

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) form

A. General Information

Name of proposal	Introduction to a career in social care – MySSSC development to enable improved engagement between colleges and employers
Responsible department	Workforce Planning (Development and Innovation).

B. Aims of the proposal

What do you hope to achieve?	<p>We hope to create a new function within MySSSC which allows existing counter signatories to enter key details about their organisations and available opportunities (which could include job vacancies or placements). These details will be shown to new college MySSSC users who will be able to search organisations to identify opportunities for course participants who wish to start a career in social care.</p> <p>The objective of the new MySSSC function is to have a simple and effective method which enables colleges to identify and engage with a larger and more diverse group of informed employers.</p> <p>If successful, the outcome would be that colleges and employers work together to provide better recruitment opportunities to participants who complete the course 'Introduction to a career in social care' which is funded by the National Transition Training Fund.</p>
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<p>Why is the proposal needed?</p>	<p>SSSC have agreed to provide national support to this new nationally funded college course. The course responds to critical recruitment needs in social care services and provides people who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment with support to pursue a new career.</p> <p>We have identified a need to create a digital process which will enable colleges to engage directly with a larger and more diverse range of employers. The process will allow us to ask employers to 'opt in' if they are actively recruiting and are interested in supporting the course. This need is derived from workforce and service level data and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>Service level data</p> <p>There are over 3,500 individual adult care services in Scotland.ⁱ</p> <p>Separate analysis within SSSC shows that adult social care services are managed by approximately 1,100 care providers/employers. Most providers operate as single services. Many providers are small-medium sized organisations (<250 employees). There are also several larger providers (>250 employees and >1000 employees) including the majority of those in the public sector. This mixture of provision represents diverse career opportunities, but it also can add complexity to workforce planning initiatives which aim to make connections between education institutions and care services, while also positively impacting upon care service vacancy levels.</p> <p>Care service vacancies</p> <p>53% of care homes and 60% of care at home/housing support services reported having vacancies at the end of 2020. This is particularly high compared to other parts of the social service sector, and other industries.ⁱⁱ As a percentage of the workforce Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) for these services it was 4.2% and 6.7%, respectively. The presence of vacancies may indicate difficulties in</p>
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	<p>recruiting and retaining the right level of staff within individual care services. It is also significant however that the workforce is growing, particularly in care at home/housing support, and increased demand for services should also lead to new posts, and potentially vacancies.</p> <p>Many care homes (52%) and care at home/housing support services (60%) also report they had 'hard to fill' vacancies in 2020. The more common reasons were "too few applicants" or "too few applicants with experience".</p> <p>There were some differences according to type of employer and service for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of private sector care at home services reported they had vacancies which were hard to fill (compared to 53% voluntary and 55% public) • 68% of voluntary sector care homes for older people reported they had vacancies which were hard to fill (compared to 59% public and 51% private). <p>The new course has the potential to reduce recruitment pressures by facilitating new connections between colleges and social care employers of all sizes, locations and service types. It may also improve early career retention because people who complete the course will have a more complete understanding of whether they are right for this type of career before they apply for employment.</p>
<p>How will the proposal contribute to the SSSC's strategic objectives and/or priorities?</p>	<p>Strategic outcome 3: Our workforce planning activities support employers, commissioners and policy makers to deliver a sustainable, integrated and innovative workforce.</p> <p>The proposed MySSSC development will provide a quick and simple method for colleges to identify employers who are informed about the new course and who have expressed an interest in being invited to take part, which could include offering employer insight or interview opportunities for example. This should</p>

	<p>result in a greater number of connections between colleges and individual employers who are actively recruiting and may also have a positive impact on the effectiveness of on-going college-employer relationships. The intervention recognises that care services and employers vary in size and profile and that without a form of centralised support some smaller or independent providers may have difficulty engaging when compared to larger organisations with increased administrative capacity and national profile.</p> <p>If the proposal succeeds in creating greater connections, this should also increase recruitment opportunities, and choice, for course participants.</p> <p>The proposal intends to support employers to take fuller advantage of a new recruitment route, with potential positive impacts on workforce sustainability. Longer term, if the intervention is well evaluated, it may influence policy makers for example those involved in designing national funding or new recruitment routes.</p>
<p>How will the proposal address the SSSC's Equality duties?</p>	<p>The proposal is designed to connect people at an organisational level, specifically college staff acting on behalf of their college's programme and counter signatories acting on behalf of their care organisation. It is not designed to connect individuals or collect information about protected characteristics. There will be a general positive impact on promoting equality of opportunity among care organisations for example the MySSSC development will present smaller, independent employers with lower national profiles alongside national organisations with larger profiles and encourage colleges to engage with a wider range of care services.</p> <p>The proposal is a component of wider partnership work between SSSC, colleges and employer representatives in which we are seeking to make the most of this opportunity to provide learning and recruitment opportunities for individual participants who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment. Within this wider work SSSC will have opportunities to address specific equality duties with regards to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and</p>

	fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
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C. Data and evidence gathering

