

## ***Progress Report on the Risk Assurance Framework – April 2024***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Progress Report on the Risk Assurance Framework was last presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) at their meeting on 7 February 2024 and to the Board at their meeting on 6 December 2023. The last meeting of the Risk Management Committee (RMC) was held on 25 January 2024 where RMC members reviewed the controls and actions against the risks on the risk register.

RMC will next formally review the risk register at their forthcoming meeting on 23 April before presenting the updated risk register to ARAC on 8 May 2024.

The Strategic Plan (2023/24 – 2026/27) sets out a number of strategic actions and outcomes for the next four years across four strategic themes of:

- Deliver effective regulation;
- Develop the capability of the workforce;
- Lead with influence; and
- Innovate and improve.

The Board reviewed and agreed new strategic risks for the organisation to reflect the strategic objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. This risk progress report describes how those strategic risks are being managed.

This Progress Report on the Risk Assurance Framework includes –

- Risk Assurance Framework – **Appendix I**;
- Risk Register – **Appendix II**;
- Review of Horizon Scanning – **Appendix III**;
- Minutes of the Risk Management Committee – **Appendix IV** (to follow);
- Risk Matrix Assessment Tables – **Appendix V**;
- Risk Appetite for new strategic risks – **Appendix VI**.

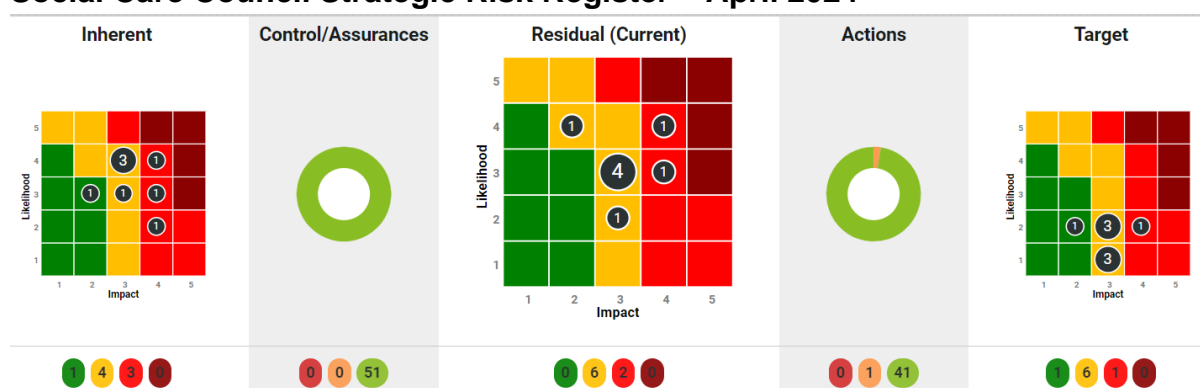
## REVIEWING THE STRATEGIC RISKS

The Risk Assurance Framework contains **8 strategic risks** identified by the Board of the Social Care Council. Strategic risks are defined as requiring close scrutiny and oversight.

The detail of the management of these risks is set out in the Risk Assurance Framework - **Appendix I**. All other risks are considered operational and managed by the Executive team through the Risk Management Committee.

An overview of the residual (current) level of strategic risks is shown below.

### Social Care Council Strategic Risk Register – April 2024



Oct 2023 (Residual Risk)	Jan 2024 (Residual Risk)	April 2024 (Residual risk)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No risks are assessed as <b>Extreme</b></li> <li>3 risks assessed as <b>high</b> level.</li> <li>6 risks assessed as <b>medium</b> level.</li> <li>0 risks assessed as <b>low</b> level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No risks are assessed as <b>Extreme</b></li> <li>3 risks assessed as <b>high</b> level.</li> <li>5 risks assessed as <b>medium</b> level.</li> <li>0 risks assessed as <b>low</b> level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No risks are assessed as <b>Extreme</b></li> <li>2 risks assessed as <b>high</b> level.</li> <li>6 risks assessed as <b>medium</b> level.</li> <li>0 risks assessed as <b>low</b> level.</li> </ul>

As can be seen in the high-level overview above, of the current 8 strategic risks

- 2 are assessed as **High**
- 6 are assessed as **Medium**
- There are currently no **Extreme** or **Low** strategic risks

Variance: One risk assessed as High in January 2024 has reduced to a medium risk at April 2024 – COR01 (Management of financial resources). This is reduced on the basis of a clear line of sight now in place which has enabled the organisation to break even in 2023/24. Once an allocation letter for 2024/25 has been received and a new

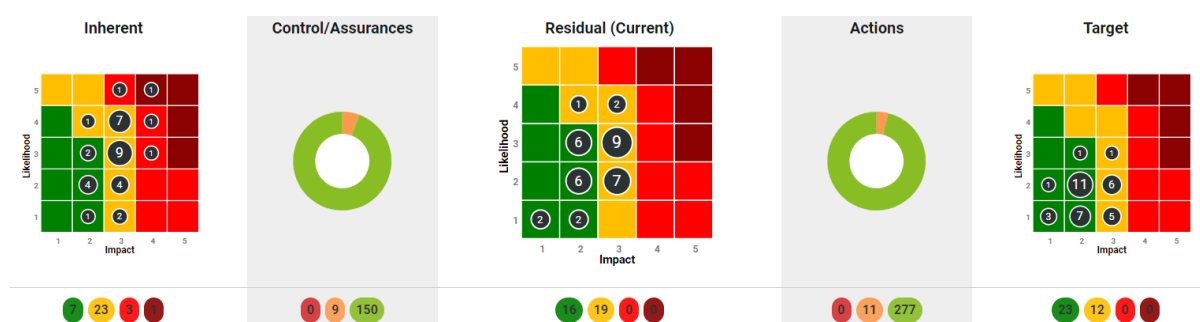
budget profile is presented to the Board this risk assessment may very well change in the future.

