

Date issued: 18 March 2024

Members of the Scottish Social Services Council are advised that a meeting of the Council is to take place at 10am on Monday 25 March 2024 in Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY and by Teams meeting.

**Sandra Campbell
Convener**

AGENDA
PUBLIC SESSION

	Item	Report no
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of interest	
3.	Draft Budget 2024/25 and indicative budgets 2025/26 and 2026/27	12/2024 to follow
4.	Care Experience Report 2024-2026 and Children's Rights Reports 2023	13/2024
5.	Independent Review of Inspection Scrutiny and Regulation (IRISR)	14/2024
6.	Date of next meeting – the next scheduled meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 23 May 2024 at 10 am.	

PRIVATE SESSION

The Convener of Council has directed that the following items be taken in private session and has given the following reasons for their exclusion:

7.	Staffing update	15/2024
----	-----------------	----------------

Private session items explained

Agenda item	Reason for exclusion
7.	<p>a. Matters likely to breach personal data legislation (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 or any subsequent legislation)</p> <p>e. Information which may be considered to be legally privileged or relate to matters of legal proceedings either in progress or relating to the SSSC</p>

Title of report	Budget 2024/25 and indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27
Public	Public
Summary/purpose of report	This report presents the budget for 2024/25 along with the indicative budgets for the following two years.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 2024/25 budget
Author	Laura Shepherd Director of Strategy & Performance
Responsible Officer	Maree Allison, Interim Chief Executive
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. Outcome 4: Valued The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.
Link to Risk Register	Risk 6: The SSSC fails to secure sufficient budget resources to fulfil the financial plans required to deliver the strategic plan.
Impact assessments	1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was not

	<p>required.</p> <p>2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required.</p> <p>3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) was not required.</p>
Documents attached	<p>Appendix 1 – 2024/25 budget</p> <p>Appendix 2 – 2024/25 Staffing</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Reduction Scenario</p>
Background papers	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The SSSC's new financial year starts on 1 April 2024. Our Executive Framework sets out that the Scottish Government Sponsor (Sponsor) must confirm our funding before the new financial year starts.
2. Council must approve the annual budget each year, as required by our Code of Corporate Governance. Council must also approve changes to our staffing establishment.
3. We reviewed each budget item to take account of actual costs from previous years and the latest budget monitoring information. We applied inflationary uplifts where we know of increases.
4. Due to the challenging public sector financial position, we have not received an uplift in our grant in aid (GIA) allocation in the Spring Budget Revision (SBR) announced on 20 December 2023. Our Sponsor has verbally advised that the funding deficit of £3.366 million (reduced from the draft budget of £3.571m) will be managed as a resource pressure in 2024/25 and our Sponsor will work with Scottish Ministers, aiming to permanently increase GIA in future years.
5. We are currently projecting to end the year with an estimated general reserve of £1.157m (4.5%). This is above 2% (£510k) to 2.5% (£637k) target. The reason for the increase from the February draft budget paper is explained below.
6. Our overall budget includes money that we use to support the sector. Postgraduate Bursaries (PG), Practice Learning fees (PL), Workforce Development Grant (WDG) and Voluntary Sector Development Fund (VSDF) budgets do not affect the GIA allocation.
7. Tayside Pension Fund's actuaries have indicated that the common contribution rate for employers that are not closed to new membership be reduced from the current 17% to 15.7% from 1 April 2024. This rate will remain for a period of three years up to 31 March 2027. The defined benefits remain the same for employees. The decision to increase/decrease in funding from SSSC to Tayside is determined by how well the investments from the fund versus projected pension payment looks.
8. The final decision will be made at the Tayside Pensions Sub-Committee meeting on 18 March 2024, therefore we have not yet included this in the 2024/25 budget. Should it come into effect, it would reduce our spending pressure by approximately £170k.
9. Council is asked to approve the budget 2024/25 as planned at 1 March 2024 in Appendix 1, and staffing changes in Appendix 2 of this report, subject to any changes following the year end position.
10. Sponsor confirm GIA by letter before the end of the financial year, it is expected that this will be with us before 31 March 2024 and we will advise

Members when this is received. There is ongoing discussion with Scottish Government central finance and public bodies around the allocation of right of use (ROU) lease costs due to the IFRS16 changes, the GIA letter will rely on this discussion being concluded.

OVERVIEW

11. We presented a draft budget to Council on 26 February 2024. Since that position we have revisited some internal policies that we apply to our budget, to look at ways to reduce our potential spending pressure.
12. Historically our staffing budget carries a 4% vacancy management adjustment (VMA). VMA is an internal control set by Executive Management Team (EMT) and deals with natural gaps in posts being filled when staff leave, or any delays to recruitment that might occur in year. Having reviewed the history of VMA we believe that increasing this to 5.5% is a reasonable approach, reflecting historic trends for the SSSC. We will trial this in 2024/25. This creates a saving of £157k and with other reductions reduces the deficit from £3.571m proposed in the February Council paper to £3.366m.
13. We have revised the draft budget for 2024/25 considering those changes and draft budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27. These include business as usual and developments that EMT considers necessary to effectively deliver our statutory functions and the Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Table 1 in Appendix 1 shows the projected sources of our operating and disbursement income of £23.782m and expenditure of £27.147m (which includes the disbursement outgoings) as of 1 March 2024, resulting in a funding deficit (shortfall) of approximately £3.366m (reduced from February position of £3.571m). Council should note this could be subject to change before the year end is finalised.
14. Table 1 also indicates that future years will carry a spending pressure of which our Sponsor department is aware. However, the indicative budgets for 2025/26 onwards may be impacted by changes to registration fees. Council approved a consultation on fees which will happen later in 2024.
15. Our Sponsor has verbally confirmed that they have approved the budget pressure. This pressure includes the cost of the agreed 2024/25 pay award.
16. Sponsor have increased PL fee resources by £1.5m. PL fees are not part of GIA but are shown alongside PG bursaries in our budget.
17. We had carried out scenario planning if Scottish Government reduced our GIA levels in the December SBR. We have included at Appendix 3, what a 5% reduction in GIA would look like for illustration purposes. However, no reduction was applied to our GIA.

Changes to staffing

18. Our staffing establishment is the approved permanent and temporary staff we need to run the organisation. After Council approval, this becomes part of the budgeted establishment for 2024/25. Appendix 2 contains the changes to the staffing establishment.
19. We have reduced 32.6 FTE (full-time equivalent), between the current 2023/24 establishment and the proposed 2024/25 establishment providing a saving of £1.141m, (£446k of which is recurring).
20. The Head of HR 1.0 FTE post was approved during 2023/24 and is offset against the costs of the Care Inspectorate Head of HR via the shared service that we no longer pay for. We are proposing a further permanent 4.0 FTE in 2024/25 with 1.0 FTE of these funded from an existing post (net increase of 3.0 FTE) at a cost of £201k and 10 temporary posts (Appendix 2, table 2) at a total cost of £516k. This gives a net reduction of 17.6 FTE and net saving of £424k, £245k of which is recurring.
21. The reduction in permanent posts has been a result of the implementation of Future Proofing Programme (FPP) and other workforce change as the result of efficiencies created through the use of digital and automation.

Planned operating costs

22. Our budget for 2024/25 includes a reduction of £177k of recurring non-staff savings where we have made efficiencies on operating costs and reduced licensing costs. However, costs for the remaining business-as-usual digital activity have increased. Digital operating costs have seen the impact of inflationary increases across licensing, cyber security and telephony resulting in £134k additional costs. This gives a net recurring saving of £43k.
23. We have planned one-off digital development of £356k, including the further development required post implementation FPP of £190k. This is a reduction from the draft budget position on 26 February for one off development of £376k.
24. The remaining development costs will support upgrades to Learning Zone and Open Badges platforms, our main website and access to MySSSC. The need for these changes is to replace outgoing technology that we cannot sustain inhouse, ensure compliance with accessibility standards and improvements to our customer experience that has been evidenced through FPP consultation work.
25. Other areas of one-off planned work outside of digital work that will support the delivery of our statutory functions and strategic outcomes are expected to cost £199k. This includes training for panel members, post

graduate research of data, fitness to practice certification and other administrative costs to support the delivery of our People Strategy.

Reserves

26. Based on projections, we estimate our total reserve to be £1,165m by 31 March 2023. The change from reported position in February has been due to several factors, however some key points are highlighted below:
- The 2023/2024 pay award was settled on the 5 of March and is projected to cost £118k less than original projection due to some posts being vacant at settlement. Pay award costs are projected on posts being filled for a full year.
 - We have received more registration income than projected and required less local authority rebates from Scottish Government to compensate for lost income arising from the August 2022 agreement. The net figure of this is £110k additional fee income. This may change in March and we will monitor this.
 - The underspend on Panel Member allowances and training has increased by another £74k since the end of January.
 - We will spend £74k less on digital running costs than projected.
 - We are carrying forward £100k ringfenced into our reserves for our digital hardware equipment that we hold for replacements required during the year, as we have done in previous years.
27. As our reserves are now projected to be above target, we will discuss the use of reserves with our Sponsor team as we drawdown funds during the year.
28. There are several issues that may require the use of reserves including the Sommerville judgement for Panel Members and other legal costs which will not be known until later in 2024/25.
29. We are projecting an estimated underspend in PG bursaries of £221k and PL fees of £607k which are not part of GIA. Sponsor has agreed the carry forward and the use of this underspend for further disbursements in 2024/25.
30. We are projecting an estimated underspend for WDG of £250k and VSDF of £116k which is not part of GIA. Sponsor has agreed the carry forward and the use of this underspend in 2024/25 for further work.
31. Our Sponsor has already confirmed that we can carry forward underspend in FPP which is ringfenced, to meet the changes to timescale driven by legislative issues experienced in 2023/24.
32. Our disbursement and grant carry forward set out above is not considered part of GIA. The SSSC or Council do not have any discretionary approval authority for use of this carry forward, this is agreed with Sponsor.

CONSULTATION

- 33. A development session was held with Council Members in December 2023 to review the draft budget position for 2024/25.
- 34. Sponsor has been involved in budget development and has agreed the spending pressure for 2024/25.
- 35. The budget has been drafted based on the delivery of the draft Operational Plan 2024/25 which covers the work we are required to deliver as agreed by Scottish Government.

RISKS

- 36. Risk 7 in the strategic risk register is that SSSC fails to secure sufficient budget resources to fulfil the financial plans required to deliver the Strategic Plan. Our appetite to risk for our budget is cautious.
- 37. Our 2024/25 and future years GIA allocation does not meet the level of funding required to deliver our statutory responsibilities and strategic plan asset out in this report. However, Sponsor has provided verbal assurance of spending pressure for 2024/25 and will continue to review our permanent GIA for future years with Ministers.
- 38. Other risks to the budget are set out below.
 - a. We are only funded year to year from Scottish Government, we do not have the ability to make future strategic financial decisions and we have no investment decisions, without the support of Scottish Government. Therefore, our budget can only be confirmed for the year ahead, which is noted as a risk by external auditors.
 - b. 80% of our budget is allocated to staffing and Scottish Government pay strategy includes a commitment to a no-compulsory redundancy policy.
 - c. Significant changes to policy and changes to our regulation process or legislation governing regulation must be approved and funded by Scottish Government. We are not able to fund or invest in significant change within the limitations of GIA.
 - d. Registration fees have not increased since 2017 and Ministers agreed with our recommendation to postpone reviewing fees in 2021/22 and 2022/23 due to the cost of living crisis. Ministers agreed in 2022 to pay fees for registrants working for Local Authorities, which adds further complexity. We rely on registration fees to contribute towards our operating costs that continue to

increase even if we stand still. We will consult on registrant fees in 2024/25 but any ultimate decision to change fee levels will not affect 2024/25 budget.