What evidence has been used to come to the decisions contained in this EqIA?	As above, this proposal has been influenced by data about care services and vacancies.
Has the proposal been the subject of relevant engagement and/or consultation?	<p>We are hosting regular meetings with colleges and employer representatives to gather feedback and insight and consider national actions we can take to make the most of this new recruitment opportunity.</p> <p>The same organisations take part in the wider SSSC's Careers Reference Group, which has met quarterly since 2019 with an objective of improving career opportunities across the social service sector. Within this group (and as an outcome of a 'Strategic Options Development and Analysis' exercise carried out in 2019) we identified a work theme of 'Apprenticeships, employability and work-based training initiatives' which recognised the need for improved supportive routes to employment to reach more people, many of whom may experience barriers to work. The Introduction to a Career in Social Care course is a good example of a new supportive route, developed by College Development Network</p>

	<p>and funded by the Scottish Funding Council who also take part in the reference group.</p> <p>At an employer information event on 24 November 2021 SSSC conducted a poll with audience members and asked them if a centralised process to connect colleges and employers would be welcomed. 39 people responded with 38 answering positively that this support would be welcomed (with one responding to say they were already connected).</p>
Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	<p>This proposal is informed by workforce and care service data, insights and priorities shared by partners, and an awareness event as described above. It is also however a test of change in which we hope to evaluate the effectiveness of our intervention which is being presented for the first time to colleges and employers. If the proposal is successful it may contribute to our evidence base for whether similar interventions are likely to be effective in the future.</p>
Have any gaps been found in the data?	<p>This EQIA uses end-of-year vacancy data from 2020. Vacancy data from 2021 is not yet published. Data held within SSSC about number of individual care providers is from 2018.</p>

D. ASSESSING IMPACT AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

This proposal is targeted at organisations. No information about participants or their protected characteristics will be collected within MySSSC and therefore all impacts below are noted as neutral.

The purpose of this proposal is to implement a digital service to connect colleges with a wider group of employers. While we designed the proposal in recognition of the critical need for improved workforce supply, we were equally motivated by a desire to increase opportunities and choice for all participants.

While the proposed digital service is not targeted at individuals, and while we assess impacts of the service on protected characteristics as neutral, we have provided supplementary information where available about the potential impacts on protected characteristics from the course itself.

Gender – neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Additional information relevant to the course but not within scope of this EQIA: in our careers and employability project work we note that the majority of the workforce is female and it is likely that more women will apply for the course than men (although course promotional materials represent men and women in recognition of the advantages of diverse workforces and the need to attract more people to the career). A 2021 report by [Close the Gap](#) found that one year on, COVID-19 had deepened existing disparities between women and men with regards to access to the labour market. It described that women were more likely to have lost their job, had their hours cut or be furloughed. Women also continue to take part in more unpaid care work. The National Transition Training Fund was designed to support individuals with a protected characteristic which made it more likely they would have employment/economic outcomes affected by the pandemic. The course therefore should have a positive impact on this characteristic.

Ethnicity – neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Additional information relevant to the course but not within scope of this EQIA: the SSSC and College Development Network are engaging with the Scottish Refugee Council to raise awareness of career opportunities for those who have moved to Scotland and who wish to consider a career in care. Refugees in Scotland can access the Introduction to a Career in Social Care course and are also eligible for additional employment support from organisations like Scottish Refugee Council and providers delivering Fair Start Scotland.

Disability – neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Additional information relevant to the course but not within scope of this EQIA: the SSSC hosts an employability working group where good practice in recruiting disabled people is discussed and this is an area SSSC will continue to engage with partners on. At an awareness event about the Introduction to a Career in Social Care course on 24 November, SSSC highlighted employment support like Access to Work and encouraged employers and college tutors to link with employment support organisations to improve the experience for participants facing barriers to work. College tutors will also be able to connect disabled course participants with individual support from their institution. The course therefore should have a positive impact on this characteristic.

