Northern Ireland
Social
Care
Council

2020/21
Business Plan

**Working together.
Making a difference.**

Terms and Definitions Used in this Plan

Advocacy Groups	Groups and networks representing and involving people who use services and carers
BI	Business Intelligence is a technology that helps analyse information
CPD	Continuing Professional Development – ongoing learning and training
DoH	Department of Health – the government body responsible for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland
EU	European Union
E-Z ines	E-zines are electronic magazines that can be emailed or viewed online
FtP	Fitness to Practise – a registrant's suitability to work in social work or social care
HEI's	Higher Education Institutions – such as Ulster University and Queen's University
HR	Human Resources – manages staff well-being, development and their employment
HSC	Health and Social Care – the people, systems and facilities that provide medical and personal care and support
ICT	Information and Communications Technology – computers, networks, websites and Apps we use
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers – a worldwide body representing social work
IIP	Investors in People – an award for good standards in staff and organisation management and development
ISO	Interim Suspension Order – temporary action to stop a registrant working while we investigate a serious complaint
KPI	Key Performance Indicator – standards we use to measure how well we are doing our job
NI	Northern Ireland
PiP	Professional in Practice – a framework that supports and provides professional recognition for social workers' learning and development
PPI	Personal and Public Involvement is a term to describe how people get involved in the planning, commissioning, development, delivery and evaluation of the services they receive
PRTL	Post Registration Training and Learning – a minimum of 90 hours of learning that all registrants must complete during the cycle of registration
QA	Quality assurance is a review to confirm that the system, process or information is robust and correct

Terms and Definitions Used in this Plan

QI	Quality Improvement is a way to identify how a service, process or system can be improved
Register	The Social Care Council's register is an electronic list of social workers and social care workers working in Northern Ireland (and also students studying for the Degree in Social Work in Northern Ireland)
Registrant	A person approved for registration on the Social Care Council's Register – social workers, social care workers and social work students
RQIA	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority – inspects Health and Social Care organisations to ensure standards are being met
3rd Sector	A term that is used to describe a range of organisations that are neither public sector nor private sector. It can include voluntary and community organisations
Sector Skills Council	UK wide bodies bringing together partners from employment and education to share sector intelligence and develop solutions to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce.
Social Care Council	Refers to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.
Social Care Worker	Individuals who provide support and/or personal care for people in their own homes, day care, residential care, or nursing home settings.
Social Worker	Individuals with a recognised social work qualification who improve and safeguard the social wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
Socrates	Is the name for the ICT system in the Social Care Council that supports the registration and regulation of the social care workforce
Stakeholders	People who are involved with our work or who are affected by what we do
UK	United Kingdom
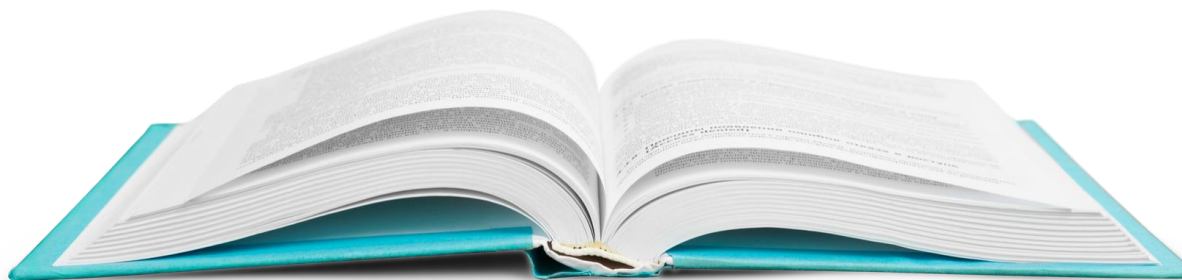
Northern Ireland Social Care Council Business Plan April 2020-March 2021

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Council) is a public body, established by the Department of Health to help raise standards in social work and social care services. We are responsible for –

- Maintaining a register of social workers and social care workers in Northern Ireland;

- Setting standards for social workers and social care workers for their conduct, training and practice; and

- Setting standards for and regulating social work education and training in Northern Ireland.

There are 45,000 people working in social work or social care in Northern Ireland, and registered with the Social Care Council. This represents almost 5% of the working population in Northern Ireland.

Our Purpose

As a regulator, everything we do is focused on care. Our work is designed to support high quality standards of social work and social care for everyone who needs it. We make a difference to the quality of social care services by regulating workforce standards and promoting continuous training and learning.

Through this work, we help support the development of a strong and professional social work and social care workforce. A workforce who provide quality care and the best outcomes for people who use services and their carers.

Our Vision and Values

The Social Care Council's Vision is 'To Improve Standards in Social Work and Social Care'. We have four Values which underpin our culture and explain how we will work with those around us –

- We promote respect

- We work with integrity

- We believe in partnership

- We strive for excellence

What these values mean for us can be found at page 39 of this Plan.

Measuring Our Impact

The Social Care Council Corporate Plan 2017-21 and the annual Business Plans to support it, have been developed using an 'outcomes based approach'. The benefit of this approach is that our Corporate Plan clearly describes what we are trying to achieve and the difference we want to make.

We use a number of methods to find out about the difference we are making – from surveys, emails, face to face engagement and meetings with different groups.

Strategic Themes for Our Business

When we developed our Corporate Plan, our stakeholders told us that we needed to focus on five key areas. We called these Strategic Themes:

Strategic Theme 1: Standards

Strategic Theme 2: Regulation

Strategic Theme 3: Workforce Development

Strategic Theme 4: Systems Leadership, and

Strategic Theme 5: Communication & Engagement.

This Business Plan describes the Strategic Actions (what we will do) and the Strategic Outcomes (the difference we want to see) during 2020/21..

IMPROVING Social Work and Social Care

STANDARDS   REGULATION   WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Our Plans

This Business Plan sets out what we want to achieve during the period April 2020 to March 2021. It also provides an overview of what we have done so far towards the strategic outcomes set out in our Corporate Plan for 2017-21.

The outcomes we are aiming to achieve for social care improvement are ambitious, but are also essential in underpinning the transformation of health and social care across Northern Ireland. As always, we are committed to –

- Working in partnership

- Bringing together the knowledge, experience and expertise of all our stakeholders

- Encouraging innovation in the development and improvement of social work and social care services

- Engaging with people who are involved with our work, or are affected by it

Delivery of this Business Plan will be reported in our Annual Report for 2020/21 which will be available on our website at www.niscc.info. During the year we also account for our progress through quarterly business performance reports which are provided to the, Board of the Social Care Council.

Northern Ireland Social Care Council Business Plan
April 2020-March 2021

Chief Executives Introduction

We are presenting our business plan for the new business year in the most unprecedented and uncertain times for all of us. The impact of the current pandemic of COVID-19 is impacting on every one of our lives and will challenge our health and social care system beyond anything anyone of us could have imagined possible. We are all playing our part to help our families, friends, work colleagues and the communities we live in, and we will be making sure we play our part as the Social Care Council, to support those front line workers in social work and social care to have access to online learning and support, in addition to ensuring those coming back to work in social work or social care can be registered quickly and safely.

We all want to see a future where it is business as normal and this business plan is drafted on that basis. I have no doubt that the challenges we face personally and professionally – and those challenges we have yet to overcome – will change our perspective on our priorities and ambitions. I will make sure the Social Care Council listens to those priorities and ambitions to make sure we continue to work with you and for you.

