

Title of Report	Qualified status of the workforce
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	This report provides the Council was an overview of the qualified status of the registered workforce. It provides an analysis of the data regarding demand for qualifications and compliance with qualification conditions. The report also identifies factors which are impacting on increasing the numbers of qualified workers and details actions that the SSSC are leading, influencing or collaborating with partners on to support the workforce to get qualified.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to Council approve the areas of focus within the report, that the frequency of reporting to Council will be six monthly and to endorse the actions the SSSC is taking to support the workforce to get qualified.
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Responsible Officer	Laura Lamb, Acting Director, Workforce Education and Standards
Link to Strategic Plan	The information in this report links to: Outcome 1: Trusted People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise. Outcome 2: Skilled Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice. Outcome 3: Confident Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.
Link to Risk Register	Risk 2: We fail to ensure that our workforce development function supports the workforce and employers to achieve the rights standards and qualifications to gain and maintain registration.

Impact Assessment	An Impact Assessment (IA) was not required.
Documents attached	Appendix 1- Qualifying the workforce- summary of actions
Background papers	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides the Council with an overview of the qualified status of the registered workforce. It provides an analysis of the data regarding demand for qualifications and compliance with qualification conditions. The report also identifies factors which are impacting on increasing the numbers of qualified workers and details actions that the SSSC are leading, influencing or collaborating with partners on to support the workforce to get qualified.
2. Council is asked to approve the areas of focus within the report, that the frequency of reporting to Council will be six monthly and to endorse the actions the SSSC is taking.

BACKGROUND

3. As the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people's workforce the SSSC sets the qualification requirements for the workforce. The SSSC is responsible for ensuring the registered workforce comply with the requirements of registration including gaining an appropriate qualification for their role within a specified timescale. For most register groups they have a period of five years to gain their qualifications if they join the register unqualified. This timescale will reduce to three years for most function-based register groups from 3 June 2024 with the exception of those joining the register in housing support, care at home or care home roles whose timescale will not reduce until June 2025.

INFORMATION

Current performance

4. In 2020 the SSSC set a Strategic Performance Indicator focussed on the percentage of the registered workforce who are qualified. The original target was set at 50% qualified increasing to a target of 53% in April 2023. The percentage of the workforce who are qualified has continued to increase year on year since the measure has been in place. The percentage of the registered workforce who were qualified at the end of April 2024 was 52.4%. As of April 2024 this will no longer be a strategic measure within the assurance report but will continue to feature as an Key Operational Indicator (KOI). This report is the first of six-monthly reports for Council on the qualified status of the registered workforce.
5. It is important to note that while the percentage of the workforce who are qualified has continued to increase so too has the size of the Register. In April 2020 the size of the Register was 162,153 individuals which has

increased to 176, 261 as at end of April 2024. The register has increased by 14,108 in the last four years and continues to grow.

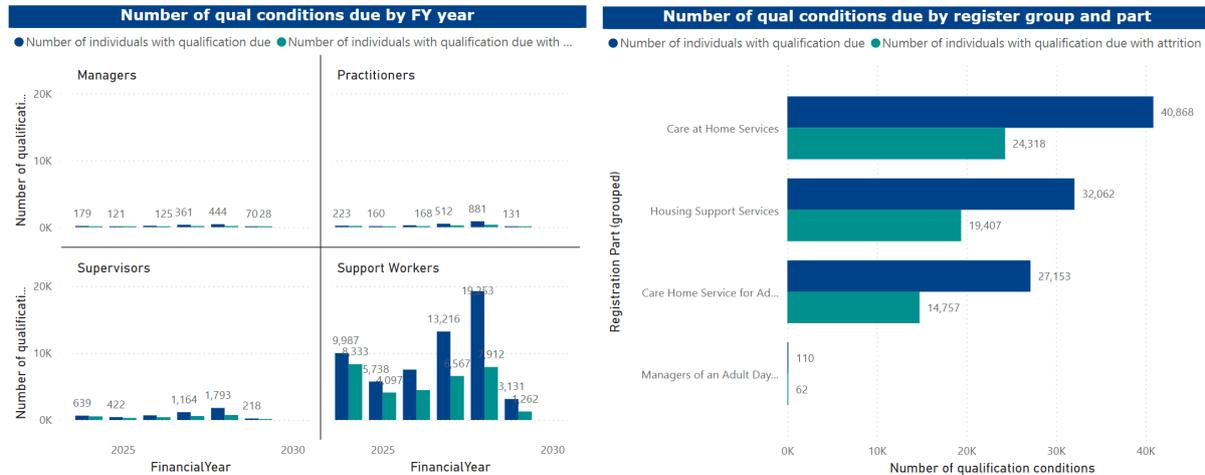
Profile of the Register

6. The chart below shows how qualified each of the register groups currently are. The most qualified group is practitioners in day care of children services and the least qualified group is support workers in a Care Home Service for Adults.



