

# **A LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS 2019 – 2027**

## **TRAINING SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR THE SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE**

**GUIDANCE FOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
REQUIREMENTS 2025/2026**

**NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (SCC),  
ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES (OSS), DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DoH)**

**TRAINING SUPPORT PROGRAMME  
FOR THE SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE, 2025/2026**

Thank you for your interest in applying to the SCC, acting on behalf of the OSS, Training Support Programme (TSP) for the Social Care Workforce.

The Programme is intended to assist with the cost of improving the knowledge, skills and qualification profile of the social care workforce in independent sector organisations in Northern Ireland.

Funding allocated under the TSP is issued in accordance with Circular HSS 1/2013 and under the authority of Article 44 Health and Personal Social Services (NI) Order 1972, and Article 14 of the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001.

**Eligibility to apply to the Training Support Programme**

The TSP is open to applications from independent sector organisations which provide social care services. **Priority will be given to applications from community and voluntary sector organisations.**

**Priorities for Learning and Development Funding**

Priority for funding in 2025/2026 will be given to whole or part qualification achievements linked to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). Such qualifications should contribute to improving the knowledge and skills of the social care workforce, in line with Department of Health standards/guidance/policy, Social Care Workforce Strategy<sup>1</sup> and the Care in Practice (CiP) Framework<sup>2</sup>.

A list of the specific qualifications the SCC, on behalf of the OSS, will be funding for 2025/2026 are detailed in the 'Priorities for Learning and Development 2025/2026' section, Page 4.

**Limits on Funding**

**Any offer of funding from the TSP will be subject to budget availability.** The TSP has access to a limited budget therefore the maximum amount that can be awarded to an eligible organisation is capped at £10,000 per year. Funding will only be considered for actual course fees.

**Accountability**

Organisations which are successful in their applications for funding from the TSP will be expected to provide detailed, timely and accurate information to the SCC regarding the appropriate use of funding received. **Funding may be withdrawn if information is not provided by the specified dates.**

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<sup>1</sup> [DoH, Social Care Workforce Strategy, 2025-2035](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Care in Practice \(CiP\) Framework](#)

Details of the monitoring and accountability arrangements for TSP funding are set out in 'Accountability Arrangements for the Appropriate Use of TSP Funding' section Page 5.

### **Award of Funding**

The payment of any funding awarded from the TSP will be issued to successful applicant organisations by the SCC, on receipt of the completed and signed Acceptance of Funding form (included with the Letter of Award).

### **Key Dates in the Application Process**

The following dates should be noted with regard to applications made to the TSP;

**17 October 2025** Closing date for completed 2025/2026 TSP **applications must be made online** to the SCC.

The application form can be accessed via the following link:

[https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/hsc/tsp-2025-26\\_applicationform\\_sep2025](https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/hsc/tsp-2025-26_applicationform_sep2025)

**06 November 2025** Allocation of funding will be notified by this date.

**16 January 2026** Final date for Update Report to be submitted to the SCC. Please forward by email to the SCC,  
[TrainingSupport@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:TrainingSupport@niscc.hscni.net)

Any actual or estimated underspend of allocated funds should be identified.

Notification must be made to the SCC of any actual or predicted underspend of funds awarded in-year.

**10 April 2026** Closing date for Final Accountability Report, as at end of year spend up to 31 March 2026, to be submitted to the SCC.

To view the SCC Privacy Notice please see our website at [Privacy Notice - NISCC](#).

If you have any questions in relation to an application to the Training Support Programme, please email [TrainingSupport@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:TrainingSupport@niscc.hscni.net).

## PRIORITIES FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 2025/26

Applications for funding from the Training Support Programme (TSP) for learning and development opportunities will be considered in accordance with the following priorities;

### Accredited Qualifications

Whole or part RQF (equivalent) awards with priority given to:

- RQF Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice;
- RQF Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Northern Ireland);
- RQF Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care Practice (Northern Ireland);
- RQF Level 3 Award in Education and Training (Train the Trainer);
- RQF Level 4 Certificate in Principles of Leadership and Management for Adult Care;
- RQF Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care (Northern Ireland);
- RQF Level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care (Adults' Management) (Northern Ireland);
- RQF Level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care (Adults' Residential Management) (Northern Ireland);

### Training Initiatives

Subject to budget availability, consideration will be given to applications for **face-to-face** learning and development training initiatives received from organisations within the Adult/Children's services sector.

All applications for funding will be assessed in accordance with the following DoH Learning and Development Priorities for the 2025/2026 year:

- Dementia Awareness;
- Moving and Positioning/ Handling of Individuals;
- Emergency First Aid;
- Palliative Care Awareness;
- Trauma-informed Practice.

Please note – the Social Care Council will fund successful social care organisations. It is the responsibility of employers to source the training provider/s.

## ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF TSP FUNDING

Organisations in receipt of funding from the Training Support Programme are required to account for actual spend and training activity undertaken, at update report stage (16 January 2026) and year end (31 March 2026).

The relevant accounting forms will be issued with the Letter of Award, which provide the necessary assurance relating to;

- (a) expenditure to date (**SCC forms TSP C/TSP C(I)/TSP C(II)**); and
- (b) learner details and progress on qualification attainment (**SCC form TSP D**)

### Update Report

At Update Report stage, organisations must provide a report (**SCC forms TSP C/TSP C(I)/TSP C(II)**) which outlines how much has been spent to date in relation to the TSP allocation as notified in the Letter of Award from the SCC.

The Update Report must include;

- the actual amount of spend at **16 January 2026**;
- a breakdown of the spend against the amounts allocated to each learner/qualification/ training initiative as set out in the Letter of Award; *and*
- the anticipated spend for the remainder of the year (up to **31 March 2026**) in relation to each learner/qualification as set out in the Letter of Award.

**Failure to complete the Update Report within the agreed timeframe may result in the SCC requesting that allocated funding be returned.**

### Final Accountability Report

Organisations which receive funding from the Training Support Programme must submit a Final Accountability Report on actual spend and qualification achievement at the end of the financial year (update of **SCC forms TSP C/TSP C(I)/TSP C(II)**).

## **Identification of Underspend**

Organisations in receipt of funding from the TSP must report any actual or potential underspend at the earliest opportunity and, in any case, at the Update Report stage. The latest date by which any projected underspend is to be notified to the SCC is **16 January 2026**.

## **Verification of Expenditure**

Proof of expenditure on all activities arising from TSP funding must be retained by the successful applicant organisation.

In order to comply with audit requirements, the SCC may request proof of expenditure in line with the agreed training and development activities. This may include evidence of the full training schedule offered by the applicant organisation.

The SCC may make site visits to organisations who have received funding from the Training Support Programme.

If you have any questions in relation to the Reporting and Accountability arrangements for the Training Support Programme please email the SCC - [TrainingSupport@niscc.hscni.net](mailto:TrainingSupport@niscc.hscni.net).