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Workforce planning for social care

The Scottish Government and COSLA have [published](#) Part 2 of the National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan, for Social Care in Scotland. Part 1, covering NHS Scotland, was published in June 2017 (see previous [ebrief](#)); Part 3, covering GP staff, will be published early this year.

As we have previously highlighted, workforce planning in the social care sector has many more challenges than in NHS Scotland. These include the fragmented range of providers, together with the absence of strong institutional structures that bring the sector together. This is reflected in the seven recommendations in the report that are largely focused on the process measures required to start workforce planning in the sector. These recommendations include:

1. Better collation of health and social care workforce data to support national and local workforce planning.
2. To develop the interactions between the national and local labour market pressures, and the specific challenges presented by the configuration and location of the current social care workforce.
3. To develop guidance for IJBs, health boards and councils that supports partnership working, including trade unions, for the formulation of workforce plans at regional and local level that include consideration of the third and independent sector workforce.
4. To progress and co-produce social care and multi-disciplinary workforce planning tools. Taking account of progress with planned Scottish Government legislation. This appears to leave open the option of including social care in the Safe Staffing Bill, although the practical challenges remain.
5. A national campaign to promote the social care profession as a meaningful, valued and rewarding career choice.
6. To develop enhanced career pathways within social care, recognising the developing integrated workforce. This will include improving entry routes into the sector and exploring how career pathways between health and social care can be developed, as well as regulatory frameworks.
7. To develop training and education proposals that will better enable a flexible, confident and competent workforce with qualifications. This includes the national qualification structure SCQF, the Review of Social Work Education and work on implementing the new Health and Social Care Standards.

The report recognises the important role of trade unions in developing workforce planning and provides a basic framework for engagement. Still some way short of the broader sector structures UNISON has argued for. However, it is a start in the right direction.

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