

<b>Title of Report</b>	Chief Executive's Report
<b>Public/Confidential</b>	Public
<b>Summary/purpose of report</b>	To provide Council Members with an update from the Chief Executive.
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Council is asked to note the information contained in the report.
<b>Author and Responsible Officer</b>	Maree Allison, Chief Executive
<b>Link to Strategic Plan</b>	<p>The information in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: <b>Trusted</b> People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: <b>Skilled</b> Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.</p> <p>Outcome 3: <b>Confident</b> Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: <b>Valued</b> The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.</p>
<b>Link to Risk Register</b>	<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 skilled workforce.</p> <p>Risk 6: The SSSC fails to secure sufficient budget resources to fulfil the financial plans 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>
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	An Impact Assessment (IA) was not required.
<b>Documents attached</b>	None
<b>Background papers</b>	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 23 May 2024, and looks forward to emerging issues.

## KEY POINTS

2. The Future Proofing Programme successfully launched on 3 June. This implemented significant changes to our register, qualification and skills, including the launch of our new Continuous Professional Learning model. This is the culmination of the three year transformation programme which included the launch of the revised Code of Practice in May. The changes to the Register, introduction of annual declarations and new approach to payment of fees are working well and the feedback on the new Continuous Professional Learning model is positive. The Programme concludes at the end of November with a closure report to Council in February.
3. Together with NHS Education Scotland (NES) we wrote to Mr Dey, the Minister for Higher and Further Education to highlight the funding challenge for adult social care qualifications to influence prioritisation of SCQF level 6 funding in the letters of guidance issues to the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland.
4. Members will be aware that we have a deficit budget with an agreed spending pressure from Scottish Government. We have been advised by our sponsor that we have received in-year additional grant in aid funding of £2.4m. This will reduce our reliance on the spending pressure. There is no certainty that this is recurring. We will update Audit and Assurance Committee in detail at the meeting in October.

**OUTCOME 1: Trusted** People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.

5. The Nursing and Midwifery Council released the independent review into concerns about their culture and fitness to practise decisions. Our Acting Director of Regulation has been leading work reviewing the findings of the report in the context of our organisation and there is a separate report later on the agenda updating Members as to our assessment.
6. Our consultation on proposed amendments to our Decisions Guidance launched on 5 August. This document supports our decision makers to

make proportionate and consistent decisions in Fitness to Practise investigations and hearings. Our current guidance has not been substantially amended since introduced in 2016. We are looking to update it in line with developments in the law and society since that time. The proposed amendments include more detail being added in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion; reference to trauma informed processes; strengthening the language around the seriousness of particular conduct.

7. We have worked with NES and the Care Inspectorate (CI) to update the Safer Staffing Guidance for social care which was published and promoted in our August newsletter.

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

8. We contributed to the delivery of Cohort 3 of the Care Experience Improvement Model leaders programme (CEIM) in May. 12 participants (7 health, 5 social services) undertook a condensed learning programme on the CEIM model and supporting their use of quality improvement tools. Feedback from this group tells us new Leaders are engaging with teams and senior leaders, applying CEIM component parts and connecting with each other to share learning and offer peer support.
9. Working with Trauma Informed Practice team in Scottish Government, we delivered a survey for social workers and supervisors of social workers on their experiences of supervision and its support to trauma informed practice. Analysis will be complete by mid-August and report published end of September.
10. The new SVQ Integrated Award has been approved, the qualification materials will be developed by the awarding body SQA. SQA are currently seeking training providers to pilot the qualification by the end of the year.
11. The SSSC suite of Open Badges now includes new badges about meaningful connection developed in partnership with the Care Inspectorate's Meaningful Connection, Visiting and Anne's Law project team. There are also new badges covering podiatry, nutrition and dietetics

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

12. We have been supporting the CI in the delivery of their Care Home Improvement Programme and in May delivered a day of input on Leadership support.
13. We delivered a leadership development support to 12 Carr Gomm managers in Argyll and Bute.

