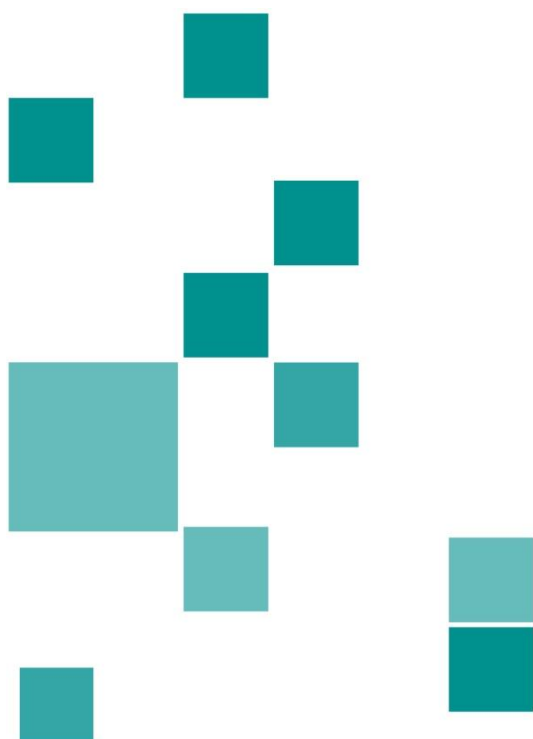


Scottish Social Services Council Learning Strategy 2017-2020

May 2017



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1. What we want to do

- 1.1 The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has a key role in helping the social service sector see the connections in different learning activities and the resources available to support workers and others. To do this, we must engage effectively with the workforce to help workers understand how important their learning is to improving outcomes for people who receive services. We must support social service workers to become self-directing and self-managing learners and a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. We also have a role in supporting formal leaders and employers to develop supportive organisational learning cultures, and supporting them to recognise how staff learning can contribute to the development of organisational culture and positive learning environments.
- 1.2 The strategy's vision is that social service workers feel supported by the SSSC, their employers and others to learn and develop throughout their career, and deliver high quality services by taking responsibility for their learning and practice.
- 1.3 This learning strategy outlines the SSSC's approach to providing workers, employers and others with learning support. It is informed by feedback from a range of stakeholders gathered in the course of the SSSC's learning and engagement activity.

2. Our learning strategy

- 2.1 As the social service workforce regulator and the national lead for workforce development in Scotland we support the development of the social service workforce. We research, design and develop products and engage with the workforce in order to improve the skills and knowledge of workers, helping them to meet the needs of the services they work in and the people who use those services. We recognise the diversity and breadth of the sector in which the workforce operates and how this affects learning activity. We learn from our experience and rely on our collaboration, and often interdependence, with a range of partners in social services and other sectors to meet the different learning needs across the sector. In particular, but not solely, we need to focus this collaboration on supporting those services involved in the integration of health and social care and the expansion of the early years workforce in Scotland.

Our products and services are diverse and include:

- designing, developing and maintaining standards and qualifications
- designing and developing skills and learning resources
- improving ways to support learning and development, for example, through digital learning.

- 2.2 We have developed this learning strategy to bring together all our activity across our learning and development responsibilities. This is a strategy for the SSSC and sets out our organisational approach to delivering our learning and development activity in line with the SSSC's vision and [Social Services in Scotland: A Shared Vision and Strategy 2015-2020](#) (Scottish Government, 2015).
- 2.3 It will also drive learning activity to support employers and workers to learn and develop in a way that works for them and that meets the needs of people using services. It sets the context for learning in social services in Scotland, identifies learning priorities for the sector and establishes the main areas for us to focus our activity. This will help us consider what we should do more of, less of, and differently, and it provides a platform to help us identify our learning activities to 2020.

3. Developing the strategy

- 3.1 To develop the strategy we considered the following areas:
- the context and underpinning principles
 - the central role of standards and qualifications to our learning activity
 - the increasing role the organisation plays in supporting policy and strategy implementation
 - the SSSC's role in supporting culture change across the sector
 - financial and other constraints and their impact on learning and development
 - the potential for increased use of technology in learning and the need to develop digital capability
 - those areas for action set out in Social Services in Scotland: A Shared Vision and Strategy 2015-2020
 - how all SSSC functions can work more collaboratively to support sector learning activity
 - the importance of learning activity being based on sound evidence and how different SSSC teams and external partners can contribute to this, acknowledging that evidence used to inform learning activity may include lived and practice experience.
- 3.2 The strategy contributes to many of [Scotland's 16 National Outcomes](#) particularly those relating to children and young people and their families, tackling inequalities, building strong communities, living healthier lives and delivering high quality public services.
- 3.3 The learning strategy contributes to all of the SSSC's strategic outcomes and priorities identified in the Strategic Plan 2017-2020 but in particular:
- Outcome 2: Our standards lead to a safe and skilled social service workforce (Priority 3: Social service qualifications and standards meet the needs of learners and employers)

- Outcome 3: Our resources support the professional development of the social service workforce (Priority 4: We work with the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser and other partners to achieve the outcomes in Social Services in Scotland: A Shared Vision and Strategy 2015-2020).

