

## **SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL**

**Confirmed minutes of the Scottish Social Services Council held on  
Thursday 26 May 2022 at 10:00 am in Compass House, Dundee DD1 4NY  
and by Teams meeting.**

**Present:** Sandra Campbell, Convener  
Theresa Allison, Council Member (online)  
Professor Alan Baird, Council Member  
Lynne Huckerby, Council Member (online)  
Rona King, Council Member  
Linda Lennie, Council Member  
Peter Murray, Council Member  
Russell Pettigrew, Council Member (online)

**In attendance:** Lorraine Gray, Chief Executive (online)  
Maree Allison, Director of Regulation  
Laura Lamb, Acting Director of Development and Innovation  
(online)  
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**

- 1.1 Sandra Campbell welcomed those present in person and those who attended online, to this first hybrid meeting of the Council. Apologies were noted from Paul Edie and Julie Grace, Council Members.

### **2. Declarations of interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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

- 3.1 The minutes of 28 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.  
3.2 The minutes of 25 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

### **4. Matters arising**

- 4.1 There were no matters arising.

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

- 5.1 Sandra Campbell presented report 17/2022 which summarised her activities as Convener since the Council meeting on 28 February 2022
- 5.2 The Council
1. noted the summary of the key issues and activities covered in the report.

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

- 6.1 Lorraine Gray presented report 18/2022 which detailed the SSSC's key performance against strategic priorities and the work of the directorates.
- 6.2 The matters below were discussed.
- Maree Allison confirmed that Police Scotland was now responding to individual requests for information.
  - Maree Allison confirmed that the support helpline for registrants had only recently started up. She also spoke about developing skills for current employees to become investigation assistants and those taking up the opportunity have expressed interest through their development discussions.
  - Peter Murray asked for further information on the Graduate Apprenticeship for Social Workers and Laura Lamb advised that this was still in development. The scheme will be piloted in the first instance. The aim of the scheme is to retain workers currently in the sector and increase the number of qualified workers. Laura Lamb also confirmed that the development of the integrated health and social care award was progressing. It will go forward through the SVQ process and offered to providers as a route to a qualified workforce.
  - Laura Lamb advised that work is being carried out on a timeline for rolling out the supported first practice year for all Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS).
  - Laura Shepherd clarified that the SSSC will continue to support the effective voice workstream.
- 6.3 The Council
1. commented on and noted the information contained in the report.

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

- 7.1 Alan Baird presented report 19/2022 from the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 3 May 2022, along with the assurance report and summary risk register, which had been submitted to the Committee, and the draft minutes of the meeting.

- 7.2 He commented on the very positive report which reflected the highlights of the meeting including the changes to the risk register to reflect changing risks to the organisation. He highlighted the two positive reports from the internal auditor and the report on Counter Fraud and Corruption that confirmed there had been no cases of fraud or corruption detected in the organisation during the financial year 2021/22.
- 7.3 Laura Shepherd confirmed, as reported in the assurance report, that there had been a marked decrease in the number of complaints received during the pandemic. The increase of complaints received more recently was in line with the numbers received pre-pandemic.
- 7.4 Sandra Campbell commented that she was pleased to see the progress of the assurance map.
- 7.5 Lynn Murray confirmed that she would look into the possibility of including additional HR metrics into the assurance report and would report back on her thoughts to Council at its meeting in August.
- 7.6 Alan Baird spoke to report 20/2022 (listed as item 8 on the agenda), the Audit and Assurance Committee Annual Report to Council. He highlighted the positive reports and comments which had been received over the year. He thanked officers for their assistance in ensuring good practices throughout the organisation and a good working relationship with the auditors.
- 7.7 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 presents no cause for concern relating to year-end outturn of approved budget
    - c. operational delivery and financial expenditure were consistent
  2. took sufficient assurances from the internal audit reports, the follow up review and the internal/external audit tracker
  3. approved the Annual Report of the Committee to Council
  4. noted
    - a. the assurance map and the future process
    - b. the Committee approved the draft Annual Governance Statement for inclusion within the Annual Report and Accounts

- c. the Committee took assurances that there were no instances of fraud or corruption detected in the financial year 2021/22.

## **8. Annual Audit and Assurance Committee report to Council**

- 8.1 This report 20/2022 was referred to in paragraph 7.6 above.
- 8.2 The Council
  1. approved the annual report of the Audit and Assurance Committee
  2. noted that the content of the annual report informed the preparation of the draft Annual Governance Statement.

