

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, Acting 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</p>

	<p>skilled workforce or have insufficient staff resources to achieve our strategic outcomes.</p> <p>Risk 6: The SSSC fails to secure sufficient budget resources 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 assessments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was not required. 2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required. 3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) 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 24 August 2023, and looks forward to emerging issues.

KEY POINTS

2. The Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation was published in September. The Review makes a number of recommendations relevant to the SSSC's functions. We expect a Ministerial response to the Review in the New Year.
3. There is an omission in the October Assurance Report. The management action for indicator 5.1 was not included in the report that went to Audit and Assurance Committee. The staff absence indicator is currently showing as red. Management have reviewed the reasons for the absences and there are no identifiable trends. Management is monitoring the impact in each department to understand number of days lost and potential impact on performance.
4. Our Future Proofing Programme continues to advance with consultations on the Code of Practice, Continuous Professional Learning and Return to Practice concluding. Scottish Government is progressing the legislative amendments to amend the structure of the Register and work is progressing on the scoping of registration of new groups.

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

5. We published our first annual SSSC Register report on 1 September 2023. This is a new report providing data from the SSSC Register and gives a unique insight into our workforce. It is available on our website <https://news.sssc.uk.com/news/new-report-provides-unique-workforce-insight>. We are currently working on a Fitness to Practise (FTP) Snapshot report giving similar insights into our FTP work. The first FTP report will be published in January 2024.

6. We have our next meeting with FTP representatives on 15 November 2023. Organisations who regularly represent workers within FTP are invited to this meeting, and we expect Union representatives and legal representatives to attend.
7. Work is nearing conclusion on the research project 'Witness to Harm, holding to account', led by the Open University (OU) with support from Manchester Metropolitan University and the Universities of Oxford, Glasgow and Edinburgh. It is looking at improving patient, family and colleague witnesses' experiences of FTP proceedings. The SSSC is one of the participants in the research project along with other health and social care regulators. The OU is holding a lunch event in Dundee on 17 January 2024 to present its finding and recommendations.
8. The final drafts of the revised Codes of Practice have been finalised and will be presented Council for approval in February 2024.
9. Our engagement work has continued with employers across the sector and with unions in relation to our work on proposed new register groups. We will report to Scottish Government in December 2023.

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

10. The consultation on our new model of Continuous Professional Learning requirements and Return to Practice requirements closed on 3 November 2023 and we are now analysing the responses.
11. We are co- delivering a webinar on trauma informed dementia support with Scottish Government on 15 November 2023. Over 600 attendees have signed up for the webinar.

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

12. We are formally consulting on the new SVQ in Integrated Health and Social Care at SCQF Level 7. This qualification will cover a range of transferable knowledge and skills, suitable for the professionalism and flexibility of workers who adapt to the diverse health and social care outcomes of people in integrated health and social care settings. It aims to strengthen movement between workplace roles and career pathways across the health care, social care and the children and young people workforce. Our intention is for this qualification to complement rather than replace current SVQs in social services or health care support, offering a

wider range of qualifications. We will accept this qualification for registration. The consultation closes on 31 January 2024

13. We are working in collaboration with Scottish Refugee Council and NHS Education Scotland to develop a recruitment / induction guide for refugees and asylum seekers that we will publish before the end of the year, and we are updating the existing guide for employers to ensure both reflect recent learning and guidance on modern slavery.

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.

14. We are actively supporting the national adult social care recruitment campaign that launched on 7 November. In partnership with Scottish Government, Scottish Care and the Coalition of Care Providers Scotland (CCPS), we co-hosted the campaign stand at the Skills Scotland events in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow to promote the adult social care national recruitment campaign and we are contributing to development of resource and campaign website content.
15. We published our first six-monthly survey report analysing the landscape of Scotland's filled and vacant social worker and senior social worker posts in local authorities.
16. We produced the report to provide an accurate picture of social work vacancies at the request of Scottish Government. Twenty-nine local authorities completed the survey. This report compares data from the annual censuses of LASWS from December 2018 to December 2022 with data from June 2023 to provide background and context.
17. Key findings from the report:
 - Almost all local authorities that responded find it difficult to fill social worker vacancies.
 - The main reasons are there are too few applicants and too few applicants with experience or qualifications.
 - There is a 1.3% decrease in the whole time equivalent (WTE) of practising social worker filled posts compared to December 2022.
 - In June 2023 there was a practising social worker vacancy rate of 11.8%. This appears to reflect increasing demand for social workers.
 - Other challenges to filling social worker posts include remoteness of posts and competing salaries offered by neighbouring local authorities.
 - Our survey results also noted that high numbers of vacancies resulted in exhaustion and burnout for social workers currently in post.

STRONG SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

18. Scottish Government Digital Assurance team conducted an assurance review for the Digital Systems Future Proofing project. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with the team commending the SSSC on the depth and clarity provided in the project documentation and the clearly defined benefits set out for the project. The formal report will go to the December Digital Programme Board.

HORIZON SCANNING

19. **National Care Service Bill:** In June 2023 the Stage 1 deadline was further extended to 31 January 2024. Regional co-design events took place throughout the summer and the parliamentary committees are continuing to take evidence on the Bill at Stage 1 following the summer recess.
20. **Independent Review of Scrutiny and Regulation of Adult Social Care (IRISR):** The IRISR published its final report in September 2023. The Council have received separate briefings on the review and what it means for the SSSC.
21. **Incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law:** The Scottish Parliament passed a motion to reconsider the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill on 14 September 2023. The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee is currently considering the Bill at reconsideration stage.
22. **ELC and school age childcare:** The Scottish Government's Strategic Framework for Scotland's Early Learning and School Age Childcare Profession is due in 2024. The framework will consider regulatory issues, qualifications and professional development.
23. **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry:** The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry began public hearings for Phase 8 of its investigations (the abuse of children in residential accommodation for young offenders and children, and young persons in need of care and protection) on 19 September 2023. I gave evidence to the inquiry on 21 September 2023.
24. **Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry:** The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has begun its first impact hearings looking at health and social care, with the first hearing held on 24 October. So far hearings are scheduled through to mid-November. We are monitoring these for any potential implications for the SSSC.

CONSULTATION

25. 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.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

26. Impact assessments for equalities, data protection and sustainability were not required.

CONCLUSION

27. This report provides Council Members with updates of matters of strategic importance and demonstrates how we are working to fulfil our statutory obligations during this time.