4. Learning priorities and underpinning principles

- 4.1 The learning strategy needs to support social service workers to develop as self-directing and self-managing learners to collectively become a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. It also needs to support employers and training providers to develop learning cultures that support this.
- 4.2 In addressing this, it is important to recognise there is a spectrum of learning capability in the workforce. While supporting more traditional and face-to-face learning where relevant, the SSSC will support learners to move from structured and prescribed approaches to learning to more self-directed learning. The SSSC is committed to working with employers to explore the impact of this move to learning that is more work-based.
- 4.3 The SSSC acknowledges the need to work with learners and employers to recognise the interface between self-directed learning, recognition tools such as Open Badges, the prescribed requirements for qualifications (for example, SVQs) for registration, continuing professional development and post registration training and learning (PRTL).
- 4.4 The following key principles underpin the SSSC's work in standards and qualifications development and the creation of workforce learning and development activity and resources.
1. Qualifications and learning resources are designed to maximise learning that takes place directly in the practice context (situated learning).
 2. Where it is not possible to deliver learning in the practice context, learning programmes and resources focus on complex problems and their solutions, and deliver learning in environments which simulate real world practice contexts as closely as possible (authentic learning).
 3. The development and use of digital capabilities is embedded in all qualification structures, programmes and learning resources as appropriate (digital and information literacy).
 4. The development of digital learning skills is encouraged and promoted throughout the workforce. The use of different types and formats of learning is explored and developed.

5. Learning activity is outcomes-focused.
6. Reflection on learning and how it can be used in practice is actively encouraged in all learning activity.
7. Recognition, recording and use of prior and current learning is supported and promoted, including the certification of informal learning.
8. As well as being structured to meet National Occupational Standards (NOS), learning activity is underpinned by frameworks and structures that contribute to personal and professional development, for example, the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers, National Care Standards, Continuous Learning Framework personal and organisational capabilities and leadership capabilities.
9. SSSC functions work together more effectively to inform learning plans.
10. The SSSC works in collaboration with partners to develop learning activities and resources, seeks to minimise repetition of effort in learning and development activity and makes connections between different types of learning.
11. There is less of an emphasis on the development of resources in some areas and an increased emphasis on engaging with the sector to support employers and workers to use existing learning resources and activity.
12. The SSSC models the learning it promotes to the sector and the six leadership capabilities in the way it leads the implementation of the learning strategy. The SSSC works collaboratively and creatively, motivates and inspires, promotes learning for everyone and works with others to ensure the SSSC's vision for learning is recognised and realised.
13. All learning activity has a strong evidence base. We explore sources of internal and external workforce data and intelligence, including sector skills reports, and collate and analyse data across the organisation to inform learning and development activity. This includes learning from the SSSC fitness to practise work.
14. We work with partners to gather evidence to determine what learning activity is working well and what needs to improve, including analysis of scrutiny evidence from the Care Inspectorate.
15. The impact of registration on the sector and how the development of the Register impacts on learning priorities and resources for different types of service is considered carefully and data analysis is used to inform learning and development plans.
16. We plan learning activity in the context of wider public service reform and link where appropriate to the Workforce Scotland agenda.

17. Career long learning is encouraged and supported beyond PRTL and workforce mobility, talent management and succession planning are encouraged.
18. We evaluate all learning activity and the difference it makes is established and reported on. We examine research evidence from the wider learning and development field and consider how this should inform ongoing development activity.

5. SSSC workforce learning plan

- 5.1 We have identified the following actions as SSSC learning priorities to 2020. They contribute to the four action areas identified in Social Services in Scotland: A Shared Vision and Strategy 2015-2020 and we have listed them under each of these below. We will develop an implementation plan detailing specific learning activities for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20, including collaboration with partners. This will include stakeholder mapping, a communications plan, an equality impact assessment and budget requirements. We will access funding for learning activity from grant in aid and a variety of specific project grants. The SSSC Learning and Development Team will lead activity with support from other SSSC teams and external partners.

Supporting the workforce

Designing, developing and maintaining standards and qualifications

1. Create, review, revise and implement NOS in accordance with national and sector priorities.
2. Create, review, revise and develop sector-specific qualifications in accordance with regulation and legislative requirements.
3. In partnership with the sector, develop, approve and quality assure SSSC regulated qualifications.
4. In partnership with the sector, develop and implement the proposed structured framework for newly qualified social workers (NQSW).
5. Support the assessment of international qualifications.