## **9. Complaints Performance update for 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

- 9.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 21/2022 which summarised the SSSC's performance in responding to complaints during 2021/22. She highlighted improvements in response times to both stage one and stage two complaints and the reasons for agreed extensions to the responses that required extra time.
- 9.2 Laura Shepherd agreed to look at benchmarking against other public bodies, including the numbers of complaints received.
- 9.3 Laura Shepherd advised on the processes and the outcomes derived from information contained in the complaints matters. She assured Members that, where appropriate, the improvements team works on making improvements to processes where possible and practical. Additionally, where possible, the response to the complainant gives information about changes made following receipt of their complaint. She advised that positive impact is not always immediate or measurable but could be deemed to have had such an impact if no further complaints were received.
- 9.4 The Council
  1. noted the SSSCs performance in responding to complaints in 2021/22
  2. approved the annual complaints performance report to be published on our website.

## **10. People Management Policies**

- 10.1 Lynn Murray presented report 22/2022, People Management Policies, which asked Council to approve the Agile Working Policy and policies approved by the Executive Management Team (EMT).
- 10.2 Members discussed the reasoning behind the previous decision, made during the Council meeting on 20 August 2020, to have any people management policies, which were approved by the EMT, then reported to Council for endorsement. It was noted that the programme of

updating people management policies was now in place, policies were on a regular programme of review and that it had been agreed in May 2020 that the policies which were strategic in nature, or that contained specific information, would be brought to Council for approval. Anne Garness advised that EMT will decide whether a new policy will be brought to Council, with advice from her when necessary.

- 10.3 Anne Garness advised Members on the terms of the RACI chart which was contained in the Code of Corporate Governance and which set out the agreed approval routes for decision-making. The Code is due to be reviewed in autumn and Members would have the opportunity to review the approval routes at that time and agree changes to these if thought appropriate. During this discussion it was noted that there was an error in the extract of the Policy Index attached to the papers for the meeting.
- 10.4 Members then turned to discussion of the Agile Working Policy, which was presented at Appendix 2 to the report, for approval. Some questions were raised as to the cost to or savings from the proposed working environment which would be enabled by approval of the policy. It was suggested that the policy would need be in place for approximately one year before savings were evident. We have made savings over the last two years by working from home.
- 10.5 Rona King, supported by other Members, stated that she was not minded to approve the policy as presented. There was discussion around the wording of the policy being too vague, and therefore not supportive to staff or managers wishing to take advantage of the terms of the policy and in the event of a dispute.
- 10.6 Lorraine Gray advised that officers will review the wording and language in the policy, taking legal advice as required, and will bring back the policy to Council in August for approval.
- 10.7 The Council
1. did not approve the proposed Agile Working Policy
  2. agreed that Members would forward their comments on the Agile Working Policy to Lynn Murray, before 6 June 2022, that she would consider these and present a revised policy to Council in August 2022
  3. endorsed the changes to policies that EMT had approved
  4. agreed that Council no longer endorses the EMT approved policies but that an annual report on the People Management Policies approved by EMT be presented to Council. This may form part of the annual People Strategy report
  5. reaffirmed that Council continues to approve policies which include any of the following:
    - associated extra costs that are out with the current budget
    - any proposed fundamental change to terms and conditions of employment
    - where the Council has a clearly defined role to play.

## **11. Future Proofing Programme consultation analysis**

- 11.1 Maree Allison presented report 23/2022 which provided a summary of the Future Proofing Programme consultation responses. Appendices 1 and 2 provided a skills analysis and a breakdown of the responses received after the 12-week consultation period, which took place between December 2021 and March 2022.
- 11.2 The publicising of the consultation and high level of engagement with the sector and responses was commended. This included online events, social media outlets, the SSSC website and SSSC news emails as well as specific meetings with interested groups.
- 11.3 The report focussed on the proposals which had less support from the sector. Some of these related to information to be shown on the public-facing register and proposed changes to adult social care qualifications.
- 11.4 There was some discussion on consultation on proposals for baseline qualifications, including regarding the proposed SCQF level 7 for adult social care workers.
- 11.5 Maree Allison advised on the complexity of weighting the responses and that this would take some work.
- 11.6 Alan Baird and Theresa Allison welcomed the consultation and felt it was thorough and inclusive and reflected the situation currently in the care sector.
- 11.7 The Council
1. noted the report
  2. noted that a further report would be submitted to Council in November 2022 with proposals and decision options
  3. requested a further development session on the Future Proofing Programme.

## **12. Council Action Record**

- 12.1 The Council considered and approved the Council action record and agreed that completed actions C91, C93, C94, C95, C96, C97, C98, C99, C100, and C101 be archived and kept on file for future reference.

## **13. Date and time of next meeting**

- 13.1 The Council noted the calendar of known scheduled business and that the date of the next Council meeting is Thursday 25 August 2022 at 10.00am.

### **Private Session**

Items 14, 15 and 16 were taken in private and minuted separately.

**Council 26 May 2022**  
**Start time: 10am**  
**Finish time: 1.30pm**

*S. Campbell*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 05 September 2022

**Sandra Campbell**  
**Convener**