

Registration of Care at Home staff in Midlothian**Report by Alison White, Chief Social Work Officer****1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to advise cabinet of the need for home care and housing support staff to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and the work that is being undertaken to support staff in this legislative requirement.

2 Background

- 2.1** The SSSC is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland. Their work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce. They protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct they can investigate and take action.

Registration is a major part of the drive for higher standards in social services and is bringing the social service workforce in line with other professional colleagues. Nursing, medicine and teaching are all regulated professions and workers have to register with their own regulatory bodies to be able to work in their field. Social service workers have to do the same. Registration of social service workers has an important role in improving safeguards for people using services and increasing public confidence in the social service workforce.

- 2.2** The register for social service workers in care at home services and housing support services will open with the SSSC from 2nd October 2017.

Registration is compulsory for care at home and housing support workers and Midlothian is unable to employ staff in these roles that are not registered. In line with other regulated professions, it is the individual staff member's responsibility to ensure that they maintain their registration throughout their employment with Midlothian Council, failure to achieve and maintain registration may impact on their continued employment with Midlothian.

Within Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership there are 182 carers who are required to be registered. These staff sit within the Care at home service comprising of Reablement, Complex care, MERRIT, Cowan Court and Midlothian West teams. Cowan Court are required to be dual registered as they provide housing support.

Staff have already been written to explaining about the registration requirement and the Trade Unions have held meetings with staff. We will continue to work closely with the Trade Unions to ensure that all staff fully understands the benefits that registration gives in terms of improving both the status of their role and the increasing professionalism.

2.3 There are a number of further actions that need to be implemented to ensure Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership are compliant with supporting staff to register.

These include:

1. Newsletter to all staff explaining the process and the value of registration 31st July 2017
2. Individual letters to staff in September with a step by step guide to the application process. This will reiterate the Codes of Practice for workers and employers
3. Provide support to staff to undertake their registration application (i.e. IT support, opportunities to access a PC to complete the application).
4. Supporting staff to obtain the relevant qualifications for their post i.e. SVQ 2, mandatory training as well as follow up refresher training.

Whilst all existing staff require to register by 2020, we will support staff to register in a timely manner. Workers new into a role will have six months from the date they start to register with the SSSC.

Work is also underway with our externally contracted providers to ensure that they are also supporting their staff appropriately to achieve and maintain their registration.

2.4 Summary

All staff need to commence their registration application from 2nd October which will be supported by managers and trade unions. This needs to be completed by 2020.

3 Report Implications

Resource

Staff will need to be supported to complete the application if they do not feel confident completing it themselves. Many of our care at home staff do not need to use computers as a part of their normal day to day work and the application process is only available online. Newbyres training room has a number of computers that staff can access to complete their application, sessions can be provided with support. The trade unions have also advised that they may be able to offer support to staff through this process.

Revenue

There are no apparent revenue implications.

4.2 Risk

Staff failing to achieve and maintain their registration with SSSC will be unable to work within these roles. Midlothian Council can only employ registered staff; those who fail to comply may have an impact on their employment with Midlothian Council.

4.3 Policy

This is a legislative requirement from the SSSC endorsed by Scottish Government.

Strategy

This meets the requirement and recommendations for the National Workforce planning strategy and Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership workforce planning strategy.

Consultation

Consultation has commenced with staff and Trade Unions and this will continue through the process.

Equalities

An equalities impact assessment has not been completed at this stage.

Sustainability

This should assist in sustaining the care at home workforce.

5 IT Issues

IT support will be available to staff who require it. This could be accessing PC's or receiving specific support to complete their application.

6 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to agree the contents of the report

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