

## **SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL**

### **Confirmed minutes of the Scottish Social Services Council held on Monday 25 November 2021 at 10:00 am via Teams meeting.**

**Present:** Sandra Campbell, Convener  
Theresa Allison, Council Member  
Professor Alan Baird, Council Member  
Julie Grace, Council Member  
Lynne Huckerby, Council Member  
Peter Murray, Council Member  
Russell Pettigrew, Council Member

**In attendance:** Lorraine Gray, Chief Executive  
Maree Allison, Director of Regulation  
Laura Lamb, Acting Director of Development and Innovation  
(Learning and Development)  
Lynn Murray, Interim Director of Finance and Resources  
Laura Shepherd, Director of Strategy and Performance  
Anne Garness, Head of Legal and Corporate Governance  
Audrey Wallace, Corporate Governance Coordinator

**Observing:** The meeting was live streamed, and the link shared with  
SSSC staff and members of the public

#### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

1.1 Sandra Campbell welcomed everyone to this, the last scheduled Council meeting of 2021. Apologies were received from Paul Edie, Rona King and Linda Lennie, Council Members.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of previous meetings**

##### **3.1 Minutes of the meeting of 26 August 2021**

3.1.1 The minutes of the meeting of 26 August 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

##### **3.2 Minutes of the private session of the meeting of 26 August 2021**

3.2.1 The minutes of the private session of the meeting of 26 August 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

##### **3.3 Minutes of 25 October 2021**

3.3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 25 October 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

#### **4. Matters arising**

4.1 There were no matters arising which were not included within the agenda for the meeting today.

#### **5. Convener's report**

5.1 Sandra Campbell presented report 44/2021 which provided a summary of her activities as Convener since the last scheduled Council meeting in August. She particularly mentioned that her activities were dominated by the Scottish Government's proposals for a National Care Service.

5.2 The Council

1. noted the Convener's summary of the key issues and activities which she covered in her report.

#### **6. Chief Executive's report**

6.1 Lorraine Gray presented report 45/2021 which detailed the SSSC's key performance against strategic priorities and the work of the directorates. She highlighted the engagement between the Regulatory Improvement Team and larger employers to improve the fitness to practise processes and also the collaboration with Scottish Government to develop the national induction programme for new entrants to adult social care.

6.2 Lynn Murray updated Members on the budget deficit situation which was discussed at Council in August when it was reported that Scottish Government would meet the deficit next year. Lynn Murray clarified that the amount was £1million based on the 2022/23 indicative budget prepared in March 2021. This figure may be revised in accordance with an updated budget.

6.3 Members commented on the following

- Alan Baird welcomed the judgement of the Court of Session in relation to obtaining information from Police Scotland. He also congratulated the Hearings and Digital Services teams in being shortlisted for the Investors in People Outstanding Technology Award
- Lynne Huckerby welcomed the implementation of the webchat facility for Registrants. Maree Allison confirmed that there was no increase in staff required for this and many people who used this service would have used a different process. Often this allowed issues to be dealt with earlier.

6.4 The Council

1. noted and commented on the information contained in the report.

#### **7. Audit and Assurance Committee report to Council**

7.1 Alan Baird presented report 46/2021 from the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 2 November 2021, along with the assurance report which had been submitted to the Committee and the draft minutes of the meeting.

7.2 Particular highlights were the two reports by Internal Audit, which were Key Performance Indicators/Performance Management and Shared Services. Both

were positive reports. Also to be noted were the benefits realised from the Digital Development and Evolve projects.

### 7.3 The Council

1. accepted that the assurance report presented a true and fair view of the SSSC's performance towards achievement of strategic objectives, financial management and risk identification and management, in particular that
  - a. operational performance as measured by strategic key performance indicators give confidence that the SSSC was delivering as forecasted to meet its strategic objectives as agreed with the Sponsor Department
  - b. financial performance was consistent with forecasted spend and presented no cause for concern relating to outturn of approved budget
  - c. operational delivery and financial spend are consistent
2. noted the endorsement of
  - a. the internal audit reports on Performance measures/KPIs and Phase two shared services, which were each given a 'good' level of assurance and contained no recommendations
  - b. the timetable for presenting two further audit reports
  - c. the timetable for the assurance mapping exercise
3. noted
  - a. benefits realised from the Digital Development and Evolve programmes
  - b. that the annual procurement report will be published on the website
  - c. there were no incidences of fraud, bribery or corruption detected for the period 1 July to 30 September 2021.

## **8. Code of Corporate Governance – Special Appeals Committee**

8.1 Anne Garness presented report 47/2021 which proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and to the procedure of the Special Appeals Committee, which are contained in the Code of Corporate Governance. Members noted that changes were detailed in the appendices to the report.

### 8.2 The Council

1. approved the proposed amendments to the terms of reference of the Special Appeals Committee as contained in the Code of Corporate Governance
2. approved the proposed amendments to the procedure for the Special Appeals Committee as contained in the Code of Conduct for Fitness to Practise Panel Members.

*Peter Murray joined the meeting*

## **9. Policies**

### **9.1 People Management Policies**

9.1.1 Lynn Murray presented report 48/2021 which asked Council to approve the Retirement and Severance Policy and to endorse changes to policies which the Executive Management Team (EMT) has approved. Lynn Murray thanked those

involved in the Member/officer group for their work on progressing the people management policies.

