



Future proofing programme: Proposals for delivery of revised register structure and revised qualifications

November 2022



Contents

Proposal 1: Reduce number of register parts.....	3
Proposal 2: Timescales to apply for registration	6
Proposal 3: Public Facing Register (PFR)	8
Proposal 4: Continuous registration	12
Proposal 5: Flexibility of qualifications	14
Proposal 6: Timescales for qualification	18
Proposal 5: Flexibility of qualifications	20
Proposal 7: Continuous professional learning (CPL)	21
Proposal 8: Return to practice	24
Proposal 9: New practitioner level for Care at Home and Housing Support workers	27

Proposal 1: Reduce number of register parts

Proposal and rationale	We want to make registration, and being registered, straightforward and easy to understand. The current Register structure has developed over time since the introduction of registration for social workers in 2003. We recognise that the structure of the Register needs to change to reflect changing and emerging roles as well as changes in the way services are delivered.		
	To address this we are proposing to reduce the number of register parts from 23 to 4 as follows.		
	Part	Type	Level
	Social Worker	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Social Work Students	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Social Care Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Care at Home (Adults)Housing SupportCare HomeAdult Day Care	Manager Supervisor Practitioner Support Worker
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Care Inspector (Adults)	Not applicable
Children & Young People Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Care at Home (Children & Young People)Day Care of ChildrenResidential Child CareResidential School Care<ul style="list-style-type: none">Independent Boarding SchoolsSpecial SchoolsSchool Hostels	Manager Supervisor Practitioner Support Worker	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Care Inspector (Children & Young People)	Not applicable	

Consultation and engagement	Will reducing the number of Register parts be an improvement to the current structure?	Yes - 88.1% (3005 of 3411 responses)
	How much would this change make the registration information we publish on our website more easy (or difficult) to understand?	Very easy or somewhat easy - 70.5% (2389 of 3391 responses)
	Will the proposed new structure help to provide a more flexible approach to how care is delivered?	Yes - 70.9% (2341 of 3301 responses)
	Do the proposed five new Register parts accurately describe these workers?	Yes - 86.8% (2838 of 3270 responses)
Post-consultation revision	<p>Our initial proposal was to create five new Register parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Workers • Social Work Students • Social Care Workers • Early Education and Childcare Workers • Care Inspectors <p>We received feedback during the consultation that the terminology of 'Early Education and Childcare Workers' was not sufficient to include the variety of roles within that part of the sector.</p> <p>We also had feedback that including Care Inspectors within specific register parts rather than as an individual part would be more appropriate. We agreed with this on the basis that this approach would allow for flexibility with changing landscape of service regulation and have therefore refined our proposal to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Workers • Social Work Students • Social Care Workforce • Children and Young People Workforce 	

Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown impact of National Care Service (NCS) legislation. • Potential lack of budget and resources to facilitate delivery of the complex systems changes required. • Risk of doing nothing following a positive response to our consultation might lead to negative perception of SSSC
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of NCS legislation on this proposal and the SSSC generally remains unknown and is monitored at strategic level. • Budget approval for 2023/24 has been sought which includes investment in systems changes and related staff resources. Scottish Government have indicated support for the programme going ahead.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved accessibility of the Register. • More flexibility when registered – no need to be removed from one part and apply for another. • Prepares SSSC for adoption of new register parts in the future. • Reduces number of individuals registered on multiple register parts. • Reduces enquiries regarding registration parts and which to apply for. • Strengthened professional identity through more accurate role descriptions.
Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require both legislative and rule changes.
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 3: Public Facing Register (PFR)
Council ask	To approve the proposal to reduce the number of register parts from 23 to 4.

