

SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE:

SSSC Activity

1. SECTOR SKILL COUNCIL ROLE

Sector Qualification and Learning Strategy (SQLS)

A SQLS and Action Plan has been completed by SfCD. The SSSC country-specific strategy focuses on the full range of learning and development activity underway in the sector. The approach taken in Scotland was to develop a strategy that presented a wide vision of learning and reflected the aspirations of Skills for Scotland.

A copy of the SSSC's SQLS and action plan is attached. (to check access with SSC)

An event in November 2008 is being planned to update the sector on the implementation of the SSA and to issue publicity material outlining progress . A similar event and materials are being planned for the end of the financial year.

Modern Apprenticeships

As part of its sector skills council role, the SSSC will be consulting on and reviewing the current HSC and CCLD Modern Apprenticeship frameworks at SVQ levels 3 and 4 and seeking views on whether there should also be an MA at level 2. There will be a consultation with employers, education and training providers and other key stakeholders to inform the review. This will take place between 1 November 2008 and 31 January 2009. The report will be submitted by the end of March 2009 to the Modern Apprenticeship Group (MAG) which has the responsibility for approving all Modern Apprenticeships.

2. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE PLANNING INITIATIVE

The Workforce and Capacity Issues Division, Scottish Government has begun work on two separate but related projects on workforce information and planning. The first of these aims is to develop a clear and coherent vision and strategy for future workforce planning in the sector. The second is focussed on the issues of workforce data and intelligence. The work on both projects is at a very early stage and involves representatives from Scottish Government, the Care Commission, COSLA and the SSSC. Both projects are still at the stage of scoping the required work.

NB: See summary of meeting between Care Group representatives and Scottish Government

3. SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY, SVQ DATA

SQA is now providing the SSSC with quarterly data on all registrations and certifications for SVQs in Health & Social Care and Children's Care Learning and Development. It is the intention to publish quarterly reports on this data with one

report per year providing a more detailed analysis of the data. A copy of the report is available from the SSSC web-site.

4. EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE WORKFORCE

The University of Strathclyde with UHI and the University of Dundee have been approved by the SSSC to deliver the BA Childhood Practice from October 2008.

5. CONTINUOUS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

The consultation process for the development of the Continuous Learning Framework has now ended. The SSSC and IRISS are currently using the consultation feedback to develop the final Framework which will be published and launched in November 2008.

The SSSC, IRISS and the Scottish Government have agreed a strategy for the implementation of the Framework. The aim of the Engagement and Embedding Strategy is to support individuals and organisations across the social services sector to take ownership of the Framework and embed it in practice through;

- having access to information so that they can make informed decisions about using the Framework in their context and
- having access to a range of resources and support networks to assist those who choose to use the Framework.

The Learning Networks will play a crucial role in the success of the Engagement and Embedding Strategy. A project board will continue to make sure the objectives of the strategy are met and membership includes representatives from government, the public, private and voluntary sectors and the Learning Networks. An evaluation of the Continuous Learning Framework will be commissioned over the three year period of the strategy.

There will be support through the provision of information, primarily through the development of a website, and the commissioning of tools and resources to facilitate the use of the Framework in practice.

6. ADVANCED ENTRY: The Experience of Social Work Education in Scotland

A pilot study commissioned by the SSSC as part of the SCQF social services project was conducted by Glasgow Caledonian University, the Open University and Dundee University, to explore the experiences of students entering social work education with advanced standing. The researchers were interested in a range of questions about students' preparedness for study; the challenges they experienced in making the transition to a professional programme and the supports needed. The findings suggest that students with advanced standing from both graduate and HNC/SVQ routes are able to make a successful transition onto the social work programme. Both of these reports are available on the SSSC website.

LEARNING NETWORKS

Since October 2007 the SSSC has been involved in discussions with the Learning Networks and the Scottish Government in relation to the future vision, role and objectives of the Networks and arrangements for supporting and monitoring them. This process is now almost complete.

The Government has agreed to fund the Learning Networks for a further three years from April 2008 to March 2011 at the same levels as they were funded from 2005 to 2008. The Networks have also been allocated some additional funding in this financial year (2008-09) to complete projects to which they were already financially committed prior to the requirement to surrender any underspend at the end of March 2008.

The four Learning Networks have agreed a revised vision along with a shared statement of purpose and four overarching aims. These are attached

The focus is now on a Network's unique role as a forum for facilitating strategic partnership working across public, private and voluntary sector employers and other key stakeholders to identify shared challenges and solutions for workforce development in their area.

The role of the Learning Networks as the key mechanism for employer engagement in the work of the SSSC in its Sector Skills Council role has now been recognised formally through one of the shared aims.

There are no shared national objectives. Instead, each Learning Network is expected to develop its own set of objectives which reflect locally identified priorities as well as local proposals for implementing national policy drivers such as the actions arising from the Sector Skills Agreement and the Continuous Learning Framework.

The Learning Networks will therefore continue to be important partners in the SSSC's achievement of its own organisational objectives for workforce development.

Scottish Government expects the four Learning Networks to work collaboratively and to identify key actions which they will take forward together.

The SSSC no longer has a monitoring role in relation to the Learning Networks. Scottish Government has assumed responsibility for the financial monitoring of the Networks and expects the Networks to take responsibility for evaluating their performance against their own success criteria. The role of the SSSC is to continue to support the ongoing development of the Networks. In the short term the role involves supporting the Networks to draw up their objectives and success criteria for the next three years and challenging them where appropriate. F

SSSC proposes to undertake quarterly visits with the Networks. In addition to providing support, these meetings will focus on the national workforce development agenda and the partnership between the Networks and the SSSC.

SFC Skills Committee

SFC have been in contact with the Care Group for assistance in the preparation of a paper they have been asked to complete for the skills committee on provision for the social services sector. They are also linking with the SSSC (Mike Docherty) and the Scottish Government (Ian Davidson).

SFC have highlighted that the analysis undertaken by SSSC has identified a number of priorities including:

- registration requirements
- soft skills
- rural and remote training.

And that some of the possible activities include:

1. Encouraging a greater focus on sartorial priorities in provision 2. Examine what provision is available to develop soft skills 3. Building links with rural employers and colleges.

They recognise there are areas of overlap with health, such as with some of the training needs identified for registration (such as health and safety and moving and handling), and want to ensure that the two areas are linked.

The request has been made for a link to the colleges, which may involve contacting relevant members of the Group and/or Heads of Department, and those who could help in developing joint areas of work. SFC have some ideas but are seeking to ensure that these are also good ideas for the college sector. The lead person for SFC is Helen Raftopoulos