- e. Inflation is included where known for example digital contracts, but no general inflationary uplift is included, meaning costs may be higher than the budget.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

- 39. The resourcing required to deliver our statutory functions and strategic plan are set out in this report.

Compliance

- 40. There are no compliance issues as part of the report.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equalities

- 41. There are no equalities impact identified as part of this report. Any development that are carried out as the result of budget approval will be screened for impacts.

CONCLUSION

- 42. Council is asked to approve the budget for 2024/25 and note the indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Table 1

	Approved Budget 2023/24 £000	Draft Budget 2024/25 £000	Movement 2023/24 to 2024/25 £000	Draft Projection 2025/26 £000	Draft Projection 2026/27 £000
Staff costs	15,246	16,259	1,013	17,148	17,408
Panel member fees	673	617	(56)	679	679
Accommodation	538	192	(346)	187	187
Administration	891	1,157	266	1,049	1,049
Travel	76	58	(18)	58	58
Supplies & Services	458	451	(7)	458	473
Digital BAU	1,380	1,534	153	1,740	1,921
Digital developments	80	356	276	98	50
Operating expenditure	19,343	20,625	1,282	21,418	21,825
Postgraduate bursaries	2,655	2,655	0	2,655	2,655
Practice Learning Fees	2,352	3,852	1,500	3,852	3,852
Skills for Care & Devt	15	15	0	15	15
Total expenditure	24,365	27,147	2,782	27,940	28,348
Grant in aid	(11,028)	(11,028)	0	(11,028)	(11,028)
Postgraduate bursaries	(2,655)	(2,655)	0	(2,655)	(2,655)
Practice Learning Fees	(2,352)	(3,852)	(1,500)	(3,852)	(3,852)
Registration fees	(3,310)	(3,310)	0	(3,310)	(3,310)
LA Reg Fee refund	(2,593)	(2,593)	0	(2,593)	(2,593)
Other income	(385)	(344)	41	(255)	(255)
Total income	(22,323)	(23,782)	(1,459)	(23,693)	(23,693)
Spending pressure	2,042	3,366	1,323	4,247	4,655
Required funding from SG	18,077	20,901	2,823	21,782	22,190

Table 1 – Deleted Posts

Permanent posts	FTE	24/25 £k
Transactions assistants (perm)	6.6	195
Transactions officer (perm)	1.0	41
Change and Improvement Assistant (perm)	1.0	42
Business support assistant (perm)	1.0	27
Registration Assistants (perm)	7.0	141
Recurring total	16.6	446
Temporary posts		
L&D Adviser (temp)	3.0	177
Systems Development Officer (temp)	1.0	45
Systems Development Assistant (temp)	1.0	34
Registration Assistants (temp)	6.0	161
Laravel software developer (temp)	1.0	56
Product owner – Mattersphere (temp)	1.0	56
Digital Marketing Coordinator (temp)	1.0	52
Involvement and Engagement Coordinator (temp)	1.0	49
Rewards Review Project Manager (temp)	1.0	65
Non-recurring total	16	695
Total	32.6	1,141

Table 2 – New Posts

Permanent posts	FTE	24/25 £k
Senior Intelligence Analyst (existing post)	1.0	60
Intelligence Analyst	1.0	51
Intelligence Researcher	1.0	56
Disbursement Assistant	1.0	34
Total Recurring	4.0	201
Head of HR (previously approved and offset against Shared Services SLA reduction)	1.0	76

Temporary posts		
Intelligence Analyst	2.0	98k
FPP Communications Officer	1.0	41k
Systems Development Officer	1.0	49k
Senior Accountant	1.0	62k
Solicitor	1.0	56k
NOS Review Advisor	1.0	62k
Business analyst	1.0	49k
OD Advisor (continuation of temp post)	1.0	49k
Level 2 Technical assistant (continuation of temp post)	1.0	50k
Total non-recurring	10.0	516
Total	15.0	793

GIA 5% reduction scenario

	2024/25 £k
GIA	15,233
Budget required	19,571
Spending pressure	4,338

Title of report	Care Experience Report 2024-2026 and Children's Rights Report, 2023
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	This paper introduces our draft Care Experience Report 2024-2026 and Children's Rights Report 2023. The Council is asked to approve both reports for publication.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. endorse the progress we have made to achieving our duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 2. approve the reports for publication.
Author	Neil Macleod, Policy and Equality Manager
Responsible Officer	Laura Shepherd, Director, Strategy and Performance
Link to Strategic Plan	These reports links to all strategic themes and outcomes in our Strategic Plan 2023-2026.
Link to Risk Register	Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations. Risk 4: We fail to provide value to stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.
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	Appendix 1: Care Experience Report, 2024-2026 Appendix 2: Children's Rights Report, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report sets out our approach to meeting our corporate parenting and children's rights duties. The reporting requirements are set out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act.)
 - We must develop a report setting out steps to fulfil our duties under Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the 2014 Act.
 - Section 2 places a duty on authorities to report on how we promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

BACKGROUND

2. We published the previous version of both reports in 2021.
 - [Realising Potential, our plan for putting care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do 2020-2023](#)
 - [Children's Rights Report 2020-2023](#)
3. Our Care Experience Report 2024-2026 has a review of our priorities over the past three years. Our Children's Rights report covers our activities between March 2020 and March 2023. The Care Experience report also has an action plan covering both reports.

CARE EXPERIENCE REPORT 2024-2026

4. The Care Experience Report covers highlights such as our:
 - work to supporting vulnerable fitness to practise witnesses
 - drive to embed trauma informed practice in the SSSC and the social care, social and children and young people workforce
 - report exploring [ten years of residential childcare workforce data](#)
 - sessions for staff with the Promise Scotland, Who Cares? Scotland and Each and Every Child.
5. The Care Experience Report also has updates on the SSSC's key actions in the Promise's [Change Programme One](#). These actions are the review of the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and the ongoing refresh of the [Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding and Values for the Children's workforce in Scotland](#).
6. The action plan has two new activities in action four. These are a review of:
 - our preparation for the incorporation [of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
 - how we can do more to treat care experience as a protected characteristic.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REPORT 2023

7. The Children's Rights Report covers highlights such as:
- the [National Directory of Continuous Professional Learning for the Early Learning and Childcare workforce](#)
 - the updated [Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment guidance](#)
 - achieving the Investors in Young People Silver award.

CONSULTATION

8. Executive Management Team and Operational Management Team have contributed to the development of these reports and action plan. Who Cares? Scotland also shared feedback on the draft Care Experience Report.

RISKS

9. We have an adverse risk towards legal compliance. These reports are a requirement under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

10. There are no new costs associated with these reports. The actions in the Care Experience Report are already a priority for the SSSC. There are two new internal actions. Further information is set out in our paragraph six.

Compliance

11. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is the driver behind the development of these reports. Our role in keeping the Promise drives our work on supporting care experienced children, young people and families.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equalities

12. We did not develop an EQIA for these reports. Many of the actions in the Care Experience Report have or will need an impact assessment.

CONCLUSION

13. The Council is asked to endorse the progress in our Care Experience and Children's Rights reports and approve both for publication.

Care Experience Report: 2024- 2026

June 2024

Contents

Foreword	3
Who we are and what we do	4
Our Strategic Plan.....	5
Introduction and language	6
Context: Corporate parenting and keeping the Promise.....	7
Our corporate parenting role and work to keep the Promise 2020-2023	8
1. We put care experienced children and adults at the heart of what we do	8
2. We do what we can to ensure that care experienced children and adults are protected by a registered workforce.....	11
3. We support social services to attract and develop the staff needed to support care experienced children and adults	14
Care experience and children's rights plan 2024-2026	17



Foreword

This report sets out how we continue to put Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do. We are proud to be a corporate parent and have a key part to play in keeping the Promise. We make sure that Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce. We wholeheartedly agree with The Promise that every child deserves to grow up safe, loved and respected and that children should be able to stay with their families when they can.

Our Future Proofing Programme is a key part of our drive to modernise regulation and to keep the Promise. In May 2024 we will publish revised Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers. In June 2024 we are also updating Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) requirements and introducing return to practice requirements for social workers. All these initiatives respond to key priorities such as the need to promote trauma informed practice. We are also leading work to implement the updated Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values for the Children's workforce in Scotland.

As of September 2023 we have over 170,000 people on our Register. These people deliver critical services such as residential childcare, day care of children and care at home. We support workers to make sure that they have the right values, are trauma informed and have the skills to develop strong, organic, positive and respectful relationships with children, young people and families. A small percentage of workers come into contact with our fitness to practice processes and we take action where necessary. These people deliver services that are essential to Scotland's wellbeing economy.

This report has an action plan setting out how we will put care experience and children's rights at the heart of what we do over the next three years. It also outlines how we continue to promote children's rights. Alongside this report we publish a separate one looking at how we promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in our work. We have much to do over the lifetime of the plan. We must work in partnership with many people to keep the promise, meet our corporate parenting duties and reinforce a children's rights based approach require collaboration and shared ambitions. Over the next three years we will work with partners to embed a trauma informed approach within qualifications, CPL and programme delivery. These activities are part of our unwavering focus on putting care experienced children, young people and adults and children's rights at the centre of service delivery and our approach.

We welcome your feedback on this report and how we can continue to improve the way we support Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults.

Maree Allison, Interim Chief Executive



Who we are and what we do

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce.

We protect the public by registering this workforce, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national Codes of Practice for people working in social work, social care and children and young people services and their employers
- register this workforce and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate their learning and development
- lead workforce development and planning for this workforce in Scotland and provide national and official statistics.

Our Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2026 sets out our strategic themes and outcomes. The work we will deliver through this plan will have a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of people using social work, social care and children and young people services. We have four strategic themes and each has its own outcome.

- **Trusted:** People who use services are protected by a regulated workforce that is fit to practise.
- **Skilled:** Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.
- **Confident:** our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.
- **Valued:** the social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.

'We believe in designing our services with you, this is the key to achieving our vision to be a public service that makes a positive and lasting contribution.'

SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Introduction and language

Introduction

Care experienced children and young people face significant challenges and barriers. For example, we know that:

- around 1 in every 100 children born in Scotland today goes into care before their first birthday
- approximately 29% of school leavers who were born into care are not in education, employment or training nine months after leaving school, compared to 7% of all school leavers
- many people working in social work, social care and children and young people services will also have experience of care.

How we talk about care experience matters. We must keep a focus on what children and young people need to thrive. It is critical that we frame care experience in a positive way and many of our employees have attended sessions by [Each and Every Child](#). We want to make better use of our data to promote a positive narrative and to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

The SSSC is proud to be a corporate parent and is helping to keep the Promise. We register and support the workforce that provides high quality critical services to care experienced children, young people and adults every day. This plan sets out our work to support care experienced children and young people and the actions we are taking to keep the promise to Scotland's children, young people and families.

This plan begins with an analysis of our work since we published our previous plan in 2021 before setting our priorities for 2024-2026.

Language

We refer to our corporate parenting role in this report because the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 uses that term. This includes legislative duties such as a requirement for corporate parents to work collaboratively. We know that Corporate Parenting is a complicated term. We agree with the Care Review that we all need to focus on good parenting rather than corporate parenting.

We typically talk about care experienced children, young people and adults in this plan. We recognise that one term cannot describe everyone. We know that there are several words or phrases used to refer to people who have experience of care, including care experience, looked after and care leavers. The Care Review and The Promise remind us that the language of care is stigmatising for many people who have experience of care and that we need to focus on building a better narrative for everyone.

We welcome your feedback on our use of language in these reports.

