Future proofing programme: Proposals for delivery of revised qualifications

Equality Impact Assessment

January 2024

Contents

Why the proposal is needed

We opened the Register to social workers back in 2003 and since then, we have gradually introduced registration to other categories of the workforce including people working in early years and children's, adult and older people's social care services. We now have more than 174,000 people on our register.

As social work, social care and early years services, and the way people access and use them, have changed over the past 20 years, so to have the skills, knowledge and qualifications that the workforce need to be able to deliver the kind of high-quality care we want for Scotland.

How the proposal contributes to our strategic objectives and/or priorities

The Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 sets out the way that our work aligns with the Government's National Performance Framework. The proposal contributes to all four of our strategic outcomes:

Outcome 1: Trusted

People who use services are protected by a regulated workforce that is fit to practise.

Outcome 2: Skilled

Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.

Outcome 3: Confident

Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.

Outcome 4: Valued

The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.

How the proposal will meet our equality duties

We believe that the main way the proposals laid out in this document will meet our equality duties is by advancing equality of opportunity across the social work, social care and early years sectors in Scotland.

The wider acceptance and portability of qualifications for various register parts will support individuals to have wider career opportunities and reduce the barrier of having to gain additional qualifications to change roles within the sector.

The return to practice standards might be particularly helpful for people who have had to take extended time away from work such as women or men who have taken time out to raise children in evidencing to potential employers that their practice is up to date.

Setting the qualification requirements at a level that accurately reflects the roles they are required for will assist in demonstrating the complexity of the roles, that the workforce is highly skilled and help to support the professional identity of the role. This may assist in national discussions regarding Fair Work.

Consultation

In developing the proposals laid out in this document, we consulted with the following:

- Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser
- Mental Health and Social Care Directorate
- Early Years Directorate
- Children and Families Directorate (The Promise)
- School Age Childcare Directorate
- Care Inspectorate
- NHS Education Scotland

In December 2021 we launched a consultation on the proposed changes to the Register and qualifications. The consultation was open until March 2022. We also held a series of online events in February 2022 and follow up focus groups in August 2022.

We have established a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to support the programme.   The advisory group includes several key stakeholders including Social Work Scotland, Scottish Care, COSLA, Scottish Government, the Promise and UNISON.

In 2021/22 we held a wide-ranging consultation on our proposals to streamline and improve consultation. Over 6,500 people responded to the consultation, including people on all parts of the register along with others with an interest in our work.

We also held 13 online events with 265 attendees and met with several key sectoral stakeholders. The vast majority of respondents were

registrants and most respondents agreed with our proposals. An analysis of the responses is available from our website.

Our consultation included several questions on the implications for equality. The majority of responses to these questions were broadly supportive of the proposals, noting that they would either have a neutral impact in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, or would not have a negative impact.

The following figures show the percentage of respondents who indicated that a proposal would be neutral or would not have a negative impact on equality, diversity and inclusion in the sector:

- In relation to our proposals about the flexibility of qualifications, 81% of respondents indicated that any impact would be neutral or not negative.
- For the proposed changes to the adult social care qualification, 75% of respondents indicated that any impact would be neutral or not negative.
- Regarding our proposals around return to practice, 84% of respondents indicated that any impact would be neutral or not negative.
- For our proposals concerning continuous Professional Learning, 84% of respondents indicated that any impact would be neutral or not negative.

While these figures suggest that the proposals will not have a negative impact, we will continue to monitor any impacts as work in this area progresses.

Proposal 1 – Flexibility of qualifications

Aims of the proposal
We propose that our main benchmark qualifications, in particular Social Services and Healthcare and Children and Young People SVQ qualifications be accepted for additional register parts with the same SCQF level requirements, where that requirement is currently one of these suites of qualifications at the same level.

We propose the following changes:

Qualification	Register parts currently accepted for	Register parts to be additionally accepted for

SVQ Social Services and Healthcare SCQF Level 6	Support worker in: • care home service for adults • care at home • housing support services	Support worker in: • day care of children services
SVQ Social Services and Healthcare SCQF Level 7	Practitioner in: • Care home service for adults Practice requirement for supervisors in: • care home service for adults • care at home • housing support services	Practitioner in: • day care of children services
SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 6	Support worker in: • day care of children services	Support worker in: • care home service for adults • care at home • housing support services
SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) SCQF Level 7	Practitioner in: • day care of children services Practice requirement for: • Residential childcare workers Registrants are also required to evidence 96 academic credits of certificated knowledge at SCQF Level 7	New register levels for practitioner in: • care at home • housing support services (Dependent on approval of proposal 9) Practice requirement for supervisors in: • care home service for adults • care at home housing support services

Increased flexibility of qualifications will support greater career pathways and opportunities for the workforce. This will also support the flexibility of the workforce to meet service demand and new models of care delivery. This will be particularly true of services that are:

- in a remote and/or rural setting
- supporting both adults and children
- out of school care services that operate for limited hours and struggle to recruit.

The mandatory SVQ units within each qualification contain the same criteria for the knowledge, skills and understanding that need to be demonstrated in a practice setting. There are slight differences where the unit contained within the Children and Young People's suites may state 'child or young person' opposed to 'individual' in the Social Services and Healthcare suite however it is the same core skills and competence that needs to be evidenced (Reflective Practice, Communication, Safeguarding Individuals, Health and Safety).

Scottish Government early learning and childcare (ELC) funded hours requirements, and Care Inspectorate registered manager requirements, do not specify a qualification – only that requirements for SSSC registration are met therefore the changes will not impact on these requirements.

Consultation and engagement
During consultation we asked:

- Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles? 88.5% of respondents indicated that we should.
- Should the SSSC develop a new SVQ qualification that would support individuals to work across different roles and settings? 79.1% of respondents indicated that we should.
- How much more or less would qualifications that are accepted for different roles support new models of care? 76.4% of respondents indicated that the proposal would provide much more support or a little more support.
- How helpful would qualifications that are accepted for different roles be to address recruitment and retention pressures in the sector, especially in remote and rural areas? 83.5% of respondents indicated that the proposal would be much more helpful or a little more helpful.
- How much more or less attractive would a career in the sector be if qualifications were accepted for different roles? 80.9% of

respondents indicated that this would make careers in the sector much more attractive or a little more attractive.

Given the results of our consultation, we have decided not to make any changes to this proposal. The responses we received from the consultation and focus groups, however, have helped to inform mitigation and the detail of what should be covered in the CPL model for those moving into different roles. For example, the development of open badges to support workers new into role, changing role or returning to the role.

General Concerns about proposals
- Feedback from the consultation survey and subsequent focus groups indicated some concern, particularly from ELC employers, that this proposal may reduce the specialist skills of staff.
- Potential for movement of staff to roles where there are better terms and conditions – for example if real living wage was increased for adult social care (ASC) but not ELC.

Mitigations
Our consultation highlighted a concern that this proposal may reduce the skills of staff working in different sectors. We believe the risk of reduced specialist skill can be addressed and mitigated through employer induction and enhanced continuous professional learning (CPL) requirements. As part of the new model we are proposing to develop CPL open badges for individuals moving setting (as discussed below).

Benefits
We believe this proposal provides:

- Support for new models of care, especially rural and remote, and out of school care.
- Improved career pathways.
- Reduced number of qualifications individuals need when changing role or working in new or across different settings.
- Support for current recruitment and retention challenges.
- Potential for enhanced practice through new skills/experience if moving to another part of the sector.
- Reduced number of registrants with a qualification condition – this will help with current supply/demand for qualifications and support proposal 6.

Impact on protected characteristics
- **Age**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their age.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's age.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their age, is neutral.

- **Disability**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their disability status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's disability or health condition.

In our consultation 88.89% indicated that the SSSC should be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles.

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by **Q31. Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles?** (is not -), **Q65. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?** (is Yes, limited a little or Yes, limited a lot), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their disability, is neutral.

- **Gender reassignment**

It is not considered that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their gender reassignment status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's gender reassignment status. However, this may be owing to the small numbers of respondents identifying as having undergone gender reassignment.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have in relation to those who have undergone gender reassignment is neutral.

- **Marriage and civil partnership**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to impact individuals, either registered workers, those who use services or members of the public on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status. The present proposal seeks to simplify the SSSC's Register, however, it will not affect the registration status of those currently registered with us, regardless of their marital or civil partnership status. Nor will the ability for individuals to gain registration with the SSSC in the future be impacted on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status as a result of this proposal.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on the basis of an individual's marital or civil partnership status, is neutral.

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their pregnancy or maternity.

- **Race**

During consultation, 90.57% of respondents from non-majority ethnic backgrounds indicated that they believed the SSSC should be more flexile and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles. The positive response in relation to this question was

higher among this group than the average across all responses.

| Yes | 90.57% |
| No | 9.43% |

Q31. Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles? (is not -), **Q67.1 What is your ethnic group?** (is Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other, please use space below to write in (for example, Sikh or Jewish), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, Showman/Showwoman, or Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in))

81.82% of respondents from non-majority ethnic backgrounds indicated that the SSSC should develop a new SVQ that would support individuals to work across different roles and settings. This again is higher than the figure for all responses.

| Yes | 81.82% |
| No | 18.18% |

Q32. Should the SSSC develop a new SVQ qualification that would support individuals to work across different roles and settings? (is

not -), **Q67.1 What is your ethnic group?** (is Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other, please use space below to write in (for example, Sikh or Jewish), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, Showman/Showwoman, or Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in))

Given the results of our consultation, we do not believe that the current proposals will have a negative impact on individuals on the basis of their race.

The free text responses to this part of our consultation provided the following comments from respondents:

Q37. Does this proposal have an impact on or for equality issues?

"Being more flexible should have a beneficial impact for equality."

"This proposal could increase equal opportunities in the sector by removing barriers for people who have already qualified for their role but might consider working in another role where a different qualification is required. It could also give workers the scope to diversify their specialties as they progress in their careers. It could encourage people to move between different lines of work within the sector and enhance career progression opportunities. This could innovate our approach to talent management and set new pathways for succession planning which encapsulate a variety of transferable skills. For example, where currently some staff might work with adults, they might be more able to transfer their skills to working with young people. If we can expand the current list of recognised qualifications to be more transferable within certain parts of the Register this would be extremely beneficial in rural areas. This could allow more flexible working, possibly increasing the number of qualified employees on our bank for example."

The respondents also highlighted several areas of concern:

"Adding qualifications listed in #34 will greatly increase employability, diversity and recruitment options. Simply opening roles to other social care categories will not have a big effect on employability or recruitment and it may have a negative impact on quality"

"Older more experienced workers may feel they do not want to participate in qualifications and may feel forced out of the sector. Provision must be made for them but younger/newer workers should be appropriate qualified for their role."

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's race. Respondents from non-majority ethnic backgrounds have been supportive of the proposals, but have highlighted other areas of concern.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their race, is neutral.

- **Religion/belief**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their religion or belief. 90.32% of respondents to our consultation from non-majority religions indicated that the SSSC should accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles?

Yes   90.32%

No   9.68%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by **Q31. Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles?** (is not -), **Q71.1 What religion, religious denomination or or body do you belong to?** (is Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, write in denomination or school below, Pagan, or Another religion or body, please write in below), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

- **Sex**

We do not consider that the present proposal, which seeks to allow our main benchmark qualifications are accepted for additional Register parts where the required qualification is already one of these suites of qualifications at the same level, will put any individuals at a disadvantage on the basis of their sex.

In our consultation, 87.96% of female and 91.13% of male respondents to our consultation indicated that they supported this proposal.

