

Learning Strategy 2021-2024

Progress Update 2022/23



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Our [Learning Strategy 2021-2024](#) brings together all the activity across our learning and development responsibilities and outlines our approach to providing workers, employers and others with learning support which contributes to us meeting our strategic objectives.

We used the findings from our **Qualified Status of our Registered Workforce** (December 2020) and [Workforce Skills Report](#) (October 2021) to inform the priorities in our learning strategy. Both reports provided valuable data and intelligence about the skills requirements and emerging skills needs of the social work, social care and children and young people workforce.

This update provides a summary of our progress on the nine priority areas highlighting what we've achieved, what work is in progress and planned activity.



The nine priority areas

1. Qualified status of the workforce
2. Career pathways
3. COVID-19 pandemic recovery
4. Trauma-informed practice
5. Digital capability and capacity of the workforce
6. Review of Social Work Education NQSW supported first year in practice
7. Infection prevention and control (IPC)
8. Quality improvement (QI) learning
9. Leadership learning

Future considerations



1. Qualified status of the workforce

To increase the percentage of the workforce who hold the correct qualification required for registration.

- We are working in collaboration with key partners to understand and address issues related to the supply and demand gap for qualifications required for SSSC registration. For example, via the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), we recently surveyed training providers who deliver benchmark qualifications to determine current capacity and their ability to adapt to changing demands and needs. We are contributing to research commissioned by Skills Development Scotland to understand the skills and training needs of the adult social care workforce.
- We continue to promote funding opportunities to all parts of the sector, including opportunities through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), which supports employers to provide inclusive learning opportunities for their workforce. We continue to administer and promote funding for social work students through our postgraduate bursary and hardship funding opportunities. We also administer the Voluntary Sector Development Fund (VSDF) on behalf of Scottish Government to support staff in the voluntary sector to gain the qualifications necessary for SSSC registration.



'We plan to be more flexible in the benchmark qualifications we accept for registration to support wider career pathways for the workforce'

- We consulted on proposed changes to the qualification requirements for registration as part of our Future Proofing Programme (FPP) in 2021/22. As a result, we plan to be more flexible in the benchmark qualifications we accept for registration to support wider career pathways for the workforce. We also plan to reduce the time for new registrants on function-based Register parts¹ to achieve a required qualification from five years to three years, with some exceptions. This will increase public protection, ensure continued delivery of high quality care, and enhance professional identity and perception of the workforce.
- We are developing four pre-employment careers in care learning resources which will sit within a **Ten Steps to a Career in Care** guidance resource.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Implement FPP qualification changes by spring 2024.
- Work in partnership with Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) to develop a skills response plan for adult social care.

¹ All parts except social workers and social work students.

2. Career pathways

To enhance career pathways within social work, social care and early years.

- We are working with all key partners to enhance career pathways within social work, social care and early years. This includes working in partnership with health colleagues and SQA to develop an integrated SVQ qualification to support individuals to work across health and social care settings.
- We are working with Scottish Government and partners to consider various career pathways into social work, including continuing to scope a new graduate apprenticeship route. Alongside this, we are supporting the development of advanced practice frameworks to allow for greater progression opportunities for social workers at all stages of their career.



- We are developing a new continuous professional learning (CPL) model in consultation with the sector as part of our FPP work. The new model will focus on key skills and knowledge required at important career stages and will include mandatory elements for each Register group.
- We continue to promote our careers website and toolkit and to support national recruitment campaigns – such as the current adult social care recruitment campaign – through our workforce planning webinars and the work of our Career Ambassadors.

