

SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

**Unconfirmed minutes of the Scottish Social Services Council held on
Thursday 27 May 2021 at 9:30 am by video conference.**

Present: Sandra Campbell, Convener
Theresa Allison, Council Member
Professor Alan Baird, Council Member
Paul Edie, Council Member
Julie Grace, Council Member
Lynne Huckerby, Council Member
Rona King, Council Member
Linda Lennie, Council Member
Peter Murray, Council Member
Russell Pettigrew, Council Member

In attendance: Lorraine Gray, Chief Executive
Maree Allison, Director of Regulation
Cheryl Glen, Acting Director of Development and Innovation
(Workforce Development)
Laura Lamb, Acting Director of Development and Innovation
(Learning and Development)
Lynn Murray, Interim Director of Finance and Resources
Laura Shepherd, Director of Strategy and Performance
Lucy Finn, Head of HR (for item 13)
Anne Garness, Head of Legal and Corporate Governance
Andrew Howe, Head of Digital (for item 14)
Nicola Gilray, Head of Strategic Communications (for items
12 and 15)
David Anderson, Internal Auditor
Audrey Wallace, Corporate Governance Coordinator

Observing: The meeting was live streamed, and the link shared with
SSSC staff and members of the public

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 Sandra Campbell welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that Council Members Lynne Huckerby and Linda Lennie would not be in attendance at the start of the meeting. There were no apologies for absence and the meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Paul Edie declared an interest in items 9 and 10, as Chair of the Board of the Care Inspectorate.

3. Minutes of Previous meetings

- 3.1 The minutes of meeting of 18 February 2021 were approved as a correct record subject to the removal of Russell Pettigrew from the attendance list as he had given his apologies, which had been noted.
- 3.2 The minutes of the private session of the meeting of 18 February 2021 were approved as a correct record.
- 3.3 The minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

Minutes of 18 February 2021 - item 6.6 - Chief Executives report

- 4.1 Alan Baird asked if the information was available on the numbers of care home workers who had taken up the option to receive the vaccinations against COVID-19. Lorraine Gray advised that this information is available on the Public Health Scotland website and the link to this would be shared with Members for ease of reference.
- 4.2 Alan Baird asked if the feedback from the staff conference was available. Lorraine Gray confirmed that this was available and the information would be sent out to Members.

5. Convener's Report

- 5.1 Sandra Campbell presented report 16/2020 which summarised her activities as Convener since the last Council meeting when scheduled business was considered.
- 5.2 The report covered matters such as the organisation's move towards an agile working environment and the future thinking for the sector following the Adult Social Care Review. The report also covered the development sessions held for Members and meetings and activities the Convener had been involved in in her capacity as Convener.
- 5.3 The Council
1. noted the summary of key issues and activities from the Convener's viewpoint.

6. Chief Executive's Report

- 6.1 Lorraine Gray presented report 17/2021 which detailed the SSSC's key performances against strategic priorities and the work of the directorates. She advised that the report was fairly extensive covering several strands of work and current issues.
- 6.2 Several issues were discussed:
- Paragraph 3.8 referred to a wellbeing survey and it was noted that only a small percentage of those invited, responded to this. However, in

mitigation, Laura Lamb explained that this was a very small part of the information gathering on the wellbeing of sector workers. The SSSC is represented on a number of groups carrying out work to support the wellbeing of workers and the survey referred to will feed into the national planning process to provide support to workers.

- Following a question about the increased numbers of requests for our workforce data, Cheryl Glen advised that recently many had come from government with some being used to assist in developing longitudinal research. She advised that all requests for data are recorded and this information will be shared with Council Members. In the future follow up surveys will be carried out with the requestees around six weeks after the information is provided, to obtain feedback on the information provided.
- Alan Baird requested further information on the Leadership and Management Programme and Lorraine Gray advised that running this with the 45 staff members had been a pilot scheme and following feedback the programme would be developed and rolled out.

6.3 The Council

1. noted the content of the report.

7. Audit and Assurance Committee report to Council

7.1 Alan Baird presented report 18/2021 from the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 4 May 2021, along with the assurance report which had been submitted to the Committee and the draft minutes of the meeting.