**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. In July, we published the updated Employers guide for overseas workers, refugees and asylum seekers, a collaboration with the Scottish Refugee council and the Centre for Workforce Supply in NES.
15. We published our second six-monthly survey report on Scotland's filled and vacant social worker and senior social worker posts in local authorities, which shows there were more social workers in post compared to the year before. The report also shows a large difference in the number of social worker vacancies reported by local authorities, ranging from 0% to 31.1.%. We are producing six-monthly reports to provide an accurate picture of social work vacancies at the request of the Scottish Government. Compared to June 2023, the data collected in the December 2023 survey shows a 1.6% increase in the whole time equivalent (WTE) of practising social workers. During that period the WTE of senior social workers increased faster than main grade WTE, particularly in children and justice teams. Between June and December 2023, the WTE of adult social workers decreased while all others increased. The data from December 2023 reported a decrease in WTE vacancies compared to the June figures (albeit from fewer reporting authorities) but still showed an increase from the December 2022 vacancy rate to 10.3%. Vacancy rates are higher for main grade posts than senior posts. Vacancy rates vary by team, however high rates in the children and adult teams suggests an increasing demand for social workers.
16. I was invited to speak at the Health Services Research UK Conference in Oxford on 8 July 2024 about our role in producing data alongside colleagues from Social Care Wales, Northern Ireland Social Care Council and the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

## **SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION**

17. We submitted a response to the Commission for Information on Public Body Expenditure and Efficiency requested by Ivan McKee, Minister for Public Health. This included benchmarking information and details of efficiencies we have realised.
18. Scottish Government are in the process of replacing the financial systems for public bodies in Scotland. SEAS will be replaced with FUSION in October 2024. There are currently a few issues with timings and information flow across the project and we have raised concerns about the proposed roll out.

19. We have launched the 2024 Registrant Survey which closes on 2 September 2024. This Survey gives an important insight into the registered workforce's views on registration, our work to support them, and our customer service.
20. We have updated our Complaint Procedure to align with the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance on child friendly complaints.
21. Work has started on our triennial Investors in People assessment which will be shared with Council later in the year.

## **HORIZON SCANNING**

22. **Programme for Government:** The Scottish Government has indicated that the 2024-25 Programme for Government will be presented to the Scottish Parliament at the earliest possible opportunity following the UK General Election.
23. **National Care Service (Scotland) Bill:** The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee is currently considering the Scottish Government's proposed Stage 2 amendments. The main changes include the creation of a National Care Service (NCS) Board and the delivery of reformed integration authorities instead of Care Boards. The Committee intends to take evidence on the Stage 2 amendments over summer and autumn and we have been invited to give evidence on the 1 October. The Scottish Government continues to consider several related areas such as Anne's law and whether children's services or justice social work services should be included in the NCS.
24. **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024:** The Act came into force on 16 July 2024. Section 18 sets out reporting duties on listed authorities such as the SSSC. This includes a requirement to publish a report on the actions taken to comply with the duty as soon as practicable after the end of each reporting period. The current reporting period ends in 2026.
25. **Post-School Education and Skills Reform: Consultation on legislation:** The Scottish Government is currently consulting on changes to the roles of the three funding bodies in the post-school system: Student Awards Agency Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland.
26. **The Promise:** Plan 24-30 setting out Scotland's plan to #keepthepromiseby2030 launched on 20 June 2024. The plan is centred around five foundations: People, Scaffolding, Voice, Family and Care. We contributed to the Plan and are leading on revising the Common Core

which is the framework of skills, knowledge and understanding, and values for the children's workforce.

27. **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry:** The public hearings in relation to phase 8 Investigations (The abuse of children in residential accommodation for young offenders and children, and young persons in need of care and protection) are ongoing and we have had preliminary meetings with the Inquiry in preparation for the next phase which is starting next year.

## **CONSULTATION**

28. 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.

## **RISKS**

29. There are no risks identified.

## **RESOURCING**

30. There are no resourcing issues.

## **COMPLIANCE**

31. There are no compliance issues.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

32. An Impact Assessment was not required as this is an information report for noting.

## **CONCLUSION**

33. This is my first report to Council since my appointment as permanent Chief Executive. I am very grateful to the Convener, Members and staff for their support over the last sixteen months and I am looking forward to working with Peter Murray as he takes up his role as Interim Convener.