

DRAFT

2024-25 Business Plan

**Working together.
Making a difference.**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Platinum

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council - Who we are

The **Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Council)** is a public body, established by the Department of Health (DoH) 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 approximately 46,000 people working in social work or social care in Northern Ireland who are registered with the Social Care Council.

Our purpose and our vision

Our purpose: As a regulator, everything we do is focused on high quality safe and effective care. Our work is designed to support this through setting standards for people who deliver social work and social care. We make a difference to the quality of social work and social care services by regulating the workforce and promoting continuous training and learning.

We help support the development of a strong and professional social work and social care workforce. A workforce who provide safe, effective and compassionate care to ensure the best outcomes for people who use services and carers.

Our vision: 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**

We work in partnership

We deliver our business by working collaboratively across the social work and social care system and through our established partnerships. We have a number of Partnerships:

- People who use services and carers – Participation Partnership
- Social care providers – Leaders in Social Care Partnership
- Social work employers and education providers – Professional in Practice Partnership

During 2023/24, we have been working with a steering group to look at how we replace the Registrants Forum which has been stood down and to see how we can best engage and connect with social workers and social care workers through our partnership working. As a result, we are establishing two new forums – one that focuses on social work registrant engagement and one that focuses on social care registrant engagement. There will be opportunities for both forums to work together, while delivering their own programmes of work. These new forums will be put in place during 2024/25.

Delivering our Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan covers the period April 2023 to March 2027 (four years) <https://niscc.info/strategic-plan/> The Strategic Plan sets out a number of strategic themes and strategic outcomes we want to achieve over the next four years. Our strategic themes are: –

- Delivering effective regulation.
- Developing the capability of the workforce.
- Leading with influence.
- Innovating and improving.

Business Plan 2024-2025

This Business Plan explains what we will do this year in support of our Strategic Plan. We will report on how well we do in our Annual Report which is published on our website at www.niscc.info

Chief Executive's Introduction

I am pleased to present our 2024/25 Business Plan for the second year of our Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan for 2023-27 sets the context for what we are aiming to deliver over that four-year period across four strategic themes: delivering effective regulation; developing the capability of the workforce; leading with influence; and innovation and improvement. There is no doubt that challenging times remain for the social work and social care sector which continues to experience funding and resource constraints, and pressures in recruitment and retention. In social care we can see the turnover experienced by employers through the churn in our Register and understand the difficulties this presents in the delivery of services. In social work we are working to support employers through reviewing the routes into social work training and seeking to increase opportunities for social work entry level training. Through our work with the Department of Health's (DoH) Social Care Collaborative Forum and Children's Services Reform Board, we are working with employers, the Department of Health and other key stakeholders and decision makers to build a sustainable social work and social care workforce for the future.

As the Regulator of the social work and social care workforce we have a responsibility to ensure that the Standards of Conduct and Practice for registrants are relevant to current practice and support the delivery of safe and compassionate care. We are using the learning from our Fitness to Practise work to support improvement in the delivery of care, through developing digital learning resources for the workforce.

During 2023/24 we were given responsibility for the Leadership in Social Work Framework and the Social Work and Social Care Research Strategy. This is an excellent opportunity to build on the existing work of the social work research community, and to develop new partnerships to influence the development of research and inform best practice.

We will continue to engage with people who use services and carers through our Participation Partnership listening to their experiences and views to help shape what we do. The views of our registrants are also important in shaping our work, and we have agreed to develop a new approach to our engagement. We are setting up a new social work registrants forum and a new social care registrants forum, both of which will enable us to better connect with our registrants and understand their experiences working in social work and social care.

All of our work is supported by the dedication and commitment of 68 staff working in the Social Care Council. Through their hard work and dedication, we have been awarded the Investors in People Platinum Award. We will continue to build on this award as we work together to make a difference in everything that we do.



