

Title of report	Future Proofing Programme – update report
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	To provide an update on programme workstreams
Recommendations	The Council is asked to note the contents of this report.
Author	Graeme Henderson, Programme Manager
Responsible Officer	Maree Allison, Interim Chief Executive
Link to Strategic Plan	<p>The information in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: People who use services are protected by ensuring the regulated workforce is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: The SSSC supports and enhances the development of the registered workforce to deliver high standards of practice and drive improvement.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Our workforce planning activities support employers, commissioners and policy makers to deliver a sustainable, integrated and innovative workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: The social work, social care and early years workforce is recognised as professional and regulated and valued for the difference it makes to people’s lives.</p>
Link to Risk Register	<p>Risk 1: We fail to ensure that our system of regulation meets the needs of people who use services and workers.</p> <p>Risk 2: We fail to ensure that our workforce development function supports the workforce and employers to achieve the right standards and qualifications to gain and maintain registration.</p> <p>Risk 4: We fail to provide value to stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.</p>

Impact assessments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was not required. 2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required. 3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) was not required.
Documents attached	<p>ApX 1 – Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) model for approval – Sponsor paper dated 5 February 2024</p> <p>ApX 2 - Return to Practice Requirements (RTP) model for approval – Sponsor paper dated 5 February 2024</p>
Background papers	<p>Council meeting of 22 November 2022 (Report 42/2022) – Future Proofing Programme Proposals Report</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPP Qualifications EQIA • FPP Register EQIA • FPP Codes EQIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


1. In February 2021 Council approved the establishment of a programme to revise our key regulatory functions. In May 2021, Council approved the governance structures of the Future Proofing Programme (FPP); FPP Sponsor Group has oversight of the programme. In November 2021 Council gave authority to consult on elements of the proposed changes. In November 2022 Council approved progression of FPP proposals. Further updates have been provided in the quarterly Chief Executive's reports.
2. In March 2023 the FPP Sponsor Group approved scoping work for new groups to be brought into programme scope, following a request from Scottish Government that we undertake this work.
3. This report provides an update on progress across the programme.
4. The programme consists of four projects:
 - the structure of the register
 - qualifications and skills
 - review of the Codes of Practice
 - scoping of new register groups.
5. We intend to launch the revised Codes of Practice on 1 May 2024, with a ministerial launch on 7 May. We will thereafter implement changes from the other projects on 3 June 2024, assuming the required legislative change is made within agreed timescales. This follows approval from Scottish Government and Sponsor Group to delay our original planned timetable from April 2024.

PROJECT UPDATES

Structure of the Register

6. The following changes are being implemented by the FPP:
 - reduction in the number of register parts, from 23 to 4
 - introduction of a requirement that workers apply for registration within 3 months of starting a new role
 - publication of additional information on the Public Facing Register (PFR) including information on any fitness to practise warnings and/or conditions; potential to display specialist qualifications for workers
 - introduction of ongoing registration, removal of the requirement to renew registration, and introduction of an annual declaration to coincide with annual fee payment
 - Addition of new register parts for Practitioner in a Housing Support Service and Practitioner in a Care at Home Service.
7. These changes require significant systems development work. All planned work to date is being delivered on schedule and we remain on track to deliver the required changes in time for go-live in June 2024.

Qualifications and skills

8. The Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) model was developed using Scottish Service Design methodology in consultation with registrants and employers before formal consultation on the proposed new model. The new model moves away from the current model of recording days/hours and has a focus on key skills and knowledge required at key career stages.
9. The CPL model, principles and guidance were approved by Sponsor Group on 5 February, with the authority delegated by Council. The report presented to Sponsor Group and associated guidance documents are included as background papers.
10. The website for CPL is under development. This is a digital resource that will help workers identify CPL pathways and learning resources relevant to their role and area of interest. We will demonstrate this and provide further detail at the Council development session in March 2024, and the website will launch April 2024 allowing promotion and communication with the sector as part of our implementation planning ahead of the new model being implemented in June 2024.
11. Return to Practice (RTP) requirements for social workers were developed in consultation with registrants and employers at the same time as the CPL model. Formal consultation on the proposed RTP requirements then took place. These requirements apply to social workers who have been out of social work practice for over 2 years and ensure that they are fit to practise on their return.
12. The model takes a tiered approach to the amount and nature of learning required by social workers returning to practice, according to the length of time an individual has been out of practice.
13. The RTP requirements were approved by Sponsor Group on 5 February, using the authority delegated by Council. The report presented to Sponsor Group and associated guidance documents are found included as background papers.
14. Our main benchmark qualifications, in particular Social Services and Healthcare and Children and Young People SVQ qualifications will be accepted for an additional register part with the same SCQF level requirement, where that requirement is currently one of these suites of qualifications at the same level. Council approved this in November 2022 and this will be implemented in June 2024.
15. There is a separate paper before Council for a decision in relation to timescales for obtaining qualifications for registered workers in housing support care at home and care homes for adults. The reduction in timescales to gain required qualifications from 5 to 3 years for other function based workers (with exceptions, as detailed in Council report dated November 2022, attached) will be implemented in June 2024. 

