

Consultation on the new National Health and Social Care Standards – Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) response

The SSSC is the regulator for the social service 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 our 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.

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. Social service workers provide care and support for some of the most vulnerable people in Scottish society. These workers deal with complex care needs and make a real difference to people's lives.

The SSSC welcomes the draft Health and Social Care Standards. We have been actively involved in the development of these revised Standards. We support the principle of general and specialist standards. These Standards clearly set out what users of services should expect. They provide a framework for employers and commissioners to plan and deliver services.

We welcome confirmation that the final version will complement existing publications such as the SSSC's Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers. We revised the Codes in 2016 following consultation with stakeholders including employers, workers, people who use services and carers.

The revised Standards identify the link with key legislation and initiatives such as Self-Directed Support and the Carers Act. These initiatives aim to improve choice, controls and standards for those receiving care services. The SSSC is actively involved in improving standards around all of these areas. For example, we have jointly developed¹ 'Promoting Excellence', a framework for health and social services staff working with people who have dementia. We have also developed the Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) guidance which aims to achieve better outcomes for carers and young carers.

¹ In conjunction with NHS Education for Scotland (NES)

This response contains a number of suggestions and amendments. Our response focuses on questions 1,3,9 and 14.

Q1. To what extent do you think the Standards will be relevant and can be applied across all health, care and social work settings?

We strongly agree that the Standards will be relevant and should apply across these settings.

The terms 'care', 'health', 'social work' and 'social services' are used throughout the consultation. It would be helpful to include a definition of these terms and sectors within the final versions. We would recommend that these terms are included in the context or glossary. The definitions do not have to be too prescriptive but would help to clarify the extent and scope of the Standards. For example, page 7 refers to additional standards for people experiencing restricted liberty and children and young people who need social work support. The term 'social services' may also apply here. It may also be helpful to provide a definition of 'health' to clarify whether this includes the NHS and acute services.

We note that 'care' and 'health' are used interchangeably throughout the consultation document. For example, page 4 refers to the registration of 'care and health services'. That page also refers to a need for 'health and care services' to continue to follow existing legislative and best practice requirements. A consistent approach to the use of this terminology may help with the definition issue identified in our previous paragraph.

Q3 Standard 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

- 1.13: we suggest that is amended to read 'suitably qualified'
- 1.47: we could remove the reference to 'full-time'. Outdoor play could also form a significant part of my day if a child attends a part-time service.

Q9: Standard 7: And if I am a child or young people needing social work care and support

We would revise the title of this Standard to clarify that this applies beyond social work. For example: 'And if I am a child or young person needing social work or social care'.

Q14 Any other comments, suggestions?

In the glossary (page 19/20) we suggest revising the definition for 'transition' to clarify that this term is also used in early years. It may also be helpful to revise this point to acknowledge the impact of transitions. The Scottish Government's consultation on the early years blue print notes that one of the aims of the expansion of early learning and childcare is to 'support transitions through early years settings and into school to ensure continuity and progression through the learner journey'

Scottish Social Services Council
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