



## Information on the Care Inspectorate link inspector role for council and partnership staff

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** The purpose of this paper is to provide information to local authorities, health and social care partnerships and community planning partnerships and their staff on the Care Inspectorate's link inspectors role.

## **2.0 CONTEXT OF THE LINK INSPECTOR ROLE**

**2.1** The Care inspectorate has had link inspector arrangements in place with all 32 local authorities in Scotland since its establishment in 2011. The role is undertaken by strategic inspectors. Each council area has one strategic inspector allocated to it to undertake the link inspector role. Occasionally, a council area may have two link inspectors allocated to it (for example, a large city council area). Each strategic inspector will undertake the link inspector role for one or two council areas.

**2.2** Section 44(1) (b) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 provides the Care inspectorates "general duty of furthering improvement in the quality of social services". Social services are defined as social work services and care services. This provides the statutory basis for the link inspector role and in particular for the Care Inspectorate's engagement with local authority social work services at the strategic level, out with inspections.

**2.3** Meeting this duty is complicated by the context in which social services are delivered. Whereas stand-alone social work departments were the norm in the past, this is no longer the case. Most social care and social work services are now provided in partnership with other key council departments or agencies, such as education services and the NHS. These partnerships have increasingly developed more formalised arrangements, especially with the integration authorities under health and social care integration. There is variation across Scotland in how social services are delivered. In some local authority areas, all social services are delivered from within the framework of an "all in" approach to health and social care integration. In other areas, there are effectively two partnerships for social services, one with the NHS covering services for adults and one with education services for children and families. With a few exceptions the provision of criminal justice services tends to mirror the arrangements which have been made on whether children's social services are "delegated" to the IJB.

**2.4** In each of 32 local authority areas, the link inspector will focus on:

- monitoring the performance and quality of social work services
- monitoring the performance of partnership public protection arrangements
- identifying factors which are supporting social work services to deliver good or improved outcomes, and any barriers
- highlighting risks to the above, and their potential impact
- identifying good practice within social work service and disseminating this more widely
- supporting partners' efforts to build capacity for continuous improvement.

**2.5** Each link inspector is allocated an element of time each year for link related activities for each council area. This can include a range of activities and will normally include the following:

- attendance at the meetings outlined in the table at paragraph 3.2 below
- internal Care Inspectorate meetings, including with the relationship managers for the regulated care services within the link area (see section 4)
- intelligence sharing meetings with other scrutiny bodies, for example, the Audit Scotland Local Area Networks (LANs)
- preparation time for meetings and reading to keep up to date with developments, such as CPC/APC minutes, new strategies and plans.

Requests for support and improvement activity as outlined in section 3 below are separate and additional to the above.

### **3.0 WHO DOES THE LINK INSPECTOR ENGAGE WITH IN COUNCIL/PARTNERSHIP AREAS?**

**3.1** The link inspector is expected to engage with the following in order to undertake their link inspector role:

- **Chief Social Work Officer.** Given the focus and responsibilities of the Care Inspectorate, the CSWO is a key person with whom the link inspector should engage with. CSWOs are required to prepare and submit to their council an annual report in respect of its social work duties and services, The link inspector should be familiar with the latest CSWO annual report which may provide a useful source of discussion with the CSWO and also more broadly at link inspector meetings.
- **Senior social work managers.** Depending on the partnership structures and how actively the CSWO is involved across the range of adults, children's and criminal justice social work services the link inspector will need to engage with this group in order to be able to monitor performance across the range of social work services.
- **Chief Officer** of the IJB. This will enable discussion on the progress of health and social care integration. Consideration should be given to whether it would be practicable and beneficial to try and dovetail some of the engagement with the chief social work officers and the chief officer.
- **Child protection committees, adult protection committees and chief officers' group.** To monitor the partnerships responsibilities for public protection. The link inspector should also have knowledge of how the strategic oversight group for MAPPA operates.