Context: Corporate parenting and keeping the Promise

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 identifies several corporate parents, including the SSSC. The 2014 Act requires corporate parents to:

- assess need
- be alert and notice if care experienced children, young people and adults need help
- promote the interests of care experience children, young people and adults and provide opportunities to improve wellbeing
- take action and make sure that care experienced children, young people and adults can access opportunities
- work together with other corporate parents to improve our approach.

We are proud to be a corporate parent. We have a key role to play in supporting the social work, social care and children and young people workforce. The SSSC can and must do more to support people who support and care for care experienced children and young people.

- The Promise is that Scotland's children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected. The Promise followed the Care Review which involved over 5,500 people who have experience of care. The SSSC has a key part to play in keeping the promise.

This plan sets out our part in keeping the Promise to Scotland's children and young people. This includes our work to revise the [Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers](#), to promote a trauma informed practice and to lead the development of an updated [Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the Children's Workforce in Scotland](#).

Our corporate parenting role and work to keep the Promise 2020-2023

We have carried out a range of actions since we published our previous Corporate Parenting Plan in 2021. We summarise progress under three headings.

1. We put care experienced children and young adults at heart of what we do.
2. We do what we can to ensure that care experienced children and young adults are protected by a registered workforce that is fit to practise.
3. We support services to attract and develop the staff needed to support care experienced children and young adults.

1. We put care experienced children and adults at the heart of what we do

1a. Future Proofing Programme

Our [Future Proofing Programme](#) aims to make registration simple and easy to understand. We want people to know about the benefits and value of registration and the standards, skills and qualifications needed to deliver high quality care.

- In May 2024 we will publish the revised [Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers](#). The review of the Codes is a key part of our commitment to keep the promise. They will reflect many of the priorities and ambitions set out as part of the promise such as a focus relationship-based practice. We are working with The Promise Scotland to develop a resource that will help children and young people to understand and engage with the Codes.
- In June 2024 we are introducing new requirements for registrants' continuous professional learning (CPL). Our model sets out essential skills and knowledge for each register group. We will set out proposed pathways for registrants and specialist pathways. Our approach has eight core learning elements and suggested learning topics. Child protection, adult protection and trauma informed practice will be mandatory requirements for all register groups.
- In June we are also introducing Return to Practice (RTP) requirements for social workers who have been out of practice and who have not registered for over two years. We want to make sure that social workers update their knowledge, skills and competence while building their confidence to practice. Social workers will demonstrate learning across four themes such as adult and child protection.
- The time to achieve a required qualification will reduce from five to three years. The exception will be new registrants with no recognised qualification joining as a supervisor, manager or residential childcare worker.

'It is the opinion of the Review that the Future Proofing Programme work...has the potential to contribute to more effective registration practices that support the workforce and those using services.'

Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation of Social Care in
Scotland, 2023



1b. Revising the Common Core of skills, knowledge, understanding and values

- [The Promise's Change Programme ONE](#) identifies the need for a national values-based recruitment and workforce development framework which will be adhered to by all organisations and people involved in supporting children and families. As part of that commitment we are leading work to refresh and embed the [Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values for the Children's workforce in Scotland](#). We will work with partners to make sure that the Core is meaningful and helps to drive values-based recruitment and workforce development.

1c. Registration

- As of September 2023, there are approximately 170,000 registered people working in social work, social care and children and young people services, including social workers and people working in day care of children, residential childcare and residential school care accommodation services. This figure is approximately 80% of the total social service workforce of 211,510 in Scotland. In 2023 we began publishing a new series of reports on our register. During 2022/23 [all but two parts of our register increased in size](#).
 - The number of people working in day care of children services on our Register grew from 42,425 in 2022 to 44,290 in 2023. +1,865 (+4.40%)
 - The number of registered social workers increased from 10,674 in 2022 to 10,826 in 2023. +152 (+1.42%)
 - In 2022/23 the number of people working in residential childcare services fell from 8,230 in 2022 to 8,153 in 2023.
 - As of February 2024 more than 85% of practitioners in day care of children services meet our qualification requirements for registration.

1d. Supporting vulnerable Fitness to Practise witnesses

- We may ask care experienced children and young people to attend a hearing as a witness, although this is rare. We support all vulnerable witnesses – including care experienced children and young people - to attend hearings. We assign a hearings officer to support a witness before, during and after a hearing. All our hearing officers are trained mental health first aiders. We put special measures in place to protect vulnerable witnesses when giving evidence in hearings. These can include using a video link, using pre-recorded evidence, or using a screen. We are securing an advocacy and intermediary service for witnesses and members of the public complainants.
- We are considering further improvements as part of the Open University's Witness to Harm project examining witnesses' experiences of Fitness to Practise hearings.

1e. Assessing our impact and putting people first

- In 2022 we published [Involving People: Our engagement strategy and framework 2023-2026](#). The Framework sets out the importance of taking a people-led approach to designing our services. The Framework highlights our commitment to follow the principles of the [Scottish Approach to Service Design](#). Stakeholders contribute to the development of our learning resources and supported a review of the way we contact people as part of our Fitness to Practise processes.
- We use Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) to help us consider the needs of diverse groups when we make decisions. Our assessment prompts us to consider care experience as part of the development of everything from our continuous education policy to our Future Proofing Programme. We are taking steps to streamline our process and to make sure we think about care experience and children's rights from the start of our work.
- We must do more to support children, young people and adults to access their rights. We are looking at how we can do more to make our resources accessible as we prepare for the commencement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

1f. Supporting the SSSC's workforce

- Our staff conferences have had sessions with The Promise and Who Cares? Scotland. We held a session with Each and Every Child on the need to reframe the way we view care experience. We continue to develop regular briefings for our staff on our Corporate Parenting, how Scotland is keeping the promise, our role and key publications such as The Promise's Plan 21-24.
- In April 2023 we achieved the Gold Standard for Investors in People and we are on track to keep it. We have recently achieved the Silver Investors in Young People Award. These awards recognise several areas such as our work to promote learning and development opportunities and to support our staff health and wellbeing.
- Our People Strategy sets out our ongoing commitment to continue developing our staff and our drive to be a trauma informed organisation. We continue to explore how we can support more people with care experience to consider, join and develop a career with us.
- We deliver or arrange staff training on topics such as child protection, adult support and protection, human rights, unconscious bias and children's rights. We are developing further training on people protection.

'The presentation by Who Cares? took me back to front line practice and why we do what we do.'

'Who Cares? Scotland session was excellent, highly informative and I can use this in my role.'

Survey responses following SSSC staff conference

1g. Supporting panel members

- Fitness to Practise panel members receive support and training on key areas such as unconscious bias and bespoke training on trauma informed question techniques.

2. We do what we can to ensure that care experienced children and adults are protected by a registered workforce

We continue to work closely with The Promise and others to deliver the actions in Plan 21-24. Our key priorities include the implementation of our Future Proofing Programme and supporting the development of a trauma-informed workforce.

2a. Developing the social work, social care and children and young people workforce

- We are working with UK partners to review the National Occupational Standards (NOS). The NOS describe the knowledge, skills and understanding that a worker needs to be competent at their job. All qualifications accepted by the SSSC to meet qualification requirements are underpinned by the NOS. We will revise the language and strengthen elements of the current qualifications to meet ambitions in the Promise such as upholding and promoting rights and compassionate care. We will consider children's views as part of the review. The review will be complete by December 2025.
- [The SSSC's Learning Strategy 2021-24](#) sets out our approach to providing workers, employers and others with learning support. In recent years our resources have supported priorities including the implementation of the:
 - National guidance for Child Protection
 - Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland Act 2019)
 - Keeping Sisters and Brothers Together: Sibling national guidance
- Our learning resources are available from our [Learning Zone website](#). They include the [23 Things ELC Leadership resource for early learning and childcare services](#) and the Safe Administration of Medication (SafeMed).
- In 2023 we created the [National Directory of Continuous Professional Learning \(CPL\) for the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce](#). These free modules that cover several topics including supporting parents to further engage in child development and building confidence in identifying and responding to additional support needs.
- We supported the development of the National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) training programme. This is a comprehensive training programme that underpins the Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing. The training is for police officers and social workers who conduct joint investigative interviews.

2b. Promoting a trauma informed approach in social work, social care and children and young people workforce

- We support the Scottish Government and our partners to develop a trauma informed and trauma responsive workforce and services. We continue to promote the [National Trauma Training Programme](#) resources. We are working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and other partners to promote the National Trauma Transformation Programme's learning resources.
- We want to embed trauma informed practice in qualifications, CPL requirements and programme delivery. We want our learning resources to be accessible to all and to make sure the workforce has increased access to wellbeing support.
- We have an endorsement process which recognises the NES national trauma and learning resources that support the social work, social care and children and young people workforce to gain the specialist skills and knowledge they need to carry out their role. We monitor and review the resources to ensure they are up to date for current practice. We signpost to these resources in the suggested learning to meet the mandatory CPL requirements and specify the required level of training for different roles. We also highlight trauma informed practice on our [Newly Qualified Social Worker website](#).
- We have embedded QR codes into the national trauma training modules so that learners can record learning via our [My Learning App](#) and the NES Turas platform.
- We are supporting the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser's work on the development of reflective practice resources to support social workers.

2c. A trauma informed SSSC

We want to be a trauma informed organisation. We want to use language that is inclusive, welcoming and follows trauma informed practice.

- Fitness to Practise staff have had trauma informed training and a session on the Trauma Informed Justice Framework.
- We have set up a Trauma Informed Champions Group. The Group uses a trauma informed lens to consider implications for the SSSC. The group are reviewing our policies and are considering training for our wider workforce.
- Panel members have been receiving training and awareness sessions on trauma informed practice since 2021. Members have recently had training on the Trauma Informed Justice Framework and trauma informed questioning.
- We have renovated our office and hearing rooms, using a trauma informed lens to provide calm, suitable spaces.

2d. A regulated workforce protects people who use services

Fitness to Practise (FtP) is about protecting and enhancing the safety and welfare of people who use services. A minority of SSSC registrants come into contact with our FtP processes. We must be sure that people on our Register meet the standards of character, conduct and competence necessary to do their job safely and effectively in line with the SSSC Code of Practice. We investigate concerns about workers and act where necessary. We continue to improve our approach to FtP and have made several improvements since 2021.

- We [updated and combined the FtP rules](#) and [decisions guidance for FtP Panels and SSSC staff](#). The guidance sets out priorities such as our focus on helping decision makers to reach proportionate and fair decisions, to be consistent and transparent. We are making it easier for employers to identify when to raise FtP concerns with us. In 2022 we updated our [Fitness to Practise Thresholds Policy](#) and our [Employer Referral Guidance](#).
- We have introduced a [dedicated and independent wellbeing line for people undergoing FtP investigations](#). We also have links to [free online resources](#) including webinars and wellbeing articles. We signpost workers to independent advisors such as a trade unions and professional bodies.
- We continue to deliver online hearings. Our [Remote Hearing Guidance](#) sets out how we aim to meet everyone's needs. We hold in person hearings where appropriate.
- We are recruiting legally qualified chairs for our Fitness to Practise Hearings. Chairs must be aware of trauma informed practice and the [Trauma Informed Justice Framework](#).
- We encourage registrants to take part in hearings as it gives them a chance to explain their position on allegations. We also know that registrants who take part in hearings often have a better outcome. Before the pandemic approximately 26% of registrants took part in hearing. In 2022/23 this figure increased to 56%. We are working with key partners such as local law clinics and centres to explore how we can improve worker representation.
- In January 2024 we published the [first Fitness to practise data report](#).

2e. Using data to support workforce planning and to inform our understanding of regulation

- As the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce we are in the unique position of holding reliable information on the registered workforce. [We recently published a report on the 168,000 people on our Register](#). Our data helps Scottish Government, employers and others to identify trends and supports workforce planning.
- We continue to publish data on vacancies and key policy priorities. For example, in 2022 and 2023 we published a [report examining ten years of residential childcare workforce data](#) and a report on the [movement of day care of children workforce](#). These reports provide critical information on the profile of the workforce and inform the expansion of funded early learning and childcare.

