

## SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

This response is from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and was established by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. We are responsible for registering people who work in social services, regulating their education and training and the collation and publication of data on the size and nature of the sector's workforce. We are also the Scottish partner in Skills for Care and Development, the Sector Skills Council for the care sector in the UK.

Our work increases the protection of people who use services by ensuring that the workforce is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated. We aim to protect people who use services, raise standards of practice, strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce and improve the outcomes and experience of people who use social services. The social service workforce provides care and support for some of the most vulnerable people in Scottish society. The sector employs more than 189,000 people<sup>1</sup> in Scotland (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014). These workers often deal with complex care needs and make a real difference to peoples' lives.

The SSSC's vision is that our work means the people of Scotland can count on a trusted, skilled and confident social service workforce. Our purpose is to raise standards and protect the public through regulation, innovation and continuous improvement in workforce planning and development for the social service workforce.

### **Q1. What makes a job 'good' or 'bad'?**

A number of factors determine whether a job is 'good' or 'bad'. This report is based on our experience as a regulator and employer-led skills body. In this response we focus on a number of key themes within social care. These include:

1. having an appropriate level of control and involvement in your role
2. feeling valued / having an ability to make a difference
3. access to learning
4. an appropriate level of pay
5. employer and employee perceptions

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<sup>1</sup> There are a number of groups of workers not captured by this data. These include childminding assistants and personal assistants employed by individuals in receipt of a direct payment (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014).

## **1.1 Having an appropriate level of control and involvement in your role**

The SSSC (in collaboration with a number of partner bodies) has developed a strategy for building leadership capacity in social care. The strategy is about “strengthening the skills and confidence of the workforce (and) enabling workers and people who use services to influence the system. It is about giving permission to lead, to take calculated risks and to innovate.” (SSSC, 2014).

In April 2015 the SSSC, Scottish Care (SC)<sup>2</sup> and the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS)<sup>3</sup> surveyed 1,000 private and voluntary sector social service workers.<sup>4</sup> More than half of respondents indicate that they are ‘often involved’ or ‘always involved’ in decision-making within their service.

## **1.2 Feeling valued / having an ability to make a difference**

There are a number of initiatives which support workers to feel valued and to share perspectives at national policy-making level.

- The Scottish Government holds practitioner engagement events as part of the implementation of the vision and strategy for the sector (Scottish Government, 2015).
- The SSSC develops resources which help employees and employers to identify the way that they make a difference. Resources such as the Continuous Learning Framework (CLF) “set out what people in the social service workforce need to be able to do their job well now and in the future and describes what employers need to be able to do to support them” (SSSC; IRISS, 2008).

The majority of respondents to the SSSC / SC / CCPS survey indicate that workers are ‘often’ or ‘fully’ valued by staff from other organisations. In addition, 79% of respondents are ‘often’ or ‘always’ able to support people who use their services to meet their needs and outcomes. These findings echo a previous stakeholder survey of 1,000 people in December 2014. Almost 72% of respondents indicate that they have received positive feedback from people who use services during the previous six months.<sup>5</sup>

## **1.3 Access to learning**

Workforce development plays a key part in developing good jobs. The SSSC register was setup to regulate social service workers and to promote their education and training. There are 90,000 individuals on the SSSC Register as of August 2015. We

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Care represents the largest group of health and social care independent sector providers across Scotland with over 400 members: [www.scottishcare.org](http://www.scottishcare.org)

<sup>3</sup> CCPS aims to identify, represent, promote and safeguard the interests of third sector and not-for-profit social care and support providers in Scotland, so that they can maximise the impact they have on meeting social need: <http://www.ccpscotland.org/>

<sup>4</sup> This work is about developing a better understanding of the implementation of the integration of health and social care service. This survey is referred to as ‘our survey’ throughout this paper. Respondents were able to skip some of the questions.

<sup>5</sup> This survey is unpublished. The data informs the SSSC’s annual report.

will register and regulate approximately 63% of the social service workforce by 2020 (Scottish Government, 2015).

