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17 March 2026

Dear Convener

I am writing to provide an update on the National Social Work Agency which launched today.

The National Social Work Agency has been created to strengthen and support the social work profession. It will work in partnership with the profession, people with lived experience, and partners to strengthen practice, elevate the profession, shape policy, and drive positive change. It will be responsible for leading excellence and driving positive change across the social work profession in Scotland, and for providing expert impartial social work advice to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government. Further information on the National Social Work Agency can be found here: [www.socialwork.gov.scot](http://www.socialwork.gov.scot).

In addition, investment of almost £1 million will be made available to nurture practice development, supporting a sustainable workforce that is equipped to meet demand and improve the outcomes of people. This will fund:

- Distance Learning Fund – up to £610,000 to fund social work distance learning course fees for 64 new social workers (two students per local authority);
- Practice Educator Fund – up to £150,000 to support postgraduate certificate fees funding through HEIs for up to 100 practice educators;
- Mental Health Officer Qualification Fund – up to £234,000 to support funding of fees in HEI programmes for up to 50 MHO awards.

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As part of the launch of the Agency, *Valuing Practice: Scotland's Framework for Social Work Education and Learning* has been published. This focuses on social work education standards from pre-qualification and throughout different career phases and has been developed closely with Scottish Social Services Council and relevant subject matter experts and marks the first time that post-qualification standards have been developed for social work in Scotland.

The Scottish Government continues to recognise the importance of social workers and values the work they do to support people across the country.

Yours sincerely,

**ANGELA CONSTANCE**

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