2f. Understanding vacancies and workforce trends

- In September 2023 [the SSSC and the Care Inspectorate published the Staff Vacancies in Care Services 2022 report](#). The report has data from the Care Inspectorate's annual returns and provides the authoritative source of data on the sector. It shows the number and percentage of residential childcare services reporting that hard to fill vacancies has continued to increase since 2020, with over half of all services reporting difficulties as of December 2022.
- In October 2023 we published our first new report examining data on [vacancies and hard to fill vacancies for practicing social workers \(PSWs\)](#). The report covers main grade social workers (SW) and senior social worker (SSW) posts. The report shows a slight increase in the number of whole time equivalent (WTE) practising social workers over a five-year period. It also shows an overall PSW vacancy rate of 11.8%. The report is a snapshot as of June 2023 and we intend to publish these reports every six months.

3. We support social services to attract and develop the staff needed to support care experienced children and adults

3a. Attracting people to work in social work, social care and children and young people services

- We work with Scottish Government and others to promote career pathways. We continue to scope graduate apprenticeship routes and new pathways for senior phase pupils. We are supporting the development of a graduate apprenticeship for social work. We are also developing a new integrated qualification which would allow individuals to work across different roles and settings.
- In October 2023 the SSSC and Care Inspectorate published [new guidance on safer recruitment](#). The guidance highlights the way that people with care experience suffer stigma and highlights the need for employers to take a trauma informed approach. The guidance also suggests some practical steps such as sources of funding for learning, paying for expenses to attend an interview and offering enhanced feedback. The guidance signposts recruiters to several key resources and organisations such as Redress Scotland and Who Cares? Scotland.
- We work with Skills Development Scotland to promote Modern Apprenticeships (MAs). We manage the MA for social services and healthcare (SSH) and social services (Children and Young People). An MA is available for people of any age and can support recruitment and retention. There is also the opportunity to receive enhanced funding to enable better service to care experienced and disabled people up to the age of 29. We continue to share stories as part of [Modern Apprenticeship week](#).
- We worked with Disclosure Scotland to create a podcast about the disclosure process, including the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. The podcast explores:
 - how care experience can unfairly result in an increased likelihood of contact with the police for some behaviours by young people
 - how we consider any individual circumstances such as previous convictions in recruitment.



- approaches for people concerned about past convictions
- how employers can consider lived experience as an asset.
- We worked with relevant universities and the Social Work Education Partnership (SWEP) to explore additional funding models across social work education support for social work students during a particularly challenging economic climate.
- We supported the College Development Network to implement a new online 'Introduction to a career in social care' course. We meet with colleges and umbrella bodies to identify actions we can take to improve communication between colleges and employers to increase recruitment opportunities for those participants who wish to move into employment.
- Our [Careers in Care website](#) helps people to identify and develop their career. It includes case studies from social work, residential childcare and day care of children services. In 2023 we added further information and case studies.

3b. Support people to work in social work, social care and children and young people services

- We are working with Scottish Government and partners to promote social work career pathways. We continue to scope a new graduate apprenticeship route.
- We host a regular employability and careers group with employment support providers, employers and national partners. The members share information and good practice aimed at improving career entry routes for people who experience barriers to work, including those with previous care experience which might have impacted on their choices and opportunities. These events help to highlight the diverse pathways available and where additional support is available for people with different backgrounds and experiences, with care experience one example.
- We work with organisations supporting young people to overcome personal life challenges. For example, we collaborated with the Princes Trust to provide flexible online and in-person employability programmes to young people up to age 30. Our Career Ambassadors regularly take part in information sessions with young people completing the Princes Trust's Explore social care courses. A key highlight are Celebration events at the end of the programmes where inspiring young people share what they have learned and talk about their future aspirations.
- The Scottish Government intends to implement a mandatory Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQS) Supported Year in Scotland from September 2024. An overarching aim of this project is to make sure that all NQSWs have the support they need to make the transition from education to the workplace.
 - We have developed recommendations to support the implementation of a sustainable and accessible approach to implementing the supported year. We have continued to undertake research and a pilot study to prepare for the supported year.

- Several areas are undertaking a small scale early implementation of the NQSW supported year. These include 12 local authorities, two health and social care partnerships and SWIIS Foster Care Scotland. In November 2022 [a further ten areas](#) were awarded grant funding to implement the NSQW Supported Year.
- Further information on the development of a Newly Qualified Social Worker Supported Year (NQSW) in Scotland is available from our [NQSW website](#).



Care experience and children’s rights plan 2024-2026

This plan sets out our key outcomes as a Corporate Parent between 2024 and 2026. These outcomes reflect our statutory responsibilities, our [Strategic Plan for 2023-2026](#) and our ongoing activities to support Scotland’s care experienced children, young people, adults and families. It also sets out the steps that we will take to continue to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into our work.

Monitoring

- Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG) will monitor and review the progress on our actions.
- We will report on progress in our next reports.

Outcome 1: SSSC’s employees and our stakeholders will have knowledge, skills and opportunities to support children and care experienced children, young people and adults

Action	Lead Directorate	Timescales
New training resources for our employees 1. Continue to support our employees to consider the corporate parenting duty and the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (The UNCRC Act).	Strategy and Performance	July 2024
Meeting our statutory obligations 2. Publish and monitor our care experience report and children's rights plans. 3. Introduce a new integrated assessment process. The new assessment will include statutory assessments such as the Equality Impact	Strategy and Performance Strategy and Performance/Finance and Resources	May 2024 April 2024

<p>Assessment (EQIA) and a requirement to consider a trauma informed approach to our work.</p> <p>4. Undertake an internal review of our readiness for the Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and investigate where we can do more to treat care experience as a protected characteristic at the SSSC.</p>	Strategy and Performance	July 2024
<p>Supporting our future and current SSSC workforce</p> <p>5. Consider and implement recommendations following our recent Investors in Young People Silver Award. The findings will contribute to our next People Strategy.</p> <p>6. Enhance training and development opportunities for young people across SSSC, including links with education, training and apprenticeship providers and reestablish young people mentoring scheme, create and support employee networks and ensure young people's forum has a voice in influencing policies and strategies.</p>	<p>Finance and Resources</p> <p>Finance and Resources</p>	<p>New People Strategy in 2024/25.</p> <p>October 2024</p>
<p>Supporting our stakeholders</p> <p>7. Continue to publish National and Official Statistics on the wider social work, social care and children and young workforce which support planning and raise awareness of the role and challenges for people who support children and care experienced children, young people and adults.</p>	Workforce, Education and Standards	Ongoing

Outcome 2: We support the development of trauma informed approach in the social work, social care and children and young people workforce, and within the SSSC

Action	Lead Directorate	Timescales
8. Embed trauma informed practice in the Codes of Practice, qualifications, continuous professional learning requirements and programme delivery.	Workforce, Education and Standards	Codes covered under Future Proofing Programme. Wider work to promote trauma informed practice: ongoing.
9. Complete a trauma lens assessment for the SSSC, exploring areas such as access to building and our policies. Support our staff to become trauma informed using the National Trauma Transformation Programme (NTTP) materials.	Organisational Development and Human Resources	Ongoing
10. Support employers to develop their own trauma resources and to use the NTTP resources to support learning and staff wellbeing. Support wider work to develop a trauma informed social work approach. We are working with social workers to develop a better understanding of professional supervision and how it informs trauma informed practice.	Workforce, Education and Standards	Ongoing
11. Secure an advocacy and intermediary service for fitness to practise witnesses and member of the public complainants.	Regulation	Ongoing

Outcome 3: Children and care experienced people are supported by a workforce that is confident, competent and is supported with their wellbeing

Action	Lead Directorate	Timescales
Implement the Future Proofing Programme		
12. Implement our Future Proofing Programme. Revise the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and work with The Promise to help children and young people to understand their rights and what they can expect from workers and employers. Before we can	All directorates	Codes of Practice: May 2024

make any changes our legislation will have to be updated. The Scottish Government recently held a consultation on our proposals.		Registration changes: If our legislation is updated we would start making changes in early 2024 ahead of the go live date in summer 2024.
13. Implement the Continuous Professional Learning and Return to Practice models.	Workforce, Education and Standards	June 2024.
Newly Qualified Social Work Supported Year		
14. Support the implementation of a mandatory Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQS) Supported Year in Scotland.	Workforce, Education and Standards	Implementation of mandatory year provisionally scheduled from September 2024.
Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values for the Children's workforce in Scotland	Workforce, Education and Standards	Launch of new Common Core: 1 st Quarter of 2024/25. Work to implement Common Core to continue after that date.
15. Lead and work with children and young people and key stakeholders to refresh and embed the Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values for the Children's workforce in Scotland, and work with key partners to support ongoing implementation of framework.		
Consider views of care experience children and young people as part of development of standards and resources		
16. Consider children's views as part of the review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS). The NOS describe the knowledge, skills and understanding that a worker needs to be competent at their job.	Workforce, Education and Standards	Revised NOS by December 2025.
17. Continue to work with key stakeholders, employers and the workforce to develop learning resources.	Workforce, Education and Standards	Ongoing

<p>Protecting witnesses</p> <p>18. Consider improvements resulting from Open University's Witness to Harm project. The study is examining patient, family and colleague witnesses' experiences of Fitness to Practise proceedings.</p>	<p>Regulation</p>	<p>Study due to report in 2024.</p>
---	-------------------	-------------------------------------



Scottish Social Services Council
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Tel: 0345 60 30 891
Email: enquiries@sssc.uk.com
Web: www.sssc.uk.com

If you would like this document in another format,
please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

© Scottish Social Services Council 2024

Children's Rights Report 2023

June 2024

Contents

Foreword	2
Who we are and what we do	3
The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and The Promise	5
The UNCRC.....	5
The Promise	5
Introduction	7
Reporting on progress	7
Promoting children’s rights at the SSSC 2021-2024.....	8
Cluster 1: Definition of the Child	8
Cluster 2: General measures of implementation and Cluster 3: UNCRC general principles	8
Cluster 4: Civil rights and freedoms and Cluster 5: Violence against children.....	11
Cluster 6: Family environment and alternative care, Cluster 7: Basic health and welfare and Cluster 8: Education, leisure and culture	12
Cluster 9: Special protection measures	14
Action plan 2024-2026.....	14
Appendix: UNCRC Clusters	15



Foreword

All children have the same rights. Public bodies such as the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) must set out how we promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in our work. This report summarises our activities over the past three years and our next steps.

Our regulatory role is one of the key ways we promote children's rights. We have more than 170,000 people on our Register. These workers have or are working towards qualifications that support them to deliver critical services for children, young people and their families every day. A small number of workers fall short and we continue to take action where necessary. Most people working in these services support children to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential. They also drive Scotland's wellbeing economy.

We have introduced a National Directory of Continuous Professional Learning for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) workforce and we have – jointly with the Care Inspectorate – developed new guidance on safer recruitment. We continue to contribute to key policy priorities such as the expansion of funded ELC. We work closely with several partners such as Disclosure Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland.

Our Future Proofing Programme is a key part of our drive to modernise regulation and to keep the Promise. In May 2024 we will publish revised Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers. We are also updating Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) requirements and introducing return to practice requirements for social workers. All these initiatives respond to key priorities such as the need to promote trauma informed practice. We are also leading work to implement the updated Common Core, the national framework setting out the values, knowledge and skills we expect of everyone working with children and young people.