Yes — 87.96%

No — 12.04%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27
Filtered by **Q31. Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles?** (is not -), **Q68.1 What term best describes your sex?** (is Female), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

Yes — 91.13%

No — 8.87%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27
Filtered by Q31. Should the SSSC be more flexible and accept SVQ units gained in adult or childcare settings for registration in other roles? (is not -), Q68.1 What term best describes your sex? (is Male), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual)

For this reason, we deem the impact of this proposal, in terms of sex, to be neutral.

- **Sexual orientation**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation. The respondents to our consultation with non-heterosexual sexual orientations responded to this

proposal in broadly the same way as other protected characteristics with 87.69% of this group supporting this proposal.

Proposal 2 – Timescales for qualifications

Aims of the proposal

We propose that from April 2024, the timescale for new registrants on a function-based register part to achieve a required qualification will be reduced from five years to three years.

There are some exceptions to this proposal, these are as follows:

Group	Current requirement	New requirement
Any new registrant who is registered as a: • Supervisor • Manager • Residential childcare worker with no recognised qualification	5 years	5 years (no change)

Residential childcare worker with one of two required qualifications	5 years	3 years
All other function-based register parts	5 years	3 years

Consultation and engagement

During consultation we asked respondents how much easier or more difficult will this change make to ensuring individuals complete the required qualification on time? 50.3% of respondents indicated that this would make it much more difficult or a little more difficult.

Our original proposal was to reduce the timescale for all function-based register parts from five to three years. Feedback from the consultation and focus groups included concerns that this would impact those who had more than one qualification requirement. We agreed with this point and have revised the proposal as described above.

Via SQA, we surveyed training providers who deliver benchmark qualifications to determine current capacity in the system and ability to adapt to changing demands and needs. We sent the survey to 212 providers, with 58 responses (response rate of 27%).

Around 50% of respondents have capacity to increase provision in ASC qualifications and 43% in ELC qualifications, with an average increase in capacity of around 23%. 82% of respondents said they could adapt and change which awards they were delivering to meet demand.

General Concerns about proposals
- Increased demand on workforce to complete qualifications in their own time due to shorter timescales.
- Increased demand on training (funding, providers).
- Intake timescales for some programmes may be impacted by reducing our requirements.
- Access to training in rural areas can be an issue.
- Equality impact as likely to impact more women than men, and may also impact on those with disabilities, working part-time, in rural/remote areas and those with multiple qualification conditions.

Mitigations
- We have discretion and appropriate processes to provide extensions on a case by case basis where required.
- Currently the number of registrants with multiple qualification requirements is small.

- Turnover is low, and the workforce is stable – our most recent [Workforce Data Report](#) (2021) reports that around 75% of the workforce has stayed in the same post since the last year and that 83% of the workforce are on permanent contracts.
- The same report also states that ASC groups are the least qualified, with 54,000 workers required to be qualified by 2025. 20,000 of those must be qualified by 2024, which is likely to reduce the impact the proposal will have on training providers. There is no anticipated supply/demand challenge for ELC groups.
- The current timescale for achieving an SVQ ranges on average from 6 to 18 months. This is well within the proposed three years for most new registrants. Our registration data shows that the average time for a worker to meet a qualification condition is 27 months.

Benefits
- Increased public protection.
- Increased delivery of high-quality care.
- Public are reassured that workers have the required skills.
- Enhanced professional identify and perception of the workforce as skilled.

Impact on protected characteristics
- **Age**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their age.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's age.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their age, is neutral.

- **Disability**

We believe that changes to timescales for qualifications may have the potential to negatively impact disabled registrants. Some registrants with disabilities or long-term health conditions may require additional time and support to meet these requirements. This is reflected in the responses to our consultation from individuals identifying as having a disability where 20.31% of respondents indicated that this proposal would make it easier to complete qualifications on time. This is compared to 54.69% of respondents in this group who indicated that this proposal would make it more difficult to complete qualifications on time.

Where applicants have difficulty completing qualifications in time on the basis of their disability status, our existing reasonable adjustments policy should mitigate this impact.

| 23.44% | 31.25% | 25.00% | 9.38% | 10.94% |

● Much more difficult ● A little more difficult ● Neither easier or more difficult ● A little easier ● Much easier

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by **Q48. How much easier or more difficult will this change make to ensuring individuals complete the required qualification on time?** (is not -), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual), **Q65. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?** (is Yes, limited a little or Yes, limited a lot)

Overall, we deem the impact on the basis of disable resulting from this proposal to be neutral.

- **Gender reassignment**

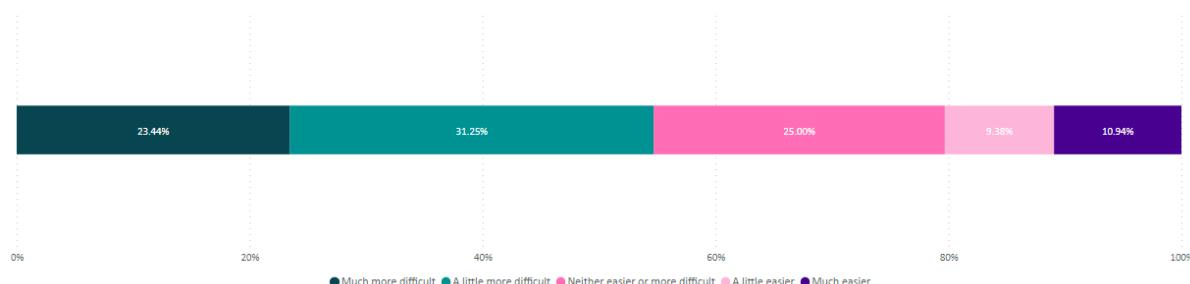It is not considered that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their gender reassignment status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's gender reassignment status. However, this may be owing to the small numbers of respondents identifying as having undergone gender reassignment.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have in relation to those who have undergone gender reassignment is neutral.

- **Marriage and civil partnership**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to impact individuals, either registered workers, those who use services or members of the public on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on the basis of an individual's marital or civil partnership status, is neutral.
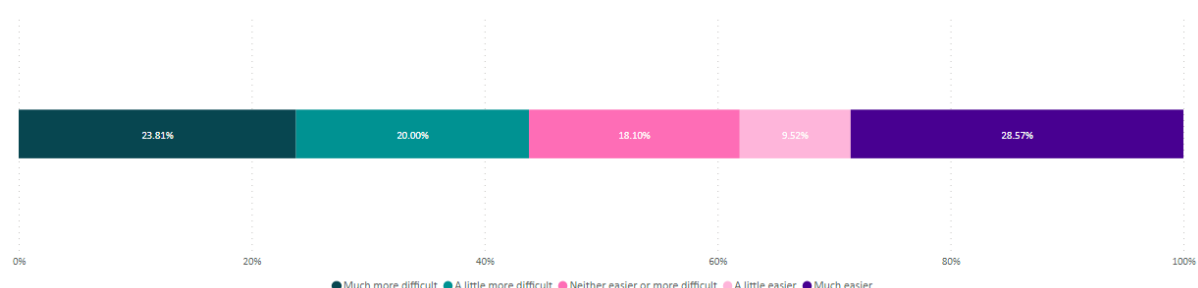
- **Pregnancy and maternity**

There is the potential for a negative impact on the basis of pregnancy and maternity as changes to the timescales for obtaining qualifications may

impact on this basis. There is also the potential for positive impact on the basis of pregnancy and maternity as this proposal aims to facilitate a return to practice for registrants that have not worked in the sector for some time. This may make it easier for those who have taken time away from the sector for childcare reasons to return to work more easily. The proposed new timescale for gaining qualification is three years. Our data indicates that the average time for registrants to gain qualifications is presently 27 months. Therefore, the proposed new timescale is unlikely to impact the majority of workers It is believed that any potential negative impact on the minority of workers that may be affected by the proposed changes will be mitigated by process that are already in place to allow extensions for qualification requirements.

- **Race**

During consultation 38.1% of respondents from non-majority ethnic backgrounds indicated that the proposal would make it easier for registrants to complete the required qualification on time. This is compared to 26.46% of respondents from all ethnic backgrounds who thought that the proposal would make it easier to gain the required qualification.

| 23.81% | 20.00% | 18.10% | 9.52% | 28.57% |

● Much more difficult ● A little more difficult ● Neither easier or more difficult ● A little easier ● Much easier

Q48. How much easier or more difficult will this change make to ensuring individuals complete the required qualification on time? (is not -), **Q67.1 What is your ethnic group?** (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

The free text responses from respondents from non-majority ethnicity backgrounds in relation to the impact this proposal might have told us:

"I do not think so, I think 3 years is more than enough to get a qualification, but also if SSSC support workers/employers to do so, make it easier to find training providers to complete the qualification"

"There are a variety of personal and systemic reasons why an individual takes 5 years to qualify, particularly if they have limited resources or language barriers. The SSSC to publish he reasons for the change and

include a wide variety of reasons for and against. Transparency is not SSSC's strength."

"Financial implications can have an impact on low income families. Reducing time to complete qualifications could impact on those with carer commitments."

"Yes. People who struggle with literacy or have other disabilities that impact on learning might find it harder to achieve at the higher level."

"Yes it definitely will make practicing in Scotland less attractive to people with high quality and/or professional qualifications from elsewhere in the U.K./Ireland/EU - unless this change is coupled with an easing or widening of the range of acceptable qualifications so that it includes such workers."

One of the key themes that emerges from these responses is concern that reduced timescales will negatively impact individuals for whom English is not their first language, or who have additional support needs with literacy.

We agree that changes to the timescales we have in place for registrants to meet qualification requirements may have an impact on staff who do not have English as a first language. However, we believe that any potential impact in relation to language ability will be mitigated by the SSSC's plain language policy and other support mechanisms we have in place to assist registrants on a case by case basis.
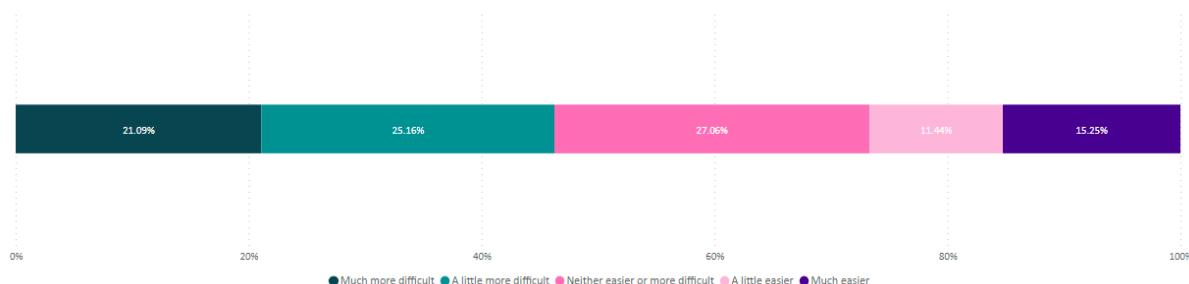
- **Religion/belief**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their religion or belief.

- **Sex**

We do not consider that, in general, the present proposal, which seeks to allow our main benchmark qualifications are accepted for additional Register parts where the required qualification is already one of these suites of qualifications at the same level, will put any individuals at a disadvantage on the basis of their sex.

In our consultation, 26.68% of female respondents indicated that this proposal would make it easier to achieve the required qualifications on time, while 46.25% of female respondents indicated that this proposal would make it more difficult.

| 21.09% | 25.16% | 27.06% | 11.44% | 15.25% |

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

● Much more difficult ● A little more difficult ● Neither easier or more difficult ● A little easier ● Much easier

Filtered by **Q48. How much easier or more difficult will this change make to ensuring individuals complete the required qualification on time?** (is not -), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual), **Q68.1 What term best describes your sex?** (is Female)

While we recognise that there is the potential that this proposal will impact women to a higher degree than men, we believe this impact to be on the basis of pregnancy and maternity, not on sex. This is discussed above. For this reason, we deem the impact of this proposal, in terms of sex, to be neutral.

