

Title of Report	Chief Executive’s Report
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	To provide Council Members with an update from the Chief Executive.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to note the information contained in the report.
Author and Responsible Officer	Maree Allison, 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>

	<p>Risk 4: We fail to provide value to stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.</p> <p>Risk 5: We fail to develop and support SSSC staff appropriately to ensure we have a motivated and skilled workforce.</p> <p>Risk 6: The SSSC fails to secure sufficient budget resources to fulfil the financial plans required to deliver the strategic plan.</p> <p>Risk 7: Closed.</p> <p>Risk 8: We fail to have the appropriate measures in place to protect against cyber security attacks.</p> <p>Risk 9: Closed.</p>
Impact Assessment	An Impact Assessment (IA) was not required.
Documents attached	None
Background papers	None

INTRODUCTION

1. As set out in the Executive Framework Document agreed by 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 full Council meeting on 22 August 2024, and looks forward to emerging issues.

KEY POINTS

2. We launched our consultation on registration fee levels on 30 September. We have received over 1600 responses and the consultation closes on 23 December. I have been asked questions about the consultation at a number of forums, including Unison's Social Work Issues Group. We will report the outcome of the consultation to the Council meeting on 27 February 2025.
3. I gave evidence about the National Care Service Bill to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on 1 October, following the announcement from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) of their withdrawal from the joint accountability agreement. The Committee's focus was on elements of the Bill which could proceed without the joint accountability agreement, such as the National Social Work Agency.
4. The final Stakeholder Engagement Group meeting of the Future Proofing Programme took place on 12 November and the last Sponsor Group meeting is due to take place on 20 November. Council Members will receive a programme closure report at the Council Meeting on 27 February 2025. Whilst we are dealing with some issues overall the Programme has been successful and we are grateful to Members for their involvement and support.

OUTCOME 1: Trusted People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.

5. Our consultation on proposed amendments to our Fitness to Practise Decisions Guidance, used when making decisions in Fitness to Practise cases, closed on 27 September. We are now analysing the 50 responses received and considering making some amendments to the proposals. The changes strengthen our approach to some of the areas which were highlighted in the Nursing and Midwifery Report Members considered at the meeting in August. We are aiming to launch the new Guidance in the Spring.
6. We have drafted a range of Practice Notes to support our hearings process, which we will launch along with our amended Decisions Guidance. These

set out guidance on a range of topics such as postponement of hearings, conflict of interest, and expert evidence, using an approach which is in line with other regulators.

7. We had an external qualification verification visit for Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) Management and SVQ Business and Administration (carried out by Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)) and received an outcome of high confidence across the board.
8. The Professional Health and Social Care Regulation Conference took place on 6 November. This is a Scottish Government run conference focusing on professional regulation. I was due to attend and present but unfortunately was delayed on my return from leave due to weather conditions. Hannah Coleman and Kristina Robb, Learning and Development Adviser, both spoke at the conference.

OUTCOME 2: Skilled Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.

9. The Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) mandatory supported first year in practice in came into effect from 1 October and was launched by the Minister at the NQSW annual conference, at which I also had the privilege of speaking. This is a significant development aimed at supporting those entering professional practice and improving retention. The new Codes of Practice and Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) both specifically support this initiative.
10. The SVQ Integrated (health and social care) award has been approved by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and will be ready for delivery by training providers by end of the year. We are working with SQA and NHS Education Scotland (NES) at supporting and promoting the launch and roll out.
11. We are collaborating with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to develop online learning modules and practice support app for frontline and managers/supervisors in care-at-home staff. The learning modules will focus on topics such as hoarding, use of emollients, safe use and storage of batteries in mobility scooters, vapes, and oxygen in care settings.
12. We have developed a series of learning modules in conjunction with Independent Living Fund (ILF) Scotland aimed at Social Workers supporting them to understand ILF processes and best practice. These will be published both on the SSSC Learning Zone and ILF Scotland's own website.
13. I was invited to speak at the Care Inspectorate award ceremony for Inspectors who had achieved their Professional Development Award in Scrutiny and Improvement Practice. This is the qualification that is a

condition of registration for Care Inspectorate Inspectors and is a bespoke specialist award.

OUTCOME 3: Confident Our work enhances the confidence, competence, and wellbeing of the workforce.

14. We are leading work with Leading2Change, Coalition of Care and Support Providers (CCPS) and Scottish Care to deliver a combination of four face to face and four online sessions for those newly recruited into a supervisory role and / or those who are in a supervisory role and working toward their formal qualifications. (Face to face sessions will be hosted in Glasgow, Perth, Aberdeen and Dumfries and Galloway). Participants will have the opportunity to record their reflection on learning and its application in practice to support their qualification achievement and evidence of CPL.
15. We have been supporting the Care Inspectorate in the delivery of their Care Home Improvement Programme, including delivery of a day of input on Leadership support for Cohort 2 of the programme which started in October 2024. Themes emerging within Cohort 2 have included the impact of working with and supporting an increasingly multi-cultural workforce whilst still carrying high vacancy rates.
16. We are holding a number of information and engagement sessions for workers and employers on our new approach to CPL, Return to Practice requirement for social workers and online events to help employers understand the process for registration when individuals are applying with an international social work qualification.
17. In September we recruited eight new participants to Cohort 50 of the Scottish Improvement Leaders programme (ScIL) which will start in November 2024. We fund these places on the programme to increase improvement leadership capacity in the sector. Six of the eight participants were from social work and two were from adult social care.
18. We are delivering an online seminar on supervision in November for Fair Work Effective Voice test sites.