## **Operational Risk Register – as at April 2024**

In addition to the strategic risks, there are **38 operational risks** as set out in the diagram below (none of these risks are high or extreme level risks). Of these 35 are open and 3 are closed. The closed operational risks (as approved by ARAC) include:

- COVID (ref. COR16)
- Recovery of deferred income (ref. COR20), and
- Rackspace Silverbear invoices (ref. COR15)

### **Overview of Operational Risk Register at April 2024 –**



As can be seen in the high-level overview above, of the current 35 operational risks

- 20 are assessed as **Medium** (residual)
- 18 are assessed as **Low** (residual)
- There are currently no **Extreme** or **High** operational risks (residual)

## **2. ASSESSMENT OF RISKS ON THE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

A copy of the full risk register can be found at **Appendix II**. ARAC's attention is drawn to a number of the additional issues facing highlighted risks below.

### **Extreme Level Risks**

- There are currently no **Extreme** level risks.

## **High Level Risks**

There are 2 **high level risks** facing the organisation and these are described below.

- **Regulatory Fitness to Practise Function Resourcing** [Ref.REG01]. Current level of assessment: **High Level 12**  
This function remains a high risk however given the nature of the work and the increasing workloads being experienced by the team. A new Case Management system is being developed which will assist the management of cases however a review of workloads is also being undertaken which will take into consideration the complexity of work, impact of workloads from consensual disposals and the increase in Interim Suspension Orders.
- **Resourcing the development of the Social Care Workforce** [Ref. WFD01]. Current level of assessment: **High Level 16**  
Through our work on developing the capability of the workforce and our development work in innovation we aim to support the sustainability of the social care workforce. These are longer term ambitions. The workforce is under pressure financially and from recruitment and retention. As a systems leader the Social Care Council will use its influence and voice to support the sector.

## **Medium Level Risks**

Of the 6 **medium level** risk ARAC are asked to note the risks which are described below –

- **Promoting the Value and Importance of Registration** [Ref REG02]. Current level of assessment: **Medium Level – 9**  
An engagement programme is underway using stories and experiences. This work will continue throughout the year. The Communications Team is working closely with Registration and Workforce Development colleagues to deliver a targeted communication programme to registrants, employers and others including using benchmarks and surveys to evaluate and monitor impact and outcomes. A new Engagement Strategy is also being developed following a period of consultation which will also support the management of this risk.
- **Management of Financial Resources** [Ref: COR01] – Current level of assessment: **Medium Level 9**  
Pressures on the budget remain under active review. Without sustainable and sufficient funding going into the new financial year the organisation's ability to deliver all of its services could be compromised. However, the risk has been reduced as the organisation has a clear line of sight and that the break even position for 2023/24 has been achieved. Members will be aware that this risk is

regularly updated taking into account the changes to funding allocations and pressure that can occur throughout the year.

- **Effective partnership/engagement with Stakeholders** [Ref WFD02]. Current level of assessment: **Medium Level – 9**

The Department of Health has transferred the Leadership Framework for Social Work to the Social Care Council and this will strengthen partnership working around the Professional in Practice Framework and engagement with Universities. With a recent change in representation from the University of Ulster work is underway to build relationships to ensure high quality delivery of the Social Work degree.

- **Social Work and Social Care Sector Data Intelligence** [Ref: SYS03]. Current level of assessment: **Medium Level – 8**

An extensive programme of work has been put in place to gather, maximise and share our data to improve outcomes and decision making. A workstream on Social Care Data and Intelligence has been established, with reporting on progress to the Social Care Leadership Forum. We are triangulating our data to join up data sets across the HSC and carrying out deep delve reviews into specific business areas including Fitness to Practise referral data. The first published report on the Register analysis is now available at [Data reports - NISCC](#)

A new State of the Nation Social Care report is also being produced for 2023/24 which will be shared with stakeholders and interested parties.

- **Promoting Systems Leadership** [Ref SYS02]. Current level of assessment: **Medium Level - 6**

During the consultation on the organisation's new Strategic Plan, the Social Care Council heard from registrants about the need to use our voice and our role to help shape better outcomes for the sector. In response to this, the organisation has a new strategic theme (Lead with Influence) which will build on our earlier work to support the sector and influence decision makers and decision making. The organisation is working closely alongside an extensive range of stakeholders to make this happen. The organisation is also working alongside the DOH on a Social Care Collaborative Forum to support this work in relation to the social care workforce.

- **Capturing the views of stakeholders** [Ref. COM01]. Current level of assessment: **Medium Level – 9**

We are continuing to work with people who use services and carers to develop our evidence base and evaluate effective engagement. An engagement platform based on MS Teams is in place which enables our partnership members to share

information, events, connections and intelligence to support the work of the Social Care Council. We are also developing an Engagement Strategy which will support our engagement – in particular with people who use services and carers.

### **Low Level Risks**

There are no Low Level risks.

### **Horizon Scanning**

As part of the risk management process, Risk Management Committee review the External, Operational and Change factors that may influence or impact on the organisation's ability to effectively manage its risk environment. The horizon scanning review is attached at **Appendix III**.

*The Risk Assessment Matrix Tables are attached at **Appendix IV** for information.*