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| Title of report | Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) model for approval |
| Public/Confidential | Public |
| Summary/purpose of report | This report summarises the development of the new model of continuous professional learning (CPL). It details feedback from consultation and changes made to the model. |
| Recommendations | The Future Proofing Sponsor Group are asked to approve this CPL model and the CPL principles and guidance. |
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| Responsible Officer | Laura Lamb Acting Director of Workforce, Education and Standards |
| 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 regulated 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 | Risk 1: We fail to ensure that our system of regulation meets the needs of people who use services and workers. |

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| | <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 skilled workforce or have insufficient staff resources to achieve our strategic outcomes.</p> |
| Impact assessments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) was developed. 2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required. 3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) was not required. |
| Documents attached | None |
| Background papers | <p>BP 1: SSSC CPL principles and overview</p> <p>BP 2: CPL model</p> <p>BP 3: Consultation and Engagement</p> <p>BP 4: EQIA</p> <p>BP 5: NQSW information</p> |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

1. In November 2022 Council approved the design of a new continuous professional learning (CPL) model in consultation with the sector to ensure that the SSSC can support the workforce to have the right skills at the right time in their career journeys to deliver better outcomes for people.
2. The new model has been developed in consultation with the sector and includes:
 - an annual declaration
 - a move away from current model of recording hours/days, with a focus on key skills and knowledge required at key career stages i.e. induction, change of role, return to practice
 - inclusion of mandatory skills/knowledge requirements for each register group for trauma awareness and adult and child protection
 - mandatory learning for those moving across the register from adults to children and vice versa to support the flexibility of current benchmark qualifications
 - 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.
3. From January to July 2023 involvement with the sector was through design sprint events, stakeholder engagement sessions and interviews with individual registrants. These conversations all influenced the construction of the model, allowing us to develop the concept, review structure, language and usability.
4. Stakeholders suggested the need for principles to underpin CPL, and following this, a thematic analysis of the large range of Principles of CPL written by the group were reduced to five principles. These were rewritten to encompass the SSSC Codes of practice and language more appropriate to the Scottish context.
5. The principles influenced further development of the model which now includes career pathways and CPL arranged under Core Learning Elements that registrants are required to cover each year.
6. The need for a website to allow ease of access and use of the new model was identified and budget has been allocated. This will also allow for flexibility as resources change and develop and policy and legislation

impact on focus areas. The CPL website is currently in the initial stages of the user experience being built.

7. Care Inspectorate were involved in the development of their part of the model and considering the proposed changes to registration for authorised officers.
8. A survey was then utilised for formal consultation with the sector. The consultation was open for 6 weeks between 25 September and 3 November. The analysis of the data resulting from this consultation has been completed and CPL principles, guidance and model reviewed in light of the feedback.
9. This report presents the revised CPL principles and guidance, the CPL model, and our responses to the consultation feedback from the sector.

CPL CONSULTATION

10. The survey closed on 3rd November 2023 with 207 completed responses. 170 registrants and 37 employers and membership organisations responded, although after analysis two of the employers gave further information that identified them as support workers who had possibly made an incorrect initial selection. There were three additional responses from OCSWA, SASW and Social Work England.
11. 296 people attended online sessions to hear about the new model and discuss the changes to CPL.
12. Analysis was undertaken internally using Power-Bi and a thematic analysis approach to the written responses. Feedback from the consultation was very positive overall with responses detailing some of the beneficial impact this could have on the workforce.
13. Further details on consultation can be found in **Appendix 3**.

CPL PRINCIPLES

14. We asked if the CPL principles were clear. 83% of responses were positive.

15. Further comments presented themes which guided our changes to the CPL principles.
- **Clarity of language.** We have revised the principles and guidance document to try to ensure that the language is relevant to each individual and reflects the requests ensuring they are easy to understand without the additional explanations in the guidance.
 - **Employer support and learning culture.** We have made links to what the wider sector responsibility means in terms of support from the SSSC, Care Inspectorate and workforce development teams, and have noted the need to help with supervision expectations by further developing our resources.
 - **Relevance and Application.** Feedback indicates that the principles should emphasise not just the importance of CPL for the benefit of service users but also the individual's own personal and professional development. The application of learning into practice was highlighted as a crucial aspect. We have highlighted this in the new principles and guidance.
16. The CPL principles were revised by the internal working group to reflect the Codes of Practice review, the comments on language and the need to include some personal and professional development. The revised wording is now as follows:

My continuous professional learning (CPL):

Principle 1: is my responsibility and will be supported by my employer,

Principle 2: improves the lives of, and protects, individuals and carers,

Principle 3: improves the quality of care or support I provide,

Principle 4: is relevant to my role and the outcomes of the individuals I support,

Principle 5: supports my career, increases my confidence and improves my professional practice.

Please see **Appendix 1** for further information about the principles and guidance.