Alongside this report we publish a separate one setting out how we will put care experience at the heart of what we do over the next three years. That report has an action plan setting out our next steps to support care experienced children, young people and how we will promote children's rights. We have much to do over the lifetime of the plan. We must work in partnership with many people to keep the promise, meet our corporate parenting duties and reinforce a children's rights based approach which require collaboration and shared ambitions. All these activities are part of our unwavering focus on putting care experienced children, young people and adults and children's rights at the centre of service delivery and our approach.

We welcome your feedback on this report and how we can continue to improve the way we promote children's rights throughout our work.

Maree Allison, Interim Chief Executive

Who we are and what we do

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce.

We protect the public by registering this workforce, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national codes of practice for people working in social work, social care and children and young people services and their employers
- register this workforce and make sure they adhere to the SSSC codes of practice.
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social work, social care and children and young people workforce
- lead workforce development and planning for this workforce in Scotland and provide national and official statistics.

Our strategic plan

The Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2026 sets out our strategic themes and outcomes. The work we will deliver through this plan will have a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of people using social work, social care and children and young people services. We have four strategic themes and each has its own outcome.

- **Trusted:** People who use services are protected by a regulated workforce that is fit to practise.
- **Skilled:** Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.
- **Confident:** our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.
- **Valued:** the social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.

'We believe in designing our services with you, this is the key to achieving our vision to be a public service that makes a positive and lasting contribution.'

SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and The Promise

The UNCRC

The UNCRC sets out who children are, their rights and the role of governments. Most countries have signed up to the UNCRC. The UNCRC sets out the rights of children such as the right to:

- not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after
- give their opinions freely on issues that affect them
- food, clothing and a safe place to live
- use their own language, culture and religion.

In Scotland, many public bodies such as the SSSC must report on the steps they are taking to promote the UNCRC in their work. This report covers the SSSC's work between March 2020 and 2023. The Scottish Government is introducing a Bill that will further incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. One of the Bill's aims is to give key bodies the power to challenge decisions that are not compatible with the UNCRC.

The Promise

The Promise is about making sure that Scotland's care experienced children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected. Keeping the promise is very important to the SSSC. Our role in keeping the promise includes the review of the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and leading a review of the Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values for the Children's Workforce in Scotland. Further information is included in our separate report on supporting care experienced children, young people and adults.

 <p>1</p> <p>DEFINITION OF A CHILD</p>	 <p>2</p> <p>NO DISCRIMINATION</p>	 <p>3</p> <p>BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD</p>	 <p>4</p> <p>MAKING RIGHTS REAL</p>	 <p>5</p> <p>FAMILY GUIDANCE AS CHILDREN DEVELOP</p>	 <p>6</p> <p>LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT</p>	 <p>7</p> <p>NAME AND NATIONALITY</p>
 <p>8</p> <p>IDENTITY</p>	 <p>9</p> <p>KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER</p>	 <p>10</p> <p>CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES</p>	 <p>11</p> <p>PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING</p>	 <p>12</p> <p>RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS</p>	 <p>13</p> <p>SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY</p>	 <p>14</p> <p>FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION</p>
 <p>15</p> <p>SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS</p>	 <p>16</p> <p>PROTECTION OF PRIVACY</p>	 <p>17</p> <p>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>	 <p>18</p> <p>RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS</p>	 <p>19</p> <p>PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE</p>	 <p>20</p> <p>CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES</p>	 <p>21</p> <p>CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED</p>
 <p>22</p> <p>REFUGEE CHILDREN</p>	 <p>23</p> <p>CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</p>	 <p>24</p> <p>HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p>	 <p>25</p> <p>REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT</p>	 <p>26</p> <p>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP</p>	 <p>27</p> <p>FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p>	 <p>28</p> <p>ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p>
 <p>29</p> <p>AIMS OF EDUCATION</p>	 <p>30</p> <p>MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION</p>	 <p>31</p> <p>REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p>	 <p>32</p> <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p>	 <p>33</p> <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS</p>	 <p>34</p> <p>PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	 <p>35</p> <p>PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING</p>
 <p>36</p> <p>PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p>	 <p>37</p> <p>CHILDREN IN DETENTION</p>	 <p>38</p> <p>PROTECTION IN WAR</p>	 <p>39</p> <p>RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION</p>	 <p>40</p> <p>CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW</p>	 <p>41</p> <p>BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES</p>	 <p>42</p> <p>EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</p>
<p>43-54</p>  <p>HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS</p>	<h1>CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD</h1>					



Introduction

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires the SSSC to sets out the steps that we are taking to promote the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in our work.

- We published our previous report in 2021 and set out many of our actions over the previous three years. That report highlighted our ongoing work to register and regulate the workforce and the training our staff receive around taking statements or evidence from vulnerable people. This report sets out the steps that we have taken since then.
- We have developed an action plan setting out the steps that we are taking to promote care experience and children's rights. That action plan is included in the separate report on care experienced children, young people and adults published alongside this one.
- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 will have implications for our reporting and the way we consider children's rights in our work. We are currently considering the implications for our work.

Reporting on progress

The UNCRC articles are often arranged into nine clusters. We use these clusters to report on progress. This approach is the internationally recognised way of reporting on progress and the Scottish Government recommend it in their guidance on developing UNCRC reports. We refer to the simplified Articles as listed on the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland's website:

<https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/articles/>

There are nine clusters in total, ranging from cluster one (definition of the child) to cluster nine (special protection measures.)

- A list of the nine clusters is in the appendix.
- The appendix also lists the relevant Articles associated with each cluster.

We do not have to report on every cluster and some of our work applies to more than one cluster. To reduce duplication we have combined many of the clusters.

Promoting children's rights at the SSSC 2021-2024

Cluster 1: Definition of the Child

This cluster confirms that a child is anyone under the age of 18.

Cluster 2: General measures of implementation and Cluster 3: UNCRC general principles

- Cluster two is about the measures that we use to implement the UNCRC in our work. It includes legal measures such as laws and non-legal measures such as strategies, training and awareness raising. This cluster also covers the role of data in improving outcomes for children.
- Cluster three is about the four general principles of the UNCRC.
 - All children have these rights (Article 2)
 - Adults must do what's best for me (Article 3)
 - I should be supported to live and grow (Article 6)
 - I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12)

Regulating the workforce

- As of September 2023 we have more than 170,000 people on our Register working across Scotland. These people are in several different roles and functions such as social work, residential care childcare and day care of children services. These people hold or are working towards the qualifications they need to support them to deliver critical services to Scotland's children, young people and families. Further information on qualifications is available from our [Workforce Skills Report \(WSRs\)](#). Further information on our fitness to practise role is under cluster four and five.

Futureproofing our Register

- Our Future Proofing Programme (FPP) aims to make registration simple and easy to understand. We want people to know about the benefits and value of registration and the standards, skills and qualifications needed to deliver high quality care. We are planning to make several changes to simplify the system and to provide better outcomes for children, young people and their families. These include reducing the time that some people have to achieve the qualifications they need for registration. These changes would apply to new people joining our registration. Further information about these changes and wider futureproofing activity is available from our website: www.sssc.uk.com

Reviewing the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers

- A key part of our Future Proofing Programme is our review of the [Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers](#). The review of the Codes is a key part of our commitment to keep the promise. We will publish the new Codes in May 2024. The revised Codes reflect many of the priorities and ambitions set out as part of the Promise such as a focus on relationship-based practice. We are working with The Promise Scotland to develop a resource that will help children and young people to understand and engage with the Codes.

A new Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) approach and supporting return to practice

- As part of our Future Proofing Programme as we are setting new requirements for registrants' continuous professional learning (CPL). The new model will launch in June 2024. sets out essential skills and knowledge for each register group. We set out proposed pathways for registrants and specialist pathways. Our approach has eight core learning elements and suggested learning topics. Child protection, adult protection and trauma informed practice will be mandatory requirements for all register groups.
- In June 2024 we are also introducing Return to Practice (RTP) requirements for social workers who have been out of practice and who have not registered for over two years. We want to make sure that social workers update their knowledge, skills and competence while building their confidence to practise. Social workers will show learning across four themes such as adult and child protection.

'It is the opinion of the Review that the Future Proofing Programme work...has the potential to contribute to more effective registration practices that support the workforce and those using services.'

Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation of Social Care in
Scotland, 2023

Promoting trauma informed practice in the social work, social care and children and young people workforce

- We support the Scottish Government and our partners to develop a trauma informed and trauma responsive workforce and services. We continue to promote the [National Trauma Training Programme](#) resources. We are working with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and other partners to promote the National Trauma Transformation Programme's learning resources. We want to embed trauma informed practice in qualifications, CPL requirements and programme delivery. We want our learning resources to be accessible to all and to make sure the workforce has increased access to wellbeing support.

- We have an endorsement process which recognises the NES national trauma training and learning resources that support the social work, social care and children and young people workforce to gain the specialist skills and knowledge they need to carry out their role. We monitor and review the resources to ensure they are up to date for current practice. We signpost to these resources in the suggested learning to meet the mandatory CPL requirements and specify the required level of training for different roles. We also highlight Trauma informed practice on our [Newly Qualified Social Work website](#).
- We have embedded QR codes into the national trauma training modules so that learners can record learning via our [My Learning App](#) and the NES Turas platform. We are also supporting the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser's work on the development of reflective practice resources to support social workers.

Promoting trauma informed practice at the SSSC

We want to be a trauma informed organisation. We want to use language that is inclusive, welcoming and follows trauma informed practice.

- Fitness to Practise staff have had trauma informed training and a session on the Trauma Informed Justice Framework.
- We have set up a Trauma Informed Champions Group. The Group uses a trauma informed lens to consider implications for the SSSC. The group are reviewing our policies and are considering training for our wider workforce.
- Our Panel members also received training and awareness sessions on trauma informed practice since 2021. Members have recently had bespoke training on trauma informed questioning and Trauma Informed Justice Framework. They have also received training on unconscious bias.
- We have renovated our office and hearing rooms, using a trauma informed lens to provide calm, suitable spaces.

Revising the Common Core of skills, knowledge, understanding and values

- [The Promise's Change Programme ONE](#) identifies the need for a national values-based recruitment and workforce development framework which will be adhered to by all organisations and people involved in supporting children and families. As part of that commitment we are leading work to refresh and embed the [Common Core of skills, knowledge and understanding and values for the Children's workforce in Scotland](#). We will work with partners to make sure that the Core is meaningful and helps to drive values-based recruitment and workforce development.

Assessing our impact

- We use Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) to help us consider the needs of diverse groups when we make decisions. Our assessment prompts us to consider care experience as part of the development of everything from our continuous education policy to our Future Proofing Programme. We are taking steps to streamline our process and to make sure we think about care experience and children's rights from the start of our work.



Using data to drive improvement

As the regulator for the social work, social and children workforce we hold authoritative data on the 170,000 people on our Register. Our data helps employers and commissioners to build a sustainable workforce. We publish regular reports and tables on the number of workers on our Register and the wider social work, social care and children and young people workforce. We also publish reports on vacancies and on sectors and areas such as residential childcare. These include the [Movement of Day Care of Children Staff Report 2023](#). All reports are available from our [data website](#).

Training and awareness of children's rights

- Our [People Strategy 2021-2024](#) sets out how we will continue to develop the SSSC's workforce. Our priorities include investing in our youngest workers and developing an agile and innovative workforce. We continue to provide opportunities for apprenticeships at the SSSC.
- Our staff conferences have had sessions with The Promise and Who Cares? Scotland. We held a session with Each and Every Child on the need to reframe the way we view care experience. We continue to develop regular briefings for our staff on our Corporate Parenting, how Scotland is keeping the promise, our role and key publications such as The Promise's Plan 21-24.
- We are supporting the Scottish Government's wider work to develop a UNCRC Skills and Knowledge Framework for Scotland. The framework will have a training plan and resources to help everyone to promote a child rights approach.