**3.2** The way social work services are structured in a local authority is likely to affect how link inspector engagement in that area should most productively take place. However, below is who the link inspector should meet with, including minimum frequency.

Link inspectors are expected to agree their engagement arrangements with the CSWO/local authority/partnership. The arrangements will also be confirmed by the link inspector's service manager.

<b>Who</b>	<b>How often (minimum standard)</b>
Chief social work officer/chief officer/senior social work managers <sup>1</sup>	Quarterly
Child protection committee	Annually
Adult protection committee	Annually
Chief officer group	Annually
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

**3.3** Link inspectors are expected to maintain a record of their engagement with their link councils/partnerships. They will also provide their line managers (strategic service managers) with a verbal update of their link inspector engagement and any significant developments within council/partnership as part of the agenda of one to one meetings. Where such developments occur that may require urgent action or an immediate response by the Care Inspectorate, the link inspector will inform their service manager straight away.

**3.4** The link inspector's engagement with the council/partnership will also help inform the Care Inspectorate's intelligence sharing with other scrutiny bodies and the planning for future inspection planning, including joint strategic inspections.

#### **4.0 STANDARD LINK INSPECTOR AGENDA**

**4.1** Below is a list of standard agenda items which would normally feature on the agenda of link inspector meetings.

- Key developments within the council/partnership relating to adult, children's & criminal justice services.
- Key developments within the Care inspectorate.
- Any matters arising from current or planned strategic scrutiny activity.
- Progress on implementing action plans from any recent strategic inspections.
- Any thematic issues arising from inspections of regulated care services.
- Update on any SIRs & SCRs being completed and on any improvement activity arising from previous reviews.
- Service performance hotspots as identified by the council/partnership and/or via Care Inspectorate intelligence.
- Important areas of service improvement and/or service development
- Self-evaluation and supported self-evaluation activity.
- Traditionally higher risk service areas, for example out of hours services.

**4.2** Other potential engagement opportunities for the link inspector could include:

- attendance at meetings of the IJB, community justice partnership, children's service partnerships

- attendance at relevant partnership events, such as child and adult protection annual conferences (this could be either the link or relationship manager)
- meeting elected members to gain a sense of political support and leadership of social work services.

## **5.0 THE LINK INSPECTORS' INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT**

**5.1** Within the Care Inspectorate, the link inspectors main contact and engagement will be with the relationship managers for the regulated care services within that council area. Each council area has two relationship managers one for the regulated care services for adults and one for the regulated care services for children. Liaison between link inspectors and relationship managers will involve:

- liaison on any pertinent matters regarding regulated care services and of a strategic nature that the strategic inspector needs to be aware of and may wish to raise as part of their engagement with the council/partnership. Examples could include how adult or child protection concerns for people in regulated care services are being dealt with and how assessment and care management responsibilities for people in these services are being delivered
- discussion about the Care Inspectorate's engagement with the APC and CPC. In addition to link inspector's annual engagement with APCs and CPCs, they should liaise with relationship managers about the possible need for additional Care Inspectorate attendance. For example, where there have been a large number of adult support and protection referrals relating to a care home, it may be appropriate for the relationship manager to attend
- link inspectors keeping relationship managers informed of any significant developments within the local authority/partnership area, especially where these may be relevant to the activity of regulated care services.

As well as their engagement with relationship managers, link inspectors will also have contact with colleagues in the Care Inspectorate's registration and complaints teams where required. The link inspector may be able to facilitate contact between colleagues in these teams and senior council/partnership managers. An example might be where the council/partnership is considering developing a new service which does not readily fit into existing guidelines for the registration of care services.

## **6.0 HOW DOES THE CARE INSPECTORATE RESPOND TO SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY REQUESTS?**

**6.1** Link inspectors are frequently asked to support specific pieces of activity within social work and wider partnerships. Such requests are welcomed, but we need to ensure our response to this is commensurate to need, risk and strategic inspector capacity. Given this, link inspectors will want partnerships to provide some

specific detail on the focus, purpose, timescale and resource implications of any planned improvement activity where Care Inspectorate input is being requested. This will then be considered by the Care Inspectorate's relevant service manager(s).