Substantial numbers of workers are gaining qualifications as a condition of their registration. For example, in 2014 there were 7,148 SVQ certifications (at level 2,3 and 4) in the Scottish social service sector (SSSC, 2015). These figures tell one part of the story. We regularly publish reports which examine take-up of a range of work-based, academic and specialist qualifications such as Higher National Certificates, Childhood Practice and the Mental Health Officers Award.

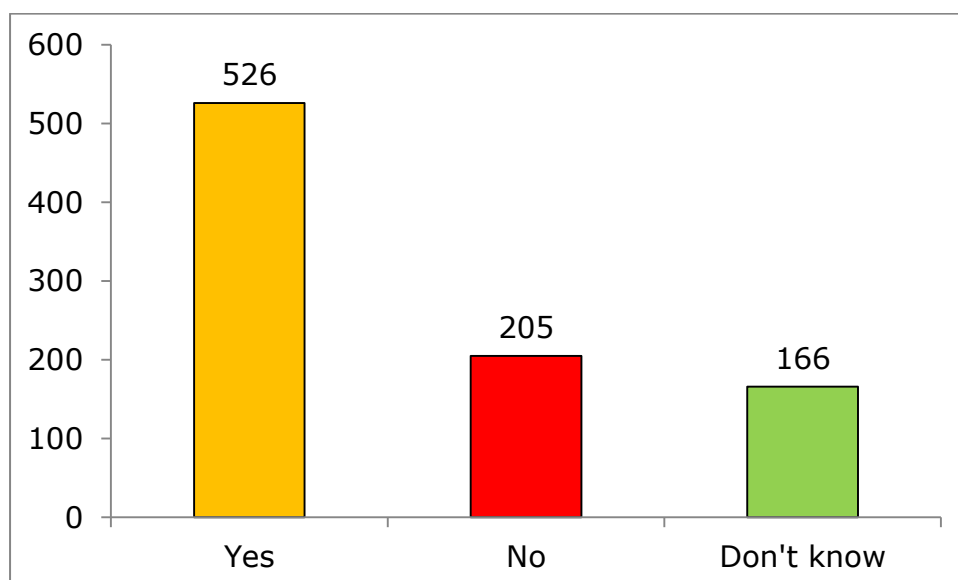
In 2013 we carried out a survey<sup>6</sup> of more than 800 social care employers. The survey aimed to develop a better understanding of the workforce development challenges for providers. Approximately 72% of respondents told us that access to training courses was easier or about the same as it had been three years previously (SSSC, 2014).

**1.4 An appropriate level of pay:** Please see our response to question 4.

**1.5 Employer and employee perceptions:** Career promotion and development has a vital part to play in 'selling' the sector. A number of resources and people play an important part in promoting careers in care. For example, the SSSC has a network of ambassadors for careers in care. These ambassadors share experiences in a number of settings including careers events, job centres and talks at schools and colleges.

One way of measuring an employee's perception of their job is to ask whether they would recommend a career to family and friends. Our recent stakeholder survey (December 2014) suggests that a majority of workers would do so.

**'Would you recommend a career in social services to family / friends?'**



<sup>6</sup> This survey is part of our workforce skills reports, available from <http://data.sssc.uk.com/>

## Q2. Have jobs become better or worse since 2008?

Many of the key challenges in social care pre-date the recession. Commissioning is typically cited as having a number of negative impacts on job quality in care:

- challenges in relation to maintaining pay and conditions
- hindering workforce stability
- limiting opportunities for workforce development.

(Scottish Government, 2015; Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland, 2015; Scottish Care, 2015)

The need for commissioners and providers to work together on these challenges is key (Scottish Government, 2015). The Scottish Government is developing new procurement guidance for public services.

The need to improve perceptions of job quality by highlighting the image and value of the sector is a key theme throughout government strategies and resources. These strategies identify a need to tackle the factors which create these perceptions such as pay, challenging workloads or a belief that care roles are exclusively for women (Scottish Government, 2015; Siraj & Kingston, 2015) Tackling these challenges will help to improve job quality.

A number of initiatives support the improvement of jobs in social care.

**2.1 Registration and regulation:** Registration of the social service workforce has an important role to play in improving safeguards for people using services and increasing public confidence in the sector.

**2.2 Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers:** We have developed Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers. We are working with a number of partners to make sure that the Codes continue to reflect good practice.

