

Title of report	Update on the progress in implementing the recommendations from the Review of Social Work Education (RSWE)
Public/confidential	Public
Action	For information
Summary/purpose of report	This report updates Council on progress in implementing the recommendations from the review of social work education.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to: 1. note the progress from the five thematic areas of the RSWE.
Link to Strategic Plan	The information in this report links to Strategic Outcome 4 - Qualifications are fit for purpose.
Link to the Risk Register	Strategic Risk number 5: the work of the SSSC does not increase the skill level and competence of the social service workforce.
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Documents attached	Appendix 1: Social Work Education Partnership – Governance, Remit and Membership Appendix 2: Revised Standards in Social Work Education Appendix 3: Framework for Social Work Education: revised ethical principles Appendix 4: Draft standard for NQSWs

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

Update on the progress in implementing the recommendations from the Review of Social Work Education (RSWE)

- 1.1 In 2015 Scottish Government published Social Services in Scotland: a shared vision and strategy 2015 – 2020. The strategy includes an action to support the implementation of any recommendations agreed following the SSSC's Review of Social Work Education.
- 1.2 The Review of Social Work Education (RSWE) has advanced in two phases. Phase one established a broad stakeholder group which met monthly and reviewed a range of evidence. Phase one concluded that social work education in Scotland is 'fit for purpose' and that there is a continued commitment to a generic social work degree, with undergraduate and postgraduate routes, albeit with clear areas for enhancement.
- 1.3 Phase two sought to develop the evidence base for strengthening professional learning and to engage a wider constituent group. Work was structured around three broad themes (integrated professional learning, design and delivery of qualifying and post-qualifying programmes and resources and frameworks) and was advanced through the commission of ten shared areas of inquiry, research and the development of draft standards.
- 1.4 In 2017 the Review of Social Work Education Phase 2 report set out five themes:
 - shared Professional Learning and Integrated Practice improving the design and delivery of social work education
 - the review of the framework and standards in social work education
 - the development of standards for Newly Qualified Social Workers and a supported year for Newly Qualified Social Workers
 - the review of continuous professional learning
 - routes into social work education.

2. SHARED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND INTEGRATED PRACTICE

- 2.1 The RSWE concluded that existing models of social work education in Scotland rely on partnerships between university providers and employer partners and that current partnerships rest largely on goodwill, have no regulatory reach to employer partners and lack the infrastructure and professional leadership to consistently realise required outcomes.
- 2.2 The review recommended the development of a national infrastructure that is capable of enabling and sustaining a shared approach to professional learning. A strategic approach to embedding professional learning across the social work career journey was seen to promote and contribute to a more resilient workforce of the future. Evidence points to

the efficacy of formal partnership models in supporting the kind of cultural, professional and organisational change required to achieve excellent professional learning outcomes.

- 2.3 The publication of the National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan part 2, with the attendant role for SSSC in taking forward the work on career pathways and the development of professional frameworks for practice, now underpins this area of work.
- 2.4 During 2018 the SSSC has been working alongside Scottish Government and the sector to develop a draft remit for the Social Work Education Partnership (Appendix 1). The establishment of the Partnership is a commitment in the 2018-19 Programme for Government.
- 2.5 The Social Work Education Partnership will not have responsibility for approval or assurance of social work qualifying programmes, but rather will aim to support and enable the delivery of consistent, high quality social work education across Scotland. This could, for example, include considering the need for, coordinating and/or delivering national-level responses to requirements or recommendations made by the SSSC in the delivery of their approval function.
- 2.6 The SSSC is represented on the National Partnership board. The Project Delivery Manager and Project Officer roles will be hosted by COSLA, and the SSSC have contributed to the development of the roles.

3. REVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

- 3.1 The existing Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE) (Scottish Executive, 2003) have now been revised to better reflect the current context of practice and a formal consultation with the sector informed the final revised standards (Appendix 2).
- 3.2 The SSSC is engaging with all current providers of social work programmes and can confirm to Council that all social work programmes will have embedded the revised SiSWE into their programmes by 2020.
- 3.3 We have developed a website has been developed to host the revised SISWE. The main users of the website will be social work students and practice educators. The website includes associated guidance and practice examples have been developed which will bring the SiSWE to life for students and maintain a strong focus on linking the standards with actual practice. The website is anticipated to go live in autumn 2018.
- 3.4 The broader principles underpinning the Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2003) have also been revised in order to strengthen a shared approach to professional learning. A revised set of ethical principles which underpin the Framework for Social Work education have been developed collaboratively (Appendix 3), and the emerging Social Work Education Partnership will inform the final Framework development, particularly in relation to practice learning.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS (NQSW) AND A SUPPORTED FIRST YEAR IN PRACTICE FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