- **Sexual orientation**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Proposal 3 – Continuous professional learning (CPL)

Aims of the proposal
To design a new continuous professional learning (CPL) model.

The new model will be developed in consultation with the sector and include:

- an annual declaration
- a move away from current model of recording hours/days
- focus on key skills and knowledge required at key career stages ie induction, change of role, return to practice
- inclusion of mandatory skills/knowledge requirements for each register group ie trauma
- mandatory learning for those moving across the register from adults to children and vice versa to support the flexibility of current benchmark qualifications
- new requirements for newly qualified social workers, to support the roll-out of the mandatory supported first year of practice
- flexibility for SSSC to revise requirements to respond to emerging skills gaps

Revising the CPL requirements will help us to support the workforce to respond to emerging issues more quickly when required – for example, the infection control skills and knowledge required at the start of the pandemic and ensure the workforce have the right skills at the right time in their career journeys to deliver better outcomes for people.

Work Carried out following Council approval

In November 2022 Council approved the design of a new continuous professional learning (CPL) model to be developed in consultation with the sector to ensure that the SSSC can support the workforce to have the right skills at the right time in their career journeys to deliver better outcomes for people.

The new model will include:

- an annual declaration
- a move away from current model of recording hours/days, with a focus on key skills and knowledge required at key career stages ie induction, change of role, return to practice
- inclusion of mandatory skills/knowledge requirements for each register group ie trauma
- new requirements for newly qualified social workers, to support the roll-out of the mandatory supported first year of practice
- flexibility for SSSC to revise requirements to respond to emerging skills gaps.

Since Council approval we have concluded Phase 1 of this project. In Phase 1, the initial design of a new model of Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) in consultation with the sector was explored, using evidence from:

- desk based research (including learning from other sectors)
- experience of other regulators such as Coru, Social Work England and Social Care Wales
- an internal working group with representatives from across the SSSC
- stakeholder engagement in two Design Sprint events based on Service Design Principles
- individual registrants from different parts of the register developing personas to allow us to model their CPL journeys.

The model we have used for service design has put a lot of emphasis on involving the sector. We used design sprints to begin the process of designing a new model for CPL. The design sprints were held as day long online workshops with participating stakeholders. 29 Stakeholders and

registrants as well as SSSC working group members took part in these design sprints.

During Design Sprint 1 participants:

- used personas to begin to think about the different career journeys that Social Care workers might take.
- focussed on the different career stages that workers might experience and debated the language we use to describe these.
- discussed different CPL priorities and approaches.
- thought about pathways and who might need them at different stages in their careers.
- created a 'map' which recorded the areas the group found most important and began to reflect the complex nature of devising a model which could meet the needs of all workers in all areas of the sector.

Design Sprint 2 was based on the outcomes of the first Design Sprint.

Participants:

- considered the look and feel of the prototype and asked what would we need it to do? How could we achieve this?
- began to establish some principles to underpin the CPL approach.
- defined some of the career stages.
- established the need for clarity and ease of use – language matters.
- examined knowledge, skills and values at career stages.

During the discussion of the underlying principles of CPL, participants agreed that CPL should focus on the needs of the service users and registrants and be accessible and relevant while encouraging reflective practice. This feedback prompted us to carry out a thematic analysis of the large range of principles of CPL suggested by the group. These principles showed clear links to The Interprofessional CPD and Lifelong Learning UK Working Group's 'Principles for continuing professional development and lifelong learning in health and social care' which were written in May 2022.

The 5 principles of this model are:

- Principle 1: CPD and lifelong learning should be each person's responsibility and be made possible and supported by your employer.
- Principle 2: CPD and lifelong learning should benefit service users.
- Principle 3: CPD and lifelong learning should improve the quality of service delivery.
- Principle 4: CPD and lifelong learning should be balanced and relevant to each person's area of practice or employment.

- Principle 5: CPD and lifelong learning should be recorded and show the effect on each person's area of practice.

The SSSC internal working group for CPL agreed to look at how our model could incorporate the service design principles.

Participants in sprint 2 examined the language and understanding of the concepts used in CPL. Stakeholders had different understandings of language widely used in the sector and it was proposed that the CPL model should include a glossary with clear explanations of the terms in the CPL model.

The group discussed the skills and knowledge that will make up the core content of the CPL model, using questions from our initial consultation as guidance. The group identified the National Occupational Standards and the Care Inspectorate's Health and Social Care Standards as needing to be central to the CPL model content. The group also identified that using CPL to generate evidence for qualifications as being good practice and allowing for faster evidence gathering when SVQ qualifications are used.

The group identified that it was extremely important to make sure that workers who remain in a post for their whole career are recognised as experts in their area.

The group also agreed that our CPL model needs to be flexible to allow workers growth and development while not imposing an unwanted career trajectory.

Sprint 2 also highlighted that there may be a need for different CPL models for three different register groups:

- Social Workers (including NQSW)
- Adult Social Care
- Children and Young People

Social Work and the Social Care Workforce both have different legislative requirements and therefore need separate CPL models. The discussion around potential different requirements for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People centred on the movement of workers across the register. A possible solution is that the 'map' will look the same but the skills and knowledge underpinning it will be different.

Next steps

The use of a website was identified as a need during the design sprints, and this has been sourced and budgeted for. The website is due for launch in April 2024 with a year of support as part of the design and build package. The April launch will allow for communication with registrants about the coming changes and wider user testing before June 2024.

Consultation and engagement

In response to our question on whether the SSSC should be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements, 70.4% of respondents indicated that we should.

77.3% of respondents indicated that there should be mandatory CPL requirements for those new into role.

62.9% of respondents indicated that there should be annual CPL requirements.

There was considerable support for this proposal and therefore no specific changes were made as a result of the consultation.

The consultation informed the planned content, for example suggestions of core elements such as values, health and social care standards, safeguarding, the role of the SSSC and reflective practice, and that these should be transferable across settings.

Consultation following Council approval

We engaged with external stakeholders in the two design sprints previously discussed. We identified stakeholders using available SSSC stakeholder lists and the Stakeholder Advisory Group. We also used the Communications Team's stakeholders exercises with the SSSC internal working group. All identified stakeholders were invited to participate and many sent individual participants along with registrants who volunteered to take part via the monthly SSSC newsletters. Other stakeholders have participated through forums and meetings.

These design sprints took place in April and May 2023 and were based on the service design principles. Eight members of the group were individual registrants from different parts of the register who brought current lived experience to the discussions. The draft CPL model has been based entirely on these design sprint conversations and the evidence gathered in initial research.

152 registrants responded to a request to take part in CPL development we made as part of a weekly newsletter. The volunteers are being grouped according to their register parts areas of work. These groups will participate in design discussions to examine and comment on the next

stages of the CPL model development as well as the knowledge and skills that will form the basis of the model. Pre-existing stakeholder groups will also engage in these design discussions.

A large part of our consultation following Council approval has been guided by the use of personas that have been developed to help gain an understanding the needs of different users of our CPL resources. These personas were developed by the SSSC, based on either real or fictitious people, and present profiles of workers from different backgrounds and experience.

Fay

Job Role
Social Care Worker

Work pattern
shift worker in a care home for older people

"I just want to be friends with everyone"

Motivation
Wants to help people
Used to care for a relative

Background
Has worked in public facing jobs since she left school (retail and bar work)

Left school with Highers, hasn't done any formal learning since

What matters to Fay?
Family, friends and going out
Not working every weekend
Doing a good job
Juggling work and family

Career journey
Began work as a social care worker just before the pandemic. Has been on the SSSC register and now needs to complete a qualification. Is keen to learn more and move up the career ladder in the care home to be a supervisor.

Interests
Loves people and socialising
Occasional snowboarder

Other relevant info
A small issue with the police (breach of the peace) when she was 16.

Adam

Job Role
Senior Playworker

Work pattern
Breakfast clubs 7-9am
After school 2pm-6pm
Fridays 11.30-6pm
Holiday clubs 7am-6pm

Motivation
Wants to bring play and a sense of security and fun to the children he works with unlike his own childhood experiences.

Background
Adam has worked with children since before he left school, supporting holiday clubs and working on Fridays at a local youth centre.

What matters to Adam?
The children and families in the community he works with. He is passionate about ensuring they are supported and heard.

Career journey
Started at a youth club supporting younger children and then did a Modern Apprenticeship in Playwork working as a playworker. Took three years out to look after his mum and his younger siblings. Returned to work as a playworker and further study for an SVQ4 playwork qualification which took 2 years. Is now working as a senior playworker in the same organisation and doing a PDA9 Childhood Practice as an evening course.

Interests
Play, mess, art, loose parts, woodwork and gardening

Other relevant info
Adam is a carer for his mum who has a degenerative disease.

The use of personas is believed to increase empathy in service design by allowing those involved in the discussion to put themselves in the shoes of another.

We believe that the use of personas has allowed the design of our CPL resources to take into account the needs of a much wider range of people

than if we had not used personas. The persona-led discussions highlighted the need to make sure our resources were accessible for all and that we focussed on making sure we got the language we used right at all levels.

General Concerns about proposals
- The system for recording CPL needs to be simple and accessible.
- The potential for additional costs arising from new requirements, including for staff on minimum wage.
- The need for CPL requirements to be realistic, achievable and flexible.
- The potential for groups to be disproportionately affected, for example people with disabilities, caring responsibilities or on maternity leave.

Additional concerns identified following council approval

No additional concerns have been identified following Council approval.

Mitigations
- Our existing MyLearning app provides an easy-to-use platform for workers to both access resources and record CPL in one place, which is portable and transferrable (the individual owns their own record).
- We plan to take a flexible approach and include SSSC and national resources that are open learning so accessible by all. We can use QR code functionality to link CPL directly in the MyLearning app.
- There are no anticipated additional costs for individuals or employers.
- Processes are already established for people who need extensions, for example due to maternity leave or illness.

Benefits
- Annual requirements will encourage workers to take ownership of their CPL.
- Ensures workers have the right skills at the right time, in turn increasing public confidence and outcomes for people.
- Allows SSSC to flex in response to emerging skills needs.
- Will support implementation of NQSW supported first year in practice.
- Will allow the SSSC to support and implement national policy and strategy programme for government commitments in respect of workforce development ie a trauma-informed workforce.

October 2023 consultation

We received 210 responses to this consultation. 207 of these were through our own survey with the other three responses coming from

OCSWA, SASW and Social Work England. The makeup of the respondents to our survey can be seen below.
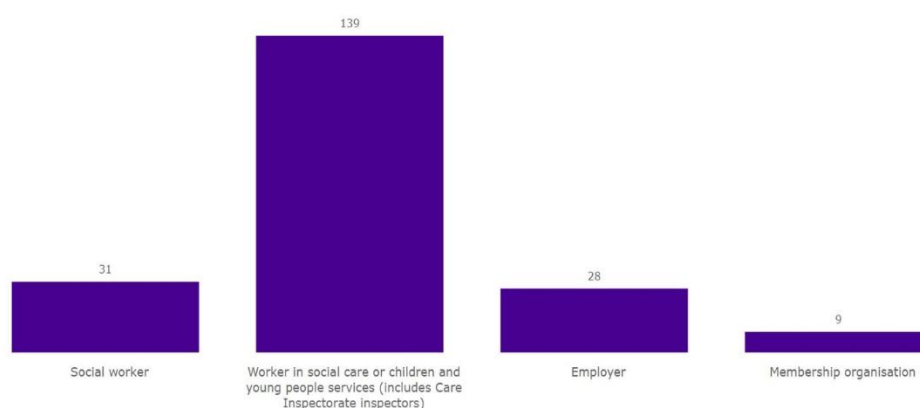
As can be seen from the above table, 139 workers in social care or children and young people services (including Care Inspectorate inspectors), 31 Social workers, 28 employers and nine membership organisations responded to our survey.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The majority of respondents to this survey were happy to provide their equality, diversity and inclusion data with us. The disclosure rate for this consultation was 83.1% which we consider to be a good level of disclosure.