7.2 He drew attention to the revised format of the assurance report which had been re formatted to provide further useful assurance information, following input at the Member/officer group. He also highlighted the internal audit reports on ICT Systems Access and Regulation Modelling. David Archibald spoke briefly on the reports, the findings, recommendations and the actions already progressed by officers.

7.3 The Council

1. accepted that the assurance report presents a true and fair view of the SSSC's performance towards achievement of strategic objectives, financial management and risk identification and management. In particular that:
 - a. operational performance as measured by strategic key performance indicators gives confidence that the SSSC was delivering as forecasted to meet its strategic objectives as agreed with the Sponsor Department
 - b. financial performance was consistent with forecasted spend and presents no cause for concern relating to year-end outturn of approved budget
 - c. operational delivery and financial expenditure were consistent
2. noted the outcomes from the internal audit reports including the approval of revised completion dates for two recommendations and took sufficient assurances from the management of the internal audit processes that follow

up actions are being monitored, processes are being followed and quarterly reports will confirm progress

3. took assurance from the external audit plan that appropriate processes and timelines are in place for the audit and production of the annual report and accounts
4. noted that the Committee approved the draft Annual Governance Statement for inclusion in the Annual Report and Accounts
5. took assurance that the processes in place have detected no instances of fraud within the organisation for the financial year 2020-21
6. approved the appointment of Russell Pettigrew as the Counter Fraud Coordinator for the organisation and the appointment of Lynn Murray as the Fraud Liaison Officer for the organisation.

8. Draft Audit and Assurance Committee Annual Report to Council

- 8.1 Alan Baird presented report 19/2021, the draft of the Audit and Assurance Committee's Annual report which would be included within the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 when they are presented for approval to Council in October. Comments were invited on the content of the report which provided a summary of the work of the Committee throughout the year and gives the Committee's opinion on the assurance that this work provides.
- 8.2 Alan Baird commended the officers who had worked to improve the governance arrangements of the Council, including Chris Weir, the former Head of Legal and Corporate Governance.
- 8.3 The Council
 1. approved the Annual Report from the Audit and Assurance Committee
 2. noted that the content of the annual report informed the preparation of the draft annual governance statement.

Paul Edie left the meeting for the following two items, having earlier declared an interest in items 9 and 10

9. Review of Scottish Social Services Council and Care Inspectorate Partnership Agreement

- 9.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 20/2021 which demonstrated how the Scottish Social Services Council and Care Inspectorate (CI) will continue to work together across a range of areas. She referred to 2012 when the first agreement came into place and she spoke of the processes which were in place for reporting and monitoring of joint projects. It was agreed that an annual joint meeting would take place between the Board of the CI and the Council and this should be scheduled to receive an annual report following the financial year end.
- 9.2 Members asked for performance measurements to be set against actions to ensure that agreed work is carried out and not allowed to drift due to

competing priorities. Laura Shepherd confirmed that this could only really be done separately by each individual piece of work.

- 9.3 Following a question by the Convener, Laura Shepherd advised that the main pieces of collaborative work carried out last year were in relation to setting up the temporary register and the deployment of care sector workers into areas where they were required. This had involved close working between the two bodies.
- 9.4 Questions on managing shared service staff would be addressed in the following agenda item on Shared Services, however Lynn Murray stated that she would be in-gathering information from shared services staff.
- 9.5 There was some discussion on reporting on the outcomes of the partnership and it was noted that quarterly reports would feed into the annual report which would be submitted to an annual joint CI and SSSC meeting. The report should contain both partnership and shared services outcomes and information.
- 9.6 The Council
1. approved the revised agreement
 2. agreed that an annual joint meeting between the Council and Board of the CI should be requested and if agreed by the CI Board, meetings scheduled in order to receive the annual reports on partnership working and shared services outcomes at the end of each financial year.

