

Title of report	Chief Executive's Report
Public/confidential	Public
Action	For information
Summary/purpose of report	To provide Council Members with an update from the Chief Executive.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to: 1. note the information contained in the report and offer comment on the content.
Author and Responsible Officer	Lorraine Gray Chief Executive Tel: 01382 207250
Link to Strategic Plan	Links to all outcomes in the Strategic Plan
Link to the Risk Register	<p>Risk 1: We fail to ensure that our system of regulation meets the needs of people who use services and workers.</p> <p>Risk 2: We fail to ensure that our workforce development function supports the workforce and employers to achieve the right standards and qualifications to gain and maintain registration.</p> <p>Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations.</p> <p>Risk 4: We fail to plan and resource our activities to deliver our digital strategy.</p> <p>Risk 5: We fail to provide value to our stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.</p> <p>Risk 6: We fail to develop and support SSSC staff appropriately to ensure we have a motivated and skilled workforce to achieve our strategic outcomes.</p> <p>Risk 7: The SSSC fail to secure sufficient budget resources to fulfil the financial plans required to deliver the strategic plan.</p>

	<p>Risk 8: The current Business Continuity plan in place, is not up to date, for the SSSC.</p> <p>Risk 9: The SSSC is unable to operate due to effects of global pandemic COVID-19.</p>
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	N/A
Documents attached	None
Background papers	None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As set out in the Executive Framework Document agreed between Scottish Government and the SSSC, the Chief Executive is accountable for the operational performance of the SSSC and responsible for organisational governance. This report provides an assessment of performance, highlights important information that has happened since the last Council meeting on 14 May 2020, and looks forward to emerging issues.

2. OUTCOME 1: PEOPLE WHO USE SERVICES ARE PROTECTED BY ENSURING THE REGULATED WORKFORCE IS FIT TO PRACTISE

- 2.1 We have begun incremental recovery steps in relation to our regulation work. We have started:
- communications relating to the requirement to register for support worker in care at home and housing support
 - removing people from the register who are no longer working in services
 - sending reminders about fees
 - phasing in investigations in fitness to practise cases which were on hold.
- 2.2 Since lockdown we have been operating Temporary Order Hearings remotely. In June we started holding appropriate Impairment Hearings remotely. The feedback from those involved in remote hearings continues to positive. Remote hearings are not appropriate for all cases and our plans to commence physically distanced hearings in the office as of 17 August are in place.
- 2.3 On 26 June 2020 we issued a joint statement with the Care Inspectorate (CI) in response to the Cabinet Secretary for Health's letter to all care home staff to be tested weekly. Since we issued the joint statement there have been a number of meetings and discussions with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders around the testing regime and how to manage staff refusal to be tested. The Scottish Government is reviewing the situation and is providing advice to the Cabinet Secretary

3. OUTCOME 2: THE SSSC SUPPORTS AND ENHANCES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGULATED WORKFORCE TO DELIVER HIGH STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND DRIVE IMPROVEMENT

- 3.1 Applications to the 2020-21 Voluntary Sector Development Fund (VSDF) are now open. It supports voluntary sector organisations providing social services registered with the Care Inspectorate.
- 3.2 We administer the VSDF on behalf of the Scottish Government. Around £900,000 is available during 2020-21 to contribute to costs associated with staff meeting the required registration qualification criteria we set. VSDF funding helps employers to achieve a qualified workforce. A maximum of £1,200 is available for each worker who undertakes the SVQ

in Social Services and Healthcare at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 6.

- 3.3 We have developed a new COVID-19 guide 'Key measures for infection prevention and control' for social care workers providing care in an individual's home. It highlights essential practical actions to support good infection prevention and control practice when providing care in an individual's home during the pandemic. Based on the national domiciliary care guidance from Health Protection Scotland, it will be particularly useful for care at home or housing support workers. The guide is one of a range of resources we have developed with partners to support the workforce during COVID-19.
- 3.4 The National Social Work Education Partnership (SWEP) comprises representatives from the COSLA, SSSC, Heads of Social Work/HEIs, Social Work Scotland, Chief Social Work Officers, Independent Sector, Society of Personnel and Development in Scotland representative of service users and carers and the Scottish Government who have worked together to agree a shared position for resuming social work practice placements.
- 3.5 At its July meeting SWEP agreed that placements should be permitted to resume as from 1 August 2020 where this was agreed by the student, employers and the University. The partnership also recommended that there would be no wholesale suspension of placements in any future lockdown; instead the continuation of the placement will be considered on a case by case basis. SWEP also recognised that not all employers may be able to commence all placements from August, therefore those coordinating placements should prioritise as follows; priority, interrupted placements, second, final placements and then all other placements.
- 3.6 SWEP has secured financial resources to enable the introduction of an additional "Resumption of Placement Fee" to provide a financial contribution to help employers with any additional costs incurred in accommodating a student placement.
- It will be a flat fee of £300 to accompany a student on placement.
 - The same amount will be paid to each employer, whether a local authority or a third sector provider.
 - The fee will be paid in full, upfront at the start of the placement.
 - The resumption of placement fee will only be paid in the financial year 2020/21 because of the changed placement environment resulting from COVID-19.
 - The fee will be paid to HEIs based on the number of student placements, who will then distribute the resources direct to employers.

