

Future of Foster 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.

Questions

Our vision

1. What are your views on our vision for foster care?

We believe the vision as laid out in the consultation document provides a children's rights based approach to foster care which also recognises the need for skilled and knowledgeable foster carers. We welcome the centrality of the child's voice in this vision and the recognition that societal changes require that foster carers receive continuing support to make sure they are able to provide the highest level of support to the children in their care.

Flexible fostering approach

2. What are your views on the proposed flexible fostering approach?

We support the proposed approach to flexible fostering.

3. What are your views on the seven different elements in the flexible fostering approach?

We believe the seven principles present a good foundation from which a flexible fostering approach can be established.

4. What implications does a flexible fostering approach have for how fostering is funded and how foster carers are remunerated?

We have no view on this.

5. How can the Scottish Government, working with you, support the delivery of the flexible fostering approach?

Because of our role in developing the foster care standards, we would welcome the opportunity to work with Scottish Government to make sure the standards are revised to reflect these values.

Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

6. What is the role of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) in the future of fostering?

The SSSC has no view on this.

7. Should we require all IFAs to have charitable status? Please explain.

The SSSC has no view on this.

8. Should we limit how much local authorities can pay to IFAs? If so, why and how would we do it?

The SSSC has no view on this.

9. Should IFAs be required to pay their foster carers the Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA)?

The SSSC has no view on this.

10. What more could be done nationally to support local authorities when paying for placements from IFAs (including forecasting, market shaping and procurement)?

The SSSC has no view on this.

Recruitment

11. What are your views on the 'offer' described above?

The SSSC has no view on this.

12. What more can the Scottish Government and local authorities do to recruit foster carers? Please explain your answer. You may wish to share successes and challenges of recruitment of foster carers in your response.

The SSSC has no view on this.

Learning, development and practical support

13. What is your experience of the SSSC 'Standard for Foster Care' and do you find it helpful?

Following the publication of the National Foster Care Review in 2013, the Scottish Government asked us to develop a framework for learning for all foster carers and foster care organisations in Scotland. We published the Standards for Foster Carer in April 2017. If there is a desire to revise or update the standards, we would welcome the opportunity to contribute to that work.

14. Should there be a new national learning framework for foster carers which could also be a pathway for continuous development?

The current standards describe the learning expectations for foster carers at three different learning stages:

- Pre-approval or induction
- Post-approval
- Continuous professional development

The current standard specifically requires in relation to continuous professional development that:

'Foster carers need to keep their learning up to date in relation to the learning areas that make up the Standard and be consistently skilful in applying this to their practice with children and young people. They also need to show they are actively working towards enhancing their knowledge, supportive of the learning of others, and working to develop relevant specialist areas.'

We believe that a new national learning framework for foster carers aligns with the original intention of the standards. We also believe that such a learning framework may be beneficial in improving the implementation of the standards. The SSSC offers a range of free and accessible learning resources through our [Learning Zone](#) and [CPL websites](#) and we would welcome the opportunity to support the development of any national learning frameworks.

15. What more can the Scottish Government do to nationally support the learning and development of foster carers?

The SSSC has no view on this

16. What, if any, specific support might be needed to ensure that foster care in Scotland is attuned to the unique and specific needs of infants and very young children?

The SSSC has no view on this.

17. What other practical support would help foster carers?

The SSSC has no view on this.

18. What, if any, additional learning and development would be needed for the 'flexible fostering' approach?

The SSSC has no view on this

Financial support

- 19. How effective is the current financial model for foster carers? Is there an alternative? Please explain your answer.**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 20. Do you think there should be national approach to fees for foster carers? Please explain your answer.**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 21. Do you think there should be a national approach to additional payments? Please explain your answer.**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 22. Should the financial model for foster carers include a retainer fee for when a foster carer does not have a child placed with them? Please explain your answer.**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 23. Do you think there should be a national approach for Continuing Care allowances and fees? Please explain your answer.**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 24. Would an enhanced framework of transparency with a legal requirement, for example, on local authorities and independent fostering agencies to publish foster care allowances assist foster carers and wider recruitment and retention?**

The SSSC has no view on this.

National charter

- 25. What are your views on the proposal for a national charter of support for foster carers?**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 26. What else could national government do to increase the value, status and recognition of foster carers?**

The SSSC has no view on this.

Day to day decisions

- 27. Is the existing framework under which foster carers can make decisions clear?**

The SSSC has no view on this.

- 28. Would further guidance, for example good practice, be helpful to support decision making for foster carers (sometimes called**

delegated decision making) be helpful? If yes, please explain what you'd like it to include.

The SSSC has no view on this.

National Register of foster carers

29. What are your views on a national register for foster carers in Scotland?

The SSSC has no view on this.

30. If a register is introduced where should the register be held?

The SSSC has no view on this.

31. What are your views on the potential to linking continuous professional development to a register?

As the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people's workforce in Scotland we require all registered workers to abide by the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers (the Codes). We do not register foster carers. One of the requirements of the Codes is that social service workers maintain and improve their knowledge and skills through continuous professional learning (CPL). We believe that improving knowledge and skills is important in maintaining a confident, competent and skilled workforce and leads to better outcomes for people who use services. The national standard for funded early learning and childcare (ELC) hours requires anyone delivering funded hours including childminders who do not register with us to meet CPL requirements and hold, or be working toward, SSSC equivalent qualification requirements. CPL requirements for foster carers would bring them into line with the registered workforce and those delivering funded hours under the national standard. We would welcome the linking of continuous professional development to any potential register of foster carers.

32. What are your views on a national approach to foster care placement matching?

The SSSC has no view on this.

33. How can the Scottish Government support local authorities with resource planning of foster carers, including building an evidence base and data on placements, including those outside local areas?

The SSSC has no view on this.

Allegations

34. Should the Scottish Government update its guidance on managing allegations against foster carers? If yes, please explain what you'd like to see updated or added.

The SSSC has no view on this.

35. What more can the Scottish Government do to ensure that allegations against foster carers are dealt with quickly and fairly?

The SSSC has no view on this.

Raising concerns

36. Is there is a need for the Scottish Government to take action in this area? If so, please explain why and what would be helpful, for example best practice guidance?

The SSSC has no view on this.

Wider issues

37. Is there anything not covered in the consultation which impacts on fostering that you would like to tell us about, or take action on? E.g. housing, poverty etc.

The SSSC has no view on this.

Scottish Social Services Council

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