Proposal 2: Timescales to apply for registration

Proposal	<p>To amend legislation to introduce a requirement that workers apply for registration within three months of starting a new role and be registered within six months.</p> <p>We believe that there will be an increased level of protection for service users by having workers apply for registration sooner. As workers are aware they have six months to register they do not apply when they first start employment. On average it takes four and a half months from a worker starting their role to apply for registration.</p>	
Consultation and engagement	Will changing the regulations make it easier for employers to comply with requirements?	Yes – 74.8% (2243 of 2998 responses)
	Is three months after starting in their role an appropriate timescale to require workers to apply for registration?	Yes - 78.1% (2356 of 3018 responses)
Post-consultation revision	Feedback received was positive and we have made no changes to our original proposals.	
Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reliance on employer introducing and promoting registration. Sector may be unaware of new requirements and continue to promote six-month timescale. Potential confusion around three-month application requirement and six-month registration deadline. 	
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications plan, including extensive stakeholder engagement activities to ensure that employers and workers are aware of new responsibilities. Development of resources to introduce new workers to the SSSC and registration. Using our data to identify employers who need further support. 	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging workers to apply for registration sooner has a positive impact on public protection and on outcomes for service users. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers would adopt registration with SSSC as part of their induction processes. • Increased visibility and understanding of what the SSSC is and what we do.
Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require legislative changes.
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	
Council ask	To approve the proposal to amend legislation to introduce a requirement that workers apply for registration within three months of starting a new role and be registered within six months.

Proposal 3: Public Facing Register (PFR)

Proposal and rationale	<p>To publish additional information on the PFR as detailed below.</p> <p>We have compared our proposals with what other regulators publish on their public facing registers (or equivalent). While all have a slightly different approach, we are consistent in our approach with the majority of comparable organisations. The biggest difference in our current approach is the publishing of fitness to practise information. This is currently published on another area of our website. Regulators, including our equivalent organisations in other UK countries as well as bodies such as the General Medical Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council publish this as part of their PFR.</p> <p>We will improve public protection by making the information already held in disparate areas of the website more streamlined and easier to access. This will make the information held on our website clearer and more transparent for the public accessing the register and brings us in line with other equivalent regulators.</p>	
	Currently publish	Propose to publish
	Registration number Individual's full name Town of employment Register part Registration status Removed date Suspended from date (if applicable) Suspended to date (if applicable)	Registration number Individual's full name Town of employment Register part Type and level Registration status Removed date Suspended from date (if applicable) Suspended to date (if applicable) Fitness to practise information (currently published separately on our website) Qualification status Social work specialist awards (ie MHO)

Consultation and engagement	Should the public Register on our website show the level of role someone is carrying out, such as manager, supervisor, practitioner, support worker?	Yes - 75.1% (2194 of 2921 responses)
	Should the public Register online show whether someone has the qualification for their role or not?	Yes - 64% (1862 of 2911 responses)
	Should the public Register online show fitness to practise warnings and conditions, that are currently on a separate area of the website?	Yes - 55.2% (1601 of 2902 responses)
	We are considering publicising information about additional practice qualifications registrants may hold, for example mental health officer awards and practice teaching awards. Should the public Register show if a registrant holds an additional qualification?	Yes - 61.8% (1794 of 2904 responses)
	Should any other information be shown on the public Register online?	No - 84.2% (2346 of 2785 responses)
Post-consultation revision	<p>We identified two key themes through free text analysis of consultation responses to help inform follow-up discussions at focus groups in August 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public perception of an unqualified workforce • disadvantaging unqualified workers. <p>Based on these discussions we decided that we want to make provisions in the legislation to allow us to publish</p>	