**2.3 Qualifications which support workforce flexibility:** The recent introduction of new Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) allows support workers to move within and across practice areas without the need to replicate learning. These qualifications support the development of a flexible workforce.

**2.4 Innovative approaches such as Childhood Practice (CP):** We develop a range of qualifications and resources for the early years and child care workforce. These initiatives make a difference to the way in which workers practice and view themselves alongside other professionals involved in the learning and development of children. The innovative CP award is one of the first work-based awards in Scotland where entry is based on SVQs and the experience workers gained to date. These awards build on non-traditional learning and make access to higher education more achievable. The new BA and PDA SCQF Level 9 award is contributing to the development of a group identity for this workforce (Siraj & Kingston, 2015).

### **Q3. What effect might low quality/low pay jobs have on the economy?**

The need to tackle low pay in social care appears in a number of Scottish Government-funded initiatives and strategies including:

- 'Social Services in Scotland: A shared vision and strategy 2015-2020'
- An independent review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) workforce and Out of School Care (OSC) workforce
- Full report on the future of residential care for older people in Scotland

(Scottish Government, 2015; Siraj & Kingston, 2015; Taskforce for the future of residential care in Scotland, 2014)

Low pay has a negative impact on the social service sector and the way in which it is portrayed, as identified within the vision and strategy 2015-2020.

“Pressures on pay and conditions and workload impacts on morale, recruitment and on the quality of care and support provided. The economic contribution made by the sector is significant and it is a matter of concern that parts of it have developed a reputation as low-wage/low skill which impacts negatively on the workers and potentially on public confidence. Action to address low pay would enable a more positive narrative to emerge about the sector and encourage people to see it as a good career choice”

(Scottish Government, 2015)

In the social service sector low pay and low quality jobs can have an impact on the economy, employers, employees and people who use services and carers.

#### **Impact on people who use services and carers**

- Low pay can exacerbate staff turnover issues and ultimately affect the ability to provide continuity of care. A continuous caring relationship with an identified professional can be particularly important in many instances. For example, it can be vital when supporting an individual with dementia.

#### **Impact on employees**

- Can have a negative impact on health and well-being.

#### **Impact on employers**

- Can hinder recruitment and retention and may require employers to explore alternative options. For example, employers may have to explore options for recruiting workers from out-with the European Economic Area (EEA).

#### **Impact on economy**

- A negative impact on productivity and competitiveness.

- Can perpetuate gender inequality and occupational segregation.
- Can impact on public confidence in a sector.

#### Q4. What can the Scottish Government and public policy makers do to improve job quality in Scotland?

Action	Challenges and activities
<p><b>1. Continue to promote a positive message about the social service sector</b></p>	<p>More than 60% of respondents to our stakeholder survey indicate that media coverage of the sector is ‘negative more often than not’ or ‘always negative’. A number of partners have a role to play in promoting the sector’s image including Scottish Government, the SSSC, employers, employees and the media. Work is underway to develop a better understanding of society’s perceptions of the sector and explore ways of building public support (Scottish Government, 2015). Projects such as the Care Accolades, World Social Work Day, the Social Service Expo and national awards showcase the critical work of this sector.</p>
<p><b>2. Tackle reward and wage issues</b></p>	<p>Workers should receive a wage which reflects the job they do and their contribution to society. A number of bodies have a role to play including Government, commissioners and providers.</p> <p><b>Harmonise the living wage (LW) and working conditions:</b> There are disparities in working conditions across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The LW has led to an increase in wages for many local authority staff. Only one-third of the social service workforce is employed by local authorities (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014). Recent studies suggests that many independent adult social care providers are unable to pay the LW and may struggle to match conditions available to supermarket staff (Scottish Care, 2015) A recent survey of twenty six voluntary sector employers identifies similar messages. Many of these providers note that commissioning has caused instability and prevents them from paying a LW (Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland, 2015). Commissioners and providers must work together to tackle these challenges (Scottish Government, 2015) The Scottish Government and COSLA are developing a better understanding of the cost of implementing the LW for the social service workforce. The new public procurement legislation also emphasises a need for appropriate working conditions and pay. There is some evidence of social service employers beginning to raise hourly rates (Scottish Government, 2015). The introduction of Childhood Practice also appears to be leading to an improvement in working conditions (Siraj &amp; Kingston, 2015).</p> <p><b>Implementing the new national living wage:</b> There are a number of issues which must be considered as part</p>