Sexual Orientation – neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Gender Reassignment– neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Age– neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Additional information relevant to the course but not within scope of this EQIA: the National Transition Training Fund was designed to create opportunities for people who are over 25. However as a result of questions from employers and colleges it was agreed by the course leads and the funding council that the course could be made available to all age groups if other funding mechanisms existed, for example from the Young Person's Guarantee. The main website page for the course now reflects a range of options for people of all ages <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/introduction-career-social-care/> The course therefore should have a positive impact on this characteristic.

Marital and Civil Partnership– neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Pregnancy and Maternity– neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

Additional information relevant to the course but not within scope of this EQIA: the course may provide a positive opportunity for women with this protected characteristic (which refers to pregnancy and the 26 week period following birth). The course is fully online,

can be completed over a flexible time period and connects a participant to individual tutor support. The course will not exclude any person on the basis of pregnancy or maternity. As seen above under the protected characteristic of gender there have been particular impacts on women with relation to increased job insecurity, reduced hours or redundancy during the pandemic and this will also apply (perhaps more so) to women with the additional characteristic of pregnancy and maternity. In these circumstances, people with these characteristics may benefit from flexible, individual support to consider a new career such as that offered within this course. When raising awareness of this course (and other pathways into work) SSSC routinely highlights employment support services, including the parental employability support fund which can support parents in a range of circumstances, including those with very young children, to re-enter the workplace when it is the right time for them.

Religion/Belief/Non-belief– neutral impact from this MySSSC proposal. No data to be collected in relation to this characteristic and the proposed system will benefit people equally.

E. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROUPS LIVING IN AN ISLAND COMMUNITY

This section considers the impact or effect of the proposal on island communities and whether this could be significantly different from its effect on other communities.

This proposal is for a MySSSC intervention targeted at colleges and employers. We recognise that the design of the MySSSC proposal may bring impacts on individuals, groups and organisations in island communities. We would assess these mainly as positive.

The course is fully online and offered by many colleges including partner colleges within the University of the Highlands and Islands. Participants can study with any college.

Positive impacts may come from the following.

- Colleges and employers will be able to take advantage of the proposed MySSSC development regardless of location.
- If a course participant lives in a remote, rural or island location, the college will be able to find out which employers have expressed interest from that local authority area (regardless of where the college is located) and can access further detail about towns and postcodes.
- Colleges in island communities may be more likely to offer flexible start dates compared to cohorts (cohorts are instead more likely to be developed for regions with larger populations and therefore higher applicant numbers). Where this flexibility attracts participants from mainland Scotland the island college will still be able to research relevant employers in different local authorities, so they will not therefore be restricted to supplying learning to the local population only.

Neutral impacts may come from the following.

- Due to the smaller number of individual care providers which typically operate in island communities it is possible that islands will make less use of the proposed MySSSC service, choosing instead to rely on existing local relationships.

F. CHILD RIGHTS AND WELLBEING

This section considers the impact of the proposal on children and young people, or specific groups of children and young people, in Scotland.

This proposal is for a specific MySSSC intervention which was designed to connect organisations and not individuals. However, if young people enrol on the course there may be an indirect positive impact through this proposal due to more effective connections between colleges and employers, and therefore more choice for those participants wishing to pursue employment.

The College Development Network is the lead organisation for the course and colleges led its design and delivery. The following course details are included for information only.

- Many colleges have made the course available to young people so no age group is excluded <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/introduction-career-social-care/>
- The course is completely free for those who meet criteria of being unemployed or at risk of unemployment.
- Young people who apply for the course will have tutor support. They will be supported to consider next steps which could be into further education or employment.
- SSSC will continue to raise awareness about employment support which could support young people experiencing barriers to work.

G. HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES

This section considers the impact of the proposal on physical and mental health and wellbeing; this includes for example, participation, creativity and developing potential.

This proposal is for a specific MySSSC intervention which will impact on organisations and not individuals. There may be indirect positive impacts if the proposal is successful in improving engagement between colleges and employers, and subsequently improving choices for participants.

The College Development Network, in collaboration with colleges, is the lead organisation for course design and delivery.