Patricia Higgins
Chief Executive,
Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Strategic Theme: Deliver effective regulation

Through our regulatory activity we protect anyone who uses social work and social care services by supporting our registrants to be person-centered, values driven, competent, confident and compassionate. All social workers and social care workers must comply with our Standards of Conduct and Practice

Professional regulation assures people who use social work and social care services that the person working with them meets our requirements for registration and will work to our Standards of Conduct and Practice in order to provide safe, effective and quality care. In providing this assurance, it is important that we maintain an accurate and up to date register of social workers and social care workers. We provide a self-service digital portal for registrants and our Registration Team also support registrants to keep their registration data up to date by promoting how to use the Public Facing Register (the Register), answering emails and phone calls and arranging one to one in person meetings where this supports the registrant or employer. Last year the Registration Team managed over 50,000 contacts with registrants and employers, and processed 10,407 new applications to register.

Our model of regulation focuses on promoting the Standards of Conduct and Practice and supporting registrants to improve and develop in their role. A small percentage of the workforce are referred to us to review their fitness to practise, some of whom require additional support or training whilst others are suspended or removed from the Register. This work is supported by our Fitness to Practise (FtP) and Committee Services Teams. While the numbers of referrals received are low compared to the size of the Register (1% of the total Register), this is complex and sensitive work with 40 new cases on average being referred to the FtP Team each month.

We will continue to work with registrants and their employers to make sure they fully understand and value the importance of maintaining their registration and practice within their Standards of Conduct and Practice. We will work collaboratively with employers and other key stakeholders to improve our approach to regulation and share our learning.

We will work with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and employers to ensure that employers are using the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Employers to support social workers and social care workers including those newly appointed to that role.

We will also seek feedback from people who use services and carers about the experiences they have when they use social work or social care services – so that these experiences and views inform how we deliver our business over the next four years.

Strategic Actions from our Strategic Plan 2023-27

- Develop our model of regulation to ensure it focuses on improving standards and supporting registrants to be the best they can be.
- Ensure our standards of conduct and practice are aligned with the changing context of social work and social care.
- Enable social workers and social care workers, through education and training, to put standards at the heart of their practice.
- Ensure employers understand their responsibilities in relation to the Standards for Employers.
- Ensure the experience of people who use services and carers informs the Standards of Conduct and Practice for social workers and social care workers.

By delivering our strategic actions we will ensure:

- Social work and social care registrants use the Standards of Conduct and Practice to support their practice.
- Regulation enables people who use services and carers to have confidence in the social work and social care workforce.
- Social workers and social care workers are supported by their employers through the Standards for Employers.

To support this work in 2024-25, we will –	How we will measure our success:
1. Support registrants and employers to maintain and value registration by promoting our online resources, encouraging the use of the online Portal, managing and responding to emails and phone calls, promoting one to one clinics for registrants and employers, and effectively processing applications, and renewals against our KPI's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 97% of registrants maintain their registration throughout the year and our KPI's are met.
2. Review the ways in which we support registrants when they contact us online, on the phone or in person to use ICT and other methods to improve the registrants experience by December 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The registrants' experience and satisfaction levels will improve in support of our KPI's.
3. Deliver our FtP functions safely and effectively in accordance with rules, emerging case law and regulatory best practice and our KPI's. This includes triaging cases, investigative enquiries, and preparing and presenting evidence to FtP Hearings and implementing any recommendations arising from the 2023/24 independent review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FtP activity is managed efficiently in line with FTP Rules, best practice, and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). • The outcomes of our activity are robust, fair, equitable and proportionate.
4. Deliver our Committee hearings services to support our KPI's, including the provision of high-quality papers, ensuring hearings (online or in person) are managed professionally and that all committee members are trained and supported in carrying out their roles. We will implement recommendations arising from the 2023/24 independent review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee activity delivers against the KPI's and hearings are managed in an effective, professional and timely manner.
5. Implement the recommendations arising from the review of hybrid/online FtP hearings by January 2025 including any changes to our Rules and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FtP hearings held from January 2025 based on the findings from the review.
6. Promote compliance with the Standards of Conduct and Practice for Registrants, and working with RQIA promote compliance with the Standards for Employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 90% of registrants' report using the Standards to inform their practice. • At least 90% of employers report using the Employer Standards to support social workers and social care workers.

Strategic Theme: Develop the capability of the workforce

Social work and social care services are delivered within diverse communities and multi-professional environments. In order to improve outcomes for people who use services and their families, carers and communities, we will help develop a confident and competent social work and social care workforce that delivers safe, effective and high-quality care.