Age

The respondents to the survey came from a wide range of age groups. The highest represented groups were 35-44 and 45-54. Ideally we would have liked to have seen some response to our survey from workers under the age of 25, however, we do not believe that the absence of this group in the responses to this survey presents a challenge as younger workers have responded to previous consultations and been involved and taken into account in the development of this work area.

What is your age group?

Disability

There were 33 respondents to our survey that identified as having a disability that limits their day-to-day activities either a little or a lot, as can be seen below.

No	139
Yes, limited a little	27
Yes, limited a lot	6

Total Responses

Responses to our survey highlighted several issues relating to disability, such as disability awareness and communication needs that could form the basis of additional specialisms within career pathways.

Race

The majority of respondents to our survey where from White ethnic backgrounds, however 11 responses were received from individuals from other ethnic backgrounds. This equates to approximately 6.1% of responses.

What is your ethnic group?

White	16
African, Scottish African or British African	3
Caribbean or Black	3

Sex

The majority of responses received were from female respondents. This was expected given the known composition of the sector.

What term best describes your sex?

Female	15
Male	16

Gender reassignment/Trans history

We did not receive any responses from individuals identifying as being trans or as having a trans history. We do not believe that the proposals in this document will have an adverse impact on the basis of gender reassignment or trans history, however we will continue to monitor this as well as looking at ways we can gain insight on this work from people from the trans community.

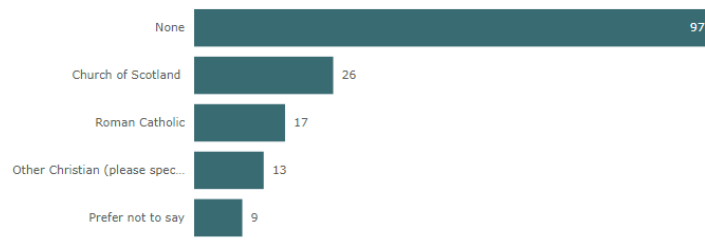Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history?

No	16

Religion

We believe that the proposed areas of work resulting from this consultation will have no impact on the basis of religion. We also note

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that the demographic of respondents to this survey in terms of religion is in line with the population at large.

What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?

None	97
Church of Scotland	26
Roman Catholic	17
Other Christian (please spec...	13
Prefer not to say	9

Sexual orientation

The majority of respondents to this survey identified as being heterosexual, however we received a significant number of responses from individuals identifying as gay/lesbian, bisexual or who would prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation. WE do not believe the proposals resulting from this consultation will adversely affect individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual/straight	14
Prefer not to say	11
Gay/lesbian	10
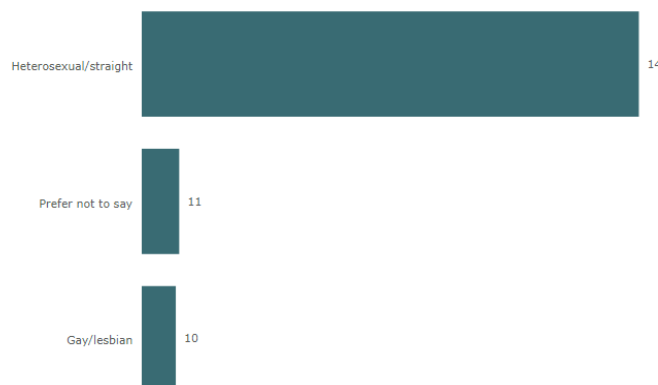
The Survey

The survey asked respondents a variety of questions, however, for the purposes of this document the most relevant questions are:

- Q3. How clear are the five CPL principles?
- Q5. How relevant are the pathways for your role/workforce?
- Q7. How relevant are the core learning elements for your role/workforce?
- Q8. How easy is it to understand the career pathways and core elements?

- Q9. Do Social Workers require specific core learning elements?
- Q11. Should the SSSC set additional mandatory training requirements within the core learning elements?
- Q13. The new COPL process has pathways for specialist areas of learning. What do you think the specialist areas should include?

We will discuss the responses in relation to these questions below.

Q3. How clear are the five CPL principles?

During our consultation the overwhelming majority of respondents (66) gave positive responses to the question of how clear the five CPL principles were. Of the different respondents, Social Workers, Workers in social care or children and young people services (including Care Inspectorate inspectors) and employers on average indicated that the five principles were very clear. 80% Membership organisations responded on average that the principles were somewhat clear and the remaining 20% of these organisations indicated that they were very clear.

Analysis of survey responses revealed several themes of how the five CPL principles may be improved. These are highlighted in the following table.

Improvement theme	SSSC Response
Responsibility and support	We will include emphasis on the individual and employer responsibilities as part of guidance and through Codes of Practice. Support will be offered by free resources through digital model.
Clarity and terminology	We will refine the wording of guidance and principles to ensure we use plain English and commonly understood terms. We will define what we mean by the wider system.
Relevance and diverse contexts	We will reword of some of the principles to be more inclusive of the whole workforce
Personal development not explicitly mentioned	Add into principles as they are revised

As a result of the feedback we received from this survey, we have made revisions to the five CPL principles as shown below.

My continuous professional learning (CPL):

- Principle 1: is my responsibility and will be supported by my employer

- Principle 2: improves the lives of, and protects, individuals and carers
- Principle 3: improves the quality of care or support I provide
- Principle 4: is relevant to my role and the outcomes of the individuals I support
- Principle 5: supports my career, increases my confidence and improves my professional practice

Q5. How relevant are the pathways for your role/workforce?

The survey responses we received in relation to this question indicated that the CPL pathways were, on average, either extremely relevant or moderately relevant to our respondents. Social work, Workers in social care or children and young people services (including Care Inspectorate inspectors) and employers strongly indicated that the pathways were extremely relevant to them whereas membership organisations indicated that CPL pathways were moderately relevant to them or their workforce.

Analysis of the survey responses has revealed several themes for how CPL pathways may be improved. These are highlighted in the able below.

Improvement theme	SSSC response
Relevance and clarity	We will continue to make sure we use clear language and reassess some of the language used in the Social Work model to make sure we avoid reliance on jargon where possible. We will also make sure the CPL website is clear and easy to use.
Pathways for management roles	This was not evidenced in examples we shared but is there in supervisors and management parts of the model. Social workers may need some revision in structure to ensure this aspect.
Diverse workforce, some with multiple job roles	We will make sure the flexibility of the approach is made clear to workers in guidance and on the front facing web pages.
Employer support and learning culture	Links to a wider sector responsibility and the need to help with supervision expectations.

Q7. How relevant are the core learning elements for your role/workforce?
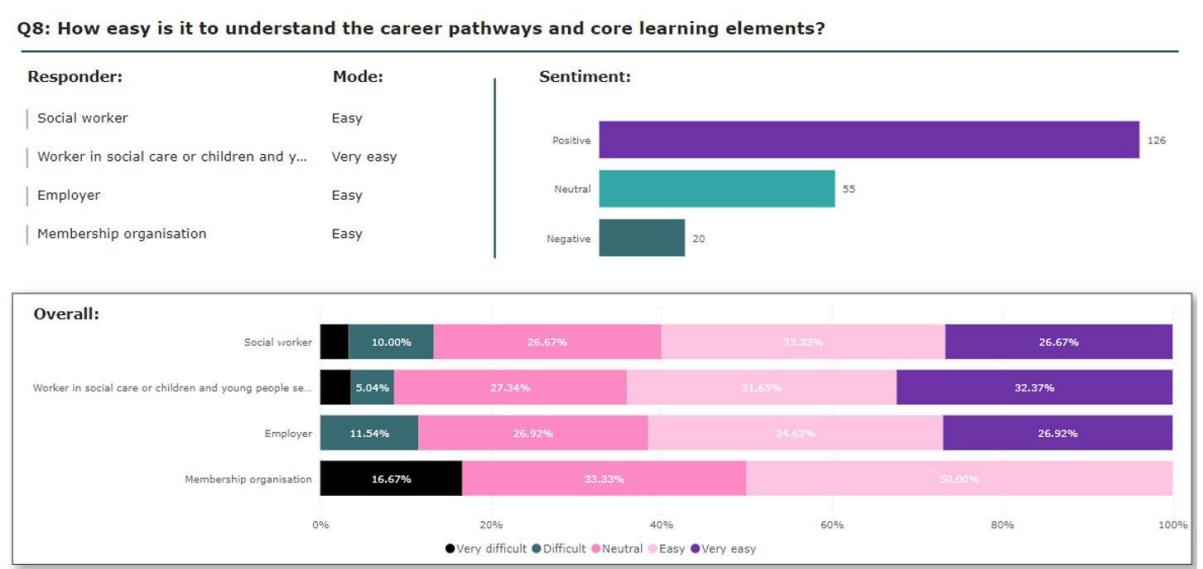
Our survey responses indicated that the core learning elements were seen to be extremely relevant across all types of respondent. Indeed, 100% of Social Workers indicated that the core learning elements were extremely relevant to them.

The main themes for how the core learning elements could be improved focused on the elements of this that were shared as part of the consultation. We shared the core learning elements for support worker level employees so many of the suggested improvements were around making sure leadership roles were reflected properly. We currently do have content regarding leadership roles for the appropriate levels so we will take no further action in relation to these comments for the present.

Other comments focused on making sure we used accessible, clear language and that the level of the learning elements is in line with the complexity of job roles. We believe the work that has been carried out to date reflects these comments, but we will continue to be mindful of them as the project progresses.

Q8. How easy is it to understand the career pathways and core elements?

An analysis of the responses to this question can be seen in the following table.

Q9. Do Social Workers require specific core learning elements?

The three groups that responded to this question, Social Workers, Employers and Membership organisations, all agreed that there should b specific core learning elements for Social workers.

Q9: Do Social workers require specific core learning elements?

Responder:	Mode:
Social worker	Agree
Employer	Agree
Membership organisation	Agree

Sentiment:
- Positive: 48
- Neutral: 9
- Negative: 4

Overall:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Social worker			16.67%	43.33%	36.67%
Employer		4.00%	12.00%	48.00%	36.00%
Membership organisation	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	16.67%

Q11. Should the SSSC set additional mandatory training requirements within the core learning elements?

Responses to this question were fairly evenly split with 106 respondents answering that we should not set additional mandatory requirements within the core learning elements, and 97 respondents suggesting that we should.

Our view is that mandatory training should seek to strike a balance between making sure there is a standardised level of knowledge and skill across the various levels of the workforce, while also making sure the training requirements are not so burdensome that staff are unable to complete them.

The relatively even split of views on mandatory training and the very wide range of suggestions of potential inclusions in mandatory training indicate to us that each part of the sector has areas they think are essential and which they feel could be better reflected in the model. We believe that, with two exceptions, we could better achieve this through the different pathways and stages rather than by making a wider range of elements mandatory across all sectors.