When we consulted on our current Corporate Plan four years ago, we heard clear messages from our stakeholders about the areas we needed to focus on and the difference we needed to make. Our Corporate Plan for 2017- 2021 reflected that feedback and set out a number of strategic objectives and outcomes. The objectives were challenging and we have come a long way in the last three years in delivering against those objectives and outcomes.

This is the last Business Plan arising out of our Corporate Plan, and this year will be about consolidating what we have achieved over the last three years, to ensure those developments and improvements are sustained. We also want to use this year to identify where any gaps exist so that we can explore these with our stakeholders in the development of our next Corporate Plan. We will be consulting on our new Corporate Plan during 2020/21. It will be important to hear what you want and need from the Social Care Council over the next four years, and where we need to position ourselves to make a positive impact for the social care sector.

We do not deliver our work in isolation and have the support of a Board[1] and a number of Partnerships[2] –

- Participation Forum – this includes people who use social care services and carers

- Registrants Forum – this includes registered social workers and social care workers

- Leaders in Social Care Partnership – this includes social care providers

- Professional in Practice Partnership – this includes social work employers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Our Business Plan 2020/21

Stakeholder feedback tells us that we need to keep supporting improvement in social work and social care practice. This includes sharing best evidenced based practice through face to face engagement, our website and further developing our digital learning resources. Standards are at the heart of safe, high quality social work and social care practice, and we have gathered evidence from social workers and social care workers about their level of awareness of the Standards of Conduct and Practice and how they use them in their daily practice. The level of awareness and application of the Standards varies between those newly registered with us and those who have been working for a longer period of time in the social care sector. It is important that we take this into account when we are engaging registrants about the importance and value of the Standards.

Through our promotion of careers in social work and social care, we have learned that there is an appetite among young people to follow a career in social care. We will continue to work with the Leaders in Social Care Partnership to develop a campaign to promote the value of social care as a positive career choice.

Last year we led a successful campaign to promote a career in social work. Working in partnership with the DoH, employers and social work education providers this campaign led to an increase in applications for social work degree courses. This work demonstrated that concerted efforts to encourage and promote awareness of social work as a career can result in real and measurable outcomes. We will continue to support this initiative in 2020/21.

1 Details on our Board can be found on our website at www.niscc.info
2 Details on our Partnerships can be found on pages 12 and 13 and on our website www.niscc.info

By setting standards for education and training in social work, we ensure that social workers have the right knowledge and skills to deliver high quality services. We will work with our registrants to encourage more social workers to use the Professional in Practice Credit Accumulation system to track their continuous learning and development and support them to achieve professional recognition.

The social work and social care workforce and the Health and Social Care (HSC) system face many challenges in the delivery of high quality care. Working alongside the DoH and in partnership with our registrants, people who use services and their carers, social work and social care providers, and others within the HSC system, we will work to build a competent and confident workforce to support the programmes of reform and transformation.

Patricia Higgins,
Interim Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Strategic Context

We are mindful that the delivery of our business takes place alongside a number of external and operational factors (sometimes called drivers) that have the potential to influence how we deliver our business. These drivers can provide opportunities as well as challenges. It is important that in setting our aims, objectives and outcomes for this year, we take into account the strategic context (and environment) in which we operate.

External

COVID-19 Pandemic
We need to be responsive to the needs of the sector and those who use services and their carers and ensure we re-prioritise our business accordingly.

Programme for Government
We are pleased to work with the new Minister of Health on his priorities for the social work and care sectors. We will continue to support the Minister and the DoH in their leadership of the reform and transformation of the Health and Social Care system.

Brexit
We will work with the DoH during the Transition Period while the UK and EU negotiate the arrangements for the EU Exit.

Quality and Safety
The outcomes of a number of strategic reviews and reports are anticipated during 2020/21 which will seek to improve the quality and safety of care for the citizens of Northern Ireland. We will review these reports to identify how we can support the implementation of recommendations where appropriate.

Operational

Landscape Review
We are participating in a Landscape Review which is a review of our services and business that takes place every five years. We expect the outcome of this Review to be completed during 2020/21.

Technology
Developments in technology present many opportunities for us to work in a smarter, more flexible and accessible way throughout our business. We will continue to improve our use of technology to provide a seamless service for our registrants and stakeholders, and become more efficient and effective in how we deliver our business.

Resources
Like all public sector organisations, we must manage our services within budget constraints and this presents many challenges including finding new and better ways to continue to deliver high quality services. We also recognise that budgetary challenges exist for social care employers and we must therefore find innovative ways to support learning and development.

People working in Social Care
The registered workforce has grown significantly over the last number of years. With 45,000 people registered and working in the social work and social care sector, we need to use our sector intelligence to help influence and shape social care transformation.

Business Planning Assumptions

To develop our Business Plan for 2020/21 we consulted with our staff, our Board, our Partnerships and the DoH. During the consultation, we made the following planning assumptions:

- We will need to re-align our business priorities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure our resources are targeted to where they are most needed;

- We will be allocated a revenue resource limit to maintain our services at the current level of performance and quality; and

- No further responsibilities will be assigned to us without additional resource

Our Ambitions

The Social Care Council's Board developed the following ambitions to help shape the way in which we deliver our business. These are long term ambitions which will be integrated into the way we deliver our services, and will form part of our consultation on the new Corporate Plan. We have started work to give effect to these ambitions and will continue to do so during 2020/21.

Working in partnership with the DoH and our stakeholders, we aim to be:

- An Enabler for Social Care Transformation - Supporting and upskilling the workforce

- A Sector Leader for Data Analysis - Informing workforce planning and policy development

- An Agile and Innovative Regulator - Using innovative approaches to improve our services

- A Centre of Excellence for Social Work and Social Care - Supporting evidence based practice in social work and social care

Collaborative Partnership Working

The Social Care Council has had a long history of working collaboratively in the design and delivery of its business across the social work and social care sector. Many of the objectives and outcomes described in this Business Plan require the involvement and collaboration of its Partnerships. The diagram below describes how each of these Partnerships (also called 'Forums') work to challenge, influence and advise the work of the Social Care Council.

- **Participation Forum**
- **Registrants Forum**
- **Leaders in Social Care Partnership**
- **Professional in Practice Partnership**

Participation Forum

- Improves participation and engagement with people who use services and their carers in line with the principles of Co-production to support the work of the Social Care Council.

- Supports the Social Care Council to raise practice standards of registrants working in social work and social care.

- Hold the Social Care Council to account for their participation and engagement activities with people who use services and their carers,

PiP Partnership

- Identifies post qualifying education and training needs, gaps in provision and priorities for development and advises the social care council and the Board to ensure these are represented in the organisation's business.

- Facilitates the development of relevant provision to meet identified needs across sector.

- Keeps the PiP Framework under review and brings forward recommendation for development.

- Provides advice and guidance to the Board on matters relevant to the training and development.

Eternal Perspective

Challenge

Influence

Advice

Expert Knowledge

Leaders in Social Care Partnership

- Provides a strong, positive voice for social care and promotes its value through improved understanding of it's role, contribution to social wellbeing and contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

- Develop a culture in social care that reflects the shared health and social care values of working together, excellence, compassion, openness and honesty.

- Lead from the edge- supporting people to innovate and to bring new ideas for person centered care from the margins into social care services.

Registrant's Forum

- Provides advice and representation on the views of Registrants.

- Acts as a consultative body with the aim of promoting better communication and understanding between the Social Care Council and its Registrants

- Represents the views and expectations of Registrants on key aspects of the Social Care Council's work.

Strategic Theme 1: Standards

Putting Standards at the heart of Social Work and Social Care Practice and Education & Training

<mark>You said</mark> – The Social Care Council should put standards at the heart of social work and social care practice and education and training, to support the delivery of effective social care services both now and in the future.

