

Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill: Consultation

Our response focuses on the question of mandatory training for the health and social care workforce.

9. Social Care

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 and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social service workers, 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 services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland
- publish data and official statistics on the social work, social care and children and young people workforce.

We welcome the focus the consultation document places on the role of social care, however there are several points that we have identified that should be clarified in the proposed actions in the consultation document.

First, we believe any proposals in this area need to make clear the distinction between learning and training. The paper appears to use the terms interchangeably, this could cause confusion as in practice these terms have specific meanings.

The SSSC sets standards for practice and sets the qualification and continuous professional learning requirements for the regulated workforce. This includes setting mandatory learning requirements for everyone registered with us, in any role.

We also have a role in promoting and regulating the learning and development of the workforce including the approval and/or endorsement and quality assurance of programmes, for example social work and childhood practice awards but we ourselves do not deliver training. We do, however, have a lead role in developing learning frameworks and provide learning resources to support the development of the workforce, as have been mentioned in the consultation document.

Our role in setting the standards for practice and for promoting and regulating the learning and development of the workforce mean that we would need to be involved in any developments that may have an impact on these areas.

We believe that the consultation document needs to be clear about who exactly it means when it references the social care workforce. We are responsible for registering social workers, social care workers and children and young people service workers. This amounts to 174,627 as of March 2024. This figure excludes individuals that are not currently registered by the SSSC, personal assistants for example. We believe that any proposals have to be clear about who would be subject to any mandatory training obligation.

We would welcome further opportunities to contribute to the development of any proposals relating to the social work, social care or early years workforce that arise from this consultation.

The Scottish Social Services Council

April 2024