The two areas that we believe should be included as mandatory essential training elements in all pathways for all sectors are Trauma and Protection.
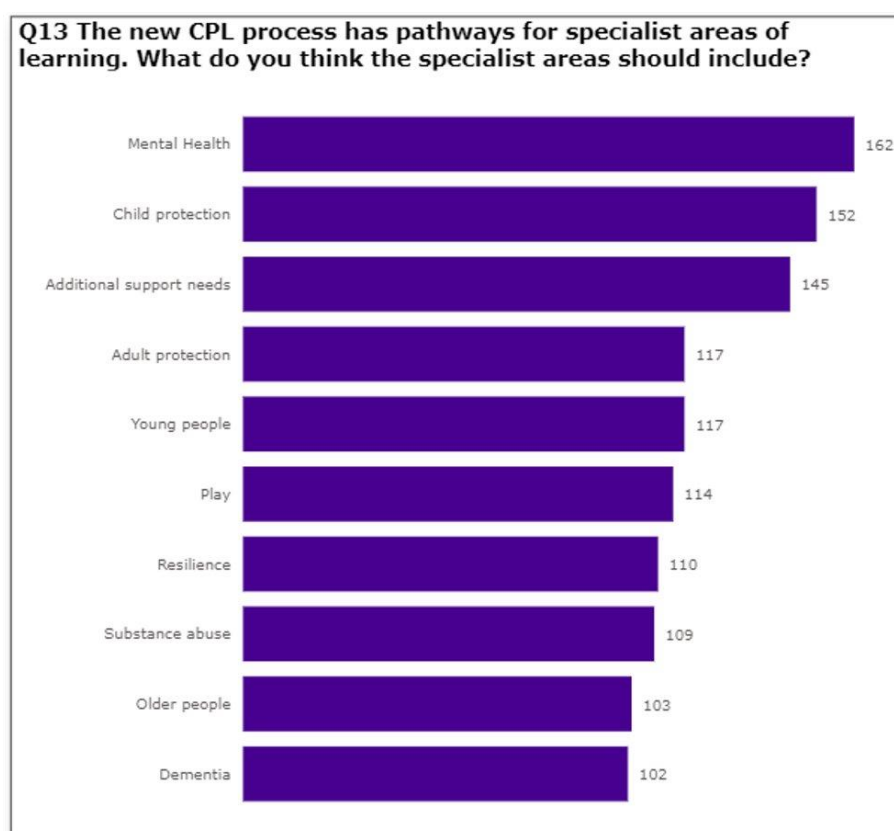
Q13. The new CPL process has pathways for specialist areas of learning. What do you think the specialist areas should include?

We received many responses about specialist areas that should be included as pathways in the new CPL model. However, many of the specialist areas that were suggested by respondents were individual areas

of training rather than complete specialist subject areas and so would fit better within the core learning elements.

When we grouped the suggested specialisms for the functional parts of the register, it became clear that these suggestions related to different work areas within different register parts eg residential care, day care of children, care at home etc. Suggestions around Social Work specialisms were easier to group, for example specialisms for mental health officers (MHOs) and link workers or practice educators.

The following table illustrates the top suggestions for specialist areas that should be included in the new CPL pathways.

Q13 The new CPL process has pathways for specialist areas of learning. What do you think the specialist areas should include?

Specialist area	Count
Mental Health	162
Child protection	152
Additional support needs	145
Adult protection	117
Young people	117
Play	114
Resilience	110
Substance abuse	109
Older people	103
Dementia	102

We are currently rewriting this section of the model to reflect the feedback we received in this area.

Impact on protected characteristics
- **Age**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their age.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's age.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their age, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Disability**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their disability status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's disability or health condition. Indeed, 66.15% of respondents identifying as having a disability indicated that the SSSC should be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements and 75.38% indicated that there should be mandatory CPL requirements for those new to roles.
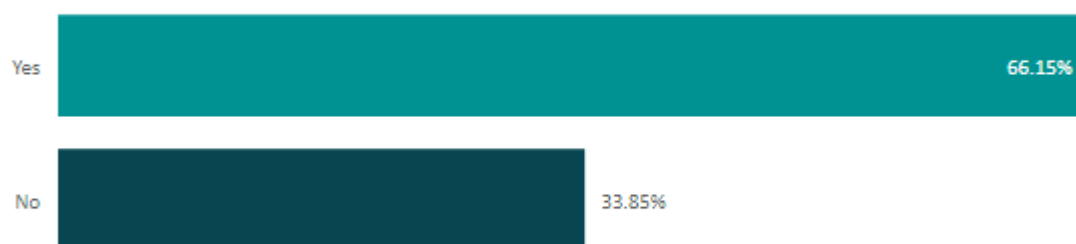
Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by **Q58. Should the SSSC be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements?** (is not -), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual), **Q65. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?** (is Yes, limited a little or Yes, limited a lot)

| Yes | 75.38% |
| No | 24.62% |
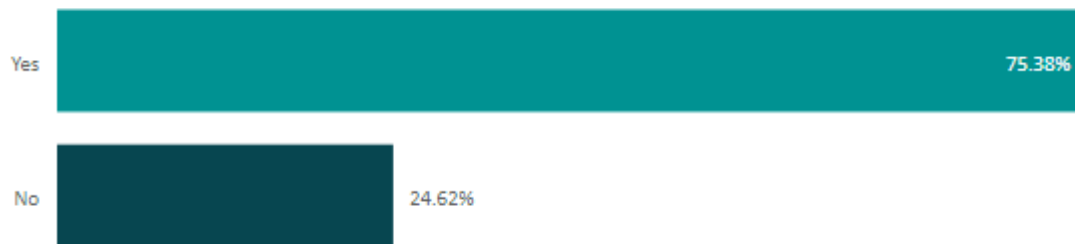
Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by Q59. Should there be mandatory CPL requirements for those new into role? (is not -), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual), Q65. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (is Yes, limited a lot or Yes, limited a little)

A selection of free text responses to the question of whether respondents identifying as having a disability felt this proposal would have an equality impact are listed here:

"Digital poverty - inequality for those who are unable to access materials"

"Yes, for those who have long term health problems and work part time/ nights etc. it is difficult to access training."

"If the mandatory CPL units are free, then no"

"Yes, like me , I am unsure on how to find my way around the site to find learning information which are for my work practice."

"If they want to change roles [as suggested previously] e.g. early years to adult then some kind of CPL should be done to ensure they have a good understanding of Service user needs and challenges and this would be dependent on the sector they wish to enter."

"Less folk will want to work in care. "

"Yes training is important you can offer it in the workplace but not as mandatory qualifications just a more helpful hands on approach from yourselves would be much better."

"This is a dreadful proposal - puts too much pressure on people and it seems SSSC are making a niche for themselves with mandatory training"

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their disability, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic. However, we continue to be aware of the need to ensure that any digital resources we develop for CPL meet accessibility requirements.

- **Gender reassignment**

It is not considered that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their gender reassignment status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's gender reassignment status. However, this may be owing to the small numbers of respondents identifying as having undergone gender reassignment.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have in relation to those who have undergone gender reassignment is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Marriage and civil partnership**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to impact individuals, either registered workers, those who use services or members of the public on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on the basis of an individual's marital or civil partnership status, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their pregnancy or maternity.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Race**

Or consultation indicated that 76.15% of respondents from non-majority ethnic backgrounds supported the SSSC being able to set mandatory training for CPL. This is higher than the average across all ethnic groups.
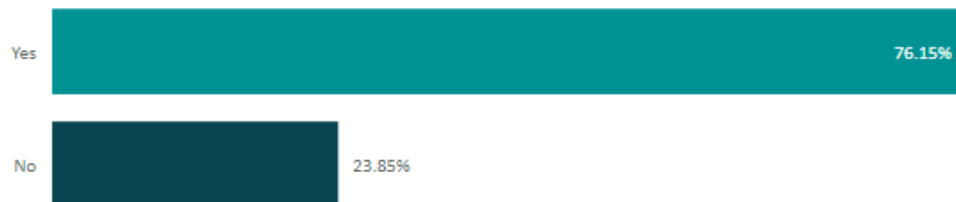
Q58. Should the SSSC be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements? (is not -), **Q67.1 What is your ethnic group?** (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

Similarly, 78.9% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds indicated support for mandatory CPL requirements for individuals new to a role. This is broadly similar to the figure for support across all ethnic groups.

Q59. Should there be mandatory CPL requirements for those new into role? (is not -), **Q67.1 What is your ethnic group?** (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

On whether there should be annual CPL requirements, 64.49% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds indicated that there should be. Again, this is broadly consistent with the support for this proposal across all respondents.

Free text responses in relation to these proposals highlighted the following:

Q61. Does this proposal have an impact on or for equality issues?

"A positive impact, self - reflection and ongoing training makes workers a better team members that value service users and employers."

"As long as any manadatory [sic] CPL is financed by employers and support is given to those who require it there should not an impact on equality issues. Any mandatory training should be within the employees working hours."

"Yes due to the place they are working in and time commitment- the onus seems to be on the induvial[sic] when it should be jointly owned with workplace"

"Yes, for those who have long term health problems and work part time/ nights etc. it is difficult to access training."

As a result of our consultation, we do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their race.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their race, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Religion/belief**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their religion or belief. The proposal that the SSSC should be able to set mandatory CPL requirements was supported by 66.63% of respondents from non-majority religions in our consultation. 71.88% of respondents from non-majority religions also supported the introduction of mandatory CPL for those new to roles.

Yes — 65.63%
No — 34.38%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by **Q58. Should the SSSC be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements?** (is not -), **Q71.1 What religion, religious denomination or or body do you belong to?** (is Another religion or body, please write in below, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, write in denomination or school below, or Pagan), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

Yes — 71.88%
No — 28.13%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by Q59. Should there be mandatory CPL requirements for those new into role? (is not -), Q71.1 What religion, religious denomination or or body do you belong to? (is Another religion or body, please write in below, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, write in denomination or school below, or Pagan), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual)

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Sex**

We do not consider that the present proposal, which seeks to allow our main benchmark qualifications are accepted for additional Register parts where the required qualification is already one of these suites of qualifications at the same level, will put any individuals at a disadvantage on the basis of their sex.

Our consultation showed that 75.19% of female respondents supported the SSSC being able to set mandatory training for CPL and 81.22% of

41

female respondents indicated that there should be mandatory CPL for those new to their roles.
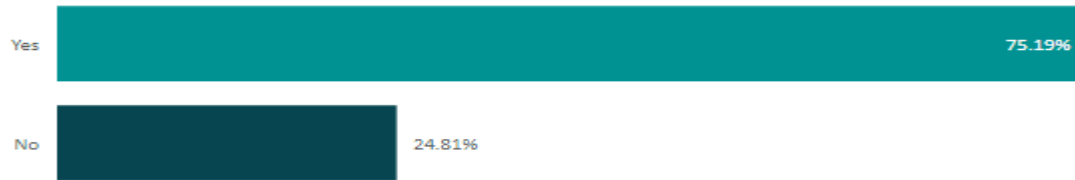
Yes	75.19%
No	24.81%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27
Filtered by **Q58. Should the SSSC be able to set mandatory training for CPL requirements?** (is not -), **Q68.1 What term best describes your sex?** (is Female), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

Yes	81.22%
No	18.78%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27
Filtered by Q59. Should there be mandatory CPL requirements for those new into role? (is not -), Q68.1 What term best describes your sex? (is Female), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual)

Free text responses to whether this proposal would have an equality impact indicate:

"May impact on those on extended leave ie maternity/long term absence"

"Not really any effect to equality because such trainings are fairly standard (some mandatory) the only difference is that they are being recorded as CPL"

"yes,some people will have to cut down their work hours to fit this in unless they are getting paid to do CPL as they may have other commitments which require all their free time."

