

2025/26 SSSC Risk Appetite

Date agreed by Council:

Introduction

This statement sets out how we balance risk and opportunity. It describes our appetite for risk in different areas of our work. It is a key element of our corporate governance framework and is reviewed by Council annually. We recognise that the appetite for risk will vary according to the activity undertaken and there will be different appetites and tolerances for risk.

Risk appetite and risk tolerance are often used interchangeably. Risk appetite is defined as the level of risk which we aim to operate within. Risk tolerance, is the level of risk which we are willing to operate in.

Our risk appetites are aligned with the strategic risk register to identify existing and emerging risks that outside of our stated risk appetites.

Overarching Statement

We have successfully regulated and developed the social care workforce for over 20 years. We have developed an organisational maturity that helps us understand our risks and opportunities. We are therefore not a risk averse organisation. All our processes, procedures and activities have a degree of risk. Our approach is to choose the most appropriate course of action based on an assessment of impact, anticipated benefits, risk and cost.

Risk Appetite Definition

Appetite	Descriptor
Hungry	Eager to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher business rewards, despite greater inherent risk.
Open	Willing to consider all potential delivery options and choose the one that is most likely to result in successful delivery while also providing an acceptable level of reward/value for money.
Cautious	Preference for safe delivery options that have a low degree of residual risk and may only have limited potential for reward.
Minimalist	Preference for ultra-safe business delivery options that have a low degree of inherent risk and only have a potential for limited reward.
Averse	Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is a key organisational objective.

Risk Appetite Rationale

Finance and Value for Money

How will we use our resources?

We operate in a tightly controlled and audited financial regime. We maintain a **cautious** risk appetite where financial management and delivering within allocated budget is our primary concern and will help us pursue Best Value. We are willing to consider the costs and benefits of any proposed course of action and are prepared to accept the possibility that some reward gains will outweigh the cost. The Executive Management Team closely monitors the overall level of financial risk we face.

Efficiency is a very high priority to maximise our ability to pursue our strategic goals. Furthermore, efficiency and Best Value is within our control and is a strong focus for all staff. We therefore have an **open** risk appetite for Best Value initiatives.

Infrastructure

How will we be operationally fit for the future?

We have a **minimalist** appetite for business continuity and the changes to our service. This allows us to make decisions to ensure our services are maintained with minimal impact and change for the sector.

We maintain a **cautious** risk appetite towards sustaining appropriate operational processes, systems and controls to support operational delivery. However, we have an **open** risk appetite for the development and enhancement of these systems subject to effective testing and implementation controls.

People and Culture

How will we be perceived by our workforce?

We recognise that our staff are critical to the achievement of our strategic priorities. The support and development of our staff is key to making the SSSC an inspiring and safe place to work.

We are **averse** to taking risks that mean we are unable to manage our talent, succession plan, motivate, develop and train our staff. This includes having the right people in the right jobs and a structure fit to deliver our organisational outcomes. We have an **open** risk appetite for decisions that improve culture and support transformational change or continuous improvement.

Legal Compliance

How do we meet our legal obligations?

We aim to reduce our risk of failing to meet our legal and financial obligations to a managed position of being “as low as reasonably practicable”. We maintain an **averse** risk appetite towards regulatory and legal compliance.

Risk taking is generally limited to those events where there is little chance of any significant repercussion for the SSSC if there is a compliance failure.

Regulatory Quality

How will we deliver effective regulatory functions?

We place public protection as our highest priority. We aim to respond proportionately to fitness to practise issues as they arise, and we have a **cautious** risk appetite to the management of these processes. We understand the need to be transparent in the decisions we make and maintaining the independence of Hearing panels. We understand the importance of maintaining proportionate regulation that provides public assurance and protects and improves the experience of people using social care services. The risks we are willing to take do not have a significant chance of long-term negative impacts on our regulatory quality. We accept that in striving for excellence and trying new approaches, short term issues may arise which we will seek to mitigate as best we can.

How will we approach assessment of qualification and standards?

Developing and setting the standards for practice, setting the qualification requirements, and quality assuring the education and training are part of our regulatory function. There are principles criteria, established rules and requirements set around assessment and standards that we must adhere too. When the guidance allows, we take a proportionate approach, however we are bound by the legislative framework that exists therefore we have a **cautious** risk appetite.

Developing the Sector

How do we support development of the sector?

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.

National policy landscape

How do we contribute to national policy and the developing landscape?

We are a key contributor to the national policy landscape that defines the sector we work in. We play a key role in informing and delivering wider policy developments that contribute to the Scottish Government's national outcomes and shape wider society.

We have a **cautious** approach to policy changes that impact on regulation of the workforce. We have an **open** appetite for areas of our work that create opportunities to support workforce development, initiatives and policies designed to improve the delivery of social work, social care and children and young people services.

Communication and Profile

How will we be perceived by our stakeholders?

We can take decisions that have the potential to expose us to additional scrutiny but only where appropriate steps have been taken to minimise any adverse exposure and where such decisions could result in sustainable change. We have a **cautious** risk appetite for this area of our activity.

We horizon scan to ensure we are aware of changes, so we can respond timeously to changes to policy at a national and local level that have an impact on the sector. We take a **minimalist** approach to responding to changes so our services are maintained and aligned with national policy, legislation and professional standards.

We take an **open** approach to promoting our work to ensure we remain visible and are recognised for the value we bring to the sector. While we maintain a high standard of reputation, we will use different methods and technologies to promote the work of the SSSC and the sector.

Developing an understanding of stakeholders' opinions, concerns and views will help us shape the delivery of our work. For this to be effective we need to use different ways of engagement to reach all our stakeholder groups. We have an **open** approach to ensuring the mechanisms are in place to hear the views and voices of our stakeholders.

Data and Intelligence

We take a **cautious** approach to our data quality and use of our data. This ensures our data is the data accurate, complete, and consistent and that data is used ethically and for the right purpose. We take an **open** approach to our data availability to ensure the data is accessible and available when needed within the parameters of our capacity to delivery and that of data protection guidance. We want our stakeholders to use our data to develop and support the sector and our

registrants and will work to make sure we can provide data and intelligence that is necessary.

Risk appetite summary

Heading	Description	Current Appetite
Finance and value for money	Pursuit of BestValue	Open
	Cost/benefitappraisal	Cautious
	Financial management	Cautious
Infrastructure	Developing new process, systems and projects	Hungry
	Existing processes, systems and controls	Cautious
	Business continuity and adaptation of service	Minimalist
People and Culture	Organisationaldevelopment (developing SSSC workforce)	Averse
	Culture and transformational change	Open
Legal Compliance	Failure to meet obligations	Averse
Regulatory Quality	Deliver effective regulation	Cautious

	Quality and standards of education and training for the sector	Cautious
National policy landscape	Changes to regulation	Cautious
	Supporting wider policy development	Open
Developing the sector	L&D innovation & responsiveness	Hungry
Communication and profile	Exposure to scrutiny	Cautious
	Failure to respond to policy developments	Minimalist
	Promoting theSSSC brand	Open
	How we engagement with stakeholder	Open
Data and Intelligence	Data quality and ethical use	Cautious
	Data availability	Open