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 practice safely and to a high standard. We also monitor adherence for social workers in maintaining their professional development. By setting and monitoring standards for social work education and training at both qualifying and post qualifying levels we support the development of safe and effective practice across the career spectrum. We regulate and quality assure the delivery of the Degree in Social Work and Professional in Practice approved programmes and courses (for which we are the awarding body through robust approval, monitoring and review processes).

We want to ensure that we use our knowledge of the workforce to shape learning and development in the future. The Professional in Practice (PiP) framework is the continuous professional development framework for all social workers in Northern Ireland. As the awarding body for the framework we have a statutory responsibility for the approval, quality assurance and delivery of the framework. We use our system knowledge to work with partners and stakeholders to promote and support engagement and achievement within the Framework. In the context of the current workforce pressures, we will continuously improve opportunities for social workers to have their learning and development benchmarked against the Framework's quality standards. Our learning resources and lunchtime seminars provide accessible ways to support and complement workforce learning. We will continue to engage the workforce through our partnerships, forums, lunchtime seminars, webinars, and podcasts. We are continuing to support learning development and career pathways for social care including the introduction of Care in Practice Certification which we plan to launch later this year.

We appreciate that the sector and communities are changing with people who use services, carers and registrants having a wide and diverse range of cultural backgrounds. It is essential that in planning and developing the workforce's capability that we are mindful of that diversity to ensure the workforce is equipped to deliver high quality services in a diverse setting. We have seen an increase in Internationally Qualified Social Workers (IQSW) applying to register to work as social workers in Northern Ireland. We have robust procedures in place to support IQSW's applying to register and will be looking at ways to improve efficiency in responding to the increase in applications.

We will deliver the Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) and Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) audits throughout the year – reporting learning to employers and relevant stakeholder groups. We will continue to support the work of the NI Social Work Degree Partnership throughout the year as we ensure those training for the Degree in Social Work have a quality and engaging experience to support their careers in social work. We will also engage Social Work Leaders to support leadership at all levels of the profession through the implementation of the Social Work Leadership Framework; and work closely with the DOH to progress the social care reform agenda.

Strategic Actions from our Strategic Plan 2023-27

- Establish a qualifications and continuous learning framework which can support a career in social care that strengthens the capability of the social care workforce.
- Ensure the delivery of high-quality qualifying and post-qualifying social work education and training that is accessible, flexible and equips social workers to meet the needs of the people they work with in an increasingly diverse society.
- Embed the PIP Framework for social workers as the benchmark for safety, quality, improvement and continued fitness for practice.
- Support the development of social work leadership capability using the DoH Leadership Framework.
- Promote uptake and engagement in continuous learning through the development of a Digital Learning Strategy.

By delivering our strategic actions we will ensure:

- Career choices for the social care workforce are supported by continuous learning and development.
- There is increased engagement in the PiP Framework and Digital Learning Resources to support learning and development.
- Leadership capability is embedded in qualifying and post-qualifying social work education and training.
- The social work and social care workforce are supported to work effectively with people of various cultural backgrounds and understand how their own cultural beliefs may differ from other cultures.

To support this work in 2024-25, we will –	How we will measure our success:
1. Approve and assure standards of social work education and training at qualifying and post qualifying levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Report on the 2023/2024 periodic review of the Degree in Social Work is published with recommendations for improvement. • The statutory requirements as the Awarding Body for the PiP Framework are met. • Post-qualifying social work education meets the required Standards for Approval within the PiP Framework.
2. Work with the Professional in Practice (PiP) Partnership, social work registrants, and others to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement through engagement in the PiP Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routes to achievement within the Framework offer flexibility and accessibility to meet the needs of the workforce.
3. Engage with Social Work Leaders to support leadership at all levels of the profession by implementing the Social Work Leadership Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of engagement with social work leaders to support the Social Work Leadership Framework. • Evidence of outcomes from year 1 of implementation. • Delivery of social work leadership focused PiP awards.
4. Support the equality, diversity and inclusivity of the social work and social care workforce by establishing baseline datasets on which to build evidence and growth by December 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline data gathered that will enable a strategy and actions to be developed to support equality, diversity and inclusion in our work to support the workforce.
5. Contribute to the development of cultural competence in the social care and social work workforce through the promotion and development of Learning Resources by March 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In year one (2024-25) 40% of Learning Zone resources will include opportunities to enhance cultural competence.

