

The Improvement Service

ELECTED MEMBER BRIEFING NOTE

Care Inspectorate



What is the purpose of the briefing note series?

The Improvement Service (IS) has developed an Elected Members Briefing Series to help elected members keep pace with key issues affecting local government.

Some briefing notes will be directly produced by IS staff but we will also make available material from as wide a range of public bodies, commentators and observers of public services as possible.

We will use the IS website and elected member e-bulletin to publicise and provide access to the briefing notes. All briefing notes in the series can be accessed at www.improvementservice.org.uk/elected-member-guidance-and-briefings.html

About the Care Inspectorate

There are 14,000 care services in Scotland – and the majority of them are good, very good or excellent. This note gives an overview of the Care Inspectorate – Scotland’s scrutiny and improvement organisation for social care and social work, which also works across early learning and childcare, community justice and integrated health and social care. The Care Inspectorate is a non-departmental public body that regulates care, publicly reports on its quality and supports improvement if necessary. The organisation also investigates complaints about care services from members of the public.

The Care Inspectorate is responsible for scrutinising the quality of social work in local authorities and carries out joint inspections of services both for children and older people. It does this by working closely with education, police and health to ensure that, in each local area, different agencies are all working well together to deliver positive outcomes for people in local communities and to protect those who are at risk of harm.

What is the issue?

There is significant change in the health and social care landscape so keeping the quality of care high during a time of change is important. Almost everyone in Scotland will use a care service at some point in their lives. The Care Inspectorate has a focus on scrutiny as a way of supporting improvement.

Care services are not allowed to operate unless they are registered by the Care Inspectorate. As at 30 November 2016, there were 13678 care services:

Childminders	5666
Daycare of Children (Nurseries, playgroups etc)	3739
Support Services (Care at home and day care of adults)	1463
Care Homes (For older people, adults and children)	1430
Housing Support	1075
Nurse Agencies	69
School Care Accommodation	66
Fostering Services	59
Adult Placement	39
Adoption	38
Childcare Agencies	24
Offender Accommodation	5
Secure Accommodation	5

Inspection

Inspections of care services are risk-based, mostly unannounced and take place against a frequency criteria. Last year the Care Inspectorate carried out some 7,000 inspections. Inspectors look at four quality themes:

- Care and Support
- Environment
- Staffing
- Management and Leadership

Services are graded using a simple six point grading scale: unsatisfactory, weak, adequate, good, very good, or excellent. Currently, over 85% of services are evaluated to be good, very good or excellent for the quality of care, but with significant variations by sector and service type. Grades are recorded in the service's inspection report and on the Care Inspectorate website, where all inspection reports are published in full. You can search for a particular care service here: www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/care-services.

Complaints and when services don't improve

One of the most important ways to make sure care services improve is by dealing with complaints from members of the public. Complaints about registered care services run by the local authority, voluntary sector, or the independent sector are investigated by the Care Inspectorate. People can make complaints anonymously if needs be online or by phone. A complaints investigation can result in recommendations and requirements, and occasionally in enforcement action. Complaints also help build an intelligence profile of what is happening in care services and where we need to target resources.

When a service is not operating at the standard expected, the Care Inspectorate seeks to try and support improvement but can take enforcement action in rare cases.

Local area scrutiny

In addition to regulated care inspections, the Care Inspectorate carries out joint inspections with other organisations to review the quality of provision across local areas and integration joint boards. These inspections cover a Community Planning Partnership (CPP) / [Integration Authority](#) area. A team of link inspectors also support local authority officers directly.

A joint approach is used by the Care Inspectorate and [Healthcare Improvement Scotland](#) to examine the effectiveness of collaborative working between health, social work and social care services for older people and their carers. The future model will focus on strategic commissioning in Integration Authorities from April 2017. In addition, the Care Inspectorate is developing methodology for a thematic review to examine the quality of, and support improvements in, adult support and protection and in self-directed support during 2017/18.

The Care Inspectorate leads on joint inspections of services for children and young people across Scotland. Working within a framework of quality indicators, inspections look at the difference services within a CPP area are making to the lives of children, young people and families. They provide public assurance about the quality of services aimed at giving children and young people the best start in life, making recommendations about what needs to improve. The Scottish Government has recently asked the Care Inspectorate to design and lead a new programme of inspections for children, which will help strengthen scrutiny of child protection and corporate parenting arrangements in Scotland.

What does this mean for elected members?

