

**Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) form****A. General Information**

<b>Name of proposal</b>	SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026
<b>Responsible department</b>	Performance and Improvement

**B. Aims of the proposal**

<b>What do you hope to achieve?</b>	<p>The Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is intended to ensure that the SSSC is able to work toward meeting its vision that social work, social care and children and young people services in Scotland are delivered by a trusted and skilled, valued and confident workforce, providing the high quality care people of Scotland need now and in the future.</p> <p>The work we will deliver through this strategic plan will have a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of people using social work, social care and children and young people services by advancing our four strategic themes. Each of our four strategic themes has its own outcome.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Trusted - people who use services are protected by a regulated workforce that is fit to practise.</li><li>2. Skilled - our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.</li><li>3. Confident - our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.</li></ol>
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	<p>4. Valued - the social care, social work and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.</p> <p>We have carried out extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the strategic plan reflects a range of experiences and perspectives.</p>
<b>Why is the proposal needed?</b>	<p>We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in our varied roles which include being a public body, regulator and an employer. It is critical that our strategic plan considers our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).</p>
<b>How will the proposal contribute to the SSSC's strategic objectives and/or priorities?</b>	<p>The SSSC's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 sets out our Strategic Outcomes and Priorities for the next three years.</p>
<b>How will the proposal address the SSSC's Equality duties?</b>	<p>The SSSC's plan must consider our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which require public bodies to pay due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it</li> <li>• foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> </ul>

### C. Data and evidence gathering

<p><b>What evidence has been used to come to the decisions contained in this EqIA?</b></p>	<p>We undertook the following steps to involve stakeholders in the development of the strategic plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioned external research to gather wide ranging feedback on priorities from Registrants, Employers, SSSC staff and other key partner agencies.</li> <li>• Executive Management Team (EMT) held a development session with Council Members to review research findings and agree outcomes. A further session is scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022.</li> <li>• We consulted with our Sponsor department on a draft version of the strategic plan in June and in October 2022.</li> <li>• We held a series of external engagement sessions with a wide range of stakeholders, utilising a consultation log to capture feedback.</li> <li>• First draft of plan sent to key stakeholders such as CCPS, Scottish Care, NES, Public Health and the Scottish Government policy team.</li> <li>• Further consultation with EMT and the Operational Management Team (OMT) on the draft plan.</li> <li>• Consulted with the CSWOA in October 2022.</li> <li>• SSSC staff undergoing consultation during November 2022.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the proposal been the subject of relevant engagement and/or consultation?</b></p>	<p>Both internal and external engagement and consultation was carried out both before and after the drafting of the Strategic Plan 2023-26, as set out above.</p>
<p><b>Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?</b></p>	<p>We explored a range of options to inform the development of the strategic plan. We engaged with a range of stakeholders as detailed in the sections above and to supplement this, officers involved in drafting the plan</p>

	engaged with staff and used their best judgement to utilise this feedback to inform the values that would be contained within the strategy.
<b>Have any gaps been found in the data?</b>	<p>No gaps were identified. However, the next stage in this process is to implement the strategy. Once in place, the further work necessary will be to develop strategic measures that will allow us to monitor progress under each strategic priority. Some of the measures will be met via anonymised surveys of the workforce, and we will include questions about their protected characteristics so that we can explore whether there are differences and if we need to amend the plan at that point.</p> <p>The strategy offers opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and reduce inequalities across Scotland. A central objective is workforce planning and taking those steps necessary to sustain Scotland's social service work force. It includes reference to the need for a skilled workforce who will support a growing and aging population and information on the economic value of the sector. It is not the sole purpose of the strategy to advance equality of opportunity and it is a high-level document. However, it is appropriate that steps are taken to ensure that equality of opportunity is assessed during planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy moving forwards. As such, where they relate to people, including the social service sector workforce, services users and partners/stakeholders, the plans, policies and projects that are developed to implement the strategy will need to be impact assessed.</p>

## **D. Assessing Impact and Identifying Opportunities to Promote Equality**

The SSSC's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is a high level plan that will facilitate many different workstreams over the next three years. The Strategic Plan states the SSSC's commitment to equality diversity and inclusion in general, with particular mention of anti-racism and children's rights. The intention of the plan is to have a positive impact in these areas.

The areas of work that fall under the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 will themselves be subject to EqIAs and it would be beyond the scope of the present EqIA to go into further detail on these at this point. However, we believe that the underlying ambitions of the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and the values it promotes will promote positive change across the social work, social care and early years sectors in Scotland, as well as among our own staff.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2026 sets out two key ambitions for the coming period, these are to be an intelligence-led organisation and to make sure we engage with and involve people in the development and implementation of the strategic plan. We believe that these high level ambitions will mean that the work of the SSSC will have positive impacts across all protected characteristics.

