

A National Care Service for Scotland: Consultation Briefing Note

The consultation seeks views on a single national body to oversee social care, with clear lines of accountability to Ministers at a national level. It assumes the incorporation of adults' services including social work.

The aim of proposals is to develop and design care and support that meets the needs of everyone and to move away from a notion of eligibility that requires a point of crisis before support is available. The consultation asks for views on having a single support plan, a single point of access for complaints. It aspires to a single digital health and social care record to reduce people's experiences of repeated requests for the same information and to share information more effectively for better quality service provision. There are chapters on commissioning, governance structures for new Community Health and Social Care Boards, rights for carers, regulation, and fair work.

What might this mean for social work?

- **Children's social work:** the document asks whether children's social work and social care services should be located within the NCS.
- **Justice:** the consultation asks whether justice should be included in the NCS but also asks for opinions on other models including a separate service akin to the Probation Service in England. It also suggests the NCS should oversee social care provision for people in prison.
- **Mental health:** the consultation proposes that "*appropriate*" elements of mental health services should be "*consistently delegated*" to the National Care Service.
- **Addictions:** the consultation proposes the NCS may be able to commission specialist addictions care, such as residential rehab, at a national level
- **National Social Work Agency:** to have national oversight and leadership over social work qualifications, workforce planning, improvement, training, continuous professional development and pay and grading within a national framework. It would invest in and raise the profile of social workers throughout the NCS and partner organisations, ensuring parity with other professions.
- **The Scottish Social Services Council:** to be enabled to compel employers to adhere to the codes of practice and to implement sanctions arising from fitness to practice hearings.

It is not yet clear whether social workers might remain in local authorities or in future be employed by the Community Health and Social Care Boards or the National Care Service directly. We understand that this will form part of future consultation activity as part of the NCS Programme.

Within the consultation, we intend to pay attention to the way that the social work role is described. SASW is alert to risks of erosion of holistic and relational principles and approaches that underpin our work leaving social workers operating constantly in a high risk, complex environment where the likelihood of the need of undesired intervention impacts individual and social trust in the profession.