10. Shared Services Agreement – Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Inspectorate

- 10.1 Lynn Murray presented report 21/2021 which included the governance documents for the shared services arrangements for approval. She advised the Council that the documents were based on previous documents and took into account the advice given by CIPFA. The documents have been reviewed by the internal auditors and performance measures will be kept under review. Where KPIs are set, targets must be sensibly set and developed over time.
- 10.2 The board of the CI will consider the governance documents at its meeting on 17 June 2021. Should there be minor amendments it is suggested that these be made by Lynn Murray, but any major issues would require to be brought back to Council.
- 10.3 Members supported maintaining a separate risk register for shared services, but also the inclusion of the high-level risk associated with shared services within the strategic risk register.
- 10.4 Sandra Campbell thanked Lynn Murray and her team for bringing this matter to this point, it has taken some time to bring together the governance arrangements of the shared services. Lynn Murray advised on the timetabling of the governance meetings including monthly meetings of the Shared Services Oversight Group and quarterly meetings of the Review Board. Following the second quarterly meeting of the Review Board there will be an update report to Council and thereafter an annual report to Council on performance of the

service. It was also noted that within the Audit Plan there was an audit of the service to be carried out one year after the service becomes operational. This was agreed at the Audit and Assurance Committee on 4 May 2021.

- 10.5 Peter Murray questioned the reason behind setting achievement targets of 80% for accounting and 80% for transactions. He was advised that this was a realistic target initially and would be kept under review. The target was set based on the data gathered during the survey carried out in 2020.
- 10.6 Theresa Allison asked whether there was sufficient staff capacity in the shared service teams to carry the workload. Lynn Murray confirmed that the Head of Shared Services will review resources based on business as usual and annual development requests and the Shared Services Oversight Group would discuss priorities regularly.
- 10.7 Lynn Murray said that operational documents had yet to be completed and Council asked for an update to be provided to the next Council meeting in August.
- 10.8 The Council
1. approved the following governance documents for the shared services arrangement between SSSC and the CI:
 - a. strategy
 - b. management agreement
 - c. performance measures
 - d. risk register
 2. noted the recommendations in the internal audit report that Henderson Loggie prepared, which were reflected in the documents above.
 3. agreed that risk 1 in appendix 4 should be included in the strategic risk register
 4. agreed that the Interim Director of Finance and Resources can make any minor changes to the documents eg as a result of feedback from the Care Inspectorate Board
 5. noted the terms of reference for the Shared Service Review Board and Oversight Group
 6. noted that revised shared services arrangements were effective from 1 April 2021
 7. agreed that a further update on operational documentation be submitted to the Council meeting in August.

Lynn Huckerby arrived during discussion of the above item
Paul Edie returned to the meeting

11. Future-Proofing Programme Governance Structure

- 11.1 Maree Allison presented report 22/2021 which provided Members with the proposed governance structure for the programme of work reviewing core regulatory approaches. This included setting up a Programme Board and a Sponsor Group. The Sponsor Group membership will include three Council Members.

- 11.2 Members discussed the fluctuation of business and projects that may be absorbed into this programme, as examples, any changes required as a result of the Review of Adult Care Services and priorities which may be set by Scottish Government.
- 11.3 Theresa Allison, Julie Grace, Linda Lennie and Peter Murray asked for their interest to be noted in becoming members of Sponsor Board.
- 11.4 The Council
1. endorsed the governance structure for the future-proofing programme
 2. noted interests in Members who wished to be considered to sit on the Sponsor Board.

Linda Lennie arrived during discussion of the above item

12. The SSSC People Strategy

- 12.1 Lynn Murray presented report 23/2021 which set out the overarching aims of the SSSC People Strategy 2021-2024. It was noted that there were a number of strategies and policies affecting the staff in the organisation. These included Investors in People (IiP), Healthy Working Lives etc. This strategy covers a three-year period and serves to pull together these various strands of work.
- 12.2 Members commented on the lack of specific measures against actions and highlighted a need to prioritise actions over the three-year period of the strategy, including some of the big issues which arose from the IiP survey.
- 12.3 Lynn Murray confirmed that reporting on progress of actions would come back to Council. Data will be included in the assurance reports, and the additional annual report will provide more context. This may result in some measure of duplication.
- 12.4 Following a question on providing information to staff following the IiP surveys, Lynn Murray advised that information would be shared with staff following the Council meeting.
- 12.5 Members commented favourably on the strategy and the organisation's progress towards the gold IiP award. However, they requested that more information on the high-level priorities for years one, two and three be reported to the Council at its next meeting in August. Lynn Murray confirmed that this information would be reported then.
- 12.6 The Council
1. approved the People Strategy 2021-2024
 2. agreed that a report be submitted to Council in August 2021, setting out high level priorities in the strategy for years one, two and three.