- 6.2** This approach will allow us to gather and evidence the range of support and improvement activity we provide, help prioritise towards need and risk, allocate resources based on capacity and provide strategic inspectors with a range of opportunities for different improvement work.
- 6.3** This could include involvement with the Care Inspectorate's improvement support team who have a range of health and care portfolios and improvement knowledge and skills. The team provide support and guidance in improvement methods for Care Inspectorate staff and service providers and also recruit specialists to work with us on a short-term basis if required. They work with organisations and care providers to develop their improvement knowledge and skills of using the Model for Improvement to enhance the quality of life and care experiences for people receiving care. They can also link in with health and social care partnerships at all levels to support integrated care pathways. Link inspectors can liaise with the team to see if they can have any role and input to a piece of improvement activity suggested by councils/partnerships.
- 6.4** Link inspectors may call upon and work with strategic inspector colleagues when considering and responding to a request for advice, information and assistance from a council/partnership. Where this has resource implications for the Care Inspectorate, the involvement of other strategic inspectors will be considered as part of the process outlined at paragraph 6.1.

**7.0 WHAT IS THE LINK INSPECTOR ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC INSPECTIONS AND POST INSPECTION ACTIVITY OF THEIR LINK AREA?**

- 7.1** Inspection programmes and activities inevitably evolve over time. However, as a general principle, link inspectors will always contribute to inspections by providing information and intelligence about their link area.
- 7.2** For joint strategic inspections the partnership will be asked to submit a SMART improvement plan within six weeks of the publication of the inspection report. The action plan should address all of the inspection report's areas for improvement/recommendations. The responsibility for completing and implementing the improvement plan rests with the partnership. However, the improvement plan will be submitted to the inspection lead.
- 7.3** The lead inspector will discuss the improvement plan with their service manager and the link inspector. They will agree one of the following responses:
- the improvement plan adequately/fully addresses the areas for improvement/recommendations and can be accepted as such by the Care Inspectorate

- subject to some modest revision and amendments the improvement plan could be accepted by the Care Inspectorate. The lead inspector will engage with the partnership to ensure the partnership submits a revised improvement plan which can be accepted by the Care Inspectorate.
- in a number of important areas, the improvement plan fails to adequately address the inspection's areas for improvement/recommendations. The lead inspector will engage with the partnership to ensure the partnership submits a revised improvement plan which can be accepted by the Care Inspectorate. In this instance, there may be a need for a meeting with the partnership involving the lead inspector, their service manager and the link inspector.

- 7.4** Responsibility for monitoring the partnership's progress in implementing the improvement plan is assumed by the link inspector at the point it has been accepted as suitable by the Care Inspectorate. Prior to this, the link inspector will have been fully involved in all the considerations of the suitability of the improvement plan from its submission to the Care Inspectorate.
- 7.5** Part of the process of endorsing the improvement plan will include obtaining confirmation of the partnership's own processes for implementing the areas for improvement/recommendations and its arrangements for measuring their impact.
- 7.6** The link inspector will then agree with the partnership about how they will be provided with information on its progress in implementing the improvement plan. This may involve being provided with copies of reports going to committees/strategic overview groups. It could also include the link inspector attending a meeting(s) of such groups. There might also be occasions where the link inspector agrees to support and participate in some of the partnership's own quality assurance and self-evaluation activity to reassure itself that areas for improvement or recommendations are being implemented effectively.
- 7.7** In any event, the improvement plan should be a standing item on link inspector meeting's agenda. Some areas for improvement and recommendations can take longer than others both to implement and before their impact becomes clear. Link inspector meetings at both the six and twelve months stage, after the improvement plan was signed off should include a general discussion about progress. "Formal" monitoring of the improvement plan would not normally continue beyond the 12 months stage, although there may be one or two longer term improvement areas which the link inspector may wish to be kept abreast of further to this.