Strategic Theme: Lead with influence

As the workforce regulator, we have a key role to play in empowering social workers and social care workers to effectively contribute to the delivery of high-quality services. In order to support and develop the workforce, we need to understand the environment in which they work. There is a need to build our evidence base, using research, data and intelligence, to inform the provision of sufficient numbers of the right people, with the right knowledge, skills and values, are in the workforce. Our focus will be on supporting them in a way that reflects the value of their work and the contribution they make to the wider health and social care system. This is critical to the improvement and transformation of health and social care services.

Key to our work is the information and intelligence we hold about the social work and social care workforce. We are uniquely placed to collect and use this information and our ambition remains to use our workforce intelligence to inform strategic decisions to support the sector. We will develop our information and analysis capabilities to prepare annual 'State of the Nation' reports on the sector to share learning and inform strategic direction and decision making. We will publish the first of these reports this year for the business year 2023-24.

We will improve how we share and access data across the health and social care system to present this to decision makers and leaders so that they are informed when developing policy and responding to the challenges faced by the social work and social care workforce – we are working alongside the DoH to support the 'Social Care Collaborative Forum' and the Children's Services Reform Board.

We will continue to work with employers and education providers to promote careers in social work and social care to help strengthen the capability and diversity of the workforce – we have started to look at how we can influence and support a more inclusive workforce both for ourselves and the sector. As part of our responsibility for the Social Work and Social Care Research Strategy 2020-2025 we will work collaboratively with stakeholders, established and new networks, to support research evidence activity, improvement and innovative practice.

Strategic Actions from our Strategic Plan 2023-27

- Develop our capacity and capability for research evidence and data analysis and insight to unlock intelligence about the workforce, and the context of social work and social care practice.
- Work with our partnerships and networks to promote a collaborative working environment to enable transformation and improvement.
- Work collaboratively with health and social care workforce regulators and the RQIA, using our data and insights to inform, improve and enhance service user safety and experience of social work and social care workforce and services.
- Influence the recognition of the value and contribution the social work and social care workforce make to society
- Promote careers in social work and social care that reflects the diversity of our communities.

By delivering our strategic actions we will ensure:

- Workforce data and intelligence and research improves understanding of the role and value of social work and social care and informs the development of policy and strategy.
- The contribution of social work and social care is recognised and valued by those who engage in the services they provide.
- There is greater diversity in the social work and social care workforce.
- A more stable and sustainable workforce exists across both social work and social care.

To support this work in 2024-25, we will –	How we will measure our success:
1. Work with the DoH and other stakeholders to build and share our data sets to inform the social care sector including the production on an annual State of the Nation Report on the social care workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to HSC data sets and reporting to share with leaders. • State of the Nation Social Care Workforce report produced.
2. Support the reform, transformation and development of the social care workforce through our work with the Leaders in Social Care Partnership, the Social Care Collaborative Forum and the Children’s Services Strategic Reform Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme of work for the Leaders in Social Care Partnership for 2024-25 is delivered. • Support provided to designated workstreams to achieve agreed outcomes. • The programme of work for the Children’s Services Strategic Reform Board, where the Social Care Council is lead for 2024-2025 is delivered.
3. Establish the Registrants Social Work Forum and Registrant Social Care Forum by September 2024, following the review of the Registrants Forum that took place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice of social work and social care registrants have a formal mechanism through which to influence outcomes and change for the sector and help shape and influence the work of the Social Care Council.
4. Work collaboratively with our existing partnerships and networks and establish new networks including a Research and Evidence Partnership to influence and support the use of research and evidence within the social work and social care workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained inclusive engagement and networking with existing groups supporting the creation of new research engagements as appropriate, internally and externally
5. Raise the profile of social work and social care while increasing recognition of the value of the social work and social care workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using surveys, increase awareness and develop a benchmark on the recognition of the value of social work and social care. • Targeted and public relations campaign delivered.
6. Promote careers in social work and social care, including targeting sectors to promote the diversity and inclusivity of the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted and public relations campaign delivered to promote the value of social work and social care. • Full evaluation of the four years of the ‘Social Care – Making a difference campaign’.