13. People Management Policies: Code of Conduct

- 13.1 Lynn Murray presented report 24/2021 which included the employee Code of Conduct and a revised timetable for presentation of the HR policies. She

advised that the Code of Conduct had been reviewed by the member/officer short life working group. She further advised that the review of two other policies, Grievance and Workforce Change, due to be considered at this meeting had been impacted by resource issues as had some policies that were due to be approved by the Executive Management Team. The short life working group reviewed the timetable in view of this challenge. Lynn Murray confirmed that there continued to be resource issues in HR, however Lucy Finn, the recently appointed Head of HR was prioritising the review of policies and a revised policy review timetable was presented.

- 13.2 The Council
1. approved the Employee Code of Conduct
 2. approved the revised timetable for policies.

14. Digital Development

14.1 Digital Development Update

- 14.1.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 25/2021 which gave an update on the digital development work carried out as part of the 2020-2021 Digital Programme. One of the highlighted projects was the implementation of the new telephony system which greatly assisted in allowing a seamless transition into working from home, with no loss of contact during the pandemic. The new introduced webchat function appeared to be well received as well as time saving for those using it as staff could deal with more than one enquiry at any one time.
- 14.1.2 There was discussion around the importance of ensuring cyber security including compulsory training for new staff. Scheduling this training into an induction programme for new staff is being reviewed. Laura Shepherd assured members that currently, simulated attacks took place by way of phishing emails etc to test staff and Members' awareness of such attacks and results monitored. Following a question by Linda Lennie on how the organisation would respond to a major incident such as hacking into the data held, Andrew Howe confirmed that he is currently looking this type of incident. Particularly he is aware of an activity known as 'exercise in a box' which is supported by the National Cyber Organisation and Scottish Government and this type of exercise will help him determine how the SSSC would respond to such incidents.
- 14.1.3 Members commended Laura Shepherd and the ICT team for the progress made in the development of digital projects which have supported the organisation working from home.
- 14.1.4 The Council
1. endorsed the progress made to date.

14.2 Digital Strategy 2021-2024

- 14.2.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 26/2021 which set out the planned Digital Strategy for 2021-2024 which is aligned to the Digital Strategy for Scotland. Consultations with Scottish Government and with staff had taken place to inform the strategy.

- 14.2.2 Members were given assurance that the automated services introduced and planned mainly referred to processes such as generating invoices and 'green channel' applications where applicants have no changes to make to their renewal applications. The chat service was a front facing service but many were background.
- 14.2.3 Laura Shepherd advised that a twice-yearly benefits realisation report would show where the impact of automated services provided benefits. Including some information in the Annual Report and Accounts would publicise this progress externally. She further advised that she and the Head of Digital Services had been invited to present an online seminar 'Scotland's call for collaboration – virtual learning exchange.' This would further publicise these developments.
- 14.2.4 Members commended the department on the progress made with the digital transformation.
- 14.2.5 The Council
1. approved the Digital Strategy 2021-2024.

15. Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

- 15.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 27/2021 which set out the proposed Communication and Engagement Strategy for 2021-2024. She referred to the development session earlier in the year where the broad terms and focus were discussed with Members. With reference to a question about sufficient resources to carry out the work included within the strategy, Members were advised that the communications team will lead the work, but much of it will be carried out within each department. Laura Shepherd was confident that there were sufficient resources.
- 15.2 Laura Shepherd advised that engagement resource data was being revised to ensure that the information and contacts are comprehensive and current. The Involving People Strategy also ensures that people who use services are included in engagement exercises and assurances were given that processes are in place to include people who use services in our engagement with external resources. Nicola Gilray advised on benchmarking that is carried out with other authorities across the UK as well as other regulatory bodies. Laura Shepherd confirmed that there is an external communications KPI within the assurance report.
- 15.3 Members were interested to hear about the SSSCs work in embedding fair work principles. Lorraine Gray clarified that this was part of our role in promoting careers in the sector and Cheryl Glen informed Members about 'effective voice' which is one of three workstreams of the Fair Work in Social Care group. The Fair Work programme also covers minimum terms and conditions and the real living wage. The SSSC supported the effective voice workstream by promoting a survey sent out to employers and staff through our social media. A paper from the implementation group for Fair Work in Social

Care group is being presented to Scottish Government this month. The SSSC will have sight of this at an early date.

