

A consultation on the provisions of the Education Bill

The Scottish Social Services Council 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 services being provided by a trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce.

We protect the public by registering this 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 take action.

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 this workforce in Scotland and provide national statistics.

1. What changes should we consider in terms of how qualifications are developed and delivered that you think would improve outcomes for Scotland's pupils and students?

The SSSC has no view on this.

2. How best can we ensure that that the views of our teaching professionals are taken into account appropriately within the new qualifications body, and do these proposals enable this?

We believe that involving key stakeholders in the decision-making process is an effective way of ensuring that decisions reflect the views of those stakeholders. The work we have carried out on our Future-Proofing Programme highlights this. To make sure the various workstreams of the Future-Proofing Programme reflect the needs of the social work, social care and children and young people's workforce in Scotland, we have established the Stakeholder Advisory Group who are given regular opportunities to assess and comment on the work of the project. The feedback we have

received from this group has helped shape the direction of this project.

We believe that the proposals Scottish Government are making will enable the involvement of the teaching profession in the decision-making of the proposed qualification body.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the role that individuals outside the teaching profession play in the education system. We believe that early learning and childcare professionals, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, play specialists and educational support staff play key roles in the education system and the voice of these professions should be included in stakeholder engagement.

3. How best can we ensure that the views of pupils, students and other learners are appropriately represented within the new qualifications body, and do these proposals enable this?

As per our answer to question 2, above, we believe that involving key stakeholders in decision-making is essential for successful outcomes. We believe the proposals will enable this and that involving children and young people in the decision-making process will help to further embed the UNCRC principles in Scotland's education system.

4. How can we ensure qualifications being offered in Scotland are reliable, of a high standard and fit for purpose?

We believe that in order to make sure that a qualification is fit for purpose, we need to be clear about what the purpose of the qualification is. It may be that it is required by industry, to demonstrate basic knowledge to gain access to university or college courses, to prove the ability to study at a particular level or for any number of other reasons. Whatever the reason, having a clear understanding of its purpose is the first step to making sure it will meet the needs of young people.

We believe a whole system approach is needed to make sure the qualifications in Scotland are reliable. To achieve this, the system of inspection through His Majesty's Inspector of Education (HMIe), the new qualifications body and teachers and others in the classroom who have been given adequate training and support must all work

together to make sure the quality and expectations of the delivery and assessment of qualifications is consistent across the country.

As well as support, teachers will need to be given time to assimilate any new information and produce appropriate supporting materials, which will themselves need to be quality assured. The process of quality assuring these materials should involve those who are delivering courses along with subject experts from HMIe, the qualifications body, from further and higher education and the wider workforce.

Drawing on external research and intelligence will also be important to help to frame the knowledge about what works already and what could work better, allowing the cycle of improvement already in use in schools to not only influence better learning but better assessment.

5. How do you think the qualifications body can best work with others across the education and skills system to deliver better outcomes for all?

We believe the proposals set out in the consultation document in relation to making sure the qualification body works effectively with stakeholders across the sector are a reasonable means of achieving this ambition. We would welcome moves to include children and young people in stakeholder engagement activities as being in keeping with the principles of the UNCRC. The SSSC would welcome the opportunity to support the qualification body through the national forum.

6. Do you agree or disagree with the purposes set out? Is there anything in addition you would like to see included?

Although we agree with the purposes as set out, we believe that certain key elements of the current inspection process are missing from the three purposes. Specifically, we would like to see safeguarding and protection, personalised support, family learning, transitions and partnerships, ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion and increasing creativity and employability better reflected in the three purposes.

7. Do you agree or disagree with the range of establishments to be inspected by HM Inspectors of Education? Is there anything you would change?

We agree with the range of establishments to be inspected.

8. Do you have any specific comments on the role of the inspectorate of education in the inspection of publicly funded colleges, initial teacher educations, early learning and childcare and/or modern apprenticeships?

We welcome the continuing involvement of HMIE in early learning and child care inspections and the joint inspection framework being developed with the Care Inspectorate.

We manage the modern apprenticeship frameworks for social services and healthcare (SSH) and social services (children and young people) (CYP) as part of our role with Skills for Care and Development. We work with employers to develop qualification structures and apprenticeship frameworks, including modern, technical and professional levels. We would therefore wish to support the qualifications body as is needed in these areas.

9. Do you agree or disagree with the priorities set out? Is there anything in addition that you would like to see inspection cover?

We agree with the priorities as set out.

10. Do you have a view on these options for establishing the new approach to inspection?

The SSSC has no view on this.

11. Do you have a view on how governance arrangements for the inspectorate could be developed to better involve providers, including teachers and other practitioners, pupils and students and parents/carers in inspection?

We believe the current practice of using of lay inspectors is a good approach to ensuring additional input, but that this could be built upon to be more inclusive. In particular we believe this is an area where more participation by children and young people could be beneficial to better realising their rights.

12. Do you have a view on how we make sure evidence from inspections is being used as fully as possible to drive improvement and inform policy and on who the inspectorate should report to?

The SSSC has no view on this.

**Scottish Social Services Council
December 2023**