Strategic Theme: Innovate and improve

We are an innovative regulator, with a culture that supports inclusion, collaboration and creativity. We will develop our digital systems to deliver efficient and effective workforce regulation, and will support our registrants to engage with digital innovation.

The use of technology continues to revolutionise the way we work – we are now much more confident and capable in accessing services online, using online meeting tools (or a hybrid approach to allow both in person and on screen at the same time), the use of Applications (Apps) to support services, social media platforms and seeing how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being referenced more in the media as a business and home life tool. All of this means that as an organisation we need to keep connected to the evolutions in technology and provide services in a manner that meets the needs of our registrants and our staff – while acknowledging the benefits of in person engagement and communication – and getting the balance right between technology and human contacts and interactions.

As part of this we have been developing an engagement strategy with registrants, people who use services, carers and staff to ensure that we do get the balance right – and target our use of electronic communications, engagement and collaboration in a meaningful and accessible way. To inform this we are tracking the experience of those who engage and connect with us so that those experiences influence the design and the way we deliver our business.

The DoH have produced a Digital Strategy and we are continuing to see how we can deliver our business in support of this. We are engaging with Digital Health and Care NI (DHCNI) to scope a new registration and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system to support our business and hope to be in a position to receive business case approval in 2024/25. The system will need to integrate with the new Case Management System we developed last year to support our FtP and Committee functions. The online registration Portal is also undergoing new development to continually modernise the digital service offering. Registrants and employers will see new features added during 2024/25 and this will include the launch of the complimentary Social Care Council App which will provide registrants with immediate access to a wealth of resources via their SMART phone and make use of the latest secure access technology such as fingerprint and face ID security

We are seeking to improve the quality of the data which we hold to ensure confidence, and this work will continue during the year through our Data Quality Improvement Group and will look at consistency across our digital content by establishing the Digital Content Group across teams who manage our front line and online services.

Strategic Actions from our Strategic Plan 2023-27

- Work in partnership with our registrants and employers to co-produce a future proofed regulation and registration system.
- Embed a culture and model of continuous improvement, research and evidence to ensure the efficient delivery of Social Care Council services.
- Improve our digital registration, regulation and development systems to ensure a seamless and efficient service for registrants and all of our stakeholders.

- Engage the Digital Strategy to inform our digital innovation and system improvement.

By delivering our strategic actions we will ensure:

- Stakeholders' experience of engaging with us is positive and our services fulfil their needs.
- Registrants are able to engage effectively and easily with our systems and processes.
- The Social Care Council maximises the use of digital innovation to deliver high quality services.

To support this work in 2024-25, we will –	How we will measure our success -
1. Develop an engagement strategy by September 2024, which is informed by our existing registrant engagement and supports the growth of community confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement strategy in place supporting meaningful engagement.
2. Carry out a review of the current user experience journey for registrants by December 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User data and experiences available and used in designing our business.
3. Working with DHCNI to scope the requirements for a Registration and CPD system by September 2024 and seek business case approval that will support an improved end user experience for staff, registrants and employer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Case approval from DHCNI and a board approved specification prepared ready for procurement once funding has been approved
4. Develop and launch a new App to support the regulation and registration system for social workers and social care workers by June 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of new App by 10% of register by March 2025, with 50%+ satisfaction level
5. Work with our Registration, Workforce Development, Database, Fitness to Practise and Committee Teams to drive up the quality of our system data with clear targets out outcomes to identify areas for inspection and quality assurance during 2024-25.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and quality assurance of our data and datasets will improve reporting, confidence and better outcomes.

Delivering our Strategic Plan for 2023-2027

People, Communication & Engagement, Evaluation and Resources

The Social Care Council is an IIP Platinum accredited employer and also holds the IIP Health and Wellbeing Gold Award. There are 68 staff in the Social Care Council who can work from the office or remotely in line with the organisation's Agile Working Policy. The organisation is also supported by its Health and Wellbeing Committee, which is represented by staff from each of the functions. The workforce 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 has worked with staff to ensure its staffing resource is deployed to support its business priorities and has commenced work on a People Plan which will be finalised and delivered during 2024/25.