	<p>of the implementation of the new National Living Wage. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) levels of funding to support the implementation of the policy<sup>7</sup></li> <li>b) a need to ensure that this policy do not lead to a dilution in service delivery</li> <li>c) making sure that selected workers are not left behind by the changes. The new rate will not apply for workers below the age of 25. As of December 2013 there were more than 20,000 people (10% of the total workforce) under the age of 25. These workers are based in a number of sub-sectors including care home services, care at home and day care for children services (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014)</li> <li>d) clarifying the implications arising from the living wage for self-employed workers such as childminders and staff employed directly by someone in receipt of personal support.</li> </ul> <p>The Scottish Government wants businesses to implement an approach which includes paying a living wage, supporting workforce engagement and development and avoiding exploitative zero hours contracts (Scottish Government, 2014). In August 2015 the SSSC will publish updated information on the numbers of social service workers who have contracts with no guaranteed hours.</p>
<p><b>3. Support services to recruit and retain staff</b></p>	<p>The need to retain experienced staff is a key theme in the Scottish Government’s vision and strategy for social services. “Retaining experienced staff in front line practice is crucial to delivering excellent social services. Continuous professional development and career pathways need to be in place across the workforce so that people are equipped for their current jobs as well as for future careers” (Scottish Government, 2015). This response highlights a number of initiatives such as the Certificate of Work Readiness and a Question of Care.</p>

<sup>7</sup> For example: 1) open letter from UK Home Carers Association to Chancellor (July 2015): <http://www.ukhca.co.uk/pdfs/UKHCAOpenLettertoChancellor.Final.20150727.pdf> 2) press release from National Day Nurseries Association (August 2015) [http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/News/Press\\_releases\\_2015/National\\_Living\\_Wage\\_funding\\_factor\\_is\\_vital\\_ahead\\_of\\_30\\_hour\\_free\\_child\\_care\\_offer.aspx](http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/News/Press_releases_2015/National_Living_Wage_funding_factor_is_vital_ahead_of_30_hour_free_child_care_offer.aspx)



	The SSSC is also working with partners to develop new guidance around safer recruitment.
<b>4. Deliver high-quality, flexible and affordable childcare</b>	Childcare plays a critical role in enabling people to participate fully in the labour market. A highly skilled early learning, childcare and out of school workforce is a key part of this ambition. This response has highlighted a number of initiatives (such as the Childhood Practice award and registration) which actively make a difference to the way in which workers practice and view themselves alongside other professionals involved in the development of children.
<b>5. Improve workforce diversity and supporting people from all backgrounds to work in the sector</b>	<p>Services should seek to have an inclusive workplace which provide opportunities for all irrespective of age, gender or disability. Addressing workforce diversity is a key part in addressing wider inequality issues (Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, 2014).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Encourage males to consider a career in care:</b> caring (particularly for children) is traditionally associated with women's work. There is a need to support males to consider a career in the sector. Modern Apprenticeship funders are encouraging young males to consider a career in care. Projects such as 'all about men' and 'men can care' also play a part in changing the culture. (Smith et al, 2008).</li> <li>- <b>Support the long-term unemployed and people furthest away from the labour market:</b> The Certificate of Work Readiness (CWR) was developed in partnership with businesses. The CWR helps young people to demonstrate the skills that they can bring to employment. The CWR helps a number of young people to begin a career in social care.</li> <li>- <b>Support older workers to sustain employment:</b> the need to support an ageing workforce is identified by a number of researchers and policy-makers. These issues are particularly prevalent in social care. The social service sector's workforce is on average older than would be expected given the age profile of Scotland's working age population (SSSC, 2014). The sector also has a number of physically demanding roles.</li> </ul> <p>From April 2017 new powers to provide employment support for disabled people and those at risk of long-term unemployment will be devolved to Scotland. Supporting the development of a diverse workforce will help employers to deliver high-quality and flexible services which meet the needs of the people they support.</p>

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