

<b>Title of Report</b>	Review of Registration Fees
<b>Public/Confidential</b>	Public
<b>Summary/purpose of report</b>	To update Members on progress towards consultation on reviewing registration fees and to propose amendments to the frequency and level of fees proposed in the consultation.
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Council is asked to approve amending the consultation proposals to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual changes to fee levels for five years</li> <li>2. Annual increases of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2 for students</li> <li>• £3 for support workers</li> <li>• £4 for practitioner/supervisor</li> <li>• £8 for manager/social worker</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Author and Responsible Officer</b>	Maree Allison, Chief Executive
<b>Link to Strategic Plan</b>	The information in this report links to: <p>Outcome 1: <b>Trusted</b> People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: <b>Skilled</b> Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.</p> <p>Outcome 3: <b>Confident</b> Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: <b>Valued</b> The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people’s lives.</p>
<b>Link to Risk Register</b>	Risk 6: The SSSC fails to secure sufficient budget resources to fulfil the financial plans required to deliver the strategic plan.

<b>Impact Assessment</b>	An Impact Assessment (IA) was not required.
<b>Documents attached</b>	None
<b>Background papers</b>	<a href="#">Report (07/2024)</a>

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its February meeting Council approved consulting on reviewing registration fees with the consultation due to start at the end of the Summer after conclusion of the Future Proofing Programme.
2. In preparation for the consultation Scottish Government Legal Department have requested that the Rules contain fixed increases rather than percentages over a fixed period. This is to provide certainty and is a change from our intended approach.
3. We have therefore revised our proposed approach to level and frequency of fees, and this report sets out those proposals for approval.

## FREQUENCY

4. The level of fee we are entitled to apply is set out in Registration Rules. Our intention was to propose drafting the Rules to provide for annual percentage changes until Council decided to review the situation and amend the Rules to fix or revise fee levels.
5. Our revised approach is to consult on annual changes for five years. After five years fee levels will remain static until Council makes a decision to consult and amend the Rules to revise fee levels.
6. Five years is a reasonable period to propose, allowing us to move to the intended approach of regular, small increases. Council will have the option of carrying out an early consultation and Rule revision to adjust the approach if an unexpected situation arises during the five years.

## LEVEL

7. We originally proposed consulting on an initial 12% increase with 5% annually thereafter:

	Current	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Increase	Total % increase
Social Worker Fee	£80	£90	£95	£99	£104	£109	£29	36%
Supervisor/ Practitioner Fee	£35	£39	£41	£43	£45	£48	£13	37%
Support Worker Fee	£25	£28	£29	£31	£32	£34	£9	36%
Student Fee	£15	£17	£18	£19	£20	£21	£6	40%

8. After five years this proposal would result in an additional £2.147m in fee income.

9. For information other professional regulator's fees are:

<b>SOCIAL WORK REGULATORS (part-funded by fees)</b>				
	Students	Support Workers	Practitioners/ Supervisors	Managers/ Social Workers
SSSC	£15	£25	£35	£80
NISCC (Northern Ireland Social Care Council)	£20	£30		£65
SCW (Social Care Wales)	£15	£30		£80
SWE (Social Work England)				£90

<b>HEALTH REGULATORS (fully funded by fees)</b>	
GChC (General Chiropractic Council)	£800
GDC (General Dental Council)	£690
GMC (General Medical Council)	£455
PSNI (Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland)	£398
GOC (General Optical Council)	£360
GOsC (General Osteopathic Council)	£320
GPhC (General Pharmaceutical Council)	£276
NMC (Nursing Midwifery Council)	£120
HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council)	£117.74 (Consulting on increasing to £123.34)

10. Our revised proposal for consultation is an annual increase of:

- £2 for students
- £3 for support workers
- £4 for practitioners and supervisors
- £8 for managers and social workers.

	Current	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total Increase	Total % increase
Social Worker Fee	£80	£88	£96	£104	£112	£120	£40	50%
Supervisor/ Practitioner Fee	£35	£39	£43	£47	£51	£55	£20	57%
Support Worker Fee	£25	£28	£31	£34	£37	£40	£15	60%
Student	£15	£17	£19	£21	£23	£25	£10	67%

11. After five years this proposal would result in an additional £3.341m in fee income with our highest fee set at that of the lowest fee for health professionals.

## **CONSULTATION**

12. We have discussed the revised approach with our Scottish Government Sponsor who will discuss with the Minister.

## **RISKS**

13. We have a cautious risk appetite for both financial management and decisions affecting how we will be perceived by our stakeholders.
14. Members considered the risks associated with consulting on reviewing fees at the meeting in February. The proposed amendment to the proposals engage the same risks:
  - There is a risk to people who use services and the workforce that any increase in fee levels is a barrier to people joining the sector or leads to an increase in people leaving the workforce. There is no evidence of such an impact when we raised fees in 2017 however the financial landscape has changed.
  - In 2022 Scottish Government decided to fund fees for those employed by local authorities as part of the financial settlement with local authorities. We receive additional grant in aid from Scottish Government in respect of these fees. This decision was outwith our control but will likely be a significant reputational issue raised in consultation responses.
  - There are risks to our financial sustainability if we do not take the opportunity to review fees (which have not been reviewed for seven years and the planned review has already been delayed by four years). Scottish Government do not expect us to use fee increases to fully address our financial sustainability.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Resourcing**

15. There are no specific resourcing implications for carrying out the consultation.

## **Compliance**

16. Our power to charge fees is contained in our founding legislation and the level is set within our Registration Rules. The legislation requires us to consult on Rule changes and obtain ministerial consent.
17. Any consultation must be genuine with the results of the consultation having the ability to influence the final decision. The fee levels consulted on represent the maximum level of any increase that Council could decide to impose.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

18. We will undertake an impact assessment as part of the consultation.

## **CONCLUSION**

19. We are proposing a revised approach in light of the requirements of Registration Rule changes and ask Council to approve the amended consultation proposals of annual fee changes for five years at the level set out in paragraph ten.