For this reason, we deem the impact of this proposal, in terms of sex, to be neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Sexual orientation**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

Proposal 4 - Return to practice

Aims of the proposal
To develop separate return to practice standards for social workers and function-based social service workers.

For **social workers**, we are proposing a return to practice requirement based upon the length of time an individual has been out of practice. This does not include individuals who have qualified but never practiced. Those individuals would have to complete the newly qualified social work requirements.

We also propose that the number and nature of learning required will be tiered according to the length of gap – for example:

- 0 – 2 years gap – no requirement
- 2 – 5 years
- 5 years +

The requirements will be formed of supervised practice, formal learning and informal learning.   We consulted on each part of the requirements through both survey and focus groups.

Other UK regulators require these hours to be completed before an individual can be registered as a social worker. We proposed in the consultation that we would also require these hours to be completed before registration, however, feedback from the sector highlighted that people felt that this would disadvantage social workers wishing to return to the register as it would be challenging to access supervised practice and formal learning. We have the precedent of setting conditions for specialist social work awards from England, and so are now setting the requirements for social workers returning to practice to be completed within 6 months of registration. Learning completed 12 months prior to registration will also be accepted as evidence as we know some people may wish to prepare before registration.

For **function-based parts of the register** we propose that return to practice requirements for will be different from social work registration. This is because individuals can join the register without any prior knowledge, skills or experience. It would therefore disadvantage those returning to roles. Additionally, workers may also return to practice from one part of the sector or register to another and therefore may also have a new qualification requirement. Asking those workers to complete a return to practice requirement in addition to this and above CPL requirements would be excessive.

We propose that the requirements of any return to practice for function-based sit with the refreshed CPL requirements. We suggest that in

developing CPL requirements, workers returning to practice would be included in setting requirements of hours and skills/knowledge to be covered by registrants as part of induction requirements.

We would also see that induction requirement by employers would also support their learning.

Work Carried out following Council approval

In November 2022, Council approved the above proposals on the basis that return to practice requirements for function-based workers will be incorporated into the new model for CPL.

Since being approved by Council we have carried out a review of models used by other regulators, aligned this work with other key developments supporting social work practice, established a focus group and identified additional steps that would ned to be carried out to progress work in this area.

Review of models

Following Council approval we carried out desk-based research into the return to practice models used by other social service regulators in the UK. CORU, Social Work England and Social Care Wales all have models of return to practice requirements. Each of these regulators uses a tiered approach which links the number of years an individual was unregistered to the number of hours required to be evidenced before an individual can return to practice. The RTP models of all these regulators require a mix of formal, informal and supervised practice to be evidenced, with different numbers of required hours for each.

Each of these regulators takes a different approach to how individuals can meet RTP requirements. Social Work England are supported by some HEI courses linked with local authorities that provide the learning and experience required to meet RTP requirements. CORU rely on individuals accessing learning and development opportunities for themselves. Social Care Wales are currently reviewing their requirements but are not considering an HEI supported course owing to small numbers of individuals accessing RTP resources. Each of these regulators requires that evidence of meeting RTP requirements be submitted, in some cases attracting fees of at least £200.

At present we set a post-registration compensatory requirement for individuals holding 'fast track' specialist social work awards from England. These individuals are required to submit reflective accounts relating to adult and or child protection for assessment by us.

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Our conclusion from this research is that our RTP model should be flexible in relation to years not registered, as well as accommodating various options for learning, assessment and evidence. We considered how our approach fits with the new models of CPL and fast track compensatory measure, rather than fitting with other regulators who base their approach on hours. We also believe, and consultation with the sector agreed, that there are issues such as the availability and appropriateness of practice placements that should be considered.

Aligning with other developments

The work carried out in relation to developing an RTP model will give consideration to how any approach aligns with the learning from work carried out in relation to the CPL model. This will include thinking about how individuals can provide evidence of meeting RTP requirements without relying on hours. RTP has already been included in the CPL prototype created through the design sprint.

We have liaised with colleagues in OSCWA leading the development of the Advanced Practice Framework for social workers, and we will continue to liaise with them to discuss and consider their recent consultation and anticipated approaches to evidencing learning/competence.

We are working closely with internal colleagues leading on the Newly Qualified Social Work (NQSW) supported first year in practice to ensure any requirements follow the same principles of supporting development and to learn from the pilots and early implementation sites how standards can be evidence and different approaches for verification/endorsement.

Focus group

Since Council approval we have established a focus group of key stakeholders including representation from:

- Scottish Government Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (trauma informed practice)
- Social Work Scotland
- Mental Welfare Commission
- Social Work Education Partnership
- British Association of Social Workers
- Social Workers Union.

The initial feedback from the focus group on our RTP proposals has been positive. The group welcomed the chance to create requirements that enabled social workers to feel supported in their return to practice. The group highlighted the importance of workers feeling confident and competent in their skills and knowledge, with recognition that individuals hold individual responsibility for their registration and learning.

Consultation and engagement

In response to the question of whether there should be a return to practice process for social workers, 85.9% of respondents indicated that there should be.

78.6% of respondents indicated that there should there be a return to practice process for other Register groups.

Our initial proposal was to develop return to practice standards for social workers and social service workers who have come off the Register for over two years and want to re-join.

From feedback during consultation and from focus groups, including discussion around the distinct requirements for registration and the statutory requirements of social workers, we decided that it would be appropriate to have different requirements for social workers and for function-based social service workers as detailed above.

Additional consultation following Council approval

Please refer to our discussion of work carried out with our focus group (above).

We carried out further consultation through a survey aimed specifically at social workers and their employers. We asked questions about each component of the requirements.

Majority of respondents supported return to practice requirements. They also agreed with the themes and modes of learning required.

Concerns raised from the consultation

- Access to appropriate placements for supervised practice
- Concern that the learning would be unachievable prior to registration, and potential employment if unable to access placements or formal learning.
- Support for the requirements as long as there is clear guidance for returning social workers.

General Concerns about proposals
- The proposals may act as a barrier to recruitment when encouraging people to return to the sector.
- Assessment of return to practice learning may impact SSSC staff resourcing.

Additional concerns identified following Council approval

We have not identified any additional concerns following Council approval.

Mitigations

- Only social workers who have not been registered with any regulatory body for 2 or more years will have to complete the RTP requirements. Social workers who qualify but do not practice for 2 or more years will be covered by any NQSW process or requirement in place. To minimise impact on staff resourcing, endorsement of supervised practice will be required, with SSSC assessment focused on the evidence for informal and formal learning.
- We considered the issues of fees for assessment as part of consultation work. We are proposing no fees for the assessment of the RTP evidence as this may encourage and support recruitment across social work.
- Allowing returning social workers to register with a condition will allow better access to supervised practice and formal learning in order to meet the requirements.

Benefits

- Increased confidence that the competence, skills and knowledge of individuals returning to practice (particularly social workers) are up to date.
- Developing return to practice standards would bring us in line with other regulators.

Impact on protected characteristics

- **Age**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their age.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's age.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their age, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Disability**

We believe that the current proposal will have a positive impact on the basis of an individual's disability status.

The present proposal is intended to facilitate a return to practice after a period of absence. We deem that this will have a positive impact on

individuals who may have been absent from practice on the basis of disability or long-term health condition.
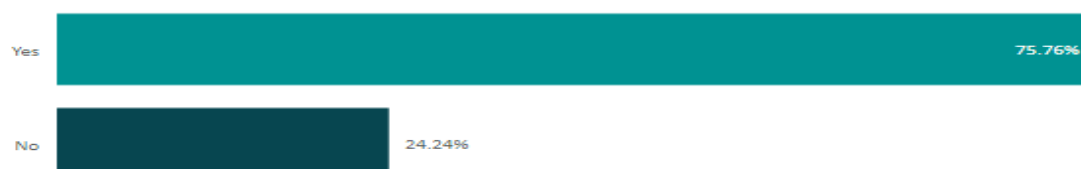
The proposal for a return to practice process for social workers was supported by 72.27% of respondents identifying as having a disability with 75.76% supporting return to practice processes for other register groups.

Free text responses to the question of whether this proposal would have an equality impact include:

"Depends on whether this is a supported process, and who is responsible for supporting a return to practice. The employer? or the Registrant? If the registrant this could be costly and take additional time to access"

"This will affect people who have taken a break for various reasons...to care for a family member/child care or illness and will hamper very well qualified people getting back to work."

"Yes, those on career breaks (up to 5 years) or those early retired who did not have access to free training but still pay registration fee and do occasional bank work/report writing"

"I think if a return to course was offered it may help people return"

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their disability, is positive.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Gender reassignment**

It is not considered that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their gender reassignment status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's gender reassignment status. However, this may be owing to the small numbers of respondents identifying as having undergone gender reassignment.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have in relation to those who have undergone gender reassignment is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Marriage and civil partnership**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to impact individuals, either registered workers, those who use services or members of the public on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on the basis of an individual's marital or civil partnership status, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

The present proposal is deemed to have a positive impact on individuals on the basis of their pregnancy or maternity.
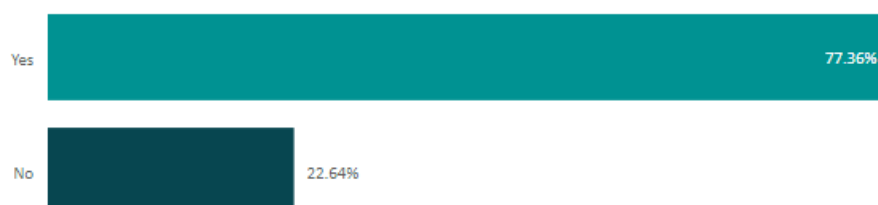
This proposal is intended to facilitate a return to practice for individuals who have been absent for a long time. This may include women who have left practice for reasons owing to pregnancy or maternity.

For this reason, we deem the impact of this proposal to be neutral in terms of pregnancy and maternity.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Race**

Our consultation shows us that 77.36% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds support the proposal for a return to practice process for social workers. This is lower than the level of support across all respondents.

Q53. Should there be a return to practice process for social workers? (is not - or (Blank)), Q67.1 What is your ethnic group? (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

In response to whether there should be a return to practice process in place for other Register groups, 72.38% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds indicated that there should be. Again, this is a lower level of support for this proposal compared to all respondents.

| Yes | 72.38% |
| No | 27.62% |
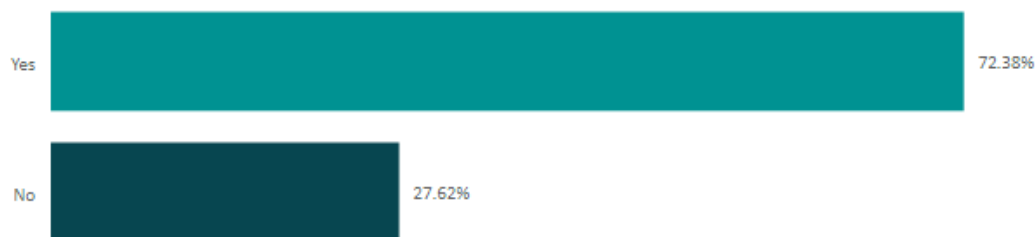
Q54. Should there be a return to practice process for other Register groups? (is not -), Q67.1 What is your ethnic group? (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

Free text responses to our question of whether this proposal would have an impact on equality revealed:

Q55. Does this proposal have an impact on or for equality issues?