Standards are the cornerstone of everything we do to strengthen the professionalism of the social work and social care workforce across NI.

The social work and social care workforce includes 45,000 people, 38,000 of whom are working in social care job roles. Many of the social care workers registered with us are relatively new to the register and at an early stage on their professional regulation journey.

We are committed to working with this workforce and their employers to assist them in developing understanding of their responsibilities as a registered social care workforce. We will also work with employers and educators to develop tools, knowledge and learning resources that will help them embed the Standards into their organisational policies and practices.

We are an agile and innovative regulator using our digital learning platforms together with face to face engagement to support the workforce in applying the Standards. Our objectives will include targets to ensure the majority of registrants and employers are regularly using the Standards to inform and improve their social work and social care practice.

By March 2021, we said we would achieve two strategic outcomes for Standards:

1. The Standards of Conduct and Practice are relevant, trusted, understood and embedded.
2. The Employer Standards support the delivery of effective social work and social care services.

Embedding the Standards so that they are trusted, valued and understood has been a different journey for each of our key stakeholder groups – social workers, social care workers, employers and people who use services and their carers. Our approach to promoting the Standards and ensuring they support the workforce therefore needs to be adapted to the needs of each group. Last year we were able to demonstrate our progress as –
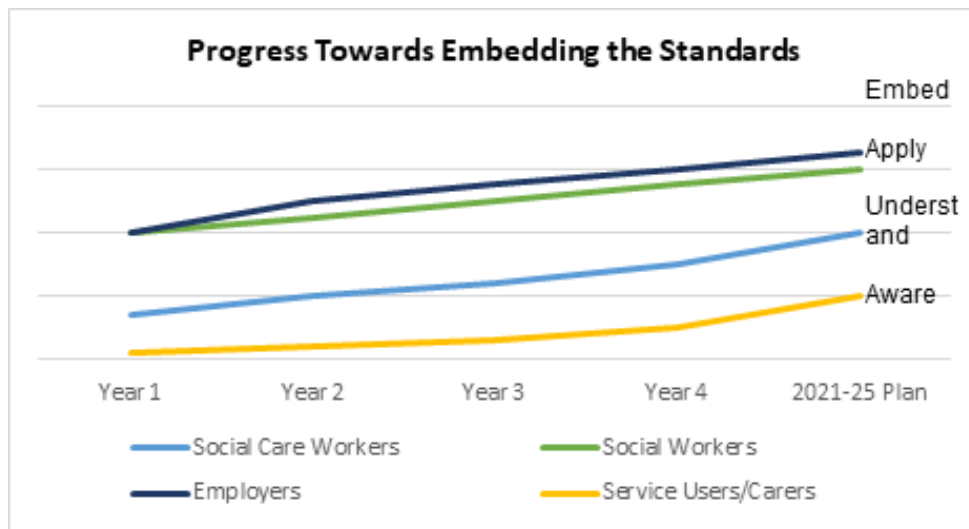
Indicators of Success

- 94% of social workers said they apply the Standards at least once a week in their social work role

- 71% of social care workers said they use the Standards at least once a month in their social care role

- 75% of people who use services and their carers (or their advocates) said they knew how to complain about their care worker if they needed to

- 79% of employers said they use the Standards at least once a month with staff

What we have learned:

- Awareness, understanding and use of the Standards is improving across the stakeholder groups
- There is movement towards more regular use of the Standards and for these to become part of everyday practice
- Stakeholders are at different stages in their understanding and use of the Standards and the way they support good practice
- People who use services and their carers have less awareness of the Standards but know how to report any concerns about a registered worker
- We need to increase our engagement and support to move all stakeholders from 'awareness' to 'embedding' the Standards

Objectives to Deliver Strategic Outcomes for Standards in 2020-21

Strategic Actions
(2017-2021)

Business Objectives
During (2020-2021) We Will -

Indicators of Success
for (2020-2021)

Strategic Outcomes
(2017-2021)

Work with registrants, employers and people who use services and their carers to support the consistent application of the Standards of Conduct and Practice

Deliver a programme of engagement with social care workers to raise awareness about the Standards and how to apply them in their work.

Deliver a programme of engagement with social workers to support the use of the Standards in their work and in their professional development.

Deliver a programme of engagement to raise awareness with people who use services and their carers about the role of the Social Care Council and their confidence in the social care sector.

Work with employers and RQIA to develop ways to monitor use of the Employer Standards.

1. At least 70% of social care workers are reporting that they are aware of the Standards and know how to apply them in their practice.

2. At least 90% of social workers are reporting that the Standards are helping improve the quality of their social work practice.

3. Establish a benchmark of awareness of the role of the Social Care Council and confidence in the social care sector with people who use services and their carers.

4. At least 80% of employers are reporting that they use the Employer Standards.

The Standards of Conduct and Practice are relevant, trusted, understood and embedded

The Employer Standards support the delivery of effective social work and social care services

Strategic Theme 2: Regulation
Regulate the Workforce and Social Work Education and Training

– The Social Care Council should ensure regulation is robust, agile, valued and trusted, to support good social work and social care practice.

Our role is to raise standards in social work and care practice; strengthen safeguards; and improve outcomes for people who use social work and social care services.

As a workforce regulator we are responsible for setting standards of conduct and practice for social workers and social care workers, and setting standards for social work and social work education and training.

The Standards of Conduct and Practice for social workers and social care workers set the benchmarks for good practice. All registrants must work within these Standards to remain fit and capable of delivering high quality services. Continuous learning and development is a requirement of registration and through our Workforce Development function we support registrants to develop the knowledge and skills required to practise safely and to a high standard. We also monitor adherence to maintaining their professional development.

By setting and monitoring standards for social work education and training at both qualifying and post qualifying levels we support safe and effective practice across the career spectrum. We regulate the delivery of the Degree in Social Work and Professional in Practice programmes through robust annual monitoring and review.
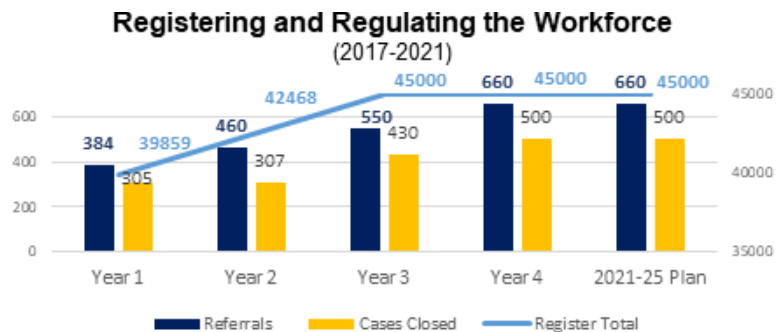
A small percentage of the workforce are referred to us to review their fitness to practise and while some are suspended or removed from the register, others require additional support and/or training to remain in practice. Following the significant increase in the size of the register, the number of allegations we receive about a registrant's fitness to practise has also increased. It is therefore important that we continue to manage our processes efficiently and ensure we have the skills mix, systems and technology to deliver this function well.

By March 2021, we said we would achieve four strategic outcomes for Regulation:

1. Registration is valued and trusted;
2. Social work education meets the needs of registrants and employers;
3. Fitness to Practise (FtP) decisions are trusted;
4. We are an agile regulator continuously developing best regulatory practice.

