

Shaping the work of your Human Rights Commission: SSSC response (November 2015)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

The social service workforce provides care and support for some of the most vulnerable people in Scottish society. The sector employs approximately 200,000 people¹ in Scotland (SSSC, 2015). These workers deal with complex care needs and make a real difference to peoples' lives.

Shaping the work of the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC)

The final question in the consultation explores how the SHRC can improve the way it influences law, policy, people and organisations in Scotland. Our response focuses on this question. There are a number of activities which promote the importance of a human-rights based approach² within the social service sector (Scottish Government, 2015). For example:

- The new National Care Standards will take a rights-based approach (Care Inspectorate; Healthcare Improvement Scotland; Scottish Government, 2015).
- We are reviewing the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers. As part of that review we are exploring the role of a rights-based approach.
- The 'Promoting Excellence' framework highlights the importance of a knowledge of a rights-based approach. The framework (and the associated standards of care) are for all health and social service staff working with people with dementia, their families and carers (Alzheimer Scotland; NHS Education for Scotland; Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland; Scottish Dementia Working Group; Scottish Social Services Council, 2011; SSSC; NES, 2011).

¹ There are a number of groups of workers not captured by this data. These include childminding assistants and personal assistants employed by individuals in receipt of a direct payment (Scottish Government, 2015).

² We use the term 'rights-based approach' as shorthand for 'human rights-based approach' throughout the remainder of this response.

- The Mental Health Strategy contains a commitment to develop and increase the focus on rights in mental health care in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2012). A recent report by the SHR and the Mental Welfare Commission highlights the progress on this commitment (Mental Welfare Commission; Scottish Human Rights Commission, 2015).
- The Standard for Childhood Practice reinforce the need for managers and lead practitioners to use their understanding of legislation and policy to establish a culture that promotes children's rights (QAA Scotland; SSSC, 2007)

We welcome the ongoing focus on embedding rights within social services. We believe that there is need to make sure that these priorities continue to feature prominently within the next version of the SHRC's Strategic Plan.

Scottish Social Services Council
November 2015

References

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