7. The number of qualification conditions due over the next five years is 82,559. After attrition the number reduces to 50,248. Of those, 38,859 are workers within the adult social care register groups.
8. This is not unexpected given they are both the largest and newest groups to join the register. The two largest groups are support workers in care at home and housing support services. Registration became mandatory for these groups in September 2020 therefore a number of individuals registered around that date who have remained on the register will not have reached the five year deadline to meet their qualification condition at this stage.
9. In addition the adult social care groups (housing support, care at home and care home services for adults) have the highest turnover rates of our register groups, particularly at support worker level, therefore there are a

large number of individuals who have joined the register in these groups who are still within their five years to gain the required qualification.



- The biggest demand for qualifications over the next five years is from support worker roles within adult social care. The qualification requirement for these roles is set at SCQF level 6 qualifications.

Compliance with qualification conditions

- The are 5,731 individuals, currently on the Register (as at 30 April 2024), who have had their qualification condition reapplied. This represents 3.25% of registrants. This is an increase from April 2020 when the figure was 4,404. This figure peaked at 5,940 during the pandemic as a result of the SSSC implementing a contingency measure of automatic extensions to anyone who had a qualification condition due between May 2020 and May 2022. This decision was made to ensure sustainability of the workforce and viability of services. Removing individuals from the register for not meeting their condition requirement would have further compounded and impacted on the significant workforce pressures and delivery of care.
- The total number of individuals who have received a qualification condition extension between April 2020 and April 2024 is 11,074. Of these, 7,228 extensions were either an automatic extension during the pandemic or due to the impact of Covid. Other than Covid, our data shows the three main reasons given for extensions were personal sickness/ bereavement, difficulties securing training provision, or other- which in many cases has been documented as caring responsibilities.
- When looking at register parts, the highest percentage of extensions within one register category are Care Inspectorate Inspectors. There have been a number of changes to the qualification requirements for Inspectors and significant challenges in accessing the required learning resulting in the CI developing a specific PDA award which is approved by the SSSC.

Whilst inspectors have one of the highest percentage of register groups with a qualification extension the actual number of registrants who have had a qualification condition extended is currently 37. Recent changes to the qualification requirements, approved by Council November 2023, should have a positive impact and assist inspectors to meet the required qualification.

14. Care Home Services for Adults has the largest number of individual registrants who have had a condition reapplied and the number of extensions for this group rose significantly during the pandemic, peaking in May 2022 before starting to reduce. However they continue to remain the highest percentage of all qualification condition extensions with currently 5.5% of registrants (2,576 individuals) with a condition extension working in care homes. Support workers in care home services for adults mandatory registration came into effect in September 2015 therefore large numbers were due to meet their qualification requirement in 2020 and received an automatic extension to their qualification condition as part of Covid contingency measures.

Qualified status of managers and supervisors

15. The percentage of managers and supervisors within each register group is detailed below. The percentage and number of individual managers who have had their qualification extended is highest in day care of children despite the overall register group being the most qualified function-based group. This is largely due to a change in qualification for the managers to a degree level qualification in 2010. In order to complete the degree qualification managers are required to hold a relevant practice qualification as an entry requirement. Managers who did not hold a relevant qualification therefore had to complete a practice qualification prior to commencing on the Childhood Practice award which can take three years to complete. This has been the most common reason for requesting extensions in the day care of children manager register part.
16. The percentage of managers and supervisors who have had their qualification condition extended is significantly higher than the overall averages in each register part. Further analysis and modelling are required to understand the reasons for these extensions. In particular it will be important to understand if those managers and supervisors receiving qualification condition extensions hold any qualification (i.e the practice element) or if we have high numbers of individuals in leadership roles who currently hold no qualification and are responsible for manager and leading the practice of others. If this is this case, we will explore options to target and support these groups to get qualified for example- prioritising them for funding through the VSDF fund and work with the CI to understand impact and risk for services.

