

Shared inspection framework for ELC services including childminding and school-aged childcare

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social work, social care and children and young people services being provided by a trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce.

We protect the public by registering the social work, social care and children and young people workforce, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and act.

We:

- publish the national Codes of Practice for people working in social work, social care and children and young people services and their employers
- register this workforce and make sure they adhere to our Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate their learning and development
- lead workforce development and planning for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland and provide national statistics.

Survey questions

What are your aspirations for children as a result of the shared framework?

We would want to see the framework make clear that both the education and the care of children are equally important within the early learning and childcare sector. We believe that putting children at the centre of the self-evaluation and inspection process is key to achieving this. We would also want to see that the framework works to raise the status of the workforce who work to support children and their families and that the framework is applied to all funded and non-funded ELC services.

What are your three key asks of the shared framework to support high quality outcomes for children?

The Framework should also clearly articulate the role and contribution of bodies such as the SSSC. This includes our regulatory role and our work to make sure that the workforce has skills and professional knowledge if needs to meet the demands of social work, social care and children and young people services.

We would want to see the shared inspection framework reflecting the draft guiding principles as set out by Scottish Government. We believe that the following guiding principles are of particular significance:

- Provide clarity to settings, practitioners and parents and carers on what standards they can expect and the roles and responsibilities of key agencies in delivering them
- Support consistency in outcomes across services so that all children and families experience high quality provision, regardless of where it is accessed
- Support collaboration and professional dialogue between providers, practitioners, teachers and staff working in settings, inspection bodies and local authorities.

These principles highlight the importance of having a workforce with the appropriate level of qualification to carry out their roles in ensuring better outcomes for children. The SSSC, as the workforce regulator, will play a central role in ensuring that registered workers meet the appropriate levels of qualification, training and conduct to deliver these outcomes.

What is important to retain from the quality frameworks the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland currently use for inspection?

The new framework must clearly articulate the connection between service provision, the framework and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We believe the recognition in the Care Inspectorate's quality care framework that children and families benefit from staff that are well trained, competent, skilled and registered with the relevant professional body is highly important and should be retained. We would also like to see the shared framework retain the recognition of the importance of compassionate care and the recognition of the value of effective staff support. The shared framework should also retain a focus on making sure the workforce has effective voice to give feedback on their experiences^{[OBJ1][OBJ2]}. We would also want the shared framework to keep the strong focus on high quality accessible continued professional learning (CPL) that is present in Education Scotland's quality framework.

We would welcome the retention of the strengths based approach currently used in both frameworks, particularly the 'how are we doing', 'how do we know' and 'what are we going to do now' approaches to inspection.

What aspects of quality ELC, childminding or school-aged childcare do you feel is missing or could be enhanced from the current frameworks?

We believe there is a key role for the SSSC in the development of this framework. Across the social work and social care sectors, regulation of the workforce and regulation of services are underpinned by the same Health and Social Care Standards and Codes of Practice which means that the SSSC and the Care Inspectorate, as regulators, can work closely and collaboratively to address issues and support improvement.

We feel that the role of the regulator for practitioners should be included in the shared inspection framework. The SSSC has 47,667 registrants on the parts of our register relating to early learning and childcare. These individuals must obtain the relevant qualifications for their respective register parts and must abide by the SSSC's Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers in carrying out their roles.

The SSSC regularly publishes data on the social work, social care and early years sectors in Scotland. This includes data specific to early learning and childcare, which we were asked to provide to support the expansion of early learning and childcare in 2020.

It is also our responsibility to approve and quality assure the BA and PDA programmes in childhood practice that managers/lead practitioners in day care of children services are required to obtain. We are also responsible for maintaining the national occupational standards that underpin the SVQ and HNC qualifications required of practitioners and support workers.

Scottish Social Services Council

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