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.

19. In the summer Scottish Government announced a new grant to be paid to social work students to support their travel costs whilst on placement. The new Practice Learning Support Grant is paid to students who have been resident in Scotland for three years or more and who are not sponsored for their studies by their employer. Scottish Government requested that we administer the grant on their behalf. We developed our digital systems to support the process and reduce the effort involved in making payments to an estimated 1,200 eligible students each year. In October

this year we started to make the payments to every eligible first and second year students undertaking a post graduate programme and to third and fourth year students undertaking an undergraduate programme. This work has created an additional opportunity to improve the process of collecting practice learning data on each student which has been welcomed by universities.

20. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) undertook a compliance review of our Mental Health Officer report which is designated as a set of accredited official statistics. They confirmed “that these accredited official statistics continue to meet the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics”.
21. The SSSC has been asked to lead the workforce workstream of the National Social Care Data and Intelligence Board.
22. We are leading work with partners who attend our Careers and Employability group to promote careers week (11-15 November). Over the last quarter we have created new video content for adult social care and early years roles both to host on website and to promote through social media. We are working with Skills Development Scotland, Developing Young Workforce (DYW), NES Youth Academy and Centre for Workforce Supply to provide support to DYW live events. We have scheduled a series of communications to go out over the course of the week which will be further promoted by the Careers/Employability group members and networks using #ShapeTheFuture. We will be re-promoting careers toolkit, pre-employment resources and ten steps guide.
23. We are working with Scottish Refugee Council to include voices of refugees and asylum seekers in development of new career stories / videos.

SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

24. We held our staff conference on the 30 October 2024. The event was well attended and received great feedback. Staff were particularly positive about the external speakers and hearing about the different work of the organisation.
25. Representatives from the Offices of Statistics Regulation attended a session in October to help us consider the codes of practice for official and national statistics and better understand the statistics landscape in the UK.
26. We will be publishing the equality data registration report this week. This report follows the format of other regulators in the UK publishing the equalities data of those on the register. Our next steps will be to discuss

the findings with stakeholders and look at further research focussed on parts of the sector.

27. We developed our internal Equality and Diversity Inclusion community of practice group for our equality work in August 2023. To date the SSSC Equality Forum has held five sessions. Each of the sessions has been attended by between 15 and 30 members, the topics of discussion are below:
- Our first session we hosted the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) who gave a presentation on inclusion in the workplace.
 - The second session hosted a presentation from a trainee solicitor in the Fitness to Practise department on the Law Society of Scotland's Profile of the Profession and what it meant for the SSSC. The session also allowed staff to feedback on what they wanted from the Forum and the consensus was that the appetite for a formally structured forum was minimal and the idea of having a charter was rejected by the group. The group indicated that they wanted sessions more focused on specific issues.
 - We used the third session to inform staff of our reporting duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The session was primarily used to allow staff to provide feedback on how well they felt we were promoting equality across the organisation.
 - The fourth session hosted a presentation from Lucy Mulvagh, the Director of Policy, Research and Impact at the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. This session looked at the key principles of human rights, how these can be translated into practice and what the future policy and sector landscape looks like. This session was attended by 39 members of staff.
 - The most recent SSSC Equality Forum session hosted an 'Introduction to Neuroinclusion at work' from the charity Salvesen Mindroom. Neuroinclusion was a topic that our survey indicated that staff would be interested in learning about.

HORIZON SCANNING

28. **National Care Service (Scotland) Bill:** The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee is considering proposed Stage 2 amendments. Key changes include the creation of a National Care Service (NCS) Board and local Boards. The Scottish Government is considering areas such as Anne's law and whether children's services or justice social work services should be in the NCS.

29. **Care experience and future of foster care:** The Scottish Government is consulting on a universal definition of care experience. A definition would aim to normalise care and ensure that everyone understands their rights and entitlements. A separate consultation on the future of foster care explores areas such as recruitment, retention, development and the Standard for Foster Care. Both consultations close in early 2025.
30. **Palliative care:** The Scottish Government is consulting on the proposed Palliative Care Strategy 2025-2030. One of the proposed outcomes is about ensuring that staff who deliver palliative care are trained, skilled and supported. The strategy references the role of the SSSC and NES Palliative Care Education Framework and ensuring Health and Social Care Partnerships and Health Boards support the delivery of training in line with the framework. The consultation closes in January 2025.
31. **Post-School Education and Skills Reform:** The Scottish Government recently consulted on changes to the roles of the three funding bodies in the post-school system: Student Awards Agency Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland. The Scottish Government intends to legislate so that the law is changed before the end of the current parliamentary session in 2026.
32. **Adults with Incapacity Amendment Act:** The Scottish Government recently held a consultation on proposed changes to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. In our response we welcomed the renewed focus on ascertaining the will and preferences of adults. We also highlighted the need to consider the role of registered workers in any proposed right of appeal in relation to Deprivation of Liberty.

CONSULTATION

33. 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.

RISKS

34. There are no risks identified.

RESOURCING

35. There are no resourcing issues.

COMPLIANCE

36. There are no compliance issues.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

37. An Impact Assessment was not required as this is an information report for noting.

CONCLUSION

38. This report provides a broad overview of activity across the organisation.