

Regulation of child contact services

The Scottish Social Services Council is the regulator for the social work, social care and early years workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national codes of practice for people working in social services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice
- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland
- publish data and official statistics on the social work, social care and early years workforce.

We do not feel it would be appropriate for us to respond to any of the questions put forward in the present consultation, however, we would like to take this opportunity to present our views on the role of regulation

Our views on regulation of child contact centre workers

The regulation of workers who interact with vulnerable groups is imperative for ensuring the needs of those vulnerable groups are met. The regulatory model used by the SSSC contributes to the creation of a social work, social care and early years workforce that is skilled, sustainable and purposeful.

Our model of regulation makes sure workers are qualified to the appropriate level for their role and that they maintain their skills and training through continuous professional learning. The SSSC currently carries out quality assurance in relation to social work degrees and social service qualifications. We also act as the national lead on workforce development for the sector, this includes providing various educational and training resources.

In terms of child contact centres, a similar arrangement may be appropriate as it is often the most vulnerable children and families, those in crisis for example, who use the support of contact centres. Given the vulnerability of the service users, we feel that the workers in child contact centres will have an important role in supporting safeguarding plans, identifying concerns and risk assessment, among other things.

The consultation paper advises that Scottish Government have decided SSSC registration of child contact centre workers would be disproportionate. If that position were to change and a view taken that the nature of their role and close contact with vulnerable children necessitates professional regulation, we would be in a position to register the workforce.

As the regulator of the social services workforce we have an established system of assessing the fitness to practise of social service workers, setting and monitoring their training and development and dealing with complaints about their conduct and practice, working closely with the Care Inspectorate. The current regulatory arrangement for social work, social care and early years sectors in Scotland ensures that both workers and services are afforded the appropriate level of regulation.

In Adult Day Care settings, only the Manager is registered with the SSSC, ensuring the person with responsibility for the service and staff within it meets regulatory standards of qualification and fitness to practise. This is a possible model that would deal with the volunteer nature of many people working in the setting.

Scottish Social Services Council

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