their job description is updated to reflect this extended scope).

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A case manager might be asked to do something which is outside their scope of practice

- ↳ In the first place, they should refrain from doing it. However, they might also consider whether they could seek training to be able to extend their scope safely and agree this with their employer/service commissioner.

### **The organisational setting:**

Whether employed or self-employed, the legal requirements or constraints and the limits of professional indemnity insurance in place may limit the permissible activities in the case manager's scope of practice.

### **Summary:**

Case managers must operate within their scope of practice and be able to justify their actions in this regard. They must also be transparent and honest in relation to their capabilities so that service users can make appropriate choices about the services they are accessing.

No matter how skilled or enabled the practitioner feels, they must still practice case management within the general scope of the discipline of case management, as well as the limits of their role, legal restrictions in the role, and their professional indemnity insurance.

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## **Additional Resources**

We recommend that case managers visit the HCPC webpages for further resources.

**Health and Care Professions Council: Identifying your current scope of practice**  
[Identifying your current scope of practice | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/identifying-your-current-scope-of-practice)

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