Designing and developing skills and learning resources

6. Review and revise induction resources for the sector incorporating the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers.
7. Continue to support the use of the Continuous Learning Framework personal capabilities to support the development of emotional intelligence alongside other areas of learning including the

development of effective relationships.

8. Encourage the development of leadership behaviours and skills that contribute to the learning process.
9. Support the implementation of social service legislation and policy via the development, delivery and evaluation of learning activity.
10. Develop learning activities that focus on prevention, early intervention and enablement.
11. Ensure learning resources are at the appropriate Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level.
12. Further develop and enhance the SSSC's learning platforms.

Improving ways to support learning and development

13. Engage with the sector and partners in a variety of ways to support the dissemination and reflection of learning.
14. Develop learning activity that supports recruitment and retention and workforce planning across different parts of the sector as required.
15. Develop and implement the Standard for Professional Learning and implement a revised process for PRTL.
16. Develop, promote and implement a structure for post qualifying and career long learning for all parts of the sector, including processes for talent management and succession planning.
17. Develop and implement a plan to support the development of digital learning knowledge and skills across the sector.
18. Provide and administer funding to support learning activity as appropriate.

Understanding service quality and performance

Improving ways to support learning and development

1. Better understand and manage the barriers and enablers of effective learning and use different theories and formats of learning.
2. Continue to support the use of the Continuous Learning Framework organisational capabilities alongside the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Employers and revised National Care Standards to develop supportive learning cultures across the sector.
3. Support the development of activities such as supervision, mentoring and coaching which enhance professional development.
4. Work closely with the Care Inspectorate, Social Work Scotland, Scottish Care, the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland and Iriss to understand the relationship between learning and service quality and performance. Use this to inform learning

plans and support employers and workers to recognise and plan for connections in learning.

Improving use of evidence

Improving ways to support learning and development

1. Consider the SSSC's research capability and take steps to develop a research plan and build it in to future staffing and resource planning.
2. Promote the value of research to inform learning activity across the workforce and evidence informed practice.
3. Explore and develop approaches for capturing and using intelligence and learning from the SSSC's registration and fitness to practise functions.
4. Work closely with employers and other partners to identify learning needs specific to different parts of the sector such as social services integrated with health, early learning and childcare and criminal justice services.
5. Use and commission research, where required, to support the development of learning activity.
6. Work with more experienced research partners to develop a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of SSSC-led learning.
7. Develop the Open Badges system as a means of recognising learning and achievement.
8. Use evaluation of learning activity to inform the SSSC's corporate parenting role.
9. Work closely with the other three home nations and Skills for Care and Development to learn from them and align our learning activity with that elsewhere as appropriate.

Promoting public understanding

Improving ways to support learning and development

1. Support the implementation of the Workforce Scotland programme across social services including engagement with the Pioneering Collaborative Leadership Programme and facilitation activity.
2. Develop the Career Ambassador network and other relevant learning networks.
3. Develop and publicise examples of effective learning in practice which show how learning activity is making a difference to people.

6. Evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy

- 6.1 The Learning and Development Team will work with internal and external partners to identify areas of connection, collaboration and difference in their respective work plans to achieve the outcomes set out in this strategy. The team will work with partners to carefully evaluate and evidence the impact of learning activities always asking: 'How do we know any of our learning activity is making a difference to workers and people who use services?' The team will manage and analyse the collective knowledge in a more considered way and use this shared intelligence to reach conclusions about the impact learning activity is having on the workforce and ultimately the people who receive services. We will report progress towards achievement of the vision annually. In the longer term the impact of the strategy should be reflected in improvements in performance across the sector and the quality of social services provided in Scotland and we will work with our partners to evidence this.
- 6.2 We regularly review and revise SSSC resources based on feedback from stakeholders or changes in policy. The SSSC's Product and Service Development Framework quality assures the development of new resources and services.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This strategy articulates the SSSC's ambition for leading, supporting and developing learning across Scotland's social services. We hope planned learning activity will have a significant impact on the transformational changes needed in practice at individual, organisational and partnership level to deliver public service reform and achieve better outcomes for people supported by social services and those who care for them.
- 7.2 Although the SSSC Learning and Development Team play a key role in supporting learning activity across the sector, it is the responsibility of all parts of the SSSC to contribute to this. Workers across the organisation must work collaboratively to make sure we plan, develop, implement and evaluate sector learning activity effectively. SSSC teams must model the learning we promote in the sector and the SSSC people development plan must recognise this.
- 7.3 This strategy will drive SSSC-led learning activity to 2020 and support the sector to make the best use of limited resources to make sure learning activity supports personal, professional and service development and improvement. Outcomes and experiences of people who use services, and their carers, will be improved because social service workers recognise how important learning is to delivering high quality services, take

responsibility for their learning and putting it into practice, and feel supported by the SSSC, their employers and others to learn and develop throughout their career.



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