THE CPL MODEL

17. The CPL model is based on the four register groups who are required to engage in CPL; Social Workers (including NQSW), the Social Care Workforce, the Children and Young People Workforce and Care Inspectorate authorised officers. Each group has a bespoke model based on its individual needs. Please see **Appendix 2** for the model content and **Appendix 5** for further information on the NQSW requirements.

Pathways

18. There are eight pathways in the CPL model dependent on the part of the model, and each one then leads to additional options to personalise the pathway for the individual:
 - I am new to my role
 - I want to return to practice after a career break
 - I want to complete a professional qualification
 - I want to keep my practice up to date
 - I want to specialise
 - I want to change jobs
 - I want to retire
 - I want to take a career break
19. We consulted on the relevance of the pathways to the workforce. 78% of responses were positive with only 6% concerned about the relevance. Written answers indicated a need for leadership and management aspects to the pathways which we had already addressed in the model but not shared in detail as part of the consultation.
20. Additional feedback identified the need for the model to greater reflect leadership for social workers and those in policy and legislative development roles. This has been addressed through the 'I want to specialise' pathway.

Core Learning Elements for Functional Registrants

21. Under each pathway for the social care and children and young people workforce, registrants are presented with the Core Learning Elements:
 - Rights based and ethical practice
 - Communication and relationships
 - Wellbeing and support
 - Protection
 - Knowledge for your role
 - Reflective practice
 - Leadership and quality assurance
22. The consultation revealed that 80% of respondents were positive about the core learning elements and could see the relevance for their role. A slightly lower percentage of respondents (63%) found the content of the core learning elements easy to understand. However, 27% replied neutrally. The introduction of the website to help registrants navigate the model and find their pathways easily should help to ensure that this is more positive in the future.

Core Learning Elements for Social Workers and Care Inspectorate

23. The model contains a specific set of core learning elements for social workers and care inspectorate authorised officers that incorporate the core learning elements for the wider sector but reflect the range of clear and reserved functions they are accountable for. The response from the consultation was 79% positive and 15% neutral, with only four respondents reacting negatively.
24. The eight core learning requirements for social workers and care inspectorate authorised officers are:
- Ethics, values and rights-based practice
 - Communication, engagement and relationship-based professional practice
 - Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making
 - Promoting wellbeing, support and protection
 - Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts
 - Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice
 - Self-awareness and reflexivity
 - Professional leadership
25. For all pathways and all registrants, we have given suggestions of learning within these core learning elements and emphasise flexibility for employers to also specify their own organisational training.

Mandatory learning

26. We asked whether any learning should be mandatory and found a split of 52% no and 48% yes.
27. We asked what should be mandatory if we were to determine this was useful. We received a wide range of suggestions which accounted for different parts of the sector, but trauma awareness and both adult and child protection were most prevalent. Given the requirements already for protection to be part of CPL for some parts of the register and the aspirations of the Scottish Government for a trauma informed workforce, we have made the decision that trauma awareness training and protection of both adults and children will be a mandatory part of CPL for all registrants.

'I want to specialise' pathway

28. We asked what should be included in the 'I want to specialise' pathway, and received suggestions which take into account many different areas of learning in different parts of the sector. In light of this response, we identified areas that the suggestions could be grouped into. Social care and children and young people workforces will have specialisms grouped according to area of work, while social work will have specialisms grouped into work areas of mental health, practice educators, older people, leadership and policy development, protection and additional support needs.

CONSULTATION

29. Extensive engagement has been carried out as part of the project. Details are included in **Appendix 3**.

RISKS

30. A system for recording CPL that is neither simple or accessible.
Mitigations: 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).
31. The CPL requirements are not realistic, achievable, and flexible.
Mitigations: 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.
32. The potential for additional costs arising from new requirements, including for staff on minimum wage.
Mitigations: There are no anticipated additional costs for individuals or employers and by making more use of available online resources this can possibly be reduced from current levels.
33. 2023/24 SSSC Risk Appetite Statement: *'In our work on learning and development for the sector, we recognise the need to maintain and enhance our reputation for being innovative and responsive to stakeholders' needs. We are therefore open to experimenting with new approaches for the delivery of CPL resources and products in the knowledge that not all of them will succeed. We have a hungry risk appetite for this area of our activity.'*

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

- 34. The use of a website was identified as a need during the design sprints, and this has been sourced and budgeted for. The website is due for launch in April 2024 with a year of support as part of the design and build package. The April launch will allow for communication with registrants about the coming changes and wider user testing before June 2024.
- 35. The CPL model will be part of the engagement events already planned for the Future proofing programme prior to launch. Further support and engagement events relating to CPL and the website will also be offered to both registrants and employers in the latter part of 2024 following launch to support the establishment of the new requirements and processes.

Compliance

- 36. Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001: regulate the training and education of the workforce.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equalities

- 37. Full EqIA attached (see **Appendix 4**)

CONCLUSION

- 38. The Future Proofing Sponsor Group are asked to approve the CPL model and CPL principles and guidance.