

# **Scottish Social Services Council**

## **Identification of the Needs of Users of Official Statistics and National Statistics**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Each year the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is responsible for publishing one Official Statistics (OS) report (the annual Scottish Social Services Workforce data report) and one National Statistics (NS) report (the annual Mental Health Officer (MHO) report), as designated by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA).
- 1.2 Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (CPOS) statistics producers are expected to investigate and document the needs of users of official statistics, the use made of existing statistics and the types of decisions they inform. Such information should then guide the approaches etc. taken by the producers of OS or NS.

### **2. Engagement with data providers**

- 2.1 Data for the annual Scottish Social Services Workforce data report (WDR) is obtained from two sources. One is the data collected by the SSSC as it undertakes its annual census of staffing working in Local Authority Social Work Services (LASWS). The SSSC meets with these data providers in the form of the Data Providers Group at least once per year to discuss issues and any proposed changes to the census.
- 2.2 The second source of data is the Care Inspectorate which collects workforce data on all registered care services in Scotland. Engagement with these data providers is usually done in conjunction with the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate holds regular meetings with its data providers every year.
- 2.3 Data for the annual MHO report is collected solely by the SSSC. Liaison between the SSSC and MHO data providers is carried out through the Data Providers Group (see section 2.1).

### **3. Engagement with data users**

- 3.1 One of the key ways in which the SSSC engages with those who use the sectoral workforce data it publishes is through the meetings of the Scottish Social Services Workforce Data Group (SSSWDG). It meets three or four times each year and includes representation from a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the data produced. Current members include: various Departments of Scottish Government; the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA); Social Work Scotland (SWS); Scottish

Care; Coalition of Care and support Providers in Scotland (CCPS); and NHS Scotland's Information Services Division (ISD).

### 3.2 The remit of the SSSWDG is to:

- To inform and support effective delivery of the functions delegated by Scottish Ministers to the SSSC in respect of Section 58 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- To ensure the workforce data reporting undertaken by the SSSC is produced in a manner that assists employers with workforce planning and development and provides other stakeholders with useful information about the social services workforce.

## **4. The Core Minimum Data Set (CMDS)**

4.1 In order to ensure that the data collected from the two data sources that underpin the WDR is comparable, a common data set with agreed data standards was developed around 2006 – this is referred to as the core minimum data set (CMDS). This work was led by Scottish Government in conjunction with the SSSC and the Care Inspectorate. It involved an online consultation with the sector and three large scale meetings with employers and other stakeholders. The current version (2.0) was developed in 2008.

4.2 Revisions to the CMDS should be made as required by the SSSC in collaboration with the Care Inspectorate and agreed with the SSSWDG. It is recommended that the CMDS is reviewed annually to ensure that all its items are up-to-date in terms of categories and codesets, and that a large scale review of the CMDS should be undertaken every five years with a view to confirming the continued usefulness of existing items, and considering the possible addition of new items to meet evolving data user needs.

## **5. Data queries**

5.1 The SSSC should keep a record of all queries received on its workforce data. These should be reviewed at least annually with a view to considering changes to the SSSC's data collection and publications based on the needs reflected in the queries.

## **6. SSSC data website**

6.1 The SSSC operates a separate data website for sectoral workforce data which includes: copies of all publications and data sets; information on the SSSC's OS and NS responsibilities; minutes and papers from the SSSWDG and Data Provider Group meetings; an interactive 'Explore the data' section. It also allows for feedback to be received from data users on the usefulness of the data made available by the SSSC.