	<p>this information on the PFR however we are proposing not to publish until a larger proportion of the workforce are qualified.</p> <p>Feedback also focused on concerns around linking fitness to practise information on the PFR. This is already published on the website but can be considered as 'hidden' as it is on a separate area of the site. Linking it to the PFR will bring us into line with the approach of other regulators.</p>
Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential increase in complaints about publicising Fitness to Practise information on the PFR. • May lead to a negative perception of the sector as a whole as 50% of the workforce is currently unqualified. • Public perception that an unqualified worker is not suitable to provide care. • Reliance on Social Workers keeping information up to date in relation to MHO status.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being clear in our communication with Fitness to Practise cases that outcomes will be published. • Being clear on the PFR what it means to be qualified and unqualified. • Promote understanding about the vocational aspect of social care qualifications. • The Fitness to Practise Public Information Policy which sets out what we publish and how will be reviewed in line with this proposal.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information will be easier to find and located in one place. • Promotes our aim of protecting and upholding public confidence in the sector. • Brings SSSC in line with other equivalent regulators in terms of information published. • Informs safer recruitment practices for employers. • Brings an emphasis to the importance of getting the workforce qualified. • Promotes career pathways
Legislative/rule change requirements	
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 1: Reduce number of register parts

Council ask	To approve the proposal to publish additional information on the PFR including the workers' register part/type and/or level of registration, alongside information on any fitness to practise warnings and/or conditions.
--------------------	---

Proposal 4: Continuous registration

Proposal and rationale	<p>To introduce ongoing registration, remove the requirement for renewing registration, and introduce an annual declaration to coincide with annual fee payment.</p> <p>Removing the requirement to renew registration for workers after three or five years will reduce confusion regarding annual and renewal fee requirements.</p> <p>There is a perception amongst some registered workers that registration is all about the fee. We want to change that perception and focus on the other responsibilities of being a registered worker with the fee being a secondary element to this.</p> <p>There is currently no incentive for registrants to log into MySSSC and update their details. This change will force an annual update resulting in a more accurate register.</p>
Consultation and engagement	<p>Will removing the need to renew registration be an improvement over the current requirements?</p> <p>Yes - 89.8% (2524 of 2811 responses)</p>
Post-consultation revision	<p>Feedback received was positive and we have made no changes to our original proposals.</p>
Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers may respond negatively to this additional requirement. Registrants and employers may be unaware of the changed requirements. Additional resources to process annual declarations may be required.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications plan, including extensive stakeholder engagement activities to ensure that employers and workers are aware of new responsibilities. Developing an intuitive and quick annual declaration process. Resources within SSSC may be less impacted by queries, for example regarding renewal, and therefore have additional capacity to manage annual declaration process.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces a consistent process annually for registrants and removes the confusion that currently exists.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Register is more up to date. • Introducing an annual declaration process (to coincide with the annual fee) presents an opportunity to annually remind registrants of their responsibilities Supports workers to become more familiar with being part of a regulated workforce.
Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require rule changes.
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 1: Reduce number of register parts Proposal 7: Continuous professional learning
Council ask	To approve the proposal to introduce ongoing registration, remove the requirement for renewing registration, and introduce an annual declaration to coincide with annual fee payment.

Proposal 5: Flexibility of qualifications

Proposal and rationale	To accept our main benchmark qualifications, in particular Social Services and Healthcare and Children and Young People SVQ qualifications for additional register parts with the same SCQF level requirements, where that requirement is currently one of these suites of qualifications at the same level. We propose the following changes:		
	Qualification	Register parts currently accepted for	Register parts to be additionally accepted for
	SVQ Social Services and Healthcare SCQF Level 6	Support worker in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care home service for adults • care at home • housing support services 	Support worker in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • day care of children services
	SVQ Social Services and Healthcare SCQF Level 7	Practitioner in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care home service for adults Practice requirement for supervisors in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care home service for adults • care at home • housing support services 	Practitioner in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • day care of children services
	SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 6	Support worker in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • day care of children services 	Support worker in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care home service for adults • care at home