Cluster 4: Civil rights and freedoms and Cluster 5: Violence against children

- Cluster four focuses on children's rights and freedoms and covers several key articles such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the right to education.
- Cluster five covers several key articles such as protection from all forms of violence and ensuring no child is subject to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Supporting vulnerable Fitness to Practice witnesses

- We may ask care experienced children and young people to attend a hearing as a witness, although this is rare. We support all vulnerable witnesses – including care experienced children and young people – to attend hearings. We assign a hearings officer to support a witness before, during and after a hearing. All our hearing officers are training mental health first aiders. We put special measures in place to protect vulnerable witnesses when giving evidence in hearings. These can include using a video link, using pre-recorded evidence, or using a screen. We are securing an advocacy and intermediary service for witnesses and members of the public complainants. We are also considering further improvements as part of the Open University's Witness to Harm project examining witnesses' experiences of Fitness to Practice hearings.



- We are making it easier for employers to identify when to raise FtP concerns with us. In 2022 we updated our [Fitness to Practise Thresholds Policy](#) and our [Employer Referral Guidance](#).
- We have also published a statement with the Care Inspectorate to remind people about the [Raising concerns in the workplace guidance](#). The guidance is for workers, employers and social work students.

Cluster 6: Family environment and alternative care, Cluster 7: Basic health and welfare and Cluster 8: Education, leisure and culture

- Cluster six is about the family, ensuring that children receive good quality care when they live away from family and the right to be protected.
- Cluster seven is about health and welfare of children and considering the rights of disabled children.
- Cluster eight focuses on the rights of children to have an education that will help them to achieve their potential without discrimination.

Identifying the key skills, knowledge and values required to care for children and young people and managing Modern Apprenticeships

- We continue to develop learning resources for social work, social care and children and young people services. Our resources align with the UNCRC and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC.) Our resources have and continue to support several priorities such as:
 - the National Guidance for Child Protection
 - the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019
 - the Keeping Sisters and Brothers Together sibling national guidance.
- We are working with our partners to do a review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS). The NOS describe the knowledge, skills and understanding that a worker needs to be competent at their job. All qualifications accepted by the SSSC to meet qualification requirements are underpinned by the NOS. The review will identify current skills gaps such as trauma informed practice. The review will revise the language and strengthen elements of the current qualifications to meet ambitions in the Promise such as upholding and promoting rights and compassionate care. We will consider children's views as part of the review. The review will be complete by December 2025.

We continue to develop several learning resources for the workforce.

- In 2023 we developed a [Quality Improvement \(QI\) learning resource to help improve the equality of outcomes for people who use services](#) and an [eBook on understanding Positive Behaviour](#).



- In 2022 we developed the [23 Things ELC Leadership resource for early learning and childcare services](#).
- In 2023 we created the [National Directory of Continuous Professional Learning \(CPL\) for the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce](#). This includes free modules which cover several topics such as supporting parents to be more confident in identifying and responding to additional support needs.
- We supported the development of the National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) training programme. This is a comprehensive training programme that underpins the Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing. The training is for police officers and social workers who conduct joint investigative interviews.
- We are developing a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Integrated Health and Social Care at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 7. The new award responds to the drive to deliver health and social care services in a more collaborative and integrated way. The Award also supports the movement of workers across health, social care and the children and young people workforce. The qualification will complement current SVQs in social services or health care.

Attracting people to work in social work, social care and children and young people services

We work with Scottish Government and others to promote career pathways. We continue to scope graduate apprenticeship routes and new pathways for senior phase pupils. We are supporting the development of a graduate apprenticeship for social work. We are also developing a new integrated qualification which would allow individuals to work across different roles and settings.

In September 2023 the SSSC and Care Inspectorate published [Safer recruitment through better recruitment](#). The new guidance has sections on promoting care experience throughout. The guidance also has links to support and advice.

We work with others supporting young people to overcome challenges. For example, we collaborated with the Princes Trust to provide flexible online and in-person employability programmes to young people up to age 30. Our [Career Ambassadors](#) regularly take part in information sessions with young people completing the Princes Trust's Explore social care courses. A key highlight are celebration events where inspiring young people share what they have learned and talk about their future aspirations.

Our [Careers in Care](#) website has all the information people need to begin and develop a career in social services. The site includes interactive learning resources, information on qualifications and case studies.

We supported the College Development Network to implement a new online 'Introduction to a career in social care' course. We meet with colleges and umbrella bodies to identify actions we can take to improve communication between colleges and employers to increase recruitment opportunities for those participants who wish to move into employment.

We manage the [Modern Apprenticeship \(MA\) Frameworks for Social Services and Healthcare \(SSH\) and Social Services \(Children and Young People\)](#) as part of our [Skills](#)



[for Care and Development](#) role. Social Service apprenticeships are two of the most popular frameworks across Scotland and account for almost 20% of all MAs in the past year. A number of young people under 18 undertake MAs and we continue to celebrate Scottish Apprenticeship Week every year.

Cluster 9: Special protection measures

- Cluster nine focuses on groups of vulnerable and marginalised children who require special protection. They include asylum-seeking and refugee children, victims of trafficking or exploitation.

Supporting refugees and asylum seekers

We work with the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Refugee Council to develop key resources for the sector. We have developed a guide for [Ukrainian nationals](#) and a [Pre-Employment and Induction Guide for Employers of Overseas Workers, Refugees and Asylum Seekers](#).

Action plan 2024-2026

Our Care experience report – published alongside this report – sets out our plan for 2024-2026.

Appendix: UNCRC Clusters

Reporting

The UNCRC has 54 articles and three optional protocols. These articles cover every aspect of a child's life and sets out their rights. For example, Article 28 and 31 covers the right to education and the right to relax and play. All rights are equally important.

The United Nations and the [Scottish Government's guidance on children's rights reporting](#) recommend using nine clusters of articles to show progress on children's rights. The following table lists the nine clusters and a brief description of each. This table uses the [UNCRC Simplified Articles on the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland website](#). Listed authorities such as the SSSC can choose which clusters they report on.

Much of what we do applies to more than one cluster. For example, the regulation of the children's workforce supports several children's rights including 'Adults must do what's best for me' (Article 3) and 'I should be supported to live and grow' (Article 6).

Table: UNCRC clusters, descriptions and articles

Cluster and description	UNCRC Articles
1. Definition of the Child	Article 1 defines a child as anyone under 18 years of age.
2. General measures of implementation – this cluster is about how we can implement the UCNRC through law, policy and decisions. This includes non-legal measures such as strategies, action plans and training.	The Government should make sure my rights are respected (Article 4)
3. UNCRC general principles – this cluster focuses on the four general principles of the UNCRC.	All children have these rights (Article 2) Adults must do what's best for me (Article 3) I should be supported to live and grow (Article 6) I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12)

<p>4. Civil rights and freedoms – this cluster focuses on children’s rights and freedoms such as the rights to be protected from inhumane or degrading treatment.</p>	<p>I have a right to a name and to belong to a country (Article 7)</p> <p>I have the right to an identity (Article 8)</p> <p>I have the right to find out and share information (Article 13)</p> <p>I have the right to have my own thoughts and beliefs and to choose my religion with my parent’s guidance (Article 14)</p> <p>I have the right to meet with friends and to join groups (Article 15)</p> <p>I have the right to keep some things private (Article 16)</p> <p>I have the right to get information in lots of ways, so long as its safe (Article 17)</p> <p>I have the right to an education (Article 28)</p> <p>I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way (Article 37)</p> <p>I have the right to get legal help and to treated fairly if I have been accused of breaking the law (Article 39).</p>
<p>5. Violence against children – this cluster covers all forms of violence including physical and mental abuse and neglect.</p>	<p>I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated (Article 19)</p> <p>I have the right to an education (Article 28)</p> <p>I have the right not be punished in a cruel or hurtful way (Article 37)</p> <p>I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated (Article 39)</p>
<p>6. Family environment and alternative care – this cluster focuses on the primary role of parents. It includes the</p>	<p>The Government should respect the right of my family to help me know about my rights (Article 5)</p>

<p>rights of children not to be separated from parents unless it is in their best interests.</p>	<p>I have the right to live with a family who cares for me (Article 9)</p> <p>I have the right to see my family if I live in another country (Article 10)</p> <p>I have the right not to be taken out of the country illegally (Article 11)</p> <p>I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible (Article 18)</p> <p>I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated (Article 19)</p> <p>I have the right to special protected and help if I can't live with my own family (Article 20)</p> <p>I have the right to have the best care if I'm adopted (Article 21)</p> <p>If I'm not living with my family, people should keep checking I'm safe and happy (Article 25)</p> <p>I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing (Article 27)</p> <p>I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated (Article 39)</p>
<p>7. Basic health and welfare – this cluster focuses on health, welfare and consideration of disabled rights.</p>	<p>I should be supported to live and grow (Article 6)</p> <p>I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible (Article 18)</p> <p>If I have disability, I have the right to special care and education (Article 23)</p> <p>I have the right to good quality health care, to clean water and good food (Article 24)</p>

	<p>My family should get the money they need to help bring me up (Article 26)</p> <p>I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing (Article 27)</p> <p>I should be protected from dangerous drugs (Article 33).</p>
8. Education, leisure and culture – this cluster focuses on the right of all children to an education. This includes the right to play, rest and leisure.	<p>I have the right to an education (Article 28)</p> <p>I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment (Article 29)</p> <p>I have a right to speak my own language and to follow my family's way of life (Article 30)</p> <p>I have a right to relax and play (Article 31).</p>
9. Special protection measures – this cluster focuses on groups of vulnerable and marginalised children who require special protection. They include asylum-seeking and refugee children, victims of trafficking or exploitation.	<p>If I am a refugee, I have the same rights as children born in that country (Article 22)</p> <p>I have a right to speak my own language and to follow my family's way of life (Article 30)</p> <p>I should not be made to do dangerous work (Article 32)</p> <p>I should be protected from dangerous drugs (Article 33)</p> <p>Nobody should touch me in ways that make me feel uncomfortable, unsafe or sad (Article 34)</p> <p>I should not be abducted, sold or trafficked (Article 35)</p> <p>I have the right to be kept safe from things that could harm my development (Article 36)</p>

	<p>I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way (Article 37)</p> <p>I am not allowed to join the army until I am 15 (Article 38)</p> <p>I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated (Article 39)</p> <p>I have the right to get legal help and to be treated fairly if I have been accused of breaking the law (Article 40).</p>
--	--



Scottish Social Services Council
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Tel: 0345 60 30 891
Email: enquiries@sssc.uk.com
Web: www.sssc.uk.com

If you would like this document in another format,
please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

© Scottish Social Services Council 2024

Title of report	Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation of Social Care in Scotland (IRISR)
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	To provide Council Members with an update on the Ministerial response to the IRISR and the work the SSSC is doing to support the recommendations.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to note this update on the IRISR and our activities.
Author	Neil Macleod Policy and Equality Manager
Responsible Officer	Maree Allison, Interim Chief Executive
Link to Strategic Plan	<p>The information in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: Trusted People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Skilled Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Confident Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: Valued The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is 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 rights standards and qualifications to gain and maintain registration.</p> <p>Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations.</p>

	Risk 4: We fail to provide value to stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.
Impact assessments	No impact assessments were required.
Documents attached	Appendix 1: IRISR Recommendations and SSSC Activity, March 2024

INTRODUCTION

1. On 23 September 2022 the Scottish Government announced its intention to carry out an independent review of inspection, scrutiny and regulation (IRISR). The review was published on 27 September 2023. The SSSC supported and informed the review. We also provided written evidence. The final report explores five key themes.
 - Theme 1 – A person centred approach
 - Theme 2 – What need to be inspected, scrutinised and regulated?
 - Theme 3 – How should inspection, scrutiny and regulation be carried out?
 - Theme 4 – How will we know systems are working?
 - Theme 5 – How will systems of inspection, scrutiny and regulation support the workforce?