Our Progress

There are 45,000 people registered with the Social Care Council, providing high quality care and support to the community in Northern Ireland. The register has grown significantly in the last four years and it is important that we have the resources and systems in place to support the needs and expectations of that workforce. Last year we were able to demonstrate our progress as –

Registering and Regulating the Workforce (2017-2021)

Social Workers - PiP Profile

Degree in Social Work Review Team

Indicators of Success

- 95% of registrants maintained registration

- 90% of FtP cases were closed in 15 months

- 32% of registrants investigated by FtP were issued with a 'Letter of Advice' or 'Conditions of Practice' to improve their standards

Indicators of Success

- 81% of managers reported new social work graduates can practise competently

- 100% of the workforce sampled for PRTL met the requirement of 90 hours CPD

- 56% of social workers engaged with the PiP framework for their CPD

What we have learned:

- We need to meet increasing demands on the Registration and Fitness to Practise functions, which will require a review of systems and application of ICT

- We need to implement recommendations from the Review of the Degree which support the development of new social workers

- We need to engage front line social workers and their managers to increase use of the PiP Credit system and Framework

Objectives to Deliver Strategic Outcomes for Regulation in 2020-21

Strategic Actions
(2017-2021)

Ensure the integrity and effectiveness of our registration, regulation and social work education functions

Improve the understanding of the role and contribution of regulation in securing public protection and enabling professionalism to thrive in social work and social care

Business Objectives
During (2020-2021) We Will -

Support registrants and employers to meet their responsibilities in maintaining social care registration.

Deliver an improvement programme to develop the online registration system which meets the needs of registrants and their employers.

Approve and assure standards of social work education and training at qualifying and post qualifying levels.

Review the FtP Rules and processes against best regulatory practice to ensure the continued delivery of a proportionate and efficient system of workforce regulation.

Through engagement with the DoH, ensure our Fitness to Practise (FtP) function has the right level of resource to effectively carry out our statutory duties.

Indicators of Success
for (2020-2021)

5. A minimum of 97% of registrants successfully maintain their registration throughout the year.

6. A minimum of 70% of registrants use the online system to maintain their registration.

7. 100% of Quality Assurance processes for social work education and training are completed within required timescales and recommendations for improvement identified.

8. All referrals and cases are managed efficiently in line with best practice, FtP Rules and key performance indicators.

Strategic Outcomes
(2017-2021)

The Social Care Council is an agile regulator able to respond to changing need and demand

Social work education and training meets the needs of registrants and employers

Fitness to Practise decisions are trusted

Social work and social care registration is valued and trusted

Strategic Theme 3: Workforce Development
Develop the Social Work and Social Care Workforce

You said – The Social Care Council should support the development of the social work and social care workforce to enable them to deliver safe, effective and values led care.

Central to how we deliver on our objectives is our partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders to create a culture of continuous professional development. There are 45,000 people actively engaged in the delivery of social work and social care services across NI. This represents 5% of the entire Northern Ireland workforce.

The social care workforce provides compassionate, safe, high quality and often complex care services to the NI population. It is therefore essential that the social care workforce is supported in a range of ways to suit their learning and development needs. In addition to developing a Learning and Improvement Framework for Social Care that recognises and supports career progression, we will continue to invest time and resources in developing our range of ICT enabled online learning and development programmes.

We are also an awarding body, delivering Professional in Practice (the professional development framework for social workers) to support continuous professional development. We will continue to develop this framework to ensure social workers have access to a range of learning to support existing and new practice.

Our ambition is to become a Centre of Excellence for social work and social care, focused on supporting the workforce to improve practice that is underpinned by research and best evidence. We will work with our partners and registrants to deliver this ambition, to support best practice and add value to the careers of those employed in social work and social care.

By March 2021, we said we would achieve two strategic outcomes for Workforce Development:

1. Social workers and social care workers are competent, compassionate and skilled in their practice, and

2. They have the knowledge, skills and competence to be able to respond to changing service needs in social care.

Our Progress

Entry to the Social Care Council's register for social workers is based on the attainment of an approved social work qualification, and a social worker's progression through their career is supported by the Professional in Practice framework. In contrast, entry to the register for social care workers does not require a qualification and there is no formal learning and development framework to support career progression. While the learning and development needs of these workforces are different we will continue to deploy our resources to support the specific needs and priorities of each workforce. Last year we were able to demonstrate our progress as -
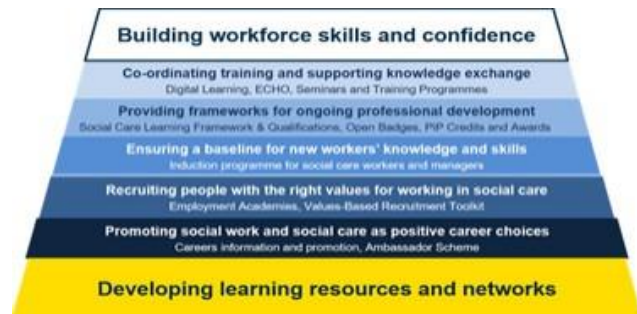
Indicators of Success

- 700 Users on the Learning Zone per month
- Values-Based Recruitment & Induction programmes published online
- HSC qualifications reviewed and revised
- Interactive Careers guides published and careers events supported

Indicators of Success

- Domiciliary care enhanced training programme delivered
- 63% increase in domiciliary care knowledge reported
- Engagement with Tech Tour to promote digital skills
- Participation in Lunchtime Seminars and networks

What we have learned:

- We need to focus our resources on consolidating the Learning Zone and evaluating the use of existing products.
- Linking Social Work PRTL to PiP Credits would enable social workers to gain recognition for their learning & development within the PiP Framework
- Establishment of a Learning Framework for Social Care and a recognised career structure would attract more people to the workforce
- We need to promote domiciliary care training to support upskilling of the workforce
- Information and awareness sessions will help build digital confidence and improve digital skills in the workforce
- Virtual learning networks will support social care managers to share learning and develop innovative approaches to service delivery

Objectives to Deliver Strategic Outcomes for Workforce Development in 2020-21

Strategic Actions
(2017-2021)

Promote and enable a culture of continuous learning and development in social work through the Professional in Practice framework.

Work in partnership with stakeholders to create a learning and improvement framework to ensure the social care workforce is skilled, confident and competent.

Business Objectives
During (2020-2021) We Will -

Develop proposals for consultation on a system of revalidation to link Post Registration Training and Learning requirements with the Professional in Practice Framework for the social work profession.

Work in partnership with stakeholder organisations to deliver careers and recruitment campaigns for social work and social care.

Develop a learning and improvement framework for social care workers which will support the development of a career structure.

Develop our digital learning platform to provide registrants and employers with greater access to learning and employment resources.

Indicators of Success
for (2020-2021)

9. Proposal agreed for consultation on revalidation of social worker registration through the PiP Framework.

10. A minimum of 85% participants who engage with the events and campaigns report an increased awareness of social work and social care careers

11. A Learning and Development Framework for Social Care is developed.

12. Maintain the number of people undertaking learning through the e-enabled technology available on our Learning Zone.

Strategic Outcomes
(2017-2021)

Social workers and social care workers will have the knowledge, skills and competencies to be able to respond and adapt to changing service needs in social care.

Social workers and social care workers are competent, compassionate, values led, confident and skilled in their practice.

Strategic Theme 4: Systems Leadership
Promote a systems leadership approach across the social care sector

– The Social Care Council should promote a systems leadership approach to contribute to capacity building that will support leadership at all levels.

Through our partnership work we are promoting and supporting a collective leadership approach within the social work and social care sector with the aim of improving quality in practice.

We are working to support the ambition of the HSC Leadership Strategy and support social work leadership programmes within the Professional in Practice framework.

