



Explaining the Role of the Scottish Social Services Council

A guide for MPs, MSPs and staff



A trusted, skilled and confident social service workforce

A PROTECTED PUBLIC, A PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE

The Scottish Social Services Council (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 were set up under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and our Register opened in 2003. We began with regulating social workers and social work students, and have gradually rolled out registration to include everyone working in residential child care, residential care for adults, early years and out of school care. We also register managers and supervisors in adult day care and care at home/housing support and over the next three years will register everyone working in care at home and housing support.

Everyone on our Register must gain a recognised practice qualification and all managers must also have a recognised management qualification.

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.
- are the official statistics provider for the sector.

Most people will use social services at some point in their lives. For example:

- social work services in Scotland's local authorities provided care, support and protection to more than 300,000 people in 2015.
- a quarter of children in Scotland aged under 16 attend registered early learning and childcare services.

4 facts about the SSSC

- We are the national social service workforce regulator.
- We are a non departmental public body sponsored by the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser in the Scottish Government's Children and Families Directorate.
- We register social service workers including workers in day care of children services, residential child care, care at home and housing support, care homes for adults and social workers.
- We publish official and national statistics on the social service workforce.

5 facts about the social service workforce

- One in every 13 people employed in Scotland works in social services.
- There are over 200,000 people working in social services across Scotland.
- Most people work in frontline care roles. They provide care and support in a range of settings including care homes, early learning and childcare services (such as nurseries) and in people's homes.
- The social service workforce includes social workers and mental health officers.
- As of 2016 there are almost 100,000 registered workers in Scotland. This figure will rise substantially when we open the Register in 2017 to further people working in care at home and housing support services.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

You will find information about what we do on our website www.sssc.uk.com

The main things we can do to help you are:

- help you to support the people living in your constituency
- direct you to information about the social service workforce in your area and across Scotland.

HELPING YOU TO SUPPORT YOUR CONSTITUENTS

- Knowing how to make a complaint about a social service worker.
- Supporting constituents who may be registered with us.
- Supporting employers and social service providers.
- Constituents looking to access learning and development.
- Signposting people who may be looking to work in social services.

Making a complaint about a social service worker

We investigate complaints about social service workers if:

- they are registered with the SSSC.
- their conduct and practice falls below the standards set out in the SSSC Codes of Practice.

You can search our Register online to see whether the person is registered with us and download the Code of Practice for Social Service Workers from our website.



What should I do if I have a concern?

If you can, you should tell the care service first for example, the local authority, care home or nursery. Often the quickest way to resolve a complaint is to tell the provider and we encourage people to do this to see if the provider can investigate and put things right.

The provider then has to tell us if the complaint affects the person's suitability to do their job and remain on our Register.

Can I contact you directly if I have a complaint or concern?

Yes. Anyone can raise a concern or a complaint by getting in touch with us. We can investigate and if necessary do something about it. In serious cases, this can mean suspending the person from our Register straight away or removing the person from our Register so that they can no longer work in social services.

If the employer or the police are investigating the case, we will usually wait until their investigation is complete before we continue with ours.

You can make a complaint by filling in the form on our website and sending it to us. Complaints can be anonymous but we then can't tell you about the outcome of the investigation.

Supporting constituents who are registered with us

People registering with us have to meet a number of criteria (you'll find this on our website) including getting a qualification that we can accept. Most people on our Register will already have a qualification and some will be working towards one while we give them time to get qualified. If they are having any difficulties with meeting this requirement, they can talk this over with us.

Social service workers who are registered with us must tell us about:

- anything that may question their suitability to be on the SSSC Register, for example a criminal conviction or disciplinary matter
- any change in circumstances, for example moving house, a change of name or any changes to the information we hold.

If a worker is being investigated by us, we encourage them to respond to our requests for information within the timescales we've specified. The worker can decide not to respond if they wish but it means that a decision will have to be made without taking their views into consideration.

They can be represented by a trade union, professional body or solicitor but they must let us know in writing.

We do our best to keep people informed and workers being investigated can ask the person dealing with their case for an update at any time.

There is a page on our website with the whole investigation process which may be helpful for anyone who wants to know more about fitness to practise for social service workers in Scotland.

Supporting employers and social service providers

Social service providers and employers must make sure that they are employing people registered with us or another relevant regulator such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The Care Inspectorate will check to make sure that everyone who needs to be is



registered. If the employer has staff who are not registered but should be, they may be committing an offence.

Constituents looking to access learning and development

An important part of our role is producing good quality learning and development resources which are then available free of charge to people working in social services and their employers. For example, we have Step Into Leadership to support leadership development, Promoting Excellence to support learning on dementia and a range of digital learning resources, amongst many others.

Constituents considering a career in care

A career in care is life changing work. Constituents who are looking for a job or changing their career may want to consider a job in social services. There are opportunities to progress, have an important role in supporting others and a sense of personal achievement from helping others.

There is more information on our website, as well as an online test called **A question of care** that people can take to see if a career in care is for them.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

As an official statistics provider we produce reports each year on the social service workforce and mental health officers in Scotland. The statistics reports cover a range of information including the type of social services in Scotland and the age, gender and work patterns

of the people working in these services. There is also employment information, information by local authority area and much more which might help you in your role. You can find out more on our statistics website data.sssc.uk.com

WHAT WE DON'T DO

We are not a professional or representative body so we can't represent anyone or negotiate pay or terms and conditions for our registrants.

We do not inspect services. This is done by the Care Inspectorate. If the complaint

is about a registered social service organisation rather than a specific registered worker, it should be directed to the Care Inspectorate.

We are a regulatory body and are accountable to, and serve, the public. We make sure that the people on our Register are suitable to be there.

CONTACT US

For general enquiries, please contact **0345 60 30 891** or [**enquiries@sssc.uk.com**](mailto:enquiries@sssc.uk.com)

If you would like to find out more about our work or meet us in person please get in touch with us. You can check our website for up to date guidance and information.

And you can find out all about our work and follow us on social media.



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**Scottish Social
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