

## Justice Committee

### Community Justice (Scotland) Bill

#### Written submission from the 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 social service 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 deal with complex care needs and make a real difference to individuals' lives.

Our vision is that our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident 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.

**1. Will the proposals in the Bill transform the community justice system in the way envisaged by the Commission on Women Offenders in its 2012 report, such as addressing the weaknesses identified in the current model, tackling reoffending and reducing the prison population?**

1.1 We believe that these proposals have a key role to play in delivering improved outcomes for community justice. We welcome the emphasis on workforce development and improvement.

**2. Are you content that the definition of 'community justice' in the Bill is appropriate?**

2.1 We agree with the definition of community justice as set out in the Bill.

**3. Will the proposals for a new national body (Community Justice Scotland) lead to improvements in areas such as leadership, oversight, identification of best practice and the commissioning of services?**

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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).

3.1 We welcome the proposals for Community Justice Scotland (CJS) and the new hub for innovation, learning and development. We look forward to working closely with the hub on the development of the community justice workforce in Scotland. The social service community justice sector is a complex and diverse workforce. The sector includes:

- criminal justice social workers
- staff working in private and voluntary sector services commissioned by local authorities to work with offenders
- staff providing substance misuse services to people who offend
- support workers
- offender accommodation services
- staff supporting the delivery of community-based sentenced provision.

3.2 The SSSC is responsible for the promotion of high standards of conduct and practice among the social service workforce and ensuring that high standards in their education and training are maintained. The education, development and training of this workforce come within the remit and scope of the SSSC. All social workers and social work students are required to register with the SSSC.<sup>2</sup> We also approve the social work degree and postgraduate courses.

3.3 There are a number of workers in other sectors (such as GPs, community pharmacists and those providing employability and education services) who play a vital role in the delivery of services to people involved in the community justice system. There may be a need for CJS and the hub to work together with a range of stakeholders to deliver their objectives.

3.4 The SSSC undertakes a range of functions which support the development of the community justice workforce and the wider social service sector. For example:

- The SSSC is responsible<sup>3</sup> for the development and maintenance of National Occupational Standards (NOS) in Scotland. The NOS underpin vocational qualifications (SVQs) used by individuals in a number of practice settings including work with looked after children, secure care, community justice, substance misuse and youth justice. These qualifications provide workers with clear pathways and articulation routes into leadership and management roles as well as further education and development such as the social work degree.
- We have developed a number of workforce development resources for use in community justice settings. These resources include the 'Step into Leadership' Website<sup>4</sup> and the Continuous Learning Framework.<sup>5</sup> These initiatives play a key role in developing the link between good performance and effective leadership.

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<sup>2</sup> The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 defines a 'social worker' as 'a person who has an entitling professional qualification in social work.'

<sup>3</sup> as part of our role within Skills for Care and Development, the Sector Skills Council for the social service sector in Scotland

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.stepintoleadership.info/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sssc.uk.com/workforce-development/supporting-your-development/leadership-and-clf>

- We anticipate working closely with the hub on a range of areas such as supporting social service workers to embed continuous professional learning throughout their career.
- The SSSC supports the development of citizen leadership approaches which support people to become fully in decisions about their lives. We could assist the hub to develop approaches which can be used while working with people who commit offences, victims and communities.

**4. Taking into account the reforms set out in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill relating to Community Planning Partnerships, will Community Justice Partners have the powers, duties and structures required to effectively perform their proposed role in relation to community justice?**

4.1 We welcome the intention for CJS to work closely with a range of community justice partners such as the integration joint boards.

**5. Does the Bill achieve the right balance between national and local responsibility?**

5.1 We make no comment on this question.

**6. Will the proposed reforms support improvement in terms of: (a) leadership, strategic direction and planning? (b) consultation and accountability? (c) partnership and collaboration? (d) commissioning of services and achieving best value for money?**

6.1 We make no comment on this question.

**7. Are the resources, as set out in the Financial Memorandum, sufficient to transform the community justice system in the way envisaged by the Commission on Women Offenders in its 2012 report?**

7.1 We make no comment on this question.

**8. Is the timetable for moving to the new arrangements by 1 April 2017 achievable?**

8.1 We make no comment on this question.

**9. Could the proposals in the Bill be improved and, if so, how?**

9.1 We make no comment on this question.

Scottish Social Services Council  
12 August 2015