Response to request for additional information at oral evidence session on 18 September 2018

Please find responses to the questions asked below:

- How long-term education and training to meet the demands within the care sector can be provided.

There are long-term education and training challenges currently facing the sector for an existing workforce, many thousands of whom were in place prior to qualification requirements being introduced via Registration. There are also challenges in how we attract, train and develop the workforce of the future – certainly, there are opportunities for this within the current FE framework however if we wish to continue to employ new social care staff based on their experiences and values, then work-based training and learning should continue to be the main area of focus. In addition to this, greater recognition of prior-learning in relation to registrable qualifications would reduce the time and financial burden faced by learners in attaining complete registration with SSSC.

The most significant challenge the sector faces in facilitating education and training is that of time. Current commissioning practices, allied to the well-publicised recruitment and retention issues within the sector, result in adult social care workers having a reported average of 7 minutes of learning time per week.

This very short space of time does not currently allow for mandatory training (such as moving and handling, infection control, adult protection etc.), SVQ/registrable qualifications, or the fact that we are now caring for an increasing number of people with multi- and complex-diagnoses with the subsequent need to develop and increase understanding in order to provide safe care. This results in staff requiring to learn in their time off, either unpaid or at the expense of employers who are already financially constrained. In either case, it results in already over-worked individuals who cover additional shifts in order to meet demand due to staffing shortages continuing with work-related activity in their time off. This allows very little time for people to relax, unwind, and provide care and attention to family and other responsibilities. A continuation of this can only lead to physical and mental burn out, intensifying already hugely concerning retention issues.

We would suggest that before developing different tools, resources and pathways for learning attention must pro-actively be given to addressing the conditions for learning. As previously mentioned, under the developing trend of providing care for more multi- and complex-diagnoses, the need for increased time and space to learn and train is more critical than ever before and must be appropriately resourced.
• **How training is put in place and accessed in order to assist career pathways (whether through Scottish vocational qualification models or apprenticeships).**

There is a juxtaposition for adult social care with regards to current Policy regarding SVQ and Modern Apprenticeships. It is becoming increasingly difficult to the point of impossibility for funding to be secured to pay for the qualification (via the SVQ or Modern Apprenticeship framework) for anyone over the age of 21 years.

The most recent SSSC Workforce Data Report shows the median age of our workforce to be 48 years. In this context, along with the fact that by 2020 one in three workers across the UK will be aged over 50, with Unison advising that the fastest growing public-sector workforce will be aged 50-59 (https://www.scotsman.com/business/markets-economy/employers-must-do-more-to-support-growing-number-of-older-workers-1-4514680), then it becomes clear that this targeting of resources towards the younger demographic is not only detrimental to social care but is counter-intuitive in the broader sense. More than half of our existing adult social care workforce are older than 45 years, with age and worker demographics into the near future not likely to lower this.

Meeting the costs of SVQ, which are circa £1500 per individual, are proving increasingly prohibitive for employers and employees.

In addition to existing resource demands, the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy has impacted on larger employers. While the introduction of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) by Scottish Government has been broadly welcomed as a means for Levy paying employers to mitigate their contributions it cannot be accessed by UK wide organisations who pay the Levy for Scottish-based staff if their main payroll office is in England. There is also some dubiety over whether or not the FWDF can be utilised to pay towards SVQ as the guidelines state ‘The fund will not support provision of qualifications/training required by legislation’ (see page 4, Eligibility, point 13. [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/announcements_sfcan132017/SFCAN132017-annex-e-FWDF-SG-employer-guidance.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/announcements_sfcan132017/SFCAN132017-annex-e-FWDF-SG-employer-guidance.pdf)). This would seem to state that qualifications and training required by regulators, such as SVQ and mandatory training, cannot be paid for via the fund. Colleagues at SSSC have expressed their belief that this is not the case and have promised to look into it.

As ensuring the current workforce attain a registrable qualification within a set time-frame or be rendered unable to work is perhaps the single greatest pressure on the sector currently, all of the above must be addressed to provide even the slimmest chance of this being achieved.

• **Also challenges faced with an increased requirement for additional qualifications for individuals who may come into the sector without qualifications or with dual caring commitments.**

This should have been addressed in the comments above however, should you wish any further information on this, or any other questions relating to the proposed Bill, please do get in touch: Karen.hedge@scottishcare.org.
I also attach links to two workforce reports published by Scottish Care this year:


Karen Hedge, National Director Scottish Care