
Report To:	Social Work & Social Care Scrutiny Panel	Date:	27 August 2024
Report By:	Kate Rocks Chief Officer Inverclyde HSCP	Report No:	SWSCSP/23/2024/JH
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Hinds Chief Social Work Officer Inverclyde HSCP	Contact No:	01475 715282
Subject:	National Review of Social Work Governance and Assurance		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 This report advises the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel about the Care Inspectorate's intention to undertake a national review of social work governance and assurance.
- 1.3 This review will take place between July and December 2024 with the aim of adding to the understanding of the role, remit, effectiveness and the current challenges facing social work services. The Care Inspectorate will do this by exploring the impact of governance and assurance arrangements in each local authority area.
- 1.4 Inverclyde Council was notified of this Review on 15 July 2024 and Laura Ritchie has been nominated as the co-ordinator for Inverclyde.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the planned review of social work governance and assurance.

**Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde HSCP**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Within their notification letter (Appendix 1), the Care Inspectorate has advised that the aim of the national review of social work governance and assurance is to gain a national overview of governance and assurance arrangements in local authority areas that provides assurance that social work duties are being appropriately discharged. The review encompasses the full range of social work duties, including adults, children and justice and is being carried out under Section 53 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.2 The purpose of the review is to add to the understanding of the role, remit, effectiveness and current challenges facing social work services and will:
- highlight the areas of influence for chief social worker officers, principal social workers and other key social work leaders as they provide governance and assurance
 - explore the support and assistance provided by leaders and managers to encourage staff to uphold social work values in practice
 - identify and disseminate information about what is working well
 - recognise the challenges faced by local leaders and staff across the country and identify areas where improvement is required.
- 3.3 The review will include consideration of how staff are supported to fulfil their roles and how social work leaders are able to influence decision making as well as having strategic oversight of significant risk relating to the statutory duties within legislation.
- 3.4 The Care Inspectorate have advised that the review has been designed to reflect the current pressures experienced by the sector and seeks to be mindful of the impact on those leading and working in social work services.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The timeline for the review is as follows:

5 to 16 August 2024	briefing sessions for co-ordinators
19 August to 4 October 2024	staff survey to be issued for all frontline social work staff and first line managers.
27 August 2024	relevant documents to be submitted.
30 September to 1 November 2024	structured interviews with a small number of core staff including Chief Social Work Officers. Local managers will also participate in themed focus groups.
17 March 2025	publication date for the national review report. In addition, a local staff survey report will be provided to each area after publication. Further opportunities to discuss findings will be arranged, including webinars.

- 4.2 As a national review, the Care Inspectorate team will not evaluate the performance of individual partnerships but expect to identify what is working well nationally and areas to consider for improvement.
- 4.3 A further report can be provided to the Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel following publication of the national review report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		x
Legal/Risk		x
Human Resources		x
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		x
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x
Environmental & Sustainability		x
Data Protection		x

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.3 Legal/Risk

None.

5.4 Human Resources

Staff time to participate in the areas of this review.

5.5 Strategic

None.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

None.

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
x	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
x	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
x	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
x	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
x	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The review will involve a staff survey of all social work staff and managers. A number of managers will also participate in focus groups and interviews with the review team.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.



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Our Ref: KM/TW/AM
Date: 15 July 2024

Dear colleagues

Review of social work governance and assurance

Further to my letter of 24 May 2024 to advise of our intention to undertake a review of social work governance and assurance. I am now writing to notify you formally that we are undertaking this review.

As noted previously, the aim is to gain a national overview of approaches to ensuring governance and assurance arrangements are in place in order to provide public assurance that social work duties are being appropriately discharged. This review will also explore how staff are supported to carry out their roles and broach any concerns.

The review will consider the extent to which social work leaders meaningfully influence decision making and have strategic oversight of significant risk relating to key areas of legislative responsibility. This will span the full range of social work, including adults, children and justice.

This review is being carried out under Section 53 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. Our work commences on 15 July 2024 and will conclude on 20 December 2024.

Approach

The approach will involve the following activities:

- A national staff survey, focussing on community based front line social work staff and their first line managers. We will provide each local authority with a copy of the staff survey results from their area to support any local improvement activity,
- The review of some core documents that can demonstrate governance and assurance approaches in local authority areas,
- A structured interview with a few core staff from each local authority area, including Chief Social Work Officers,
- Three themed focus groups, where each local authority will be invited to send two middle or senior managers to each session.

The approach taken will be proportionate, mindful of the impact on partnership areas.

Further information about the review can be found on our dedicated [webpage](#) and also from the briefing attached to this email.



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Review of social work governance and assurance**

Reporting

We will produce a single national report in spring 2025. While we will not be evaluating partnerships on their performance, we will report on what is working well across Scotland. We will also identify any potential areas for improvement for consideration.

Ask of local authorities

At this stage, we ask that all 32 local authorities provide us with the name and email address of a co-ordinator for the review **by noon Friday 19 July 2024**. The person identified should possess a strong understanding of social work governance and assurance arrangements across the local authority and HSCP area. Once identified, we will contact them with further information to support the completion of the national staff survey, provide a small number of documents and facilitate staff members to attend the structured interview and focus groups. This information will be issued on 22 July 2024.

We plan to hold briefing sessions for co-ordinators in August 2024 to answer questions and provide some further context for the review.

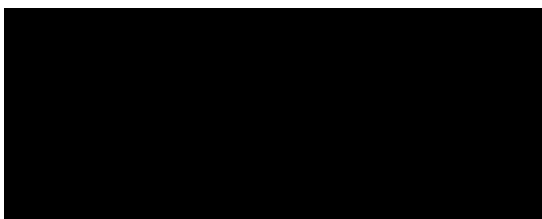
The inspection lead for this review is Tim Ward and he is supported by Ashley Martin, Strategic Support Officer.

If you or any of your colleagues have any questions or require clarification at this stage, please contact Tim Ward, lead inspector via email: ciswg@careinspectorate.gov.uk.

Please use this email address to advise us of your nominated individual who will act as our key point of contact for this review by noon on Friday 19 July 2024.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely



Kevin Mitchell
Executive Director of Scrutiny & Assurance

Enclosed: *review information document*

CC: A copy of this letter has been issued to chief executives of local authorities, chief social work officers and chief officers of health and social care partnerships.