Register Group and overall % with an extension	Number of individuals with an extension	% of Managers with an extension	Number of managers with an extension	% of supervisors with an extension	Number of supervisors with an extension
Care Home Services for Adults (6.3%)	2567	8.2	47	7.2	289
Care at Home (2.7%)	2173	10	114	5.3	276
Housing Support (2.6%)	1720	9.2	94	5.3	257
Day Care of Children (2.2%)	637	10.2	315	n/a	n/a
Adult Day Care (4.8%)	17	4.8	17	n/a	n/a
Residential Child Care (5.5%)	305	3	15	3.2	30
School Care Accommodation (4.9%)	13	7.7	1	3.7	1

Rate the workforce is gaining qualifications.

17. The current average timescale it takes individuals to gain their qualification is 36.90 months. Pre-pandemic this average was 31.43 months (as at April 2020) This average has seen an increase as a result of the Covid extensions. Although the average timescale is increasing the number of individuals meeting their qualification condition each month is increasing and is above pre-Covid rates. The groups taking the longest to qualify are CI inspectors (68 months) Care at Home (average 48 months) and Housing Support (average 47 months). Care at Home and Housing Support timescales are increasing whereas CI inspectors' timescales are reducing. Residential childcare is also beginning to see a slight increase in timescales. All other register parts are seeing a reduction.

Impact

18. We know from our Register data that those who join the register qualified or meet their qualification condition are more likely to stay on the Register and in the sector longer than those who don't and are less likely to be referred to Fitness to Practice. The average timescale that someone who joins the register qualified stays on the register is 66 months and for those who meet a condition 51 months. Those who don't meet their qualification condition on average leave at 27 months. The combined position is currently 37 months. Looking at register parts the average

length of time individuals stay on the register in Housing Support (28.7) and Care at Home (27.1) is significantly less than other register parts although is improving.

19. Our data suggests there are factors which impact on how qualified register groups are:

- **Turnover rates-**

Our data shows us that turnover rates are higher in the voluntary and private sector and that the highest turnover is in Adult Social Care (Housing Support, Care at Home, Care Homes for Adults), in particular in support worker roles. The data does however show that for most register groups the turnover rate is reducing and has reduced year on year since 2021 with the exception of social workers who saw a slight increase in 2023, although the rate remains lower than 2021.

- **Employer type-**

The demand for qualifications is lowest in the public sector, slightly higher in the voluntary sector however significantly higher in the private sector. The private sector demand is consistently around double the demand in the public sector year on year over the next five years.

- **Age**

The number of registrants who have a qualification condition reduces with age. 93.9% of registrants 24 years of age or younger have a qualification condition.

- **Access to funding for qualifications/ Difficulties accessing training provision:**

The most significant demand for qualification over the next five years is the SCQF level 6 Health and Social Care SVQ. This is driven by the numbers of support workers in care at home, care homes and housing support who still need to gain their qualification requirement for registration. Access to funding for SCQF level 6 qualifications is limited.

- **SSSC decisions:**

SSSC decisions which have impacted on timescales of registrants becoming qualified include changing the qualification requirements for register groups including changes to the requirements for Managers in Day of Children Services and Care Inspectorate inspectors, automatic extension of qualification conditions during the pandemic and requirement and the delay to the reduction of ASC qualification timescales until June 2025.

ACTIONS

20. Setting the qualification requirements, timescale to gain qualifications and ensuring registrants meet the requirements for registration, including the

qualification requirements, are the only factors directly within the SSSC's control. We are able to influence and work in collaboration with key partners to address the influencing factors but they are not directly within our control. A full list of actions and progress is available at Appendix 1.

RISKS

21. We have a cautious risk appetite to the management of regulatory quality and effective regulatory functions.
22. Our work around qualified status of the workforce supports some of the actions with strategic risk 2, however we are not in control of registrants gaining their qualification, therefore it is not the focus of mitigation against risk 2. The wide range of work across WES supports the development of the workforce in many ways and our mitigation to ensure the workforce is developing and using CPL comes from initiatives throughout the department across multiple areas.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

23. There are no resourcing requirements identified in this report.

Compliance

24. There are no compliance issues identified as part of this report.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

25. An impact assessment was not required as this report is for noting and endorsing.

CONCLUSION

26. The Council is asked to approve the areas of focus within the report, that the frequency of reporting to Council will be six monthly and to endorse the actions the SSSC is taking to support the workforce to get qualified.