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing support services
	SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7	Practitioner in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • day care of children services Practice requirement for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential childcare workers Registrants are also required to evidence 96 academic credits of certificated knowledge at SCQF Level 7	New register levels for practitioner in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care at home • housing support services (Dependent on approval of proposal 9) Practice requirement for supervisors in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care home service for adults • care at home • housing support services
	<p>Increased flexibility of qualifications will support greater career pathways and opportunities for the workforce. This will also support flexibility of the workforce to meet service demand and new models of care delivery – particularly services that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a remote and/or rural setting • supporting both adults and children • out of school care services that operate for limited hours and struggle to recruit. <p>The mandatory SVQ units within each qualification contain the same criteria for the knowledge, skills and understanding that need to be demonstrated in a practice setting. There are slight differences where the unit contained within the Children and Young People's suites may state 'child or young person' opposed to 'individual' in the Social Services and Healthcare suite however it is the same core skills and competence that needs to be</p>		

	<p>evidenced (Reflective Practice, Communication, Safeguarding Individuals, Health and Safety).</p> <p>Scottish Government early learning and childcare (ELC) funded hours requirements, and Care Inspectorate registered manager requirements, do not specify a qualification – only that requirements for SSSC registration are met therefore the changes will not impact on these requirements</p>	
Consultation and engagement	Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles?	Yes - 88.5% (2344 of 2648 responses)
	Should the SSSC develop a new SVQ qualification that would support individuals to work across different roles and settings?	Yes - 79.1% (2087 of 2639 responses)
	How much more or less would qualifications that are accepted for different roles support new models of care?	Much more support or a little more support - 76.4% (1989 of 2605 responses)
	How helpful would qualifications that are accepted for different roles be to address recruitment and retention pressures in the sector, especially in remote and rural areas?	Much more helpful or a little more helpful - 83.5% (2171 of 2599 responses)
	How much more or less attractive would a career in the sector be if qualifications were accepted for different roles?	Much more attractive or a little more attractive - 80.9% (2110 of 2606 responses)
Post-consultation revision	<p>There were no changes made to this proposal as a result of the consultation. Responses from the consultation and focus groups helped to inform mitigation and the detail of what should be covered in the CPL model for those moving into different roles. For example, the development of open badges to support workers new into role, changing role or returning to the role.</p>	

Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the consultation survey and subsequent focus groups indicated some concern, particularly from ELC employers, that this proposal may reduce the specialist skills of staff. • Potential for movement of staff to roles where there are better terms and conditions – for example if real living wage was increased for adult social care (ASC) but not ELC.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of reduced specialist skill can be addressed through employer induction and enhanced CPL requirements. As part of the new model we are proposing developing CPL open badges for individuals moving setting (see proposal 7).
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for new models of care, especially rural and remote, and out of school care. • Improved career pathways. • Reduced number of qualifications individuals need when changing role or working in new or across different settings. • Support for current recruitment and retention challenges. • Potential for enhanced practice through new skills/experience if moving to another part of the sector. • Reduced number of registrants with a qualification condition – this will help with current supply/demand for qualifications and support proposal 6.
Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require rule changes.
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 6: Timescales for qualification Proposal 7: Continuous professional learning Proposal 9: New practitioner level for Care at Home and Housing Support workers
Council ask	To approve the proposal to accept our main benchmark qualifications, in particular Social Services and Healthcare and Children and Young People SVQ qualifications, for additional register parts with the same SCQF level requirements, where that requirement is currently one of these suites of qualifications at the same level.

Proposal 6: Timescales for qualification

Proposal and rationale	From April 2024 to reduce the timescale for new registrants on a function-based register part to achieve a required qualification from five years to three years, with some exceptions as follows:	
	Group	Current requirement
	Any new registrant who is registered as a: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervisor• Manager• Residential childcare worker with no recognised qualification	5 years
	Residential childcare worker with one of two required qualifications	5 years
	All other function-based register parts	5 years
Consultation and engagement	How much easier or more difficult will this change make to ensuring individuals complete the required qualification on time?	Much more difficult or a little more difficult - 50.3% (1211 of 2407 responses)
Post-consultation revision	<p>Our original proposal was to reduce the timescale for all function-based register parts from five to three years. Feedback from the consultation and focus groups included concerns that this would impact those who had more than one qualification requirement. We agreed with this point and have revised the proposal as described above.</p> <p>Via SQA, we surveyed training providers who deliver benchmark qualifications to determine current capacity in the system and ability to adapt to changing demands and needs. We sent the survey to 212 providers, with 58 responses (response rate of 27%).</p> <p>Around 50% of respondents have capacity to increase provision in ASC qualifications and 43% in ELC qualifications, with an average increase in capacity of around 23%. 82% of respondents said they could adapt and change which awards they were delivering to meet demand.</p>	

Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand on workforce to complete qualifications in their own time due to shorter timescales. • Increased demand on training (funding, providers). • Intake timescales for some programmes may be impacted by reducing our requirements. • Access to training in rural areas can be an issue. • Equality impact as likely to impact more women than men, and may also impact on those with disabilities, working part-time, in rural/remote areas and those with multiple qualification conditions.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have discretion and appropriate processes to provide extensions on a case by case basis where required. • Currently the number of registrants with multiple qualification requirements is small. • Our most recent Workforce Data Report (2021) reports that around 75% of the workforce has stayed in the same post since the last year and that 83% of the workforce are on permanent contracts. • The same report also states that ASC groups are the least qualified, with 54,000 workers required to be qualified by 2025. 20,000 of those must be qualified by 2024, which is likely to reduce the impact the proposal will have on training providers. There is no anticipated supply/demand challenge for ELC groups. • The current timescale for achieving an SVQ ranges on average from 6 to 18 months. This is well within the proposed three years for most new registrants. Our registration data shows that the average time for a worker to meet a qualification condition is 27 months.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased public protection. • Increased delivery of high-quality care. • Public are reassured that workers have the required skills. • Enhanced professional identity and perception of the workforce as skilled.
Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require rule changes.

Links to other proposals (if applicable)	<u>Proposal 5: Flexibility of qualifications</u>
Council ask	<p>To approve our proposal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the timescale from five years to three years for those registered in function-based categories with the exceptions as detailed above • Retain a five year timescale for residential childcare workers to gain the qualification required IF they do not hold either requirement; otherwise three years • Retain five year timescale for those registered in supervisor or manager roles IF they have both the practice and management requirements to gain; otherwise three years.

Proposal 7: Continuous professional learning (CPL)

Proposal and rationale	<p>To design a new continuous professional learning (CPL) model.</p> <p>The new model will be developed in consultation with the sector and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an annual declaration as part of proposal 4 • a move away from current model of recording hours/days, with a focus on key skills and knowledge required at key career stages ie induction, change of role, return to practice • inclusion of mandatory skills/knowledge requirements for each register group ie trauma • new requirements for newly qualified social workers, to support the roll-out of the mandatory supported first year of practice • flexibility for SSSC to revise requirements to respond to emerging skills gaps <p>Revising the CPL requirements will help us to support the workforce to respond to emerging issues more quickly when required – for example, the infection control skills and knowledge required at the start of the pandemic and ensure the workforce have the right skills at the right time in their career journeys to deliver better outcomes for people.</p>
Consultation and engagement	<p>Should the SSSC be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements?</p> <p>Yes - 70.4% (1609 of 2285 responses)</p>
	<p>Should there be mandatory CPL requirements for those new into role?</p> <p>Yes - 77.3% (1763 of 2281 responses)</p>
	<p>Should there be annual CPL requirements?</p> <p>Yes - 62.9% (1428 of 2269 responses)</p>
Post-consultation revision	<p>There was considerable support for this proposal and therefore no specific changes were made as a result of the consultation.</p>