- 4.1 The RSWE developed a draft standard for NQSWs has been further developed in partnership with the sector and is currently being piloted as part of the NQSW pilots. (Appendix 4)
- 4.2 The SSSC has selected three pilot sites across Scotland which will take part in this innovative project supporting NQSWs through their first year in practice. In recognition of the limitations of the existing Post Registration Training and Learning for NQSWs, this pilot project seeks to provide a different approach with a greater focus on the transition period from student to a more autonomous professional.
- 4.3 NQSWs are supported through line manager supervision, specific learning inputs and direction aimed at supporting continuous development, research and evidence informed practice, to develop in confidence and demonstrate competence through the NQSW standards.
- 4.4 NQSWs involved in this pilot undergo the same level of learning and training stipulated for the NQSW Post Registration Training & Learning (PRTL) - 144 hours within 12 months which must include 30 hours of training and learning connected to working with others to protect children and vulnerable adults at risk of harm or abuse. Unlike the current PRTL requirements where the NQSW sends a written submission to the SSSC for assessment; and the NQSW's line manager directly involved in the assessment process along with the SSSC and pilot site representatives in carrying out the quality assurance of NQSW submissions.
- 4.5 Each test site has a dedicated co-ordinator and SSSC Adviser who is committed to supporting the implementation of the approach and the stakeholders who are involved in the delivery.
- 4.6 As part of the learning from the pilot, the SSSC has commissioned an external evaluation. The evaluation report at the end of the pilot year will make recommendations for a future national approach for NQSWs.
- 4.7 This work supports recommendation 7 of the National Workforce and the development of professional frameworks for practice. The NQSW supported year will form the first part of the professional learning pathway for qualifying social workers.

5. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- 5.1 The SSSC is reviewing the existing PRTL requirements for social workers, as part of work to develop a new Standard for Continuous Professional Learning. The Continuous Learning Framework and sector leadership capabilities are integral to this shift in approach and a separate Council report sets out the progress of this area of work.

6. ROUTES INTO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION – IMPROVING SELECTION AND WIDENING ACCESS

- 6.1 The SSSC has worked in partnership with the further education sector and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) seeking to minimise the barriers for social care students accessing social work education. Scotland’s College Development Network raised the potential barrier that the current numeracy selection requirements were having and this has been a key focus for SSSC activity.
- 6.2 Currently, each of the HEIs interpret the numeracy requirements in a range of ways, and our work has sought to reach a consensus approach which robustly supports relevant application of numeracy to actual practice, whilst removing the potential barrier of setting a requirement of a National 5 Maths level qualification. Following a national meeting with HEIs later this month, we aim to revise this part of the Framework for Standards in Social Work Education.
- 6.3 The RSWE recommended that further discussion with the sector is required on the subject of graduate level apprenticeships and any new initiatives would need to be tested and evaluated. Work is underway to enhance our existing graduate apprenticeship work and engage with the sector to explore the potential of a future graduate apprenticeship for social work.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The RSWE is funded partly through core activity and partly through the workforce development grant. There are no new financial implications or human resources arising from this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There is no impact on people with protected characteristics and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. The SSSC rules and requirements for specialist training for social service workers (2005) require course providers to meet legal obligations including those in relation to equal opportunities and human rights. The annual monitoring and quality assurance of the degree programmes provide assurance in this area.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The SSSC has a general duty to promote high standards in the education and training of social services workers. The rules and requirements for specialist training for social service workers in Scotland 2005 allow for the SSSC to carry out this duty.

10. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 10.1 A broad stakeholder group has guided the Review of Social Work Education so far and this will continue with a new representative group

that will act as a steering group for the next phase of the work. The group will have representatives from:

- Universities
- COSLA
- Social Work Scotland
- Scottish Association of Social Workers

10.2 The SSSC has engaged with the sector consistently in taking forward all areas of this work. There has been regular and on-going consultation and dialogue with HEI's and further education providers as well as social work students, registrants and employer representatives. The detail of stakeholder engagement is included within the relevant updates. The new standards and pilots for new ways of working have been developed in collaboration with partners.

11. IMPACT ON USERS AND CARERS

11.1 A service user representative was a member of the Review of Social Work Education steering group and contributed to the development of the report and recommendations.

11.2 Service user representation will continue in the next phase of the work. The principles for involving service users and carers in social work education remain strongly embedded in the revised Standards in Social Work Education and the revised supporting Framework for Social Work Education.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 Council are asked to note the progress made across all areas of recommendation from the RSWE. This work strongly supports the SSSC in taking forward key recommendations from the National Health and Social Care Workforce plan.

12.2 Council are asked to note that work is underway to develop a future position on the required registration of social work academic staff.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None.