The SSSC will provide support where possible to improve participant experience for example at a recent awareness event delivered in partnership with colleges, SSSC presented on 'Employer involvement and participant experience' highlighting the individual barriers faced by people who want a new career and the local and national employment support which can be accessed to remove these. SSSC will continue to raise awareness of the course among employment support providers, and encourage colleges to also support engagement between participants and employment support services where barriers to work (including health, wellbeing and inequalities) are identified.

H. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

This section is concerned with the impact of the proposal on pay and employment opportunities as well as valuing and supporting voluntary work.

This proposal is for a specific MySSSC intervention designed for organisations and not individuals. However, for this part of the assessment we recognise that the information gathered on MySSSC may have an impact on employment opportunities for course participants and the proposal has been influenced by this. We assess the impacts as positive.

When inviting employers to submit key details about their roles we will require certain fields to be filled which will allow colleges (and consequently course participants) to understand the employment opportunities on offer and exercise choice with regards to which employers to engage with. Employers will be asked to enter information about company values and provide a link to a recruitment page where details about pay and conditions can be appreciated. All social care employees in support worker posts must earn at least the Living Wage. Scottish Government have also committed to an increase to at least £10.02 per hour and committed in the 2022/2023 budget that this should ultimately increase (after April 2022) to a minimum of £10.50 per hour.

It should be noted that the original course (not in itself the focus on this EqIA) was designed to support those who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment to gain new skills and re-enter the labour market.

At a recent awareness event, SSSC presented on 'Employer involvement and participant experience' highlighting the individual barriers faced by people who want a new career and the local and national employment support which can be accessed to remove these. It was highlighted that taking part in an online course will not impact on benefits such as universal credit. We also highlighted the Parental Employability Support Fund and will continue to do so. Providers who offer additional employment support, including those delivering Fair Start Scotland, have been informed that participants using their services are also able to access the Introduction to a Career in Social Care course.

I. Care experienced children, young people and adults

This section concerns our duties to put Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do.

This proposal is for a specific MySSSC intervention for organisations and not individuals. However, for this part of the assessment we recognise that the MySSSC proposal may have an indirect impact on people with care experience. We would assess this as positive.

It is recognised that people who have lived experience of the care sector (through for example being cared for away from home during childhood for any length of time or living with family who have required additional local authority support) may have experienced disruption to education. Furthermore, evidence suggests people may continue to face lasting impacts in education, training, and work as a result of these early experiences <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/esss-outlines/care-experience-and-employment>

This course was funded by the National Transition Training Fund which was designed to provide education and upskilling opportunities to people who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment. It is possible that the course may attract interest from care experienced individuals who would benefit from support to pursue a new career. Through this proposal the SSSC and partners have an opportunity to support the course and its participants by ensuring a larger and more diverse group of employers are invited to express their interest in taking part and offering recruitment opportunities. There is also no expectation that participants enter employment after the six week course, and in some cases they may choose to pursue further education which would be another positive outcome.

Care experienced young people can access enhanced employment support from day one of unemployment from providers delivering Fair Start Scotland and we will continue to make colleges and employers aware of this.

<https://www.employabilityinscotland.com/employability-services/fair-start-scotland/individual/>

J. DECISION MAKING

Which of the following statements best describes the action that should be taken following the EqIA in relation to your proposal?

No major change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adjust the policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continue with Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop and remove the policy	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outline the reasons why you've selected this option

No negative impacts have been identified on protected characteristics. The proposal is suitable for organisations regardless of location.

While the proposal was designed to connect organisations, rather than individuals, we have provided additional information across several areas which describe how the MySSSC development may positively impact upon (directly or indirectly) opportunities for participants.

K. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

How will the implementation of the policy/proposal be monitored? How and when will the impact of the proposal be reviewed? Outline the actions that will be taken, the timescale for these and who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible
Evaluate impact of MySSSC proposal: number of employers, number of college users and information derived from course evaluation including on participant outcomes.	August 2022	Kerry Cannon Alan Povey

L. SIGN OFF

Name: Laura Lamb



Title: Acting Director of Development and Innovation

Date Approved: 17/03/22

ⁱ Scottish Social Services Council : Report on 2020 Workforce Data <https://data.sssc.uk.com/images/WDR/WDR2020.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council: Staff vacancies in care services 2020 https://data.sssc.uk.com/images/StaffVacancies/CI_SSSC_staff_vacancies_report_2020.pdf