Social work and social care are unique disciplines that play a major role in reducing health and social inequalities. Elected members play a major role through CPPs, Councils, and Integration Authorities in setting policy and overseeing the governance of care. It remains a challenging time for public finances and proportionate, independent scrutiny, as a complement to robust self-evaluation, can help elected members ensure that the quality of service provided is good. Everyone is entitled to safe, high quality and compassionate care. This will be underscored in the new national care standards, which will be introduced from summer 2017 – the first time a common set of standards will apply across both healthcare and social care, with a focus not just on the quality of services being delivered but how people’s needs are assessed and services commissioned, all from the point of view of the individual.

The Care Inspectorate’s evidence suggests that the quality of management and leadership is critical in delivering quality care services. Integration Authorities are in an early stage of development but the Care Inspectorate will be seeking evidence of high-quality leadership to deliver on the aims and aspirations of integration and deliver real improvements for people who use services and their families.

The Care Inspectorate’s joint inspections for services for children highlight that the strongest performance in improving outcomes for children is characterised by an assertive and shared commitment to closing outcome gaps. The Care Inspectorate noted in August 2016 that “improving the life chances of children and young people, giving them the best start in life and ensuring they are ready to succeed are high national priorities but, in a small number of areas, more aspiration for the most disadvantaged children and young people need to be demonstrated”.

Elected members therefore play an important role in the ensuring local partnerships are working well and delivering for people.

What does good practice look like in this area?

The Care Inspectorate focuses on the experiences of and outcomes for people who use care. Inspections show that over the last number of years, the quality of care has generally risen across Scotland.

The new world-leading national care standards describe what care should be like from the perspective of a person using care. As they are rolled out across planning, assessment, commissioning and delivery of care, they have the potential to improve the quality of care further and contribute to reducing health and social inequalities. The standards will be amongst the most radical, progressive standards anywhere and are designed to apply across all health and social care settings.

Innovation is an important element in delivering improved and more efficient services to people. The Care Inspectorate has been working with a number of local authorities and partners to supportive innovative practice and new models of care. For example, the Care Inspectorate has been supportive of innovative ways of commissioning childminders, new intermediate care services to help older people leave hospital, and practice which encourages positive risks to be taken where that can improve the quality of someone's life and wellbeing.

Good, strong leadership is important. The Care Inspectorate has evidenced the importance of effective leadership in the delivery of care. It believes that leaders should build teams within and across organisations and empower others to deliver first class public services.

The Care Inspectorate places great emphasis on supporting improvement, part of its statutory responsibilities. It works closely with providers to identify what works well and shares this best practice with others. It supports providers to change and innovate so everyone receives high quality care.

Key issues to consider

There are some key issues for you as an elected member to consider:

- Local authorities will play a major role in expanding funded childcare in the coming years. Many councils are considering innovative approaches, including commissioning of childminders to help support children. Elected members play an important role in ensuring their council is making use of innovative approaches with regards to achieving the expansion of quality funded childcare.
- Strong, effective leadership across partnerships is vital for bringing about change in children's services, adult services, social work and community justice. As an elected member you have an important role in ensuring the right governance arrangements are in place in your local authority and local partnerships, in order to provide effective strategic leadership for care.
- The Care Inspectorate expects local authorities and local partnerships to have the right systems in place to undertake robust, multi-agency self-evaluation. This helps to ensure that senior officials and elected members are able to evidence what is working well and what needs to improve for people locally.
- Elected members have an important role in ensuring that people with experience of care are involved in local planning and commissioning strategies, to help ensure resources are directed at meeting people's needs in a way that works for them.

- Do you make use of Care Inspectorate reports and data to more effectively help you in your governance role? All Care Inspectorate reports are published online and sent to chief officers. If you would like additional data about the quality of care services in your local area, the Care Inspectorate will be able to provide these to you upon request.

Summary

Local authorities make an important contribution to improving the experiences and outcomes for many hundreds of thousands of people who experience care, while at the same time, ensuring those same people, their families and carers are at the heart of their activities. Elected members play a key leadership and governance role in this.

The Care Inspectorate's role is to support improvements in the quality of care, and it does this through a programme of scrutiny which identifies what works well and what needs to improve, both at a service and community level.

Anyone who is unhappy about the quality of a registered care service can contact the Care Inspectorate – anonymously if needed.

Further support and contacts

If you have concerns about a care service and wish to raise this yourself or on behalf of someone else, you can contact the Care Inspectorate on 0345 6009527 or email enquiries@careinspectorate.com.

You can find details of all care services at www.careinspectorate.com.

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Feb 2017



The Improvement Service is devoted to improving the efficiency, quality and accountability of public services in Scotland through learning and sharing information and experiences.