	<p>The consultation informed the planned content, for example suggestions of core elements such as values, health and social care standards, safeguarding, the role of the SSSC and reflection practice, and that these should be transferable across settings.</p>
Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system for recording CPL needs to be simple and accessible. • The potential for additional costs arising from new requirements, including for staff on minimum wage. • The need for CPL requirements to be realistic, achievable and flexible. • The potential for groups to be disproportionately affected, for example people with disabilities, caring responsibilities or on maternity leave.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our existing MyLearning app provides an easy-to-use platform for workers to both access resources and record CPL in one place, which is portable and transferrable (the individual owns their own record). • We plan to take a flexible approach and include SSSC and national resources that are open learning so accessible by all. We can use QR code functionality to link CPL directly in the MyLearning app. • There are no anticipated additional costs for individuals or employers. • Processes are already established for people who need extensions, for example due to maternity leave or illness.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual requirements will encourage workers to take ownership of their CPL. • Ensures workers have the right skills at the right time, in turn increasing public confidence and outcomes for people. • Allows SSSC to flex in response to emerging skills needs. • Will support implementation of NQSW supported first year in practice. • Will allow the SSSC to support and implement national policy and strategy programme for government commitments in respect of workforce development ie a trauma-informed workforce.

Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require rule changes.
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 4: Continuous registration Proposal 5: Flexibility of qualifications
Council ask	<p>To approve the proposal to design a new model of CPL in consultation with the sector.</p> <p>To delegate authority to the futureproofing programme sponsor group to thereafter sign off the agreed new model of CPL when complete.</p>

Proposal 8: Return to practice

Proposal and rationale	<p>To develop return to practice standards for social workers who have been off the register; to develop separate return to practice standards for function-based social service workers.</p> <p>For social workers, we are proposing a return to practice requirement based upon the length of time an individual has been out of practice. This does not include individuals who have qualified but never practiced. Those individuals would have to complete the newly qualified social work requirements.</p> <p>We also propose that the number and nature of learning required will be tiered according to the length of gap – for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 – 2 years gap – no requirement• 2 – 5 years• 5 years + <p>The requirements will be formed of supervised practice, formal learning and informal learning. This paper proposes that further consultation and development is required to set the requirements.</p> <p>Other UK regulators require these hours to be completed before an individual can be registered as a social worker. We propose that this may not be the best approach given the difficulties individuals might face in gaining supervised practice experience prior to being registered. However, at this point it is not possible to register an individual as a social worker with a condition. Further development will be needed in order to either develop a pre-registration return to practice requirement, or develop such a requirement alongside our CPL requirements.</p> <p>For function-based parts of the register we propose that return to practice requirements for will be different from social work registration. This is because individuals can join the register without any prior knowledge, skills or experience. It would therefore disadvantage those returning to roles. Additionally, workers may also return to practice from one part of the sector or register to another and therefore may also have a new qualification requirement. Asking those workers to complete a return to practice requirement in addition to this and above CPL requirements would be excessive.</p>
-------------------------------	---

	<p>We propose that the requirements of any return to practice for function-based sit with the refreshed CPL requirements. We suggest that in developing CPL requirements, workers returning to practice would be included in setting requirements of hours and skills/knowledge to be covered by registrants as part of induction requirements.</p> <p>We would also see that induction requirement by employers would also support their learning.</p>	
Consultation and engagement	Should there be a return to practice process for social workers?	Yes - 85.9% (1919 of 2235 responses)
	Should there be a return to practice process for other Register groups?	Yes - 78.6% (1752 of 2222 responses)
Post-consultation revision	<p>Our initial proposal was to develop return to practice standards for social workers and social service workers who have come off the Register for over two years and want to rejoin.</p> <p>From feedback during consultation and from focus groups, including discussion around the distinct requirements for registration and the statutory requirements of social workers, we decided that it would be appropriate to have different requirements for social workers and for function-based social service workers as detailed above.</p>	
Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals may act as a barrier to recruitment when encouraging people to return to the sector. • Assessment of return to practice learning may impact SSSC staff resourcing. • There may be a requirement to consider charging a fee for the assessment of a return to practice portfolio. 	
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the development of this process there will need to be clarity and consultation about social workers who are registered but not working in a practice setting and their return to practice. We also envisage that social workers who qualify but do not practice for 2 or more years would be covered by any NQSW process or requirement in place. • To minimise impact on staff resourcing, we could take on a quality assurance role with sign-off responsibility being held by the employer or supervisor. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would consider the issues of fees for assessment as part of consultation work. We may wish to propose no fees, as this may encourage and support recruitment across social work.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased confidence that the competence, skills and knowledge of individuals returning to practice (particularly social workers) are up to date. Developing return to practice standards would bring us in line with other regulators.
Legislative/rule change requirements	
Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 7: Continuous professional learning
Council ask	<p>To approve our proposal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a return to practice standards for social workers, in consultation and collaboration with the social work sector, based on the length of time a social worker has been off the register with a tiered approach based on the practice time tap. Include return to practice requirements for function-based workers within the revised CPL requirements (proposal 7). <p>To delegate authority to the futureproofing programme sponsor group to thereafter sign off the agreed return to practice standard when complete.</p>