"Improves it as why should someone with a gap of 2 years just come back in beside those who have kept up-to-date by continually working?"

"Depends on whether this is a supported process, and who is responsible for supporting a return to practice. The employer? or the Registrant? If the registrant this could be costly and take additional time to access"

"The definition of "not practised" would need to be clarified to not disadvantage or penalise certain demographics of social workers to contextualise the reason for leaving the workforce temporarily. For example, the definition must account for parents who leave work to have children.   If workers have left the workforce temporarily, the assumption is that they would have maintained their own levels of CPL to evidence their ability, skills and knowledge that make them fit to return to registerable work. This CPL might be taking place whilst unemployed or working elsewhere. Therefore, these people would need access to suitable learning opportunities to help them maintain their CPL from wherever they are or whatever stage they are at when they decide to return. SSSC would need to work with training providers within the sector to ensure these opportunities for CPL are available for people who wish to re-register. This is especially applicable to people who are not able to access training through an employer."

We do not believe that the concerns highlighted in these responses would disadvantage individuals on the basis of their race, however, we have noted these concerns and believe they are mitigated by other SSSC policies.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their race, is neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Religion/belief**

Respondents to our consultation from non-majority religious groups indicated overall support for this proposal. 77.42% of respondents supported return to work process for social workers while 74.19% supported return to work process for other groups.

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by **Q53. Should there be a return to practice process for social workers?** (is not - or (Blank)), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual), **Q71.1 What religion, religious denomination or or body do you belong to?** (is Another religion or body, please write in below, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, write in denomination or school below, or Pagan)

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Free text responses to the question of whether this proposal would have an equality impact revealed:

"Yes, some workers may have found themselves in circumstances where studying may not have been possible, eg caring for a relative."

"Academic and age issues. This would have to be kept as simple as possible to include older carers to keep them up to date with recent changes."

"Ensuring that SSSC check the evidence provided in support to their application and evidence of continuous education"

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their religion or belief.

- **Sex**

We do not consider that the present proposal, which seeks to allow our main benchmark qualifications are accepted for additional Register parts where the required qualification is already one of these suites of qualifications at the same level, will put any individuals at a disadvantage on the basis of their sex.

Our consultation revealed widespread support for this proposal from female respondents. 88.65% of female respondents indicated that they supported the introduction of a return to work process for social workers and 82.92% of female respondents supported return to work process for other workers.

Yes	88.65%
No	11.35%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Yes — 82.92%
No — 17.08%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by Q54. Should there be a return to practice process for other Register groups? (is not -), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual), Q68.1 What term best describes your sex? (is Female)

Free text responses to the question of if this proposal would have an equality impact revealed:

"It may adversely impact parents who take time out of work to raise children, and so might disproportionately impact women."

"Maternity leave and pregnant women, new fathers, adoptive parents etc."

"More likely to affect women but that doesn't mean don't do it"

"Should be positive for those who have taken time out for a baby or childcare."

We believe the overall impact of this proposal on the basis of sex will be neutral.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

- **Sexual orientation**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The work we have carried out since this proposal was approved by council has not highlighted any additional potential for impact on the basis of this protected characteristic.

55

Proposal 5 – New practitioner level for Care at Home and Housing Support workers

Aims of the proposal

To introduce a new register level of practitioner for care at home and housing support workers, with a qualification requirement of SVQ Social Services and Health at SCQF level 7.

Consultation and engagement

We asked respondents if the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support should be at SCQF level 7 58.6% of respondents indicted that it should be.

58.8% of respondents indicated that the qualification requirement for support workers in care at home should be at SCQF level 7.

65.6% of respondents indicated that we should we introduce an additional Register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7 to allow employers to decide what level is most appropriate.

36.4% of respondents felt that recruiting to these roles be, if the qualification level was changed, would be much easier or a little easier.

38.3% of respondents felt that individuals would be more likely to join the workforce, if the qualification level was changed.

Our original proposal was for a change to the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support/care at home from Social Service and Healthcare SCQF level 6 to SCQF level 7. Feedback from employers and other stakeholders indicated issues and concerns about the potential impact on staff terms and conditions and around barriers for entry to the profession if this were raised.

As a result of this feedback we have decided to create a new practitioner category for housing support/care at home, with qualification requirements at SCQF level 7.

General Concerns about proposals
- There may be increased demand on training providers who cannot meet this with current capacity.
- Staff qualified to a higher level may expect changes to terms and conditions to reflect this.
- There may be increased demand for level 7 qualifications, requiring additional funding to support.

Mitigations
- Via SQA, we surveyed training providers who deliver benchmark qualifications to determine current capacity in the system and ability to adapt to changing demands and needs. We sent the survey to 212 providers, with 58 responses (response rate of 27%).
- Around 50% of respondents have capacity to increase provision in ASC qualifications and 43% in ELC qualifications, with an average increase in capacity of around 23%. 82% of respondents said they could adapt and change which awards they were delivering to meet demand.
- Employers can determine suitable levels required and most appropriate for their service.
- In terms of funding, we can provide supply/demand information to Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland. We can also set eligibility and priority criteria for the Voluntary Sector Development Fund we disburse on behalf of the government, to prioritise where most needed. We also publish extensive information on available funding routes via our website.

Benefits
- Supports the Scottish Government's ambition to increase the skill level of the ASC workforce.
- Supports career pathways and progression.
- Consistent with other register parts, where a practitioner level already exists.
- Allows employers to decide on most appropriate level based on their service and meeting the needs of service users.

- Supports professionalism and recognises those working at a higher skill level.
- Supports new models of care and changing roles.
- Ensures staff have the right skills for their role.

Impact on protected characteristics
- **Age**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their age.
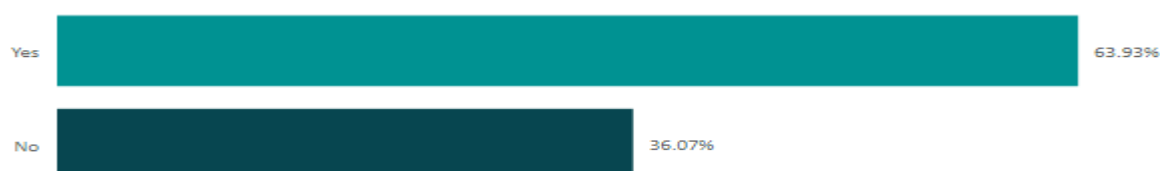
The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's age.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their age, is neutral.

- **Disability**

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their disability status.

Our consultation revealed that 63.93% of respondents with a disability supported qualifications for support workers in housing support being at SCQF level 7 and 60.66% of respondents supported qualifictions for care at home being at SCQF level 7.

Yes 60.66%

No 39.34%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by Q41. Should the qualification requirement for support workers in care at home be at SCQF level 7? (is not -), Q65. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (is Yes, limited a little or Yes, limited a lot), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual)
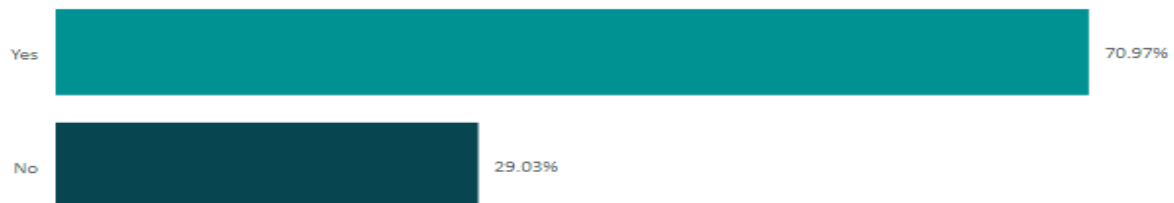
70.97% of respondents in this group supported the introduction of an additional register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7.

Yes 70.97%

No 29.03%

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27

Filtered by Q42. Should we introduce an additional Register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7 to allow employers to decide what level is most appropriate? (is not -), Q65. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (is Yes, limited a little or Yes, limited a lot), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual)

Free text responses to the question of whether this proposal would have an quality impact revealed:

"For those registrants with additional educational needs may be disadvantaged without significant support. May drive good care staff out of Social Care"

"It does for younger workers with little or no experience and also for older workers who have been out of education for a long period of time, Or those from ethnic minorities , who may have difficulty due to English not being their first language. The SCQF level 6 is a good starting place, for those new to Social care ,I think that employers should have a decision

on the level their employees start at .Those experiences support workers would manage SCQF level 7 with the correct support in place by the SVQ provider"

"People often come in to caring roles as they wish to help and support others, some would like to gain qualifications. It won't deter people from applying but to complete SCQF 7 requires them to meet criteria that may not be something they all do in their role. While setting the bar at level 7 may be an attractive option, the difference between levels 6/7 can be very significant"

"The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's disability or health condition."

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their disability, is neutral.

- **Gender reassignment**

It is not considered that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their gender reassignment status.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's gender reassignment status. However, this may be owing to the small numbers of respondents identifying as having undergone gender reassignment.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have in relation to those who have undergone gender reassignment is neutral.

- **Marriage and civil partnership**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to impact individuals, either registered workers, those who use services or members of the public on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on the basis of an individual's marital or civil partnership status, is neutral.

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their pregnancy or maternity.

- **Race**

In general, support for these proposals was higher among respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds. 69.39% of respondents from this group indicated qualification requirements for support workers in housing

support should be at SCQF level 7. This is compared to 58.6% of all respondents indicating that this should be the case.
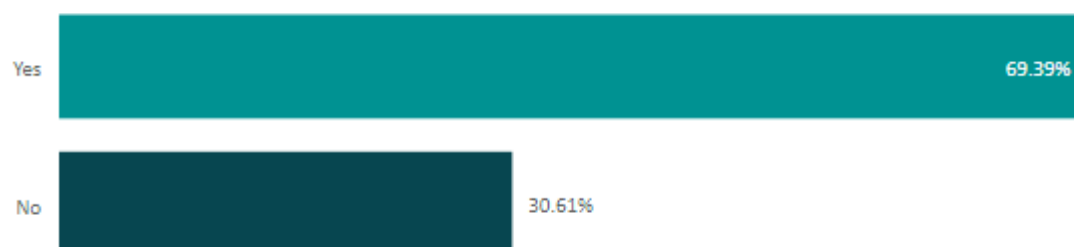

Yes — 69.39%
No — 30.61%

Q40. Should the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support be at SCQF level 7? (is not -), **Q67.1 What is your ethnic group?** (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

67.71% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds indicated that the qualification requirement for support workers in care t home settings should be at SCQF level 7. This is compared to 58.8% of respondents from all backgrounds.
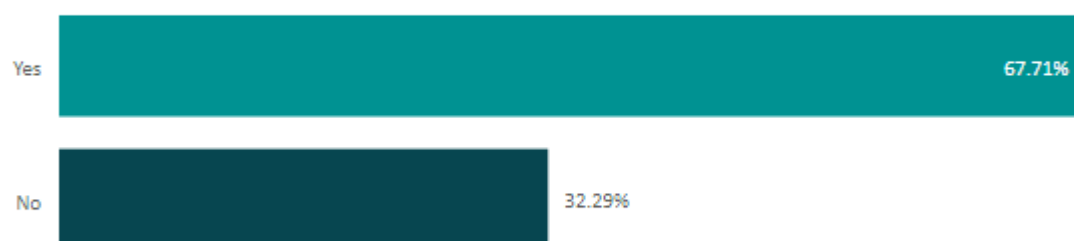
Yes — 67.71%
No — 32.29%

Q41. Should the qualification requirement for support workers in care at home be at SCQF level 7? (is not -), Q67.1 What is your ethnic group? (is Any mixed or multiple ethnic group (please use space below to write in), Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab, Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese, Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian, Irish, Other (please use space below to write in), Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Polish, Roma, or Showman/Showwoman)

67% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds indicated that we should we introduce an additional Register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7 to allow employers to decide what level is most appropriate. This is broadly similar to the level of support from all respondents.
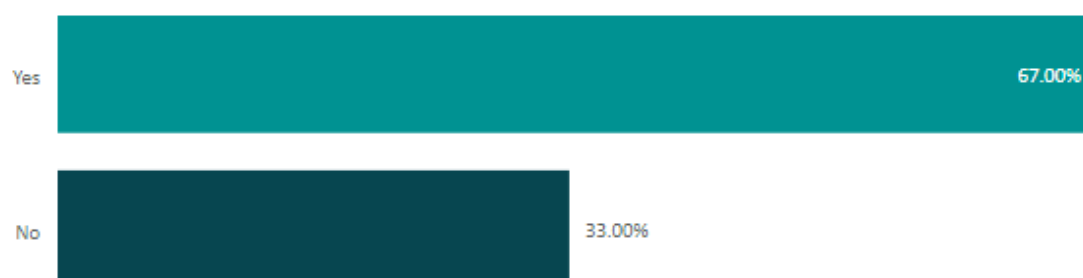
36% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds felt that recruiting to these roles, if the qualification level was changed, would be much easier or a little easier. This is broadly similar to the figure from all respondents.