A total budget of £430,000 is available to be split across HEIs. The grant will be paid directly to HEIs from the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser in the Scottish Government, based on the anticipated number of student placements.

- 3.7 The finance team developed and administered a Hardship Fund for postgraduate social work students who would not normally be eligible for a bursary. We paid a total of £64k to 43 students for the period April to June 2020.

- 3.8 We are working with Skills for Care partners on developing the UK-wide national narrative and key messages to shift perceptions of the social care workforce and begin to address the disparity between social care roles and NHS roles at similar levels. There have been a number of Inspiring Stories of Care – with over 60 stories being gathered. The first major campaign week was launched at the end of July and delivered through our social media channels. We have also almost finished a new web resource with the stories and examples of practice from the pandemic collated under the themes of our Involving People Plan so that the sector, and the SSSC, can learn from the experiences.
- 3.9 In June, the SSSC made a decision to stand with other regulators and voice our views during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. We published the SSSC’s statement on addressing oppression and racism through the work we do with the sector but also in supporting our own internal workforce.

4. OUTCOME 3: OUR WORKFORCE PLANNING ACTIVITIES SUPPORT EMPLOYERS, COMMISSIONERS AND POLICY MAKERS TO DELIVER A SUSTAINABLE, INTEGRATED AND INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE

- 4.1 The SSSC published provisional workforce data on 18 May 2020 to support the Scottish Government with COVID-19 workforce planning. The data includes headcount and whole-time equivalent data and headcount data on all registered care services at the level of individual service including type of service and type of employer. This data is being used to inform and refresh the national health and social care workforce plan which will be published in September and the reform of adult care programme which centres on the fair work agenda leadership and the workforce implications of self -directed support.
- 4.2 We are working in partnership with the department of work and pensions as part of their Getting Scotland Back to Work programme. The focus of this work is on attracting and supporting individuals who have been made redundant as a result of COVID-19 to consider a career in care. This will include working with the Department of Work and Pensions and the college sector to promote care as a sustainable career option. We will use our careers pathways resources, SSSC career ambassadors and the intelligence we hold on vacancies within the social services sector to support this programme. This work will also link to our work to the Scottish Government early year’s workforce expansion policy.
- 4.3 The Health and Care Visa will come into effect from January 2021. The visa will provide ‘fast track entry’ for people who work in eligible professions to come to the UK with their families. The initial list of eligible professions includes social workers. Social care workers are excluded. We recently responded to a call for evidence by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL). The SOL is a government-compiled list of occupations and current evidence suggests that there are not enough UK workers to fill vacancies. We highlighted concerns about the Points Based System and indicated that the wider social care sector would benefit greatly from the opportunity to continue

recruiting non-UK workers. We identified challenges around the recruitment of frontline workers.

- 4.4 The Scottish Government's view is that care home workers must be included in any scheme for post-Brexit work visas. The UK Government and the MAC have both referred to workforce challenges in social care and highlighted the need for employers to focus on investing in our domestic workforce. The Home Secretary is due to consider the MAC's recommendations in September. We will continue to support Scottish Government to monitor the impact of shortages in the workforce through our workforce intelligence data reports and workforce planning activity.

5. DEMONSTRATING OUR ORGANISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 5.1 In November 2019, Beamans carried out a job evaluation of posts with 154 full-time equivalent (FTE) allocated to them (just less than 50% of the staff group). Beamans produced their report in February 2020. The report highlighted that our pay and grading structure is no longer fit for purpose. We were unable to progress this work at the time because of the pandemic. Since May 2020 we have met with Beamans, Unison, the Sponsor and operational managers to discuss our options. To ensure that the SSSC is fit for the future and is an employer of choice the EMT, in consultation and with agreement from Unison, has agreed to carry out a full-scale review of our pay and grading structure. Work is underway to procure expertise in this area. This project could take up to two years. We have kept staff up-to-date on this issue including a live broadcast. We will also involve staff across the organisation in this programme of work.
- 5.2 We now have Lynn Murray, Interim Director of Finance and Resources in post. Lynn's Directorate includes organisational development, legal and corporate governance and has oversight of the shared services which includes finance and resources. In the two months since Lynn's appointment we are already seeing the benefits of having a dedicated SSSC Director of Finance and Resources.
- 5.3 We launched a brand-new programme of projects to support our Organisational Development (OD) implementation. 'Evolve' was launched via live broadcast to SSSC staff by Laura Shepherd and Lynn Murray. The Evolve Programme contains six work-streams. A Director leads each workstream, supported by the new Head of Organisation Development and the Employee Development Adviser, who form the new Organisational Development Team within the SSSC. OD staff and HR staff will work together to deliver improvements across the workstreams over the next 18 months.
- 5.4 We also held interviews for the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Development Adviser. The successful candidates are now in post and will start the process of identifying and delivering development needs for all levels of employees across the organisation.
- 5.5 Within Digital Services there has been an increased focus on cyber security, considering increased off-site access to systems and services. This includes the introduction of multi-factor authentication (MFA) and

other configurations to mitigate against known cyber threats as reported to the Digital Sponsor Group in June 2020.