As the workforce regulator, the information and intelligence we hold about the social work and social care workforce is unique. Our continued ambition remains to use our workforce intelligence to support the leadership challenges in social work and social care. We are uniquely placed to collect and use this information to help inform strategic decisions to support the sector.

We have remodelled how we provide systems leadership for the social care sector and have established a Leaders in Social Care Partnership which aims to put a sustainable framework in place to support, among many things, the value of social care in delivering services to the citizens of Northern Ireland.

At the same time, we are also continuing to play our part in working with others to ensure a systems leadership approach is in place in relation to social work. We are keen to take a lead role in this regard and to support our partners to raise the standing and profile of social workers.

By March 2021, we said we would achieve two strategic outcomes for Systems Leadership:

1. A systems leadership environment is created which provided for improved understanding and connection across the sector

2. Capacity is built to use collective intelligence to effect real, meaningful and positive change in social work and social care

Our Progress

Significant progress has been made to establish the networks required to provide a strategic voice for social work and social care. We have also increased our capacity to use our workforce data to influence and inform change and will continue to do this next year and beyond. Last year we were able to demonstrate our progress as –

Systems Leadership

Collective Intelligence
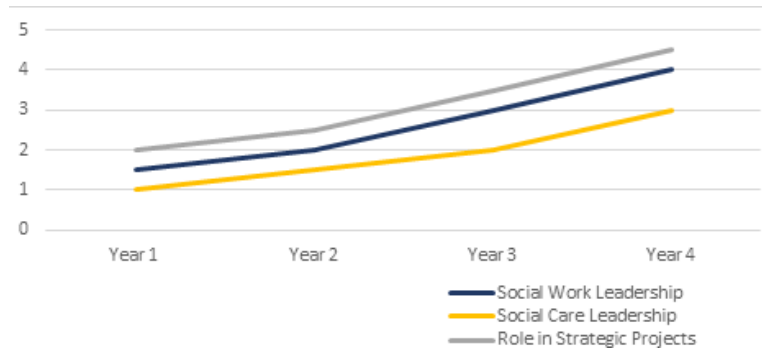
Scale: 0-5 for range of data/intelligence
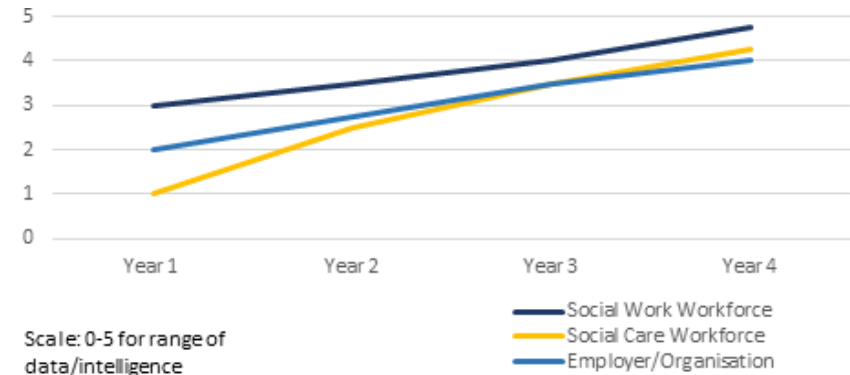
Indicators of Success

- Effective groups and partnerships in place supporting sector leaders including Social Care Managers Forum and Employers Advisory Group
- UK & Ireland HSC Regulators forum in place
- Strategic engagement in the Reform of Adult Social Care and related transformation groups
- EU Brexit planning project in place
- Leading and supporting the Social Work Leadership Network
- Supporting the 3rd sector Leadership Network
- Establishing the Leaders in Social Care Partnership

Indicators of Success

- Live reporting on Register profile
- Live reporting on PiP engagement
- Power BI application against SOCRATES data
- Systems Modelling for Domiciliary Care workforce
- Data informing DoH for Workforce Strategy

What we have learned:

- We must increase our capacity and capability to analyse and report on our information;

- A strategic voice is needed to help shape social work and social care as Health & Social Care Transformation moves forward

- Insight from sector leaders is needed to inform strategic workforce planning and development

Objectives to Deliver Strategic Outcomes for Leadership in 2020-21

Strategic Actions
(2017-2021)

Use our sector intelligence, engagement, networks and alliances to promote a collaborative working environment that will enable fresh ideas and approaches to inform the strategic development of the social care workforce

Work in partnership with key stakeholders to strengthen capacity building to support and develop systems leadership at all levels across the social care sector

Business Objectives
During (2020-2021) We Will -

Work with the DoH and other Government Departments, Community Planning Leads and employers to inform strategic workforce planning and policy development.

Continue to develop our capacity and capability to analyse and report on our data for workforce demographics, qualifications, training and learning..

Through the Leaders in Social Care Partnership, we will support the transformation and development of the social care workforce in Northern Ireland.

Continue to chair and participate in the Social Work Leadership Network to support the development of a collective leadership approach for social work.

Indicators of Success
for (2020-2021)

13. The Social Care Council actively participates in strategic projects and work streams for social work and social care planning and development.

14. The Social Care Council produces workforce intelligence reports which inform business and strategic planning.

15. The Leaders in Social Care Partnership programme of work for 2020/21 is delivered across the strategic priorities of vision, inclusion and innovation.

16. The network will develop key leadership messages to support the social work profession.

Strategic Outcomes
(2017-2021)

Capacity is built to use collective intelligence to effect real, meaningful and positive change in social work and social care standards and practice

A systems leadership environment is created which provides for improved understanding and connection across the sector

Strategic Theme 5: Communication and Engagement
Communicate, Connect and Engage

<mark>You said</mark> **– The Social Care Council should ensure there is effective and meaningful communication and engagement to improve the understanding of what the Social Care Council does and the value of the social work and social care workforce.**

Since our establishment in 2001, communication and engagement has remained a key theme: recognising that to deliver our statutory functions we need to effectively communicate with our registrants and stakeholders to successfully deliver our business. Over the last three years we have invested time promoting social care careers, developing our social media presence and creating engagement forums such as the Social Care Managers Forum to help connect better with the sector.

We have 45,000 people on the register and have many stakeholders including employers, people who use services and their carers and the interested public. We have found over the last number of years that while we successfully deliver on many things, we need to be smarter about how we connect what we are doing with the feedback we receive from stakeholders. We are also mindful that we should be talking about the 'right things' to the 'right people', at the 'right time'.

We have therefore re-designed our approach to communication and engagement this year to three clear themes –
- Raising awareness of the role of the Social Care Council
- Raising the profile of social work
- Raising the profile of social care

And have underpinned this with a detailed Communication and Engagement planner that sets out what we will do and where we will focus our activity during 2020/21

By March 2021, we said we would achieve two strategic outcomes for Systems Leadership:

1. Improving the public's perception of the social care workforce
2. Increasing confidence in the contribution the workforce makes
3. Ensuring the views, experience and expertise of people who use services and carers inform our business.