- 9.1.2 Russell Pettigrew raised some questions regarding
- the wording around creation of a voluntary redundancy scheme, including the right for anyone to apply for redundancy
  - where decisions will be made should a senior member of staff request redundancy, with no cost involved
  - issues around the possibility of severance packages.

9.1.3 Both Lorraine Gray and Lynn Murray spoke to these issues confirming that the writing of this policy was high level. These issues will also exist across other bodies given the government's stance on compulsory redundancies. Lynn Murray will take forward any work that is required.

- 9.1.4 The Council
1. approved the Retirement and Severance Policy
  2. endorsed the changes to policies, listed in the report, that the Executive Management Team had approved since August 2020.

## **9.2 Data Protection Policy**

9.2.1 Anne Garness presented report 49/2021 which presented Council with a revised Data Protection Policy which had been substantially reviewed to take account of changes in legislation and included more details of roles and responsibilities of officers.

- 9.2.2 The Council
1. approved the revised Data Protection Policy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

## **10. Future Proofing Programme Consultation**

10.1 Maree Allison presented report 50/2021 which asked Council to agree to progress a number of areas of consultation on the future proofing programme. This is a programme of work revising the SSSC's key regulatory functions. Maree Allison updated Members on the progress made to date including various meetings of the Programme Board and Sponsor Group (the Group) which had been held to date and those still to take place before the end of the year. She also highlighted the short window of time available to progress the consultation aspects.

10.2 In answering a query about resourcing the work required, Maree Allison advised Members of plans to recruit staff in the 2022/23 financial year confirming this was included within budget proposals.

10.3 There was some discussion around ensuring that the future proofing programme is aligned with the National Care Service (NCS) and it was noted that officers were working closely with the Sponsor Team to make sure that this alignment would happen where possible. This programme would also assist in pushing forward the influence of the SSSC in the NCS which will help inform the outcomes of the NCS.

- 10.4 However there are challenges and risks, as input from third parties is needed, such as changes to legislation. There is a risk that this will not be achieved but it was noted that some of the future proofing actions can be advanced without legislative changes and options will be explored.
- 10.5 Council was then advised of the proposed timetable which included the Group making some decisions on consultations in December with proposals then coming to Council in May 2022. Maree Allison also advised that information reported in the assurance report to Audit and Assurance Committee will be expanded to include future proofing matters and therefore this will provide regular updates to Members. Sandra Campbell requested that a development session for Members be put in place in order to make sure they are kept fully briefed.
- 10.6 The Council
1. approved the consultation on the structure of the register
  2. approved consultation on function-based qualifications
  3. agreed to delegate consultation authority in respect of the programme to the Future Proofing Sponsor Group.

## **11. Scottish Social Services Council Learning Strategy 2021-2023**

- 11.1 Laura Lamb presented report 51/2021 which asked Council to approve the Scottish Social Services Council Strategy Learning Strategy 2021-2023 appended to the report. The strategy supports the delivery of outcome 2, that the SSSC supports and enhances development of the registered workforce to deliver high standards of practice and drive improvement.
- 11.2 The strategy sets out the key principles for learning and development in the sector, it focusses on priority areas but remains flexible to changing circumstances. Once approved the draft will be rebranded and published.
- 11.3 The strategy was generally welcomed by Members. Laura Lamb agreed to consider wording in the following areas
- use of stronger, more positive language around working with stakeholders to identify training needs
  - ensure the language is forward thinking and vision-based
  - where possible, include reference to the needs of those being cared for
  - consider reference to Nurse Directors as mentioned in the National Care Service
  - consider any benefit in aligning to TURAS, the NHS learning platform
  - take into account that this will converge with the NCS and any issues arising from it will need to be accommodated.
- 11.4 There was also discussion around the support and development of the Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) to ensure that they have the resource and support they require, having qualified during the pandemic. Laura Lamb confirmed that data on their experience would be gathered as part of the evaluation of 120-day placement survey and also from the five-year longitudinal study. Learner Journey plans for NQSWs may be adjusted if thought to be helpful.

- 11.5 The Council  
1. approved the Scottish Social Services Council Learning Strategy 2021-2023.

**12. Rewards Review**

- 12.1 Lynn Murray presented report 52/2021 which provided Council with an update on the progress of the rewards review project. She advised that the next meeting of the Programme Governance Group is scheduled on 1 December 2021 and the project, excluding any appeals process, is scheduled to be finished by the end of March 2022.

- 12.2 The Council  
1. noted the progress on the rewards review.

**13. Fitness to Practise Committee report**

- 13.1 Peter Murray presented report 53/2021 from the Fitness to Practise Committee meeting of 23 September 2021, with the draft minutes of the meeting attached for reference. He advised that being a triennial meeting, this was the first meeting of the Committee held virtually, via Teams. There had been little discussion during the meeting as indicated in the report and minutes.

- 13.2 The Council  
1. noted the contents of the report.

**14. Council Action Record**

- 14.1 The Council approved the Council action record and agreed that completed actions C69, C71, C72, C73, C74, C75, C78, C79, C80, C81 and C82 be archived and filed for future reference.

**15. Date and time of next meeting**

- 15.1 The date of the next Council meeting will be on Monday 28 February 2022 at 10.00 am.

**Council**

**Start time: 10am**

**Finish time: 11.15am**



**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 13 March 2021

**Sandra Campbell  
Convener**