For example, our Data and Intelligence Strategy 2022-2025, which falls under the scope of the Strategic Plan, sets out how we will develop and use data and intelligence both internally and externally and the principles we will adopt to access, collate and combine information in new ways to improve the way we work.

We aim to:

- use the data and intelligence we hold to fulfil our public protection functions in line with our statutory responsibilities
- use and share the knowledge, data and intelligence we hold to understand and improve the support to the social care, social work and children and young people workforce
- help our stakeholders understand their data and intelligence needs and consider those needs in our future planning
- have the right information and processes that create the right environment for effective decision making about the work we do, based on evidence
- influence national policy making, provide support to the sector and support evidence-based decision making using the data and intelligence we hold as an organisation.

The strategic plan also articulates our commitment to involving people. When we refer to involving people, we are talking about people who have an interest in and are affected by our work and this includes (but is not limited to):

- registrants and their employers

- people with lived and learned experience of using social work, social care and children and young people services
- service and training providers in this sector
- partner organisations and strategic stakeholders.

To involve people in our work, during this strategic plan, we aim to:

- establish a SSSC Advisory Forum of registrants, people with lived and learned experience of using social services and carers who will work with us on a range of activities, bringing their voice and experience into the heart of our work
- build and develop our relationships with the national network of service user and carer organisations and groups
- develop a permanent Stakeholder Advisory Group
- consider paying people who get involved in our work and/or reimbursing expenses
- review our sector liaison framework and develop further capacity to build on our existing processes.

We believe that both of these ambitions will have positive impacts across all protected characteristics.

## **Strategic themes**

### **1. Trusted**

This strategic theme sets the outcome that people who use services are protected by a regulated workforce that is fit to practise.

To progress this outcome, the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 states that we will:

- scope the requirements to register new groups
- implement a registration process fit for the future
- use and share the knowledge, data and intelligence we hold to support stakeholders to understand the sector and improve the support to the social care, social work and children and young people workforce at a national level
- enhance our sector liaison and involving people frameworks to bring the voice of the sector into everything we do and bring intelligence back to us, which will be used to inform national decision and policy
- continue to improve our fitness to practise and hearings processes and support with a focus on supporting wellbeing for those involved.

## **2. Skilled**

This strategic theme sets the outcome that our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.

To progress toward this outcome, the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 states that we will:

- develop and implement new qualifications, standards and Codes of Practice that meet the needs of a reformed social work, social care and children and young people services landscape
- develop an agile response to publishing data and intelligence, developed by us, that influences the future shape of the sector, including the Workforce Skills Report
- enhance our sector liaison and involving people frameworks to bring the voice of the sector into everything we do, bring intelligence back to us, which we can use in turn to inform our work, national policy and decision making
- continue a shared approach to social work professional learning, introduce a mandatory, supported year for NQSWs and support wider access to social work education
- develop and promote new qualifications and career pathways and enhance our career in care resources
- work collaboratively with SWEPP partners to improve the quality, consistency and experience of social work education across Scotland.

## **3. Confident**

This strategic theme sets the outcome that our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.

To progress toward this outcome, the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 states that we will:

- deliver joint programmes of skills development with our key stakeholders, through strategic partnership agreements
- promote and support the use and further development of the national wellbeing and trauma resources, for the benefit of people who use services and workers themselves
- use our data and intelligence to develop innovative learning resources, which are targeted and co-produced with the sector.

Develop an agile response to publishing data and intelligence, developed by us, that influences the future shape of the sector, including official and national statistics.

#### **4. Valued**

This strategic theme sets the outcome that the social care, social work and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.

To progress toward this outcome, the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 states that we will:

- work in partnership with stakeholders to support employability and promote career opportunities in social work, social care and children and young people services to address national recruitment and retention issues
- support national workforce planning and those involved with workforce planning to have the knowledge, skills and data they need to be effective
- promote the value of working in the sector and the high quality care our registrants deliver
- support the development of better terms and conditions and the implementation of national standards for effective voice through our work with the Fair Work agenda.