Proposal 9: New practitioner level for Care at Home and Housing Support workers

Proposal and rationale	To introduce a new register level of practitioner for care at home and housing support workers, with a qualification requirement of SVQ Social Services and Health at SCQF level 7	
Consultation and engagement	Should the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support be at SCQF level 7?	Yes - 58.6% (1329 of 2268 responses)
	Should the qualification requirement for support workers in care at home be at SCQF level 7?	Yes - 58.8% (1327 of 2255 responses)
	Should we introduce an additional Register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7 to allow employers to decide what level is most appropriate?	Yes - 65.6% (1465 of 2233 responses)
	How much easier or more difficult would recruiting to these roles be, if the qualification level was changed?	Much easier or a little easier - 36.4% (816 of 2243 responses)
	How much more or less likely would individuals be to join the workforce, if the qualification level was changed?	Much more likely or a little more likely - 38.3% (856 of 2235 responses)
Post-consultation revision	<p>Our original proposal was for a change to the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support/care at home from Social Service and Healthcare SCQF level 6 to SCQF level 7. Feedback from employers and other stakeholders indicated issues and concerns about the potential impact on staff terms and conditions and around barriers for entry to the profession if this were raised.</p> <p>As a result of this feedback we have decided to create a new practitioner category for housing support/care at home, with qualification requirements at SCQF level 7.</p>	

Concerns and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be increased demand on training providers who cannot meet this with current capacity. • Staff qualified to a higher level may expect changes to terms and conditions to reflect this. • There may be increased demand for level 7 qualifications, requiring additional funding to support.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via SQA, we surveyed training providers who deliver benchmark qualifications to determine current capacity in the system and ability to adapt to changing demands and needs. We sent the survey to 212 providers, with 58 responses (response rate of 27%). • Around 50% of respondents have capacity to increase provision in ASC qualifications and 43% in ELC qualifications, with an average increase in capacity of around 23%. 82% of respondents said they could adapt and change which awards they were delivering to meet demand. • Employers can determine suitable levels required and most appropriate for their service. • In terms of funding, we can provide supply/demand information to Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland. We can also set eligibility and priority criteria for the Voluntary Sector Development Fund we disburse on behalf of the government, to prioritise where most needed. We also publish extensive information on available funding routes via our website.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Scottish Government's ambition to increase the skill level of the ASC workforce. • Supports career pathways and progression. • Consistent with other register parts, where a practitioner level already exists. • Allows employers to decide on most appropriate level based on their service and meeting the needs of service users. • Supports professionalism and recognises those working at a higher skill level. • Supports new models of care and changing roles. • Ensures staff have the right skills for their role.
Legislative/rule change requirements	This will require both legislative and rule changes.

Links to other proposals (if applicable)	Proposal 5: Flexibility of qualifications
Council ask	To approve our proposal to create a new practitioner level on the register for housing support/care at home, with the qualification requirement being Social Service and Healthcare SCQF level 7.