Our Progress
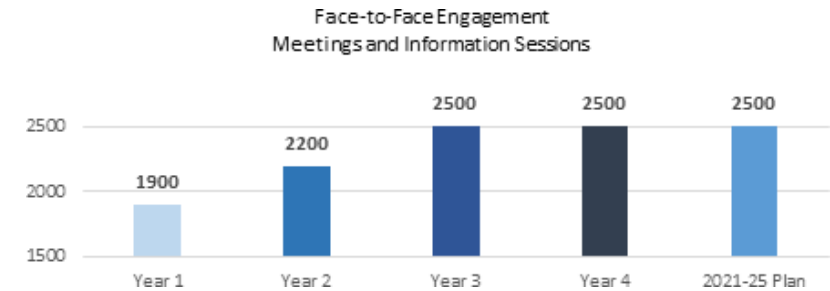
A significant programme of engagement has been delivered to engage the workforce with their registration responsibilities. Extensive work has also been undertaken to refresh the Social Care Council profile and messaging. Last year we were able to demonstrate our progress as –

Communicating

Digital Engagement Development

Legend: Website Visitors, Social Media Followers

Website Visitors: Year 1: 13000, Year 2: 14000, Year 3: 15000, Year 4: 18000, 2021-25 Plan: 20000

Social Media Followers: Year 1: 3255, Year 2: 5254, Year 3: 6500, Year 4: 8000, 2021-25 Plan: 10000

Indicators of Success

- Campaigns delivered for PiP, Registration, Careers, Standards,
- Portfolio of images and videos developed to support website and social media messaging
- Brand refresh and messaging delivered
- Staff communications and intranet updated
- E-zines tailored for stakeholder groups
- Participation & Registrants Forums engaged in business activity
- Partnerships connecting/engaging (PiP, Workforce Leaders)

Engagement Opportunities with our Stakeholders

Face-to-Face Engagement
Meetings and Information Sessions

Year 1: 1900, Year 2: 2200, Year 3: 2500, Year 4: 2500, 2021-25 Plan: 2500

Indicators of Success

- 30% knowledge improvement reported by those participating in Standards information sessions / Lunchtime Seminars
- 97% of Social Care Managers reported the Forum events would help improve standards of practice
- Staff and Participation members involved in Regional PPI events
- 3500 people engaged in online surveys/focus groups to help inform our work Evaluation groups and discussions

What we have learned:

- A Communication and Engagement Strategy will support and co-ordinate our key efforts and messages
- Communications must be clear and easy to understand
- People who use services and their carers involvement in our work must be evidenced and the outcomes shared with other stakeholders
- Online resources are essential in reaching such a large and disparate stakeholder group
- Improving public perception is a long term outcome
- More work is required to solidify communication and engagement with our immediate stakeholders – registrants, employers, people who use services and their carers

Objectives to Deliver Strategic Outcomes for Communication and Engagement in 2020-21

Strategic Actions
(2017-2021)

Create a new and progressive understanding of the role and contribution of workforce regulation in social care.

Build, develop and maintain effective and supportive relationships with people who use services and their carers, registrants, employers and other stakeholders focusing on listening, learning and evolving.

Business Objectives
During (2020-2021) We Will -

The Social Care Council – we will deliver our Communications and Engagement Plan for 2020/21 to build an understanding of the role and purpose of the Social Care Council.

Social Workers – we will deliver our Communication and Engagement Plan for 2020/21 to engage the profession and raise the profile of Social Workers.

Social Care Workers – we will deliver our Communication and Engagement Plan for 2020/21 to support the transformation and development of the social care workforce.

Indicators of Success
for (2020-2021)

17. Baselines are established for awareness levels of the Social Care Council with interested public, people who use services and their carers.

18. Consistent messages on the value of social work are established, and further embedding of the Standards is evident.

19. Baselines are established for awareness levels of the value of social care as an active career choice.

Strategic Outcomes
(2017-2021)

Improved public perception of social workers and social care workers as a workforce that is committed to upholding standards.

Increased confidence in the contribution of workforce regulation in serving and protecting the public, minimising risk and reducing harm by embedding and raising standards.

The views, experience and expertise of people who use services and carers in informing our business is valued and can be evidenced.

Infrastructure and Leadership
People, Resources, Governance, Quality and Systems

To support the delivery of this Business Plan, the Social Care Council will ensure it has the right infrastructure and leadership in across its people, resources, governance, quality and systems.

The Social Care Council is an IIP (Silver) accredited employer and retains the IIP Good Practice Award for Health and Wellbeing. It has a workforce that supports a range of front line and back office functions, supporting the overall delivery of the Social Care Council's Business Plan. The Senior Leadership Team chaired by Patricia Higgins (Interim Chief Executive) has worked with staff to ensure its staffing resource is deployed to support its business priorities.

During the year, staff participated in the HSC Regional Survey and there were many positive indicators regarding how all staff demonstrate their leadership in working together, and some areas where more needs to be done. Staff participate in a number of groups to improve the working environment, including looking at areas such as culture, quality and internal communications.

A planned programme of interactive engagement meetings with staff now takes place on a regular basis in addition to the day to day and team meetings that take place across the organisation. A culture of 'you said' and 'we did' is now firmly in place and the staff Intranet is an important tool in sharing information in real time with all staff, in addition to face to face communication and meetings.

Looking for ways to do things smarter and improving our systems will continue to be a priority during 2020/21, including making best use of the technology that is available.

By March 2021, we said we would achieve two strategic outcomes for Systems Leadership:

1. People - the Social Care Council is an employer of choice
2. Resources - resources are deployed within robust an accountable governance frameworks
3. Governance - business is delivered against good governance best practice
4. Quality - quality improvement is fully integrated in all aspects of Social Care Council business
5. Systems - technology is used to improve systems and processes

Our Progress

Our KPI's in relation to absences, appraisals, and finance continue to be met. Our programme of staff engagement has a structure and is delivered regularly to all staff. We have learnt that a QI approach to reviewing systems/functions can produce positive outcomes. Last year we were able to demonstrate our progress as —

People and Resources

Richard McNeill (centre), who was successful in applying for a place on the Young Persons Programme 2020. Pictured with Declan McAllister and Patricia Higgins.


Laura McCullough (centre), who qualified as a mediator for the HSC. Pictured with Declan McAllister and Patricia Higgins.

Indicators of Success

- Four staff engagement workshops delivered
- Staff completed learning plans and achievements
- KPI for staff absences delivered
- Appraisals and e-learning carried out
- Staff engaged on working groups
- Break even position and prompt payment targets met

Quality and Systems

Fee Payment Method 19/20

■ Online Fees % ■ Phone Fees % ■ Manual Fees %
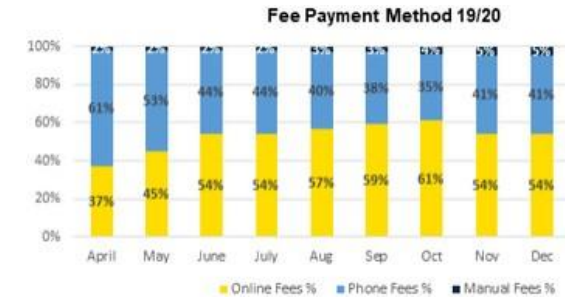
Indicators of Success

- QI project to encourage fee payments on line increased the uptake to 60%
- Phone call volumes reduced as a result of online transactions
- Changes made to the system as a result of user feedback and engagement

What we have learned:

- A QI approach to reviewing specific business functions/activities can lead to positive change and improvements
- The system to support staff and managers in managing absences is fit for purpose
- It is important to use a range of methods to engage and involve staff in delivery of the business
- Health and wellbeing activities are having a positive impact

Objectives to Deliver Strategic Outcomes for Infrastructure and Leadership in 2020-21

Strategic Actions
(2017-2021)

Effectively deploy and engage our Corporate Services to support the successful delivery of our Corporate Plan

Business Objectives
During (2020-2021) We Will -

People - Deliver the actions identified for 2020/21 business year arising from the Investors in People Report.

Resources - Manage our resources to maximum effect and within regulatory and statutory guidelines and legislation..

Governance - Deliver effective governance including risk and information management in line with relevant legislation and guidance.