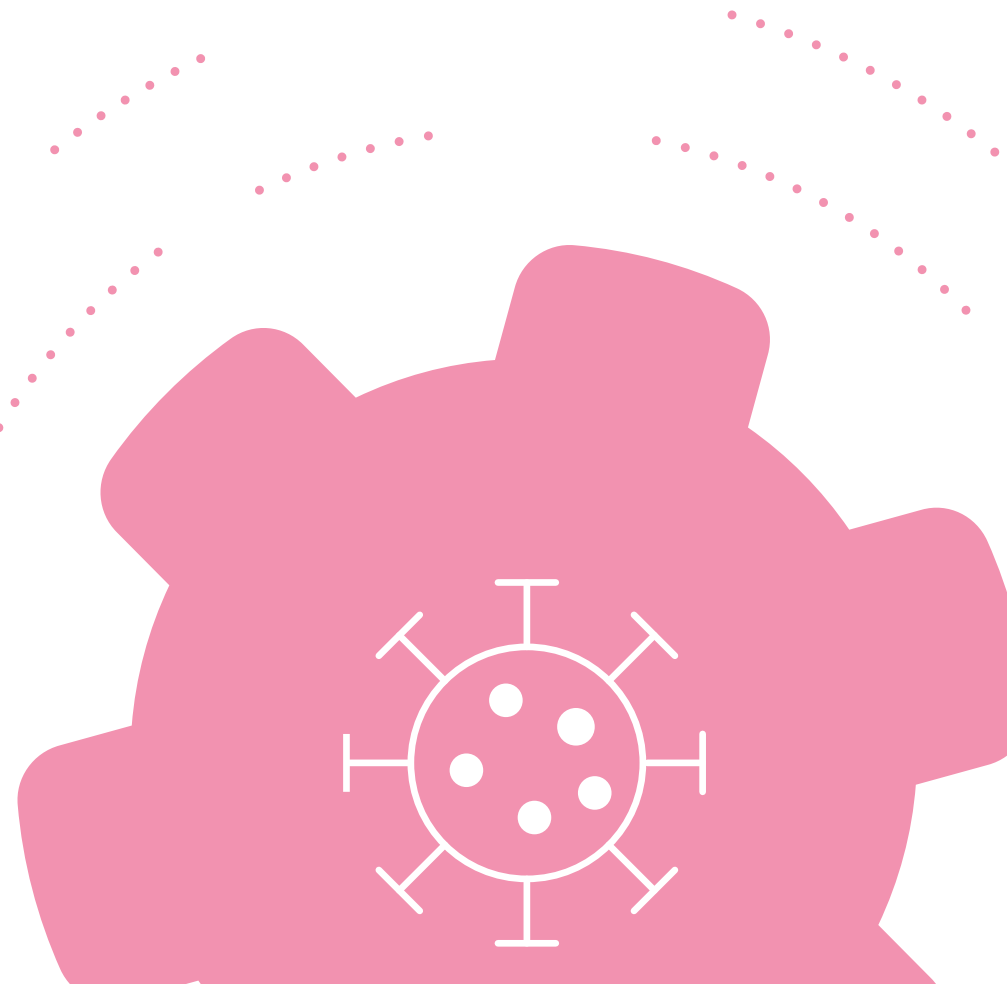
Planned activity for 2023/24

- Develop a graduate apprenticeship route into social work.
- Develop an integrated SVQ qualification.
- Develop a new model of CPL.

3. COVID-19 pandemic recovery

To support the continued delivery of approved programmes and qualifications for registration, including student placements, impacted by the pandemic.

