

## **Commission for developing Scotland's Young Workforce, Interim Report (October 2013)**

### **Introduction**

This response is from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC was established in 2001 by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB). We are responsible for registering people who work in social services, regulating their education and training and the collation and publication of data on the size and nature of the sector's workforce. We are also part of the Sector Skills Council for the social care workforce (Skills for Care and Development).

The social services sector employs approximately 190,000 individuals in Scotland. The workforce provides care and support for some of the most vulnerable people in Scottish society. The sector provides a diverse range of services including care homes for adults, care at home services, day care of children services and residential child care. These workers often deal with complex care needs and have the potential to make a real difference to individuals' lives. Social services are provided in a mixture of settings and by a range of organisations encompassing the public, private and voluntary sector.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) generated by the Scottish social services sector has increased from 1.62bn in 1998 to approximately £4.19bn in 2009<sup>1</sup>. The social services sector was identified as a "high-participation" sector in the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy (Scottish Government, 2011). The Scottish Government's Skills Strategy notes that the care sector is "crucial to our future and economic success and employment prospects" (Scottish Government, 2011).

The SSSC's work increases the protection of people who use services by ensuring that the workforce is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated. As of October 2013 the SSSC has registered more than 57,000 social services workers. During the next decade we will register substantial numbers of workers including staff working in care homes and care at home services. We aim to protect people who use services, raise standards of

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government Input-output tables 1998-2009, published May 2013: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/Input-Output/Downloads/IO1998-2009All> These figures do not include all social services. For example, these figures do not include the pre-primary education part of this footprint.

practice, strengthen and support the professionalism of the workforce and improve the outcomes and experience of people who use social services.

The SSSC undertakes statutory responsibilities around workforce planning and development as designated by Scottish Ministers under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. We also publish Official Statistics on the social services workforce in Scotland.

The SSSC's vision is that our work ensures that the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. Our purpose is to raise standards and protect the public through regulation, innovation and continuous improvement in workforce planning and development for the social services workforce.

### **Supporting young people to consider a career in social services**

We welcome the Commission's interim findings, in particular the focus on enhancing vocational education and encouraging employers to work with schools and colleges. We welcome the observation about the need to move away from the perception that vocational education is an "inferior option". A substantial number of social services workers throughout Scotland have undertaken or are undertaking vocational qualifications as a condition of their registration with the SSSC (SSSC, 2012).

We note the Commission's intentions to explore how it can encourage employers to work in partnership with schools and colleges to develop the young workforce. We are engaged in a number of activities which aim to support young people and other individuals to consider or develop a career in social services. We undertake these roles in our capacity as the SSSC and as part of Skills for Care and Development, the UK-wide Sector Skills Council for social services.

- **Careers Ambassadors:** The programme encourages social service workers to speak with young people, career changers and others about career opportunities and to help those who are interested to find out more about career options. This programme is part of a UK-wide project and so far we have recruited 100 career ambassadors who are out and about at careers fairs, giving talks to schools and employment programmes across the country. Key stakeholders (including Skills Development Scotland, Schools and Colleges) can use the new 'hub' website to invite ambassadors to participate in their events or initiatives. A parliamentary reception to promote the vital work of the Ambassadors will be held in early 2014. Further information: <http://www.sssc.uk.com/>

- **A Question of Care:** This new online resource helps individuals to think about social care career opportunities and obtain feedback on the types of situations that they may encounter in the role. The SSSC is currently piloting this resource in Scotland. Further information can be found at: <http://www.aquestionofcare.org.uk>
- **Workforce Solutions:** We have developed a number of online resources which individuals can use to plan a career in social care or early years and child care. These resources are located on our Workforce Solutions website: <http://workforcesolutions.sssc.uk.com/>
- **Careers fairs:** An estimated 1,200 students visited the SSSC's stand at the Skills Scotland 2012 events in October and November of last year.
- **A career in social services guide:** The SSSC has recently distributed approximately 1,000 information packs on a career in social services.
- **Working with key stakeholders:** We work with a number of stakeholders including Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Jobcentre Plus to identify the best ways to inform these organisations and support them to undertake their role. For example, we are currently in the process of highlighting **A Question of Care** as a resource that could link to the "My World of Work" website.