Quality -Deliver on our Quality 2020 commitments for 2020/21 as set out in the Annual Quality Action Plan

Systems - Deliver our 2020/21 ICT Improvement Plan to further enhance the user experience of our registration and regulation system.

Indicators of Success
for (2020-2021)

20. Social Care Council is placed to retain its IIP status at the end of the 2020/21 business year.

21. Business Plan for 2020/21 is successfully delivered and the Social Care Council achieves its break even target at the end of the financial year.

22. The Board receives assurance through audit and governance reports that the Social Care Council is delivering safe and effective governance.

23. Staff are supported to engage in quality improvement activity within their own business area and as part of projects working across the organisation.

24. SOCRATES Change Board ensures that system changes and developments are planned to deliver improved services, taking into account user feedback.

Strategic Outcomes
(2017-2021)

The Social Care Council is an employer of choice; employing, developing and retaining hard working, skilled staff who are committed to delivering quality services.

Resources are deployed within robust and accountable governance frameworks to ensure the Social Care Council is capable of delivering its commitments.

Business is delivered against good governance best practice to meet all statutory, legal and professional obligations.

Quality improvement is fully integrated in all aspects of Social Care Council business.

Technology is used to improve systems and processes to support delivery of front line registration and regulation services.

Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

We have a number of Key Performance Indicators across our business functions which are an accessible way for our stakeholders to quickly review what we are doing and to what level of satisfaction/completion. These KPI's have been in place for four years and during this year (2020/21) we are undertaking a review, alongside our consultation on the new Corporate Plan, to test if these KPI's are still fit for purpose – and are they the right KPI's that our stakeholders which us to report on.

We report on our KPI's in our Annual Report and in quarterly reports to our Board, both of which are available on our website at www.niscc.info

	What We Will Measure	**KPI's**
Theme 2 Registration	1. We will provide quality services that achieve a minimum of 85% stakeholder satisfaction throughout the year	**85%**
	2. We will process 100% of completed applications/renewals within 20 working days of submission.	**100% within 20 working days**
	3. We will update the register for all Fitness to Practise decisions within 2 working days of receipt of the information.	**2 Working days**
Theme 2 Regulation Social Workers & Social Care Workers	4. We will triage all referrals to the Fitness to Practise Team within 3 working days.	**3 Working days**
	5. We will conclude 100% of ISO hearings within 4 weeks of referral.	**100% within 4 weeks**
	6. We will conclude 90% of Fitness to Practise cases within 15 months of opening the case.	**95% within 15 months**
Theme 2 Regulation Social Work Education	7. We will complete 100% of Quality Assurance processes for social work education and training within timeframes agreed with providers and identify recommendations for improvement.	**100%**

What We Will Measure

		KPI's
Infrastructure People	8. We will ensure our staff absence levels do not exceed 3.5% during the year.	**3.5%**
Infrastructure Finance	9. We will ensure we achieve the minimum standard of paying 95% of undisputed invoices within 30 days	**95% within 30 days**
	10. We will ensure we achieve the minimum standard of paying 75% of undisputed invoices within the 10 day prompt payment target.	**75% in 10 days**
	11. We will manage our finances to achieve financial breakeven target of 0.25% or £20k (whichever is greater).	**0.25% / £20k**
Infrastructure Systems	12. We will ensure the Online Registration Portal is available at least 98% of time during the year.	**98%**

Appendix 2 - Evaluation - Tracking Achievement of "Indicators of Success"

Our Corporate Plan for 2017–2021 was developed using an outcomes based approach. The benefit of this approach is that our Corporate Plan clearly describes what we are trying to achieve and the difference we want our work to make for the social work and social care workforce.

This Business Plan is supported by our Evaluation Framework and Performance Management Framework. We use these tools to help evidence our progress, highlight what is working well and identify areas for improvement. The Evaluation Framework supports us to undertake evaluation on two levels:

- Engage with our key stakeholders – DoH (as our sponsor department), registrants, employers, partners, people who use services and their carers - to gather their views on our progress against the five Strategic Themes; and

- Be a learning organisation – evaluating the impact and quality of our work and using this to improve what we do in the future.

Reporting on the outcomes of the Business Plan activities

Our evidence will be gathered using a combination of evaluation tools and activities. A summary of the sources for this information is provided in the tables overleaf. This will include:

- Analysing routinely generated business information,

- Targeted surveys,

- Focus groups,

- Audits, and

- Feedback from engagement activities and events.

Updates on progress against the Evaluation Framework are included in quarterly performance reports to Board and these are published at www.niscc.info
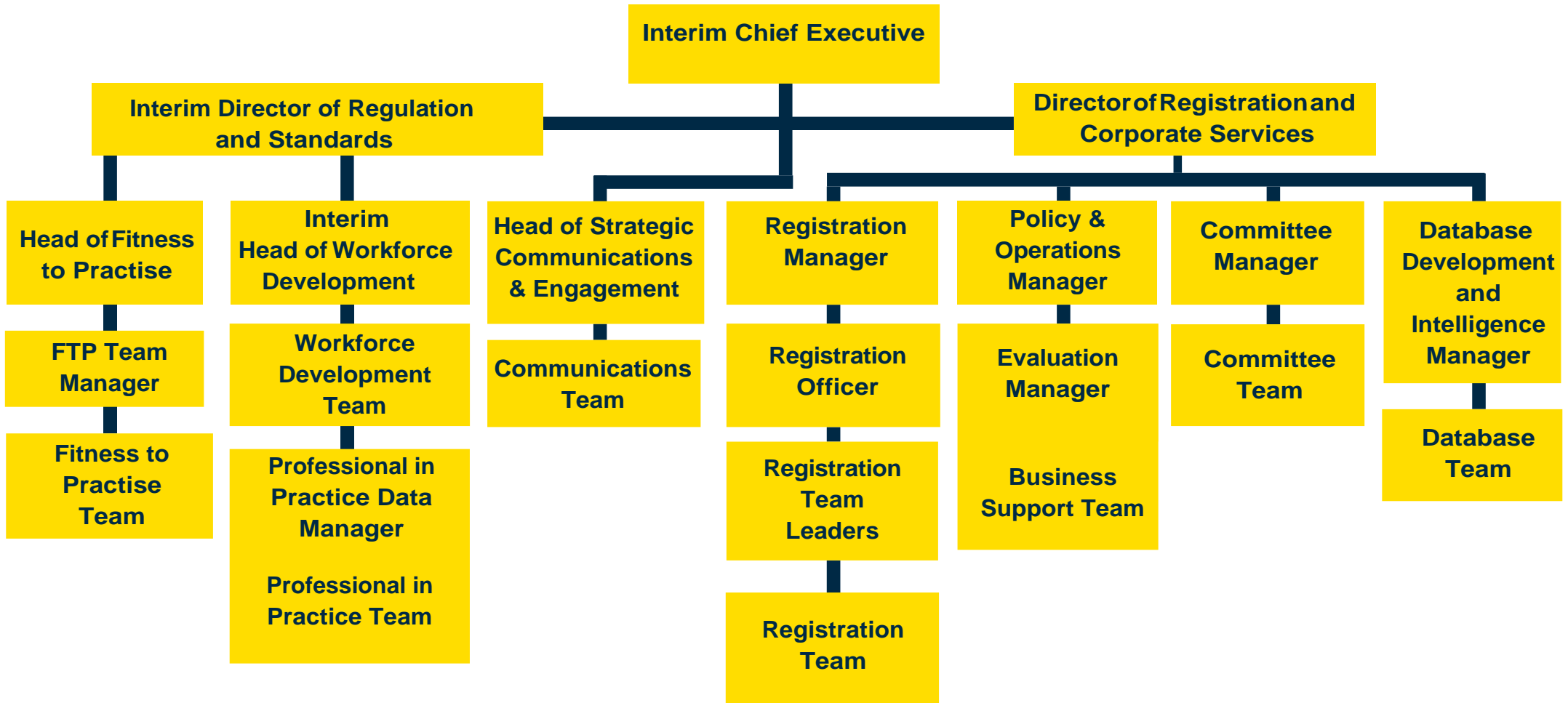
	Indicators of Success	Baseline	Information Sources
1. Standards	1. Ensure that at least 70% of social care workers are reporting that they use the Standards regularly.	**50%**	• Evaluation of Registration Policy – tracking survey/focus groups • Engagement activities – delegate feedback forms • PRTL audit submissions
	2. Ensure that at least 90% of social workers are reporting that the Standards are helping improve the quality of their social work practice.	**58%**	• Social workers and professional regulation – tracking survey • Engagement activities – delegate feedback forms • PRTL audit submissions • PiP Credit submissions
	3. Establish a benchmark of awareness of the role of the Social Care Council and confidence in the social care sector with people who use services and their carers.	**Benchmark to be defined**	• Evaluation of Registration Policy – focus groups • Engagement activities – delegate feedback forms
	4. Ensure that at least 80% of employers are reporting that they use the Employer Standards regularly.	**47%**	• Evaluation of Registration Policy – survey & focus groups • Engagement activities – delegate feedback forms • RQIA regulation activity feedback
	Indicators of Success	**Baseline**	**Information Sources**
2. Regulation	5. A minimum of 95% of registrants successfully maintain their registration throughout the year.	**90%**	• SOCRATES registration reports • Registration KPI report • QI project for registration maintenance • Customer Service – monthly feedback survey • PRTL Audit – outcomes report
	6. A minimum of 70% of registrants use the online system to maintain their registration and pay their fee.	**35%**	• SOCRATES registration reports • Customer Service feedback
	7. 100% of Quality Assurance processes for social work education and training are completed within required timescales and recommendations for improvement identified.	**100%**	• Monthly performance management reports • Degree Partnership meeting actions • QA monitoring outcomes - Degree in Social Work and Practice Learning • PiP Partnership Committee meetings • QA monitoring outcomes - Professional in Practice
	8. All referrals and cases are managed in line with Fitness to Practise Rules and key performance indicators.	**100% of referrals and 90% of cases**	• SOCRATES Fitness to Practise reports • Fitness to Practise Team KPI report • Fitness to Practise Committee KPI report