The organisation is committed to equality and diversity including making positive change in line with its values and representing those it provides its services to and will continue to pursue positive change in this important area by delivering its Equality and Disability Action Plans.

The organisation is also committed to effecting positive change in support of the climate and will develop an action plan and strategy in support of this during 2024/25.

The Social Care Council has robust governance and financial systems in place to provide assurance to its Board – this includes managing risks and incidents, producing an Annual Report and Accounts, an Annual Equality Scheme Progress Report, a Quality 2020 Report, an annual Complaints Management Report, business performance and information and evaluation reporting.

The organisation is supported by a Communication and Engagement Team who have an extensive remit to support engagement and collaboration, social media, events and surveys, website management and producing online and hard copy products – both for internal and external use and consumption.

Strategic Actions from our Strategic Plan 2023-27

People

- We will invest in the capacity and capability of our people, empowering creativity, continuous learning and improvement in everything we do.

Communications and Engagement

- We will maximise our ability to inform, connect, engage, support, collaborate and empower registrants, people who use services, careers and stakeholders.

Evaluation

- We will develop an effective model of evaluation that will measure our progress against our outcomes, demonstrate the impact of our work and use this to inform our annual business and operational plans.

Resources

- We will work with the DoH to ensure we have adequate resource for the sustainable growth necessary to realise the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.

To support this work in 2024-25, we will –	How we will measure our success -
1. Deliver the actions arising from the IIP assessment including a Reward and Recognition framework for all staff that supports our culture, values, equality and diversity commitments and People Plan by December 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIP Platinum maintained • Reward and Recognition Framework in place • Positive impact on culture of the organisation and staff satisfaction levels benchmarked against the IIP survey.
2. Develop a programme to support all staff and leaders in the organisation following on from the 2023-24 Compassionate Leadership Programme by September 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engaged in a development programme that focuses on Leadership capability and opportunity across the organisation.
3. Develop a Health and Wellbeing Programme with associated outcomes to support all staff in the organisation by September 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIP Health and Wellbeing Gold maintained with actions that will inform a future Platinum accreditation by April 2025. • Positive impact on the wellbeing of staff with levels benchmarked against the IIP health and wellbeing survey.
4. Develop a People Plan by September 2024 to support the organisation in delivering its Strategic Plan. The Plan will assess whether the organisation has the right structures and resources in place to support it to fully deliver its Strategic Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Plan developed with gaps and issues identified.
5. Develop a Climate Change Strategy and action plan by December 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are connected to their contribution to supporting climate change and affirmative actions are in place which can be managed and reported on.
6. Develop and implement an internal communications plan to include digital opportunities such as redeveloping the intranet using SharePoint and investing in the right tools for updating staff by December 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet is improved and staff satisfaction levels increase by 20%.
7. Ensure we break even by March 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break even achieved.