On 6 March 2024 the Scottish Government formally responded to the IRISR. The Scottish Government has accepted all 38 recommendations.

2. This report highlights our current and planned activity in relation to relevant recommendations. The work we deliver under the recommendations support the delivery of improved outcomes under the Scottish Government Public Services Reform agenda. We are working to deliver an improved streamlined regulatory process, involve people in our work and deliver improvements with our partners across Scotland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The IRISR identified an implementation gap between the intention of regulation and the experience of those who use and work in social care support services and set out 38 recommendations to close that gap. The appendix summarises our current and planned activity on relevant recommendations.
4. The response recognises that there is already significant work underway to address many of these recommendations. The Scottish Government's response focused on three of the recommendations, all of which are relevant to the SSSC.
 - Recommendation eight explores a bespoke scheme of registration for Personal Assistants (PAs). It confirms that the Scottish Government will not consider further actions on this recommendation under the current work to implement the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 and the PA Programme Board Work activities have progressed. The appendix provides a summary of our contribution to this activity.
 - Recommendation 15 is a review of the care service types and corresponding definitions as set out in set out in schedule 12 of the Public

Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. This work has implications for our legislation.

- Recommendation 33 is a review of the Health and Social Care Standards. We contributed to the previous review of the Standards in 2017 and would expect to be involved in this review. The Care Inspectorate has the same statutory duty to take into account the Health and Social Care Standards when carrying out its statutory functions as it does in relation to the Employer Code of Practice.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

5. Many of our activities relate to more than one of the IRISR recommendations. These include the following. Recommendation numbers in brackets:
 - Our review of the Codes of Practice for Social Services and Workers and Employers contributes to the drive to put trust, respect, relationships, ethos and culture (2) and to be better at taking account of people's experiences of service delivery (16).
 - Our work on the development of a Continuous Professional Learning Model contributes to the focus on outcomes (20) and can inform the recommendation that Scottish Ministers review the sufficiency, quality and availability of resources for training, development and improvement (37).
 - Our work on developing robust workforce data contributes to recommendations on sharing data for service planning (28) and ensuring that regulators collect the right data (30).
6. We are particularly pleased to see recommendation 15 on the review of the care service types and definitions. The previous work on this was paused during lockdown in 2020. This work will support several priorities and will make it easier for people to work across different services.

REGULATING NEW GROUPS

7. Recommendation nine is that there 'should be a universal requirement to obtain registration with a regulatory body for all social care support staff appropriate to their role and setting and that this should be a condition upon joining the social care workforce.'
 - We have recently submitted a proposal to Scottish Government covering groups such as social work assistants and workers in adult day care services.

- The IRISR notes that agency staff currently need to be registered with the SSSC but the services do not. It also notes that there are no routine inspection, scrutiny or regulatory arrangements in place for drug and alcohol services. We will explore these areas with our Scottish Government Sponsor, the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (OCSWA)

CONSULTATION

8. No specific consultation has taken place as this report brings together our current and planned activity in relation to the IRISR recommendations. Consultation and involving stakeholders is planned for individual projects.

RISKS

9. The Scottish Government is committed to implementing the IRISR recommendations. We have a cautious approach to policy changes that impact on regulation of the workforce. However, we have an open appetite for areas of our work that create opportunities to support workforce development, initiatives and policies designed to improve the delivery of social work, social care and children and young people services.

RESOURCING

10. This report does not identify any new resource implications, although there may be some from implementing some of the recommendations.

COMPLIANCE

11. This report does not identify any new legal or relevant matters.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

12. Impact Assessments were not required for this report. Many of the actions identified in our summary of the recommendations have or will require an EQIA or other impact assessments.

CONCLUSION

13. The Council is asked to note this update on the IRISR and our current and planned activities.

IRISR recommendations and SSSC activity March 2024

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
<p>1. It is recommended that inspection, scrutiny, and regulatory bodies consistently apply a human rights-based approach that places people at the centre of the process.</p>	<p>Fitness to Practise (FTP) are exploring how we can further promote a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in our processes. This includes exploring how we make our work more focused on the needs of people as we conduct investigations. An initial priority is about developing our understanding of registrants' experiences.</p> <p>A sub-group of the SSSC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG) is considering what a HRBA means more generally for us. This includes developing a better understanding of what HRBA means to staff and an internal audit of our approach.</p> <p>The FTP review and our EDIG sub-group will identify further improvements to our approach.</p> <p>We are reviewing the impact of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. The Act aims to ensure that public bodies respect and protect children's rights in their work.</p>
<p>2. It is recommended that matters of trust, respect, relationships, ethos and culture be placed at the heart of inspection, scrutiny, and regulation and should be reflected in reports.</p>	<p>We have reviewed the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers (the Codes) based on consultation with the sector. The new Codes launch in May 2024. The revised Codes reflect current thinking on several areas around relationship-based practice, kindness and compassion.</p> <p>We are developing an easy read version of the Codes. The easy read version will provide a summary of the purpose of the Codes and the key points.</p> <p>We will launch the new Codes in May 2024.</p> <p>We are also exploring how we make the Codes more accessible to young people</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
	in support of the Promise.
<p>3. It is recommended that inspection, scrutiny, and regulatory bodies must set out clearly in their annual report how they have led and cultivated a culture of openness and trust.</p>	<p>Through the Future Proofing Programme (FPP) we have improved our approach to involving people and stakeholders in our work. Our annual report will reflect the detail of this activity.</p> <p>We will share further information publicly on our registrants and stakeholder surveys. This will include further information on the results and the steps we are taking to address feedback.</p>
<p>4. It is recommended that inspection, scrutiny, and regulatory bodies make appropriate arrangements to engage people with lived and living experience in co-designing engagement tools and developing the inspection and regulatory frameworks.</p>	<p>People who use services and carers contributed to recent and ongoing activity such as the FPP, Review of the Codes, supporting the development of our Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) model (launches June 2024) and quality assurance.</p> <p>We are taking steps to further formalise the way we involve people and registrants in our work. An initial priority is to explore if we can revise the Future Proofing Programme’s Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to support consultation and engagement.</p> <p>We are developing a policy for paying people to participate in our work.</p>
<p>5. It is recommended that a strengthened system be put in place for people to have a formal role as lay inspectors in the process of inspection, scrutiny, and regulation, including young people with care experience. An appropriate level of remuneration should be made available.</p>	<p>Not directly relevant to SSSC.</p>
<p>6. It is recommended that inspection bodies’ approach to engagement must be flexible, inclusive and appropriate.</p>	<p>We have accessibility guidance for our employees. We are considering accessibility as part of activities such as promoting a HRBA and reviewing the impact of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
This includes allowing sufficient time for responses to be made and making suitable arrangements for conversations to take place with individuals, family members and staff, ensuring consistency and accessible information is available.	(Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. See Recommendation one for further information.
7. It is recommended that independent advocacy is available for people to help them exercise their rights, and when necessary, to provide support to navigate complaints and any escalation process.	<p>The National Care Service (NCS) Complaints Workstream is looking at the provision of advocacy services to support people through the complaints and escalation process.</p> <p>We work with law clinics to support registered workers to access free representation when they are involved in our FTP investigations and hearings.</p>
<p>8. It is recommended that a co-produced and bespoke scheme of registration for Personal Assistants (PAs) which recognises their skills and role, and opens up access to training and development, should be developed. Such a scheme would expressly seek to not create barriers, and through coproduction, would create positive opportunities for both the Personal Assistant and their employer.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government (SG) will not consider further steps to implement recommendation eight until work with Disclosure Scotland (on implementation of Disclosure Scotland Act 2020) and the PA Programme Board work plan activities have been progressed.</p> <p>We are in favour of exploring the registration of PAs. PAs can be carrying out the same role as regulated staff, and we think it is important for the protection of service users.</p> <p>There are challenges with how PA registration with the SSSC – if the SG chose to progress this - would fit our current system of regulation. We set out these challenges in our response to the IRISR and as part of the development of the NCS.</p> <p>We continue to contribute to the work of the PA Programme Board and Steering group. We specifically support two of the Boards sub groups on</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training - wellbeing. <p>The PA Programme Board has four objectives. One of these is on supporting the development of the PA workforce with recruitment, retention and training. Another area is on developing robust data on the numbers of PAs and estimating future demand.</p>
<p>9. It is recommended that there should be a universal requirement to obtain registration with a regulatory body for all social care support staff appropriate to their role and setting and that this should be a condition upon joining the social care workforce.</p>	<p>The majority of the social care workforce is already regulated by the SSSC. We have submitted a proposal to SG covering other groups such as social work assistants and workers in adult day care services. We are scoping the numbers of sexual offender liaison officers (SOLOs) and Sexual Violence Offender Liaison Officers (SAVOLO) in Scotland.</p> <p>We support the expansion of registration to those, such as healthcare support workers, who are not registered.</p> <p>For us, the issue that those registered with another regulatory body cannot register with the SSSC remains an issue.</p> <p>There is a need to examine a particular situation around non-SSSC registered managers. SSSC registered managers must hold or obtain a management qualification at degree level. This requirement recognises the skill and knowledge necessary for individuals to effectively manage care services.</p> <p>Non-SSSC registered managers are typically in following two roles, although there may be others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nurse managers working in care homes and registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) • teacher managers working in children’s services and registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS).

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
	<p>The Care Inspectorate (CI) does not require these managers to hold or be working towards a management qualification.</p> <p>The review also highlights that there are currently not routine inspection, scrutiny or regulatory arrangements in place for drug and alcohol services. We will explore these areas with our Sponsor in Scottish Government, the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (OCSWA).</p>
<p>10. It is recommended that inspection, scrutiny, and regulation should be extended to areas not part of the current system, including agencies who provide social care support staff, to help drive continuous improvement and deliver better outcomes.</p>	<p>Social Work and social care staff who are registered with agencies already require to be registered with the SSSC if they are engaged to work in roles subject to required registration.</p> <p>We have a concern that other types of employment types may not fall within the scope of legislation and lead to people falling out of regulation. More work to consider this is welcomed.</p>
<p>11. It is recommended that further development of stronger links between regulatory bodies across all areas within and out with the borders of Scotland should be established to ensure better regulation, transparency and accountability of providers of social care support services.</p>	<p>We have an Alliance with the social work and social care professional regulators across the UK and have strong links with professional health regulators.</p> <p>We have Partnership agreements with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the CI. We continue to work closely with other public bodies and partners such as Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland.</p> <p>We are working with standard setting organisations and sector skills councils on the review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS.)</p>
<p>12. It is recommended that the best practice from other nations' regulatory landscape is explored and considered with a view to enhancing transparency</p>	<p>There are statutory requirements that care services have a manager. If the manager is SSSC registered we can take regulatory action if they fail to ensure that the staff in their service are registered and adhering to the Codes.</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
and accountability, particularly in relation to there being a named, accountable link to registration, inspection and local employees.	The CI have statutory powers to enforce the Code of Practice for Employers.
13. It is recommended that The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 be reviewed to ensure consistent, effective and comprehensive applicability of the fit and proper person provisions across social care support services in Scotland.	We would welcome steps to ensure that all managers are registered as this will support professional regulatory oversight.
14. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers make appropriate arrangements for market oversight and sustainability in the social care sector.	We support the CI's position on regulating providers.
15. It is recommended that the list of care service types and set of corresponding definitions as set out in Schedule 12 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 are assessed for fitness for purpose.	The registered workforce is defined through employment in care services (apart from social workers, students and CI Authorised Officers). Thought must be given to the impact on our regulatory framework if any changes are made to care service definitions.
16. It is recommended that inspection, scrutiny, and regulation processes more fully take account of an individual's experience of service delivery and their overall care journey to understand, follow and evaluate the person's social care	We are doing more to embed lived and learned experience in our work. People already contribute in several ways. For example, nearly 250 people who use services and carers participated in our recent Codes consultation. We have also had significant feedback on the development of the CPL model. Involving People Engagement Strategy and Framework 2023-2026