43.43% of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds felt that individuals would be more likely to join the workforce, if the qualification level was changed, compared to 38.3% of respondents from all backgrounds.

Free text responses to this proposal highlighted the following:

Q45. Does this proposal have an impact on or for equality issues?

"Currently the care sector, i.e. care homes, care at home etc. consists of low skilled workers who only take on the job for money. Because SSSC gives people 5 years to gain a qualification the level of low skilled workers are maintained because the never have the intention to gain qualifications. SSSC should make it mandatory to start qualifications

within first year of employment. That will make a shift between people who really choose to work in care and people who only take it on for money. And that will improve standards of care."

"For those registrants with additional educational needs may be disadvantaged without significant support. May drive good care staff out of Social Care"

"Quality education is only a positive thing for future career and good job performance."

"Workers that require learning support could be impacted."

"The focus here is wrong.It is obvious that the main difficulty with recruitment stems and maintaining high levels of professionalism is not from underqualified personnel,its simply because the basic wages are so low."

"Yes if you can not afford to pay to train for level 7 as many employers do not pay for training any more or if you work as a PA with self directed support"

"Many organisations across the sector are already choosing to offer SVQ Level 3 as standard for the same worker demographics. In some cases, this can impact attraction and recruitment where applicants are seeking opportunities to qualify to a higher level despite registration conditions not requiring it for example, or perceiving the Level 3 as the best option for their career prospects because they could advance more easily. Therefore, it would be beneficial for workers to have a single standard of attainment that aligns to their role and practice, and the Level 3 is widely recognised as the preferred level by candidates and employers. This would clarify expectations and prevent any debate about the minimum standard of professional practice, or which is the best qualification to start with. We believe that our Support Practitioners would be able to evidence Level 3, however some elements would need to be considered carefully. Where people are delivering time limited and task oriented basic support (e.g. some House Support) it might be more difficult to find the variety of evidence needed for level 3 because they aren't doing the range of activities that would produce what is required for the award. The Level 3 naturally takes longer for candidates to complete and demands higher levels of skill to be evidenced. As such, some worker demographics might be disproportionately affected by the change to Level 3. For example, workers with less time left on their registration or workers who are closer to retirement who are yet to qualify. Additionally, workers who found it difficult to complete their Level 2 award would naturally require additional support to meet this higher grade."

We do not believe that the current proposal will impact, either negatively or positively, individuals on the basis of their race.

The results from our consultation have not highlighted any impact the proposal may have on the basis of an individual's race.

The SSSC considers that the impact this proposal will have on individuals on the basis of their race, is neutral.
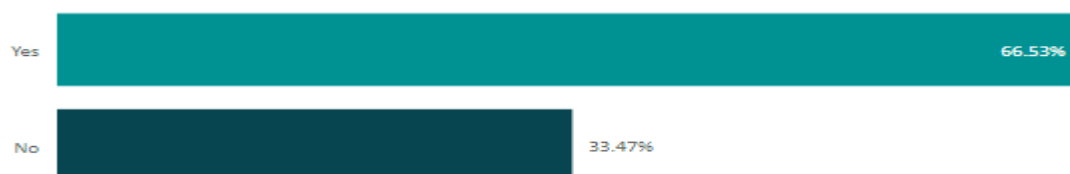
- **Religion/belief**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their religion or belief.

- **Sex**

We do not consider that the present proposal, which seeks to allow our main benchmark qualifications are accepted for additional Register parts where the required qualification is already one of these suites of qualifications at the same level, will put any individuals at a disadvantage on the basis of their sex.

In our consultation 66.53% of female respondents indicated that the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support should be set at SCQF level 7. 66.90% of female respondents supported setting the qualification requirement for support workers in care at home at SCQF level 7.
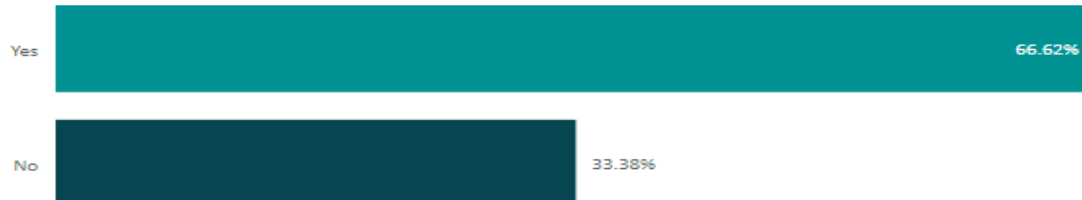

Data as of 24/11/22, 10:27
Filtered by Q40. Should the qualification requirement for support workers in housing support be at SCQF level 7? (is not -), Q68.1 What term best describes your sex? (is Female), Q2. Are you responding: (is as an individual)

Yes — 66.90%
No — 33.10%
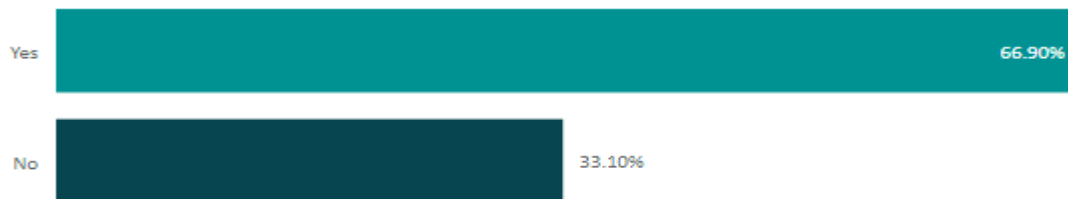
Filtered by **Q41. Should the qualification requirement for support workers in care at home be at SCQF level 7?** (is not -), **Q68.1 What term best describes your sex?** (is Female), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

In our consultation, 66.2% of female respondents supported the inrtroduction of an additional Register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7 to allow employers to decide what level is most appropriate.

Yes — 66.62%
No — 33.38%

Filtered by **Q42. Should we introduce an additional Register part for practitioners at SCQF level 7 to allow employers to decide what level is most appropriate?** (is not -), **Q68.1 What term best describes your sex?** (is Female), **Q2. Are you responding:** (is as an individual)

Free text responses to the question of whether this proposal would have an equality impact revealed:

"Currently the care sector, i.e. care homes, care at home etc. consists of low skilled workers who only take on the job for money. Because SSSC gives people 5 years to gain a qualification the level of low skilled workers are maintained because the never have the intention to gain qualifications. SSSC should make it mandatory to start qualifications within first year of employment. That will make a shift between people

who really choose to work in care and people who only take it on for money. And that will improve standards of care."

"It could do in terms of attracting and supporting people into the social care workforce - this means that entry level to the sector would be raised to level 7 - which could work against trying to attract and retain our workforce - particularly our younger workforce, which is a priority for getting into the sector, given our ageing population."

"Many people don't have academic skills for lots of written work but from experience seeing them work, they are excellent support workers. I feel people with hidden disabilities may feel discriminated against"

"Yes, makes it more difficult for good care and support workers who struggle with academic study to enter and stay in the workforce."

For this reason, we deem the impact of this proposal, in terms of sex, to be neutral.

- **Sexual orientation**

The present proposal is not deemed likely to have an impact on individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Other areas of impact

- **Groups living in island communities**

The proposal will have a neutral impact on the following duties:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Promoting good relations among and between island communities]

The proposal will have a positive impact on the following duty:

- Advancing equality of opportunity

The proposal will widen career opportunities and reduce the number of qualifications individuals need to gain if they move roles or work in more than one setting and are on more than one register part. This is particularly beneficial in remote and rural areas where individuals may work in a variety of roles and settings.

- **Children's rights and wellbeing**

The proposal will have a neutral impact on:

- Civil rights and freedoms

- Violence against children
- Family environment and alternative care
- Disability, basic health and welfare
- Education, Leisure and Cultural activities
- Special Protection measures

The SSSC's register for social workers, social care workers and early years practitioners is qualifications based. This means that workers must hold the required qualifications or be working towards them to be included on our register. The educational requirements mean that Scotland has a skilled and competent workforce that is committed to promoting and upholding children's rights. The qualifications required for registration on the day care of children and residential child care parts of the Register, for example, include mandatory elements relating to child protection (UNCRC Article 3).

We use the National Occupational Standards (NOS) as the basis of the qualifications we require registrants to hold. We work with the Uk sector skills council, and Skills for Care and Development to develop, maintain and update the NOS through stakeholder engagement to ensure they meets the needs of the sector and take note of relevant legislation. For example the NOS that have been developed for social services (children and young people) include mandatory modules on safeguarding children and young people, including a requirement to safeguard and promote children's rights. Any changes that are made to increase the flexibility of qualifications, will not impact the centrality of safeguarding and promoting children's rights within the practice of relevant practitioners. Therefore, we deem that this proposal will have a neutral impact on children's rights and well-being.

- **Health and wellbeing and health inequalities**

The proposal will have a neutral impact on:

- Removing inequalities and increasing access to opportunities for improving health and wellbeing
- Advancing opportunities for increasing health and wellbeing across the sector
- Fostering good practice for sector wide health and wellbeing

- **Economic and social sustainability**

The proposal will have a positive impact on:

- Removing disadvantage of inequality
- Advancing opportunities for individuals
- Fostering good relations and sustainability of communities

Our latest figures show that approximately six percent of Scotland' total workforce work in adult social care. This adds approximately £3.4bn to Scotland's economy. The average annual earnings in the adult social care sector is £18,400, which is higher than the Scottish Living wage. The proposal aims to make it easier for individuals to gain registration with the SSSC through more flexible qualification requirements, which should encourage further growth within the sector. This in turn will have a positive impact on advancing opportunities for individuals to access higher paid employment. The proposal will also widen employment opportunities by creating additional career pathways in the social care sector, value the workforce and support new models of care delivery which will support sustainability of care delivery in communities, especially within remote and rural communities.

- **Care experienced children, young people and adults**

The proposal will ensure the social services workforce working with care experienced children, young people and adults have the right skills, knowledge and values for the role to ensure they deliver high quality care and support and:

- Promote the well-being of children and young people
- Promote the interests of eligible children and young people
- Provide opportunities to eligible children and young people