Appendix I - Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

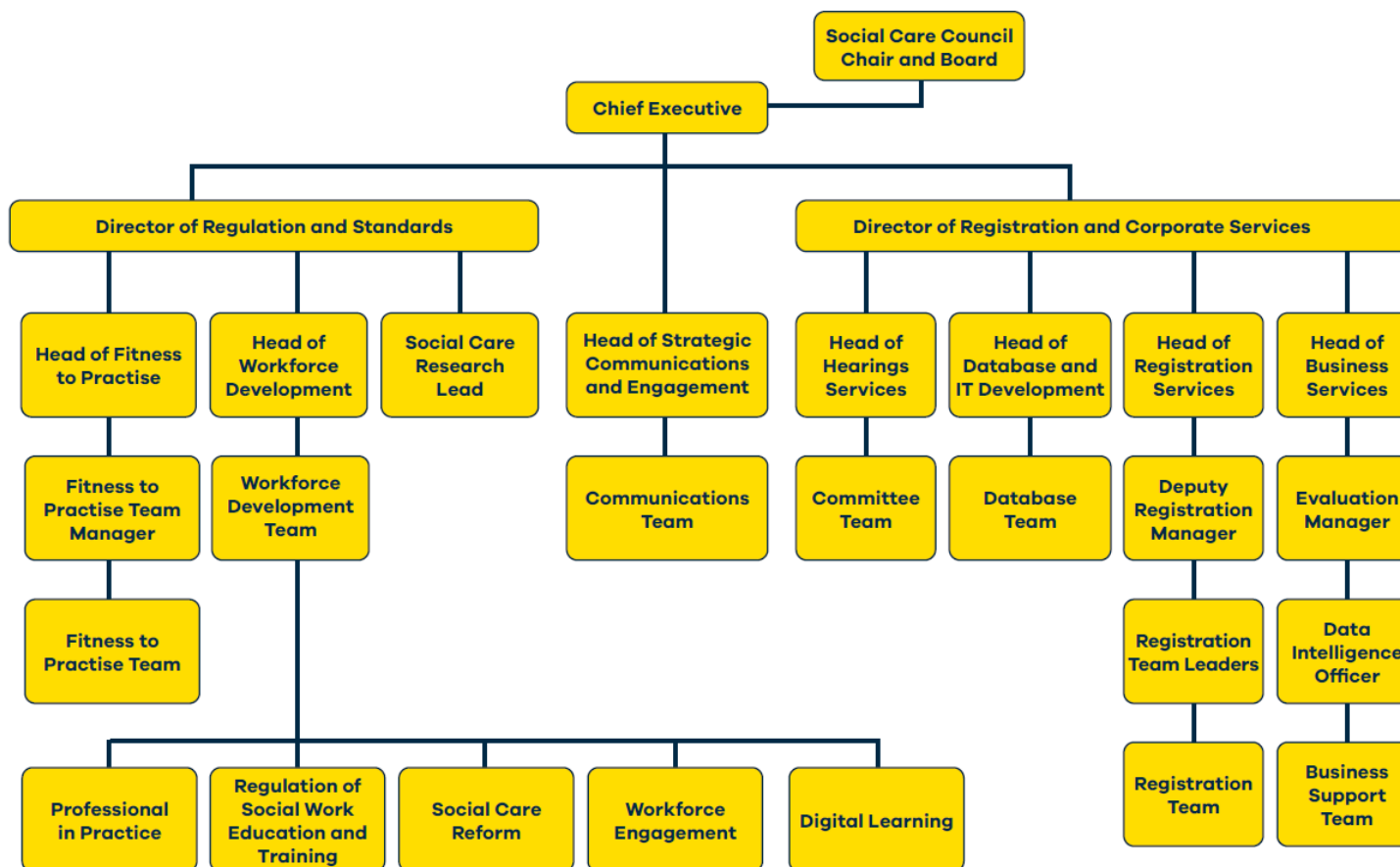
	What We Will Measure	KPIs
KPI Description	1. We will provide quality services that achieve a minimum of 85% stakeholder satisfaction throughout the year	85%
	2. We will process 100% of completed applications/renewals within 20 working days of submission.	100% within 20 working days
	3. We will update the register for all Fitness to Practise decisions within 2 working days of receipt of the information.	2 Working days
	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 Interim Suspension Order (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.	90% within 15 months
	7. We will conclude or refer to a Registration Committee, 75% of all suitability assessments within 2 months of creating the case.	75% within 2 months
	8. We will ensure our staff absence levels do not exceed 3.5% during the year.	3.5%
	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
	12. We will ensure the Online Registration Portal is available at least 98% of time during the year.	98%

Appendix II - Terms and Definitions Used in this Plan

Board	The Social Care Council Board are appointed by the Minister for Health to make sure that the organisation is managing its work properly and is carrying out the functions that they were set up to do
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CPD	Continuous Professional Development – ongoing learning and training
DHCNI	Digital Health and Care Northern Ireland
DoH	Department of Health – the government body responsible for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland
FtP	Fitness to Practise – a registrant’s suitability to work in social work or social care
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
liP	Investors in People – an award for good standards in staff and organisation management and development
IQSW	Internationally Qualified Social Worker
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 Continuous Professional Development 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
QI	Quality Improvement
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 student
RQIA	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority – inspects Health and Social Care organisations to ensure standards are being met
SLA	Services Level Agreement
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.
Stakeholders	People who are involved with our work or who are affected by what we do

Appendix III - Organisation Structure 2024-25

Organisation Structure 2024-25



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 st