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
support experience over time and their impacts.	
17. It is recommended that clear and accessible information about the agencies and their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities is provided for all those who require social care support services.	Further information on our approach to accessibility is covered under recommendation six.
18. It is recommended that Scottish Government work with the regulators to clarify roles and responsibilities between organisations to streamline inspection activity, remove repeat inspections by different agencies and to reduce duplication and omission. This should include reviewing how joint inspections are currently carried out, encouraging more partnership working and joint inspections, and greater involvement of people in receipt of social care support in inspection, scrutiny, and regulation.	Not directly relevant to SSSC as about inspection of services.
19. It is recommended that inspectors and regulators, whilst fulfilling their statutory duty to identify shortcomings in improvement, should also place equal weight on identifying good practice, innovation and improvement across the sector.	<p>Our workforce development function is about improvement and we share good practice and innovative approaches in our learning resources. We specifically support the development of the workforce in respect of quality improvement.</p> <p>We are developing our approach to data to assist us identify and amplify good practice.</p> <p>We continue to develop our partnerships with other regulators to deliver more joined up improvement support.</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
	<p>We continue to support the development and implementation of the National Improvement and Learning Framework for adult social care and community health services.</p> <p>We work with partners to increase access to quality improvement learning and support partnerships, services and workers to drive improvement.</p> <p>We engage with workers and services to promote improvement and innovation via our quality improvement learning network and other development activities.</p>
<p>20. It is recommended that an emphasis on outcomes and continuous improvement becomes a central focus of inspection, scrutiny, and regulation.</p>	<p>We have a workforce development role and we are introducing a new CPL framework in June 2024 which will require registered workers to ensure they develop their practice every year.</p>
<p>21. It is recommended that there should be a duty on the regulator/inspector to work more closely with the provider on agreeing action plans and timescales for continuous improvement recommendations that are additional to regulatory requirements and improvement notices.</p>	<p>We work alongside the CI where appropriate to support services to improve.</p>
<p>22. It is recommended that the Scottish Government updates and clarifies its expectations regarding the National Performance Framework (NPF) in relation to publicly funded delivery bodies, particularly with respect to outcomes for social care support services.</p>	<p>We await further information from Scottish Government on the NPF.</p>
<p>23. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers should review legislation to</p>	<p>We understand that there are already proposals to provide the SSSC with statutory powers to compel recovery of documents and witnesses which will</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
ensure that regulatory bodies have adequate enforcement power.	address our challenges with enforcement.
<p>24. It is recommended that a duty to self-report should be reviewed to ensure that self-reporting is inherently linked to continuous improvement, whilst also ensuring the regulatory bodies have appropriate powers to act when issues are identified.</p>	<p>There are statutory requirements on employers to report dismissals for misconduct.</p> <p>Social service workers and employers must adhere to the Codes which requires them to refer themselves or make referrals about staff to us in accordance with our FTP guidance.</p> <p>We do not have a concern about self-reporting of the registered workforce, or employer reporting of dismissals.</p>
<p>25. It is recommended that there is clear and accessible public information about how to raise a concern and systems of complaints. Those systems of complaints should be easy to use, have accessible detail about routes of escalation with clearly defined outcomes that can include redress for people.</p>	<p>There is already a government workstream looking at the complaints process for the NCS, including improving the current process.</p> <p>The SSSC is leading on the workforce strand.</p> <p>To develop a one-stop-shop for complaints, as envisaged for the NCS will require further work beyond improving the existing system.</p>
<p>26. It is recommended that the Scottish Government should make arrangements to ensure appropriate oversight of regulatory provision of social care support and consider whether there should be separate arrangements put in place for Scotland, in this respect.</p>	<p>We do not think that further scrutiny is necessary for the SSSC as the professional regulator of the social service workforce.</p> <p>We are an NDPB (Non Departmental Public Bodies) accountable to government and subject to the remit of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.</p>
<p>27. It is recommended that qualitative measures should be codesigned by the regulatory agencies and people with</p>	<p>People who use services and carers have informed the development of the Codes and the Continuous Improvement Model.</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
<p>lived and living experience to ensure that they include elements of services that are important to people.</p>	<p>We support the Scottish Government and our partners to develop a trauma informed and trauma responsive workforce and services. We continue to promote National Trauma Training Programme and learning resources. We want to embed trauma informed practice in qualifications, CPL requirements and programme delivery.</p> <p>We want our learning resources to be accessible to all and to make sure the workforce has increased access to wellbeing support.</p> <p>We want to be a trauma informed organisation. We want to use language that is inclusive, welcoming and follows trauma informed practice. FTP staff have had trauma informed training and a session on the Trauma Informed Justice Framework. We have established a Trauma Informed Champions Group. The Group uses a trauma informed lens to consider implications for the SSSC.</p> <p>Panel members have been receiving training and awareness sessions on trauma informed practice since 2021. Members have recently had training on the Trauma Informed Justice Framework and trauma informed questioning.</p> <p>We have renovated our office and hearing rooms, using a trauma informed lens to provide calm, suitable spaces.</p> <p>We are developing a policy in line with SG guidance that will support us to pay for individuals to be involved in shaping the work we do. We will have this in place in 2024/25 and will be developing the structures required to support people with lived experience to be involved with codesigning the work we do.</p>
<p>28. It is recommended that the sharing of data is examined, with the people at the centre of the process having access to their own data in formats that facilitate their</p>	<p>We have a Data and Intelligence Strategy and delivery plan and are an Office for National Statistics (ONS) provider. We develop data sharing agreements with external stakeholders when required and share our workforce and registration data for specific as well as more general purposes.</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
<p>understanding of it in order to support decision making and their involvement in this. This data should also be utilised for service planning and improvement, both strategic and operational.</p>	<p>Our data triage group has managed over 170 data requests from internal and external partners such as NES, SG, HIS, and Public Health Scotland to support the development of services for workers and people who use services.</p> <p>We are part of the Sharing Intelligence for Health and Care Group chaired by HIS.</p>
<p>29. It is recommended that data is utilised for social care planning and individuals, and their advocates, have access to this to inform their choices.</p>	<p>We have a Data and Intelligence Strategy and delivery plan and are an ONS provider. We develop data sharing agreements with external stakeholders when required and share our workforce and registration data for specific as well as more general purposes.</p>
<p>30. It is recommended that the type of data collected, and its purpose, is reviewed to ensure that the right data is collected for the right reasons, with a focus on data supporting performance management and service improvement.</p>	<p>Our data triage groups manage on average 170 requests from external partners in NES, SG, HIS, Public Health to develop data sets and share data to make decisions about the development of services for workers and people who use services. We are part of the Sharing Intelligence for Health and Care Group chaired by HIS. We are also part of several Scottish Government and other key groups such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Strategy Delivery sub-board • Health and Social Care Data Standards sub-board • Social Work Workforce Data Short Life Working Group (SLWG) to support the development of the National Social Work Agency (NSWA) and implementation of Govt policy • the Children's Services Data SLWG examining children's services data • the Care Home Review Group. <p>Our Social Services Workforce Data & Planning Group also engage with key stakeholders and connect with the wider data agenda set out in the above groups.</p>
<p>31. It is recommended that the type of data collected, and its purpose, is</p>	<p>Our role is set out under recommendation 30.</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
reviewed to ensure that the right data is collected for the right reasons, with a focus on data supporting performance management and service improvement.	
32. It is recommended that there is a 'duty to co-operate' placed upon service providers to share data appropriately and equally upon regulatory bodies to work together to avoid duplication in their requests for information.	We understand that the NCS legislation will include powers to compel recovery of documents and witnesses which will address a challenge we have.
33. It is recommended that a review of the Health and Social Care Standards takes place to ensure they are based on human rights, ethical commissioning and are outcomes focused. The Standards should be the basis on which social care support services are inspected, scrutinised and regulated.	We would anticipate a role in the new workstream announced 6 March to review Health and Social Care Standards. We will need to consider any implications for our work, including the Codes. The recently revised Codes are aligned to the current Health and Social Care Standards.
34. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers should review the powers of intervention and enforcement currently in place, where providers fail to meet workforce registration obligations or fail to follow the codes of conduct and consideration be given as to where powers of enforcement should lie.	<p>The CI has the statutory responsibility to take into account the Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers when carrying out its regulatory function.</p> <p>There is also the anomaly where managers of services who are registered with another professional regulator cannot register with the SSSC. See recommendation nine.</p>
35. It is recommended that regulators and providers examine ways in which the workforce can become more actively involved in the inspection process, on a	We are working with CI, NES and HIS to deliver the Care Experience Improvement Model (CEIM) leaders programme. The programme supports teams across health, social work and social care to develop, embed and maintain a process and culture that systematically identifies and makes meaningful

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
basis of mutual trust and respect.	<p>improvements based on the feedback of people who use their services.</p> <p>People who use services and carers have and continue to support the development of our CPL Model. This includes our testing the new model ahead of the launch in June 2024.</p>
<p>36. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers align the social care workforce in a coherent model, based on fair work, to support the sustainability of the workforce and to help drive continuous improvement.</p>	<p>We contribute to work streams under the Fair Work agenda to improve outcomes of workers in the sector. We have made available relevant learning resources to support the delivery of the Effective Voice (EV) pilot in which employers and workers are testing the implementation of EV standards.</p> <p>We contribute to the Adult Social Care Ethical Commissioning Group, led by the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS). The group is establishing an agreed set of principles underpinning ethical commissioning and corresponding implementation plan.</p>
<p>37. It is recommended that Scottish Ministers should review the sufficiency, quality and availability of resources for training, development and improvement.</p>	<p>Whilst we are not a training provider we set the standards for qualification and we monitor progress in qualifying the registered workforce. The qualification level in adult social care is below 50% and access to and funding for qualifications is a concern.</p> <p>We have a workforce development role and in June 2024 we are introducing a new CPL framework which will require registered workers to ensure they develop their practice every year. As part of this approach we will be able to direct and mandate training and development on particular topics.</p> <p>In June 2024 we are introducing Return to Practice (RTP) requirements for social workers who have been out of practice and not registered for over two years. We want to make sure that social workers can update their knowledge, skills and competence while building their confidence to practice. Social workers would demonstrate learning across four themes as part of their registration application.</p>

IRISR Recommendation	Activity
	<p>The next steps for the implementation of the FPP are a key priority. The changes take effect from June 2024. A key change will include requiring workers to apply for registration within three months of starting their role.</p>
<p>38. It is recommended that steps are taken to ensure that nationally recognised qualifications that reflect the skills required to work in the social care sector are developed and are portable across the social care sector.</p>	<p>We are working with our UK sector skills partners to undertake a review of the National Occupational Standards (NOS). The NOS describe the knowledge, skills and understanding that a worker needs to be competent at their job. All qualifications accepted by the SSSC to meet qualification requirements are underpinned by the NOS. The review will identify current skills gaps such as trauma informed practice. The review will revise the language and strengthen elements of the current qualifications to meet ambitions in the Promise such as upholding and promoting rights and compassionate care. We will consider children's views as part of the review. The review will be complete by December 2025.</p> <p>We work with Scottish Government and others to promote career pathways. We continue to scope graduate apprenticeship routes and new pathways for senior phase pupils.</p> <p>We are consulting on a new health and social care integrated qualification to reflect the skills needed for an integrated workforce.</p>