- 15.4 The Council
1. approved the Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024.

16. Complaints Performance 2020-2021

16.1 Laura Shepherd presented report 28/2021 which detailed complaints performance information for 2020-2021. She advised that an 'Improvements Group' had been set up to assist in identifying and resolving issues which lead to complaints against the organisation. Laura Shepherd confirmed that there had been no investigations against the organisation by the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) in the year reported. It was suggested that this metric be included in future reports.

- 16.2 The Council
1. endorsed the annual complaints performance report to be published
 2. noted the SSSC's performance in responding to complaints in 2020-21.

17. Annual Information Governance Report

17.1 Anne Garness presented report 29/2021 which summarised the organisation's performance in complying with its obligations under the data protection, freedom of information and records management legislation for the year 2020-2021. She advised that the number of requests received should total 125, not 120 as stated in the report. She further commented on the increase in third party requests for information, confirming many had come from Social Work England, which is a positive arrangement, indicating that thorough checking processes are in place. Generally speaking, we receive increased numbers of requests for information year-on-year.

- 17.2 The Council
1. noted the organisation's performance based on the statistical information provided.

18. Disposal of Urgent Business

18.1 Anne Garness presented report 30/2021 which provided information on the matter of urgent business which had been dealt with under Standing Order number 18 and was now being reported under Standing Order number 20.

18.2 The Mainstreaming Outcomes report and five-year strategy were circulated to Council Members for comment and approval on 2 April 2021. Members approved both by correspondence as the publishing deadline for these was the end of April 2021 and therefore fell before the next available Council meeting.

- 18.3 The Council
1. noted the approval of the Equalities Mainstreaming outcomes report and five-year strategy which was circulated for comment and approval on 2 April 2021

2. noted the report was published on 28 April 2021.

19. COVID-19: Student placements and the quality assurance of temporary measures

19.1 Laura Lamb presented report 31/2021 which gave an update on the impact COVID-19 has had on the delivery of qualifications accepted for registration with the SSSC. She spoke particularly to the continued monitoring and quality assurance of courses and practice placements to ensure that standards continue to be met. Significant work is taking place with the sector to resolve the issues brought about by the challenging learning conditions faced during the pandemic.

19.2 In answer to questions by Members, Laura Lamb advised on the launch of a comprehensive online resource to support Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW). Asked about an impact report, she advised that the SSSC has commissioned a longitudinal study over five years and this would show any impact on those who qualified during the pandemic.

19.3 Laura Lamb also advised on the attrition rate of students and measures being put in place to capture data, including students who had changed study routes. The SSSC is collaborating with Scottish Government to support students to re-engage with programmes where their studies have been interrupted or extended. It was agreed that this should also be treated as an opportunity to promote social services work and to promote the organisation. The SSSC will work with the college development network to understand the impact the pandemic has had on attrition rates.

19.4 The Council

1. noted the information provided regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of programmes, our quality assurance of temporary measures and our outlined approach and commitment to continue supporting approved programmes to secure practice learning placements
2. noted that future updates would be provided as part of the Chief Executive's report to Council.

20. Council Action Record

20.1 The Council considered and approved the Council action record and agreed that completed actions C46, C47, C48, C49, C50, C51, C52, C54 and C55 be archived and filed for future reference.

21. AOCB

21.1 There was no additional business.

22. Date and time of next meeting

22.1 The date of the next Council meeting will be 26 August 2021 at 10 am.

Private Session

Items 23, 24 and 25 were taken in private and minuted separately.

**Council 27 May 2021
Start time: 9.30 am
Finish time: 2.10 pm**

Signed: _____ Date: _____

**Sandra Campbell
Convener**