	Indicators of Success	Baseline	Information Sources
3. Workforce Development	9. Proposal agreed for consultation on revalidation of social worker registration through the PiP Framework.	**Ongoing**	• Project group updates • Feedback from participants
	10. A minimum 85% of participants who engaged with the events and campaigns report an increased awareness of social work and social care careers.	**85%**	• Engagement activities – delegate feedback forms • Ambassador feedback
	11. A Learning and Development Framework for Social Care is in place.	**Ongoing**	• Project group updates
	12. Maintain the number of people undertaking learning through the e-enabled technology available on our Learning Zone.	**700 Per month**	• Website analytics • User feedback surveys
	Indicators of Success	**Baseline**	**Information Sources**
4. Systems Leadership	13. The Social Care Council actively participates in strategic projects and work streams for social work and social care planning and development.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Project Team updates/reports • Updates to Council meetings from Council Members and senior staff on projects they lead on/participate in
	14. The Social Care Council produces workforce intelligence reports which inform business and strategic planning.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Workforce Development Partnership reports • PiP Partnership Committee reports • Degree Partnership reports • Monthly performance management reports • Reports published on Registration & Fitness to Practise trends
	15. The Leaders in Social Care Partnership programme of work for 2020/21 is delivered across the strategic priorities of vision, inclusion and innovation.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Partnership and Committee meetings – action notes • Joint planning sessions across partnership groups – feedback and action notes
	16. The sector will work together to provide leadership to support the social work profession.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Joint working across strategic groups – feedback and action notes • Feedback from participants

Indicators of Success	Baseline	Information Sources
17. Baselines are established for awareness levels of the Social Care Council with interested public, people who use services and their carers.	**New Indicator for 2020/2**1	• Communication Team monthly report • Direct engagement – participant feedback • Email campaigns - MailChimp reports on opening rates • Quarterly E-zines for social work and social care registrants - MailChimp reports on click rates/subscribers
18. Consistent messages on the value of social work are established, and further embedding of the Standards is evident.	**New Indicator for 2020/2**1	• Website news – analytics reports on engagement and user behaviours • Local media stories - media monitoring reports • Social media – analytics and insights reports on reach and reactions
19. Baselines are established for awareness levels of the value of social care as an active career choice.	**New Indicator for 2020/2**1	

Indicators of Success	Baseline	Information Sources
20. Social Care Council is placed to retain its IIP status at the end of the 2020/21 business year.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Action notes • Feedback from participants • Outcomes from HSC Staff • Survey Recommendations from IiP Assessor
21. Business Plan for 2020/21 is successfully delivered and the Social Care Council achieves its break even target at the end of the financial year.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Monthly performance management reports • Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21
22. The Board receives assurance through audits and governance reports that the Social Care Council delivers safe, effective governance.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Audit and Risk Assurance Committee reports • NI Audit Office report • Internal Audit Reports
23. Staff are supported to engage in QI activity within their own business area and as part of projects working across the organisation.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Action notes • Feedback from participants • Feedback from end users
24. SOCRATES Change Board ensures system changes/ developments are planned to deliver improved services, taking into account user feedback.	**Ongoing Programme**	• Action notes • Feedback from participants • Feedback from end users

5. Communications

Infrastructure

Organisation Structure 2020/21

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Interim Chief Executive

Interim Director of Regulation and Standards

- **Head of Fitness to Practise**
  - FTP Team Manager
  - Fitness to Practise Team

- **Interim Head of Workforce Development**
  - Workforce Development Team
  - Professional in Practice Data Manager
  - Professional in Practice Team

Director of Registration and Corporate Services

- **Head of Strategic Communications & Engagement**
  - Communications Team

- **Registration Manager**
  - Registration Officer
  - Registration Team Leaders
  - Registration Team

- **Policy & Operations Manager**
  - Evaluation Manager
  - Business Support Team

- **Committee Manager**
  - Committee Team

- **Database Development and Intelligence Manager**
  - Database Team

Our Values

There are four key values which
underpin our culture that set
a foundation for how we work
together and with those around us.

Respect
Integrity
Partnership
Excellence

We promote Respect.

We are trusted by the
sector to support good
social work and social care
practice. We respect the
rights, dignity and inherent
worth of individuals.

We work with Integrity.

We work with integrity and
are mindful of our
responsibilities and hold
ourselves and others
to account. We are open,
honest and respectful with
all our stakeholders.

We believe in Partnership.

We are a people focused
organisation that is
committed to doing what is
right. Through genuine
partnership, we work to
ensure what we do makes
a difference.

We strive for Excellence.

We take a professional
approach in putting
standards at the heart of
social work and social care.
We proactively support the
development of the social
care workforce and we
proactively support the
development of our staff.

Our Vision - Improved standards in social work and social care

Our Purpose - To protect the public and safeguard service users through the regulation and
development of the social work and social care workforce

Follow us:

@NISocialCareCouncil

@NI_SCC

@ni_scc

#ProudtoMakeaDifference

Northern Ireland
Social
Care
Council