- 5.6 Detailed discussions are underway on the shared service specification, performance criteria and resourcing of our shared services. Shared services continue to support the COVID-19 response team including significant input to the Recovery Plan particularly from HR, Finance, Estates and Health and Safety.
- 5.7 We implemented an interim pay award in May's salary payment in line with guidance from the Scottish Government. We will finalise other elements of the annual pay award in consultation with the staff side of our Partnership Forum later in the year.
- 5.8 During quarter one, the HR team have supported 20 recruitment campaigns across all four directorates.
- 5.9 We have made significant progress with our payroll/HRMIS service with new functionality being released in both the "employee self-service" and "HR" parts of our system. Some highlights include the introduction of self-service change of details and new HR dashboards that allow more instant access to management information. As well as the new functionality released, some background changes have been made that will enable the release of manager dashboards (e.g. annual leave, sickness, workforce demographics) in quarter two.
- 5.10 Our Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Group has organised regular monthly promotions in line with key monthly UK campaigns. Examples of the most recent information campaigns are Mental Health Awareness Week, National Walking Month and Sun Awareness. HWL has many information campaigns coming up including Cycle to Work Day, which may be promoted a little differently due to current homeworking arrangements, Migraine Awareness Week and World Suicide Prevention Day. We will also be looking to run an Autumn Step Count Challenge to encourage staff to exercise.
- 5.11 The support for all our events and information campaigns is tremendous. In every single event, information campaign or activity, we have had excellent employee participation which we hope will continue as we take forward new activities and challenges.
- 5.12 The legal team staff are members of the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland. The Head of Legal and Corporate Governance recently attended a meeting of the SOLAR Executive Group to share information on how legal teams in a range of public bodies are managing during the pandemic. Some of the topics under discussion included the success of virtual Council and Board meetings, plans for 'hybrid' meetings (where there is a combination of people physically in a room and others virtually) and returning to the office environment. It was a useful discussion platform and the fact that we managed to move to running meetings virtually and broadcast to the public without any interruption to the meeting cycle was not shared by everyone in that group. The SSSC is in a strong position to run 'hybrid' meetings in future thanks to the forward-thinking investment in modern IT equipment and time spent by staff running testing and such meetings internally. We

offered to share our experiences and learning with others in the group who might not be quite as far ahead as us.

6. HORIZON SCANNING

- 6.1 **Care Promise:** On 16 July the Deputy First Minister updated the Parliament on the Care Promise. Fiona Duncan has been appointed as chair of the new oversight board. The recruitment process for the board will continue over the next few weeks.
- 6.2 **The Advisory Group on Economic Recovery:** This wide-ranging report contains several recommendations. These include a recommendation that the Scottish Government accelerates its work on reforming adult social care and urgently reviews the structure, funding and regulation of the sector to ensure its sustainability and quality. The report also highlights the Fair Work Convention's 2019 report on the sector and the critical role of unpaid carers.
- 6.3 **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry:** The Inquiry's hearings on the child migration case study will resume in mid-September. The phase examining the Scottish Government's knowledge and response to abuse is planned for mid-November 2020. The case study on the abuse of children in boarding schools is expected to begin in early 2021.
- 6.4 **Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC):** In July a joint letter from COSLA and the Minister for Children and Young People confirmed that the statutory entitlement to ELC from 11 August will remain at 600 hours. The legal obligation to increase that to 1140 hours from August 2020 has been suspended. A revised date for implementation of the expansion will be confirmed in due course. An initial assessment of readiness will be undertaken by December 2020.
- 6.5 **Children (Scotland) Bill:** The changes proposed by the Bill include the statutory regulation of two court appointed officials - Child Welfare Reporters (CWRs) and Curators ad Litem – and an amendment to the law which would mean that the regulation of CWRs would extend to local authority reporters. There are potential implications for the SSSC as the Scottish Government is keen to encourage more social workers to undertake the role of CWR and many local authority reporters are already social workers. The SSSC has been asked by the Scottish Government to comment on the relevant sections of the Bill.
- 6.6 **Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020:** The Act will lead to mandatory membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme for people carrying out a regulated role with children and adults.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 9.1 Internal stakeholders have contributed to this report. This report also provides information on how we are working with partners and stakeholders to support the sector at this time.

10. IMPACT ON PEOPLE USING SOCIAL SERVICES AND CARERS

- 10.1 There is no direct impact on people who use services or their carers.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This report provides Council Members with updates of matters of strategic importance and demonstrates how we are working to fulfil our statutory obligations during this time.