## Supporting older workers and career changers

We welcome the Commission's focus on the need to develop a "highly educated, skilled and well-motivated young workforce". We note that the Commission's remit is primarily about the challenges around supporting young people. The social services workforce consists of many individuals who come to work in this sector at a later stage in their career. We believe that many of the issues that these 'older' workers face are equally relevant to the challenges identified for young people. A key challenge will be around the need to ensure that these workers also get the opportunity to develop their skills.

The Commission's contextual data report notes that 23 per cent of Modern Apprenticeships are currently undertaken by individuals aged 25 years or over. In recent years The Health and Social Care (HSC) MA Framework has gone from a situation where it had the highest number of new registrations among individuals aged 25 years and over to a position where there is no funding available for older workers to undertake this Framework. In addition, there is no funding currently available for individuals aged 25 years to undertake the Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) MA Framework. We are currently developing new Technical and Modern Frameworks in our role as part

of Skills for Care and Development. We believe that there is a need to revisit the MA funding criteria for workers aged 25 years or over.

The contextual data published by the Commission also reinforces that point that older workers are more likely to remain in post six months after completion than some categories of younger workers. These findings may also reinforce the need to revisit the criteria used to determine MA funding.

### **Improving employment outcomes in relation to gender, disability and ethnicity**

We welcome the Commission's intention to examine employment outcomes in relation to gender, disability and equality. Many previous discussions around these areas have focussed on the need to support women to access employment opportunities. The social service sector employs a high proportion of female staff. Approximately 85 per cent of the existing workforce is female. There are some sub-sectors (such as School Care Accommodation and Residential Child Care) which employ a greater than average percentage of males while there are other areas (such as Day Care of Children) which retain an almost exclusively female workforce (SSSC, 2013). The need to support more males to consider a career in social care was identified as a key theme at the joint Scottish Government / STUC Women's Employment Summit in 2012.

There have been a number of initiatives over the years which have sought to support younger and / or male workers to consider a social care career. For example, it is anticipated that the new flexible SVQ structure will provide opportunities for individuals to transfer their skills to new roles. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these areas further with the Commission if that would be helpful.

### **Certificate of Work Readiness**

The SSSC believes that the Certificate of Work Readiness has the potential to play an important part in supporting young people to join the workforce. The scheme includes an employer-assessed work experience placement. This initiative has the potential to support individuals to access Apprenticeships and to support employers and workers alike. We are currently exploring how the scheme can help looked after children to access employment opportunities.

## **Promoting Modern Apprenticeships**

We welcome the plans to consider how individuals can prepare for Modern Apprenticeships in a school environment. One potential issue that will need to be considered is how this initiative would work in practice. For example, there would need to be some thought given to the way that social services values and ethics are delivered within a teaching environment. We have developed a number of resources (including some of the examples mentioned earlier in our submission) which could be used by schools and other stakeholders to ensure these issues are considered as part of the delivery of these programmes.

## **Regional Outcome Agreements**

We would welcome further information about the proposed Regional Outcome Agreements. We would be particularly interested in any plans to explore how employers' views would be represented in the process.

## **Summary**

We welcome the Commission's interim report and the observations about the need to recognise the role of vocational qualifications. A substantial number of social services workers are undertaking SVQs and other work-based awards as part of their Registration with the SSSC. The social services sector has been identified by Scottish Government as a high-participation sector and plays a valuable role in the development of Scotland's economy. This report contains a number of examples about the work that SSSC is involved in around promoting social care careers to younger and older workers alike.

We recognise the need to support the development of Scotland's young and future workforce. A key point for the SSSC is that there is also a need to reinforce the importance of vocational qualifications for workers aged 25 years or over. A substantial number of individuals opt to work in social services at a later stage in life when their broader life experience can bring a substantial value to service delivery. It is important to ensure that these individuals can also access the vocational qualification opportunities that they will need to adapt and develop their skills. The Health and Social Care MA framework is no longer funded for workers aged 25 years or over and we believe that there is a need to revisit the funding criteria.

We welcome the Commission's observations about the challenges around supporting some workers to achieve better employment outcomes. There are many parts of the social services sector where the majority of workers are women. The need to support men to consider a career in this sector (particularly childcare) was highlighted at the joint Scottish Government / STUC summit on Women's employment in September 2012. We would welcome the opportunity to contribute to any work which aimed to address these challenges.

We would be happy to provide further information about our response.

Scottish Social Services Council  
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