Review of the Codes of Practice

16. There is a separate paper before Council for a decision on the Codes of Practice.

Scoping new register groups

17. We were asked by Scottish Government to complete a scoping exercise for four potential new register groups:
 - Workers in an adult day care service (all workers excluding managers)
 - Workers in offender accommodation services
 - Social Work Assistants
 - Sexual and Violent Offender Liaison Officers (SOLOs)
18. Engagement with a wide range of organisations and groups, including local authorities and representative bodies, took place between March and November 2023. We have concluded the scoping exercise and submitted our report and recommendations to Scottish Government for consideration in January 2024.

SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

19. Systems development work is ongoing to enable implementation of the changes to the structure of the register, CPL and RTP. Functionality has been delivered for the reduced number of register parts, new application process and annual declaration process. The revised public facing register is complete. The current wave of development is delivering functionality for the collection of fees. Staff have been involved in testing the new system throughout development.
20. Future development work covers the requirements for the new CPL and RTP models, and migration of data from our current system to new, ensuring this works alongside our existing reports and data dashboards.
21. All planned work to date has been delivered on schedule. Further required work has been identified and is detailed in the resources section below.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

22. We have developed a comprehensive implementation and communications plan to ensure that employers and individual workers are made aware of any changes that will impact them. This includes publicity, general and direct communications. The first communications have been issued, and the frequency and detail of these will increase over the coming months.

ASSURANCE

23. The Directorate of Internal Audit and Assurance at Scottish Government has now facilitated two assurance reviews of the programme. The first

was in June 2022 and the second in August 2023. These reviews involved an external team meeting with project leads and other key programme staff to identify areas of good practice and provide recommendations to improve programme delivery. At both reviews we received positive feedback and none of the recommendations received were identified as critical. We will hold a further review in April 2024, prior to go-live.

24. The Digital Assurance Office (DAO) at Scottish Government facilitated a review of the systems work in October and November 2023. The team identified specific areas of good practice with focus on our governance, definition of project success factors (benefits), use of data to inform decision making and embedding accessibility. The team also provided recommendations for action to ensure we remain compliant with the Digital Scotland Service Standard. The project team has developed an action plan to address these and will provide a progress update to the DAO in March 2024.
25. We held an internal audit of the action plan arising from the first external assurance review in October 2022. No issues were identified. A further internal audit is scheduled for May 2024, to follow the next external assurance review and in advance of go-live in June 2024.

CONSULTATION

26. We have held consultation events with stakeholders throughout the programme to date. These have covered all projects and workstreams and there have been further targeted surveys, online sessions and workshops for individual workstreams as indicated. In addition, we meet quarterly with our Stakeholder Advisory Group.
27. The programme board and sponsor group have been kept informed of the outcome of these events and had opportunity to discuss the outcomes at each stage.

RISKS

28. The programme manager maintains a programme risk register. Risks are reviewed each month with a full review of all risks every two months. The most recent full review was held on 14 December 2023, and the next one is scheduled for 21 February 2024. Full reviews will thereafter take place monthly.
29. The most recent review identified the following as current high risks relating to the future proofing programme.

Risk	Mitigation	Residual impact score	Residual likelihood score	Residual risk score
As a result of the short timescales we have to	We can amend existing contract rather than	4	3	12

work within to make amendments to the contract for the telephony system, there is a risk that the supplier is unable to provide the required resource within our timescale, which could result in delays to the programme going live.	have to undertake new procurement. Ongoing liaison with provider. Required service is already provided by this supplier so work required should be limited.			
As a result of unplanned priority or critical BAU work there is a risk that the systems development team cannot commit enough resources to the project which may result in delays or additional costs to the project.	Close working with Programme Board to understand blockers on other projects and the impact they will have. Approval from programme board to use budget from unfilled SDO post to support project in other ways. Recruitment to a revised post is underway as of January 2024.	3	3	9

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

30. The programme has an approved budget of £1,091.4k. £343k was one-off funding from Scottish Government, with the remainder to be funded from our general reserves, for delivery of the programme this financial year. Due to slippage in approval for this year's budget and the legislative changes required, the timetable has moved to the next financial year. We have prepared and agreed with Scottish Government how we manage the slippage in the budget.
31. The profile of spend has changed in that there is less required on staff but an increase in the amount of digital development required. This is due to a combination of factors, one element of which is the programme of CPL and RTP development, which was unable to be scoped at the outset. This has been developed after the consultations concluded. A further element is the amount of work required to develop the register being more than anticipated. We are working with the provider on the additional costs. If these exceed the allocated budget, we will consider using reserves.

Compliance

32. The revised number of register parts, timescales to apply for registration and the introduction of the new practitioner level for Care at Home and Housing Support workers require legislative changes.

33. The revised number of register parts, introduction of continuous registration, changes to the flexibility of, and timescales to achieve, qualifications, introduction of CPL model and the introduction of the new practitioner level for Care at Home and Housing Support workers will all require rule changes.
34. Scottish Government are aware of these required changes and are currently drafting revised legislation to support this. The required legislative and rules changes are on track to be in place in advance of our scheduled go-live in June 2024.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equalities

35. EQIAs were developed for the structure of the register, qualifications and skills and review of the Codes of Practice projects. Each is reviewed regularly with the most recent updates in December 2023.

Data protection

36. A DPIA was developed for the structure of the register project. This will be reviewed regularly throughout the life of the programme and was most recently updated in January 2024.

CONCLUSION

37. The Council is asked to note the contents of this report.