#### **Impact on protected characteristics:**

Sex:

- The sector is predominantly female, changes to registration process are likely to have greater impact on female workers in the sector, however we are aware of that mitigations are in place for this (FPP Register EqIA). (potential negative)
- Extending registration to new groups may have different gender profiles. (neutral)
- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)

Ethnicity:

- Extending registration to new groups may have different ethnic backgrounds. (neutral)
- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)
- Co-production of learning resources will mean that content and style of resources better meets needs of sector, including the needs of sector workers from minority ethnic backgrounds. (positive)

#### Disability:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)
- New standards and qualification will mean that users of services will receive better care. (positive)

#### Sexual Orientation:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)

#### Gender Reassignment:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)

#### Age:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)
- New standards and qualification will mean that users of services will receive better care. (positive)

#### Marital and Civil Partnership:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)

#### Pregnancy and Maternity:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)

Religion/Belief/Non-belief:

- Increased data offering will allow policy makers at national level to have a better understanding of sector demographics. (positive)
- Involving people work will allow greater voice within SSSC decisions. (positive)

### **E. Challenges And Opportunities for Groups Living In An Island Community**

This section considers the impact or effect of the proposal on island communities and whether this could be significantly different from its effect on other communities.

Work collaboratively with SWEP partners to improve the quality, consistency and experience of social work education across Scotland, this will include communities working in Island Communities.

### **F. Child Rights and Wellbeing**

This section considers the impact of the proposal on children and young people, or specific groups of children and young people, in Scotland.

We believe that the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 will have a positive impact on children's rights and wellbeing. This is because the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 contributes to delivering the aims set for Scotland by the Scottish Government. We align our work with the following key National Outcomes to demonstrate how we support registrants, employers and policy makers to delivery high quality and safe care. In particular:

- **We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.**

As the regulator, we will make sure that our standards and resources support the Scottish Government's aim that people are happy and fulfilled and Scotland is seen as the best place in the world to grow older.

- **We grow up loved, safe and protected so that we realise our full potential.**

The workers we register do all they can to make sure our children grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. We will provide the professional recognition and resources needed to do their work.

- **We have thriving and innovative businesses with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.**

We develop and support the social service workforce so that it attracts and retains new talent. We take seriously the wellbeing and skills of our workforce and aim for the sector to provide good quality, fair work, training and employment support for all.

The work that the Strategic Plan 2023-2036 enables will mean that the social work, social care and early years sectors in Scotland will meet the needs of children in Scotland now and in the future.

## **G. Health And Wellbeing and Health Inequalities**

This section considers the impact of the proposal on physical and mental health and wellbeing; this includes for example, participation, creativity and developing potential.

- We are committed to collaboration and co-production of initiatives set out in our strategic partnerships with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and others to deliver on key policy work nationally. We are accountable for delivering outcomes for Scottish Government policies and strategies for health and social care, early years and childcare, wellbeing, The Promise and Programme for Government.
- Our focus moves to supporting the wellbeing of those working in the sector. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the working environment on the delivery of high quality, safe care. We are committed to supporting staff to recover from their extraordinary role in helping the country through the pandemic. Their wellbeing remains a priority and we will work with our partners to develop local and national wellbeing resources.
- Our shared goal is to put wellbeing at the heart of providers, commissioners, regulators and policy makers' thinking, focusing on the importance of investment in leadership at all levels and in culture to improve workforce health and wellbeing.

## **H. Economic and Social Sustainability**

This section is concerned with the impact of the proposal on pay and employment opportunities as well as valuing and supporting voluntary work.

- We will continue our role in the Fair Work agenda. Through our contribution to its Effective Voice workstream, we will work with stakeholders to ensure the workforce experiences a safe working environment where dialogue and challenge are dealt with constructively and where employee views are sought out, listened to and used to influence positive change.
- Effective employee voice and representation can support wider social priorities in terms of equal opportunities, pay equality, learning and skills acquisition and occupational health and safety. Our role in this promotes the value of the sector in how they feel and how they are viewed.

## **I. Care experienced children, young people and adults**

This section concerns our duties to put Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2026 reaffirms the SSSC's commitment to its duties as a corporate parent, through:

- promoting the well-being of children and young people
- promoting the interests of eligible children and young people
- providing opportunities to eligible children and young people
- how we exercise our functions in relation to eligible children and young people.

## J. Decision Making

Which of the following statements best describes the action that should be taken following the EqIA in relation to your proposal?

<b>No major change</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Adjust the policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Continue with policy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Stop and remove the policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This assessment identified only positive or neutral impacts.

Further screenings and EqIA(s) will be carried when required whenever there may be potential impacts through individual workstreams during the implementation of the SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

### K. Monitoring and Reviewing

How will the implementation of the policy/proposal be monitored? How and when will the impact of the proposal be reviewed? Outline the actions that will be taken, the timescale for these and who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible
There will be the creation of an annual Operational Plan, based on the strategic plan, which sets out the upcoming objectives and activities for the year ahead, and it is here that this EqIA will also be reviewed.	Annually, in line with the drafting of the Operational Plan.	Head of Performance and Improvement

### L. Sign Off

**Name:** Laura Shepherd

**Title:** Director of Strategy and Performance

**Date Approved:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022