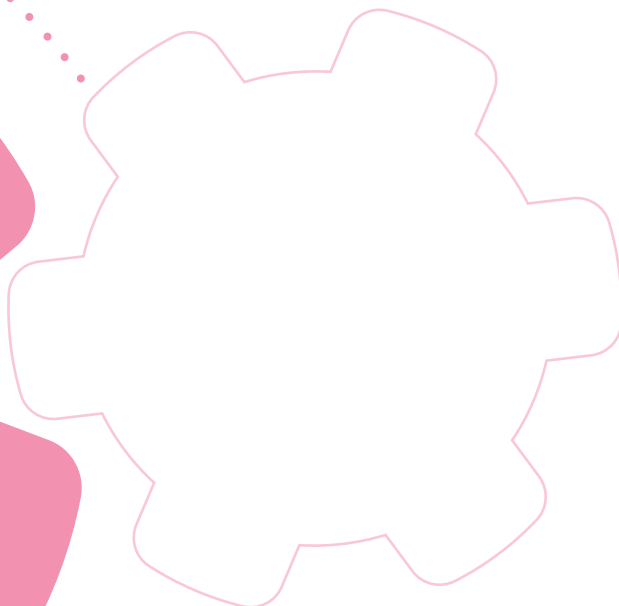
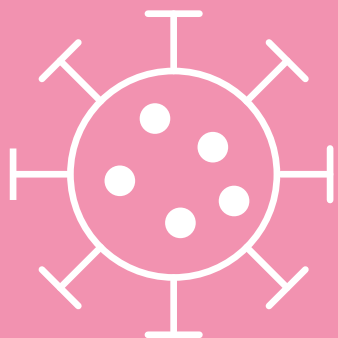
- We are working with Social Work Education Partnership (SWEP) partners to develop and agree proposals for national and regional approaches to practice learning, including monitoring and addressing shortages in social work practice placement opportunities.
- We have improved our intelligence and data processes to monitor supply and demand of qualified social workers to help contribute to effective workforce planning at a national level.
- As part of our statutory responsibilities, we continue to monitor and quality assure the delivery of approved programmes to ensure standards, rules and requirements are met. This includes regular proactive engagement with programme providers.



- We continue to review and revise contingency arrangements. In light of the significant material changes made to programmes throughout the pandemic recovery period, we are working with all approved programmes to consider whether full re-approvals are necessary next year.
- We commissioned an external evaluation of the **Advanced Skills Module and 120 Day Placement** contingency arrangement. The findings were shared and discussed with partners through SWEP and will inform future work. We published an analysis of these findings on our website.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Re-approve programmes.
- Monitor fitness to practise referral data for those who qualified during the pandemic.



4. Trauma informed practice

To support the roll out of the National Trauma Training Programme and the social service workforce to become trauma informed.

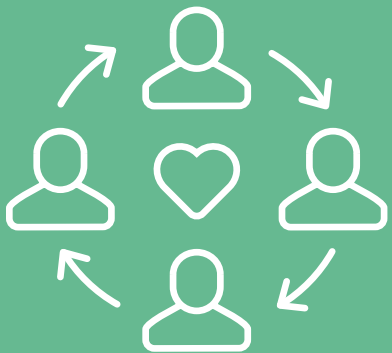
- We have reviewed the SSSC Codes of Practice and will consult on the revised Codes in April 2023.
- We continue to promote National Trauma Training Programme resources and learning events and to support partners, including the Improvement Service and NES, to roll out the national training programme to social services.
- We continue to support the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser at Scottish Government with the development and roll out of enhanced level learning resources for social workers as a key partner in the Trauma Responsive Social Work Services Partnership Delivery Group.



- We endorse the national programme and host learning resources on the SSSC Learning Zone.
- We support higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed trauma learning in approved programmes and monitor this through our annual monitoring.
- We have delivered presentations and training to SSSC Council members, fitness to practise panel members and fitness to practise staff to support our journey to becoming a trauma informed organisation. We have identified trauma champions and plan to roll out bespoke training to all SSSC staff.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Consult on the revised Codes of Practice in April 2023 and implement by spring 2024.
- Roll out trauma informed practice training for SSSC staff.
- Ongoing annual monitoring of approved programmes.



5. Digital capability and capacity of the workforce

To increase the digital capability and capacity of the workforce.

- We continue to support delivery of the digitally enabled workforce programme for health and social care and the **technology enabled care (TEC) social care plan**.
- We continue to support delivery of the workforce actions within the national cyber resilience action plan, including developing learning resources and hosting cyber resilience learning events for registrants and employers.
- We continue to refresh and promote our 23 Things Digital resource and we are launching our 23 Things technology enabled care (TEC) resource in April 2023.
- We continue to ensure the development and use of digital capabilities is embedded in all qualification structures, programmes and learning resources as appropriate. This includes the redesigned HNC Social Services and Healthcare and HNC Childhood Practice as part of the SQA HN next generation project.



- We have commissioned research into the digital capabilities of the adult social care workforce, which we are due to publish in spring 2023.
- We are a founding member of the cyberQuarter centre of excellence at the University of Abertay.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Publish findings from the adult social care digital capabilities research.
- Publish the 23 Things TEC resource.
- Continue our cyber resilience activity with a specific focus on TEC.

6. Review of Social Work Education NQSW supported first year in practice

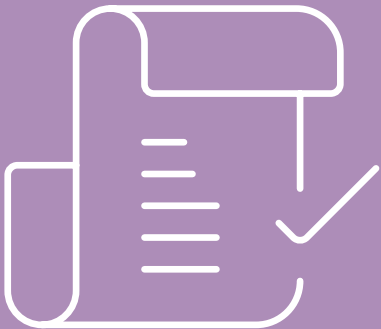
To support the implementation of a supported first year in practice for newly qualified social workers (NQSWs).

- We continue to work with Scottish Government and partners towards a national rollout of a mandatory supported first year in practice to support NQSWs' transition to – and retention in – the workforce.
- We worked in partnership with the sector to develop proposed models for a supported first year in practice, including costings, for Scottish Government.
- We commissioned the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (Iriss) to scope and research the learning and development budgets and capacity for social workers in local authorities. Findings will be available from April 2023.
- We continue to support the early implementation sites, which are in almost 50% of local authorities.

- We are carrying out research with the early implementation sites to understand their experience, including their learning from and impact of implementing the model.
- We developed online learning resources to support NQSWs, employers and supervisors.
- We are developing a new CPL model and process for NQSWs.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Support Scottish Government to roll out the proposed model by autumn 2024.
- Continue to support the early implementation sites and to build capacity in local authorities that are not yet engaged to support and prepare for roll out.
- Develop and implement a new CPL model for NQSWs by spring 2024.



7. Infection prevention and control (IPC)

To support the workforce to understand and implement best practice in IPC.

- We contributed to the development, revision and roll out of national guidance.
- We updated the SSSC COVID-19 IPC guide, as and when required, to reflect changes in national guidance and policy.
- We have developed and are currently testing an online professional support tool due to launch by the end of March 2023.
- We worked in partnership with Scottish Government and NES to develop an induction framework for adult social care to include IPC. The resource launched in February 2022.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- In partnership with Scottish Government and NES we will evaluate and review the National Induction Framework over the next year.



8. Quality improvement (QI) learning

To increase capability and capacity of the workforce to use the Model for Improvement.

- We continue to work with partners to improve access to national improvement learning programmes.
- We have maintained and expanded the social service QI network.
- We delivered a series of QI learning forum events and published learning from these.
- We have commissioned the development of a QI digital learning resource for social service workers which will be hosted on the NES TURAS QI Zone.
- We support Scottish Improvement Leader (ScIL) trained people in social services to deliver foundation level QI learning (SIFS) in their own settings.
- We support delivery of the ScIL programme as a member of the NES QI Learning Faculty.



- We provide funding for social service workers to complete ScIL training.
- We are working with NES and the Care Inspectorate to better understand QI learning needs across social services, with a particular focus on those working in justice services.
- We have tested delivery of the Care Experience Improvement Model (CEIM) with social service organisations and we are currently evaluating the impact. We are working with Healthcare Improvement Scotland and NES to influence the content of CEIM resources so they better reflect the experience of social service organisations and they can use them to support QI learning.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Evaluation of the ScIL programme.
- Funding for ScIL places for those working in social work and adult social care.



9. Leadership learning

To support leadership development at all levels

- We continue to support the development and delivery of the National Leadership Development Programme for Health and Social Care, now called Leading to Change.
- We have refreshed our supervision learning resources for Step into Leadership.
- We supported the development and promotion across social services of the Developing Senior Systems Leaders programme.
- We developed a 23 Things early learning and childcare (ELC) Leadership resource.

Planned activity for 2023/24

- Support delivery of Leading to Change.
- Publish refreshed supervision resources.



Future considerations

We will remain flexible in all the priority areas as we move into the period of our new Strategic Plan 2023-2026. We'll continue to respond to any changing circumstances in the sector, particularly in respect of the significant recruitment and retention challenges being faced